

# **Plant Phenolics Inhibit Focal Adhesion Kinase and Suppress Host Cell Invasion by Uropathogenic *Escherichia coli***

Running title: Plant phenolics block bacterial invasion

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1 **ABSTRACT**

2 Traditional folk treatments for the prevention and management of urinary tract infections  
3 (UTIs) and other infectious diseases often include plants and plant extracts that are rich  
4 in phenolic and polyphenolic compounds. These have been ascribed a variety of  
5 activities, including inhibition of bacterial interactions with host cells. Here we tested a  
6 panel of four well-studied phenolic compounds – caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE),  
7 resveratrol, catechin, and epigallocatechin gallate – for effects on host cell adherence  
8 and invasion by uropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (UPEC). These bacteria, which are the  
9 leading cause of UTIs, can bind and subsequently invade bladder epithelial cells via an  
10 actin-dependent process. Intracellular UPEC reservoirs within the bladder are often  
11 protected from antibiotics and host defenses, and likely contribute to the development of  
12 chronic and recurrent infections. Using cell culture-based assays, we found that only  
13 resveratrol had a notable negative effect on UPEC adherence to bladder cells.  
14 However, both CAPE and resveratrol significantly inhibited UPEC entry into the host  
15 cells, coordinate with attenuated phosphorylation of the host actin regulator Focal  
16 Adhesion Kinase (FAK, or PTK2) and marked increases in the numbers of focal  
17 adhesion structures. We further show that the intravesical delivery of resveratrol inhibits  
18 UPEC infiltration of the bladder mucosa in a murine UTI model, and that resveratrol and  
19 CAPE can disrupt the ability of other invasive pathogens to enter host cells. Together,  
20 these results highlight the therapeutic potential of molecules like CAPE and resveratrol,  
21 which could be used to augment antibiotic treatments by restricting pathogen access to  
22 protective intracellular niches.

23 **IMPORTANCE**

24 Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are exceptionally common and increasingly difficult to  
25 treat due to the ongoing rise and spread of antibiotic resistant pathogens. Furthermore,  
26 the primary cause of UTIs, uropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (UPEC), can avoid antibiotic  
27 exposure and many host defenses by invading the epithelial cells that line the bladder  
28 surface. Here we identified two plant-derived phenolic compounds that disrupt activation  
29 of the host machinery needed for UPEC entry into bladder cells. One of these  
30 compounds (resveratrol) effectively inhibited UPEC invasion of the bladder mucosa in a  
31 mouse UTI model, and both phenolic compounds significantly reduced host cell entry by  
32 other invasive pathogens. These findings suggest that select phenolic compounds can  
33 be used to supplement existing antibacterial therapeutics by denying uropathogens  
34 shelter within host cells and tissues, and help explain some of the benefits attributed to  
35 traditional plant-based medicines.

## 36 INTRODUCTION

37 Plants can produce thousands of phenolic compounds, which are defined as secondary  
38 metabolites comprised of at least one aromatic ring with one or more hydroxyl groups  
39 (1, 2). These diverse molecules can serve a variety of functions, which include the  
40 protection of plants from ultraviolet radiation, oxidative stress, herbivores, and microbial  
41 pathogens (2-4). The dietary consumption of plant phenolic compounds is linked with an  
42 array of health benefits ranging from anti-tumorigenesis to antimicrobial effects (2, 5-7).  
43 Especially intriguing are reports that phenolic and polyphenolic compounds derived from  
44 cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) and other botanical sources may help protect  
45 against urinary tract infections (UTI) in some individuals (8-12). These infections, which  
46 are most often caused by strains of uropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (UPEC), are  
47 exceptionally common and prone to recur (13-16). About one-quarter of women will  
48 have at least one recurrent UTI (rUTI) within six months of a primary infection, and  
49 many individuals suffer multiple rUTIs per year (13, 17-21). The rampant dissemination  
50 and amplification of antibiotic resistant UPEC strains and other uropathogenic bacteria  
51 over the past two decades has greatly complicated the treatment of UTIs and stimulated  
52 widespread interest in alternate, supplemental therapies (11, 22-27).

53         There have been multiple clinical studies aimed at defining the effects of  
54 cranberry on UTI, but results have been mixed and difficult to compare due to  
55 heterogeneity in the types and quantities of cranberry products used, variations in study  
56 population characteristics, and disparate means of defining UTI (e.g. (28-31)). Despite  
57 these complications, recent systemic reviews and meta-analyses of published studies  
58 concluded that the consumption of cranberry products could significantly lower the risk

59 of UTI in patients with a history of rUTIs (32-34). Oftentimes, bacteria that cause a rUTI  
60 are similar, or identical, to the bacteria that were responsible for the initial UTI (16, 21,  
61 35-37). These and other observations suggest that environmental or in-host bacterial  
62 reservoirs may repetitively seed symptomatic UTIs in some people. Studies in mice and  
63 humans indicate the existence of UPEC reservoirs both within the gut and within the  
64 host cells that comprise the mucosal surfaces of the genitourinary tract (21, 37-42).

65 By using adhesive organelles known as type 1 pili to bind key host receptors,  
66 UPEC can trigger actin cytoskeletal rearrangements that promote the envelopment and  
67 internalization of bound bacteria (reviewed in (42)). Within bladder epithelial cells,  
68 bacteria that are not immediately expelled can either enter the cytosol and rapidly  
69 proliferate to form large but transitory intracellular bacterial communities, or the  
70 pathogens can establish small and seemingly quiescent, long-lived reservoirs within  
71 endosomal compartments (38, 43-47). Once in place, intracellular UPEC reservoirs are  
72 well-protected from host defenses and multiple frontline antibiotics, and are  
73 consequently difficult to eradicate (16, 38, 40, 42, 48-52). The inhibition of host cell  
74 invasion by UPEC could short-circuit cycles of rUTI that may be caused, in some  
75 individuals, by the repeated resurgence of intracellular bacterial reservoirs.

76 Several phenolic compounds derived from cranberry can inhibit UPEC  
77 adherence to host cells *in vitro*, but few have been examined for their effects on host  
78 cell invasion by uropathogenic bacteria (8, 11, 12, 53-55). A class of polyphenols known  
79 as proanthocyanidins (PACs), which are found in cranberry and many other plants, are  
80 well-studied inhibitors of UPEC adherence to host cells and can interfere with bacterial  
81 invasion of intestinal epithelial and Hela cells (56-62). Within the gut, PACs may inhibit

82 host cell invasion by both inducing bacterial aggregation and by disrupting the actin  
83 cytoskeleton (60, 61). PACs may also impact UPEC colonization of the host via effects  
84 on bacterial stress response pathways, motility, biofilm development, iron metabolism,  
85 and toxin expression (55, 62-65). However, PACs likely have limited direct effects on  
86 either host cells or UPEC within the urinary tract, as these compounds are not well  
87 absorbed within the intestinal tract following consumption and are extensively  
88 metabolized by the gut microbiota (66-70). Some PAC-derived metabolites are  
89 absorbed within the gut and can later be detected in urine where *in vitro* assays suggest  
90 that they may protect against UTI by multiple mechanisms, including the inhibition  
91 bacterial adhesion to host cells (68). It is not yet clear if any of these PAC-derived  
92 metabolites can also impact bladder cell invasion independent of effects on bacterial  
93 adherence.

94 In this study, we probed the anti-invasion properties of four well-studied plant-  
95 derived phenolics: caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE), resveratrol, catechin, and  
96 epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG). These phenolics are similar to many found in extracts  
97 from cranberry and a variety of other medicinal plants, and have been linked, at least  
98 tentatively, with protection against UTI (10, 66, 69, 71-76). Results presented here show  
99 that select phenolics can inhibit host cell invasion by UPEC, as well as other invasive  
100 pathogens. This inhibitory effect correlates with suppressed activation of Focal  
101 Adhesion Kinase (FAK), a key host regulator of F-actin dynamics.

102

103

104 **RESULTS**

105 ***CAPE and resveratrol inhibit host cell invasion by UPEC***

106 The structures of CAPE, resveratrol, catechin, and EGCG, as well as representative  
107 sources of each of these phenolics, are shown in **Fig. 1A**. To examine potential effects  
108 of these compounds on UPEC-host cell interactions, we utilized standardized cell  
109 association and gentamicin protection invasion assays with the reference UPEC isolate  
110 UTI89 and the human bladder epithelial cell (BEC) line designated 5637 (77, 78). BECs  
111 were treated with each compound or carrier alone (DMSO) for 1 h prior to infection and  
112 maintained in the culture media throughout the 2-h cell association assays. During the  
113 course of these assays, the BEC monolayers remained alive and intact. None of the  
114 tested phenolic compounds altered the viability of UTI89 (**Fig. S1**), and only resveratrol  
115 caused a notable reduction in the numbers of cell-associated (intra- and extracellular)  
116 bacteria (**Fig. 1B**). In contrast, CAPE, resveratrol, and EGCG treatments significantly  
117 decreased the ability of UTI89 to invade the BECs relative to controls treated with only  
118 DMSO (**Fig. 1C**).

119

120 ***BEC invasion by UPEC does not require de novo host transcription or translation***

121 Previous studies indicated that CAPE, resveratrol, and EGCG can each inhibit activation  
122 of the host transcription factor NF- $\kappa$ B, which controls the expression of numerous  
123 genes, including many associated with inflammation and host responses to infection  
124 (79-81). With this information we reasoned that if the inhibitory effects of CAPE,  
125 resveratrol, and EGCG on UPEC invasion of BECs were attributable to the repression of  
126 NF- $\kappa$ B activation, then preventing downstream host transcriptional or translational

127 responses processes should also interfere with UPEC entry into BECs. To test this idea,  
128 BECs were treated with actinomycin D (ActD) or cycloheximide (CHX), which ablate  
129 host transcription and translation, respectively (82). Neither drug impaired the ability of  
130 UTI89 to bind to or invade BECs (**Fig. 2**), indicating that the anti-invasion effects of  
131 CAPE, resveratrol, and ECGC are not due to the disruption of host transcription or  
132 translation downstream of NF- $\kappa$ B or other host transcription factors.

133

134 ***CAPE and resveratrol inhibit FAK phosphorylation and increase focal adhesion***  
135 ***numbers***

136 Binding of the type 1 pilus-associated adhesin FimH to mannosylated glycoprotein  
137 receptors, including  $\alpha$ 3 and  $\beta$ 1 integrins, activates host signaling cascades that drive the  
138 actin-dependent envelopment and internalization of bound UPEC (42). To examine  
139 phenolic effects on host signaling processes that might affect UPEC entry into BECs,  
140 we utilized an antibody microarray approach (Kinexus) to quantify changes in the  
141 phosphorylation of specific host proteins. For this assay we focused on CAPE, which  
142 had the greatest inhibitory effect on UPEC invasion (see **Fig. 1C**). Following a 15-min  
143 infection with UTI89, phosphorylated residues within several host factors that were  
144 previously linked with UPEC invasion were notably reduced (>25%) in CAPE-treated  
145 BECs relative to those that were treated with carrier alone (**Fig. 3A**) (42, 83-86). These  
146 factors included the FimH receptor  $\beta$ 1 integrin, Akt (protein kinase B), vinculin, and FAK  
147 (protein tyrosine kinase 2), with phosphorylation of tyrosine 576 in FAK being the most  
148 diminished. Western blot analyses confirmed that CAPE treatment ablated FAK  
149 phosphorylation at Y576 [denoted as pFAK(Y576)] within UTI89-infected BECs, and



150 showed that resveratrol had a similar effect (**Fig. 3B**). EGCG and catechin had less  
151 pronounced, but still discernable, effects on pFAK(Y576).

152 FAK acts downstream of integrin receptors, working in concert with various  
153 signaling and scaffolding factors to modulate actin rearrangements and the maturation  
154 and turnover of focal adhesions (FAs) (87). These dynamic structures mediate actin-  
155 dependent host cell adherence and spreading processes, and a number of FA-  
156 associated factors, including FAK itself, are hijacked by UPEC and other pathogens to  
157 gain entry into host cells (42, 88). Integrin interactions with extracellular matrix proteins  
158 lead to the autophosphorylation of FAK at Y397, which in turn stimulates the recruitment  
159 and activation of SH2-domain-containing proteins such as phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase  
160 (PI3K) and Src kinase (87). Src then phosphorylates multiple sites within FAK, including  
161 Y576, which is required for maximal activation of FAK and the proper regulation of FA  
162 dynamics (87, 89). CAPE, but not the other phenolic compounds that we tested,  
163 diminished phosphorylation of FAK(Y397) within UTI89-infected BECs (**Fig. 3C**), but  
164 this effect was more subtle than what was observed with pFAK(Y576) (**Fig. 3B**).

165 In fibroblasts, the deletion of FAK increases the numbers of FA-like structures  
166 due to diminished turnover of integrin-linked adhesion sites (87, 90). By preventing full  
167 activation of FAK, we hypothesized that CAPE and resveratrol (and to a lesser extent  
168 EGCG and catechin) would partially mirror the effects of a FAK deletion and alter FA  
169 numbers. To test this possibility, uninfected BECs were treated with each phenolic  
170 compound individually or with carrier (DMSO) alone for 3 h and then processed for  
171 imaging by fluorescence confocal microscopy. Labeling of vinculin was used to  
172 visualize and quantify FAs, as previously described (91), and the BECs were

173 counterstained to highlight nuclei and F-actin (representative images are shown in **Fig.**  
174 **4A**). CAPE and resveratrol treatments both significantly increased the numbers FAs  
175 per cell (**Figs. 4A-B**) while EGCG and catechin slightly, but significantly, elevated the  
176 average size of the FAs (**Fig. 4C**). Together, these observations indicate that CAPE  
177 and resveratrol (more so than EGCG and catechin) can interfere with FAK activation  
178 and the turnover of FA-like complexes.

179

180 ***The anti-invasion effects of CAPE and resveratrol are largely attributable to FAK***  
181 ***inhibition***

182 Previously, the importance of FAK as a mediator of host cell invasion by UPEC was  
183 demonstrated using FAK-null (FAK<sup>-/-</sup>) mouse embryonic fibroblasts (MEFs) and siRNA  
184 with BECs (83). Building on this work, we treated BECs with a pharmacological inhibitor  
185 of FAK (FAK inhibitor 14, FAK14), which selectively blocks autophosphorylation of Y397  
186 (92). We found that the treatment of BECs with FAK14 markedly reduced UTI89  
187 internalization, but did not significantly alter the levels host cell-associated bacteria (**Fig.**  
188 **5A-B**) nor bacterial viability in the culture medium (**Fig. S1**). These results echo those  
189 obtained using CAPE-, resveratrol-, and, to a lesser extent, EGCG-treated BECs (**Fig.**  
190 **1B-C**).

191 Because CAPE and other phenolics can alter the phosphorylation patterns of  
192 multiple host factors (see **Fig. 3A**, e.g. (93-101)), we reasoned that the inhibitory effects  
193 of CAPE and resveratrol on UPEC invasion may not be entirely attributable to FAK  
194 inactivation. To address this possibility, we employed wild-type (FAK<sup>+/+</sup>) and FAK-null  
195 MEFs in combination with CAPE and resveratrol. As expected, UTI89 entry into the

196 FAK-null MEFs was greatly impaired, though the bacteria bound the wild-type and FAK-  
197 *-* host cells at similar levels (**Fig. 5C-D**). Treatment of the wild-type MEFs with either  
198 CAPE or resveratrol mirrored the effects seen with BECs (see **Fig. 1B-C**), suppressing  
199 host cell invasion by UTI89 while causing no significant changes in the total numbers of  
200 host cell-associated bacteria (**Fig. 5E-F**). Next, we asked if CAPE or resveratrol could  
201 also suppress UTI89 entry into FAK-null MEFs, which are already by and large  
202 refractory to host cell invasion by this pathogen (see **Fig. 1C**). Treatment of the FAK-  
203 null MEFs with CAPE led to somewhat reduced numbers of both bound and internalized  
204 bacteria, but these effects were not significant in comparison with DMSO-treated  
205 controls (**Fig. 5G-H**). In contrast, resveratrol significantly inhibited UTI89 entry into the  
206 FAK-null MEFs without altering the total numbers of bound bacteria. In total, these  
207 results indicate the ability of CAPE and resveratrol to obstruct host cell invasion by  
208 UPEC is mostly attributable to the inhibition of FAK. However, other as-yet undefined  
209 activities associated with these phenolics (and especially with resveratrol) can further  
210 suppress the invasion process independent of effects on FAK.

211

### 212 ***CAPE and resveratrol inhibit host cell entry by distinct intracellular pathogens***

213 Many microbial pathogens, in addition to UPEC, can invade non-phagocytic host cells  
214 via actin-dependent processes that are facilitated by FAK (88). To determine if CAPE,  
215 resveratrol, EGCG, or catechin affect host cell entry by other invasive pathogens, we  
216 employed our standard cell association and invasion assays with *Salmonella enterica*  
217 serovar Typhimurium, *Shigella flexneri*, and a non-pathogenic surrogate for *Yersinia*  
218 *pseudotuberculosis* (AAEC185/pRI203). The latter is a type 1 pilus-negative K-12 *E. coli*

219 strain that expresses the *Y. pseudotuberculosis* invasin protein, which promotes actin-  
220 and FAK-dependent host cell entry by binding integrin receptors (102, 103). None of the  
221 tested phenolics significantly altered the numbers of host cell-associated  
222 AAEC185/pRI203, though the numbers of adherent bacteria recovered from EGCG-  
223 and catechin-treated host cells trended higher and had a greater spread (**Fig. 6A**). As  
224 seen with UTI89, CAPE, resveratrol, and, to a lesser extent, EGCG significantly  
225 impeded host cell invasion by AAEC185/pRI203 (**Fig. 6B**). Similar results were obtained  
226 with *S. flexneri* (**Fig. 6C-D**), which mobilizes multiple type III secretion system effectors  
227 that engage integrin receptors and associated host factors to promote FAK  
228 phosphorylation coordinate with actin rearrangements that drive bacterial internalization  
229 (104).

230 *S. Typhimurium* can also use type III effectors to enter host cells via FAK- and  
231 actin-dependent processes, but the *Salmonella* effectors are distinct from those  
232 encoded by *Shigella* (105). Furthermore, though *S. Typhimurium* entry into host cells  
233 requires FAK, the kinase domain which contains the activating phosphosite Y576 is  
234 dispensable for host cell invasion by this pathogen (105). In our assays, none of the  
235 tested phenolics altered the levels of host cell-bound *S. Typhimurium* (**Fig. 6E**), and  
236 only resveratrol inhibited host cell invasion (**Fig. 6F**). Together, these findings indicate  
237 that the ability of CAPE, resveratrol, and EGCG to impede host cell invasion can vary  
238 markedly, dependent on the pathogen and its specific mechanism of entry.

239

240 ***Resveratrol inhibits UPEC invasion of the murine bladder mucosa***

241 Next, we tested if resveratrol could interfere with UPEC invasion of host cells in an  
242 established mouse model of UTI (41, 51). For this initial *in vivo* work, we focused on  
243 resveratrol as it was much more soluble than CAPE in both DMSO and in aqueous  
244 solutions, and consequently less prone to precipitate out when introduced into the  
245 bladder (106). Adult female CBA/JCrHsd mice were inoculated via transurethral  
246 catheterization with  $\sim 10^7$  CFU of UTI89 in PBS containing 300  $\mu$ M resveratrol or just the  
247 carrier DMSO. After 1 h, the bladders were collected, rinsed, and treated with  
248 gentamicin to kill any extracellular bacteria. Over 25-fold fewer intracellular bacteria  
249 were recovered from the resveratrol-treated bladders relative to those treated with  
250 DMSO alone (**Fig. 7**). These results indicate that resveratrol has the capacity to  
251 effectively inhibit host cell invasion by UPEC within the murine bladder.

252

## 253 **DISCUSSION**

254 Results presented here show that the plant phenolics CAPE, resveratrol, and, to a  
255 lesser extent, EGCG can inhibit UPEC entry into BECs. These phenolics are similar to  
256 compounds derived from cranberry-associated PACs and other complex polyphenolic  
257 biomolecules like tannins, which are attributed with a variety of antimicrobial activities  
258 including bactericidal and anti-adhesion effects (55, 58, 72, 107-109). In our assays,  
259 none of the tested phenolics interfered with bacterial viability (**Fig. S1**), and only  
260 resveratrol had a noticeable (though slight) inhibitory effect on UPEC adherence to  
261 BECs (**Fig. 1B**). Furthermore, we found that host cell invasion by UPEC did not require  
262 *de novo* host transcription or translation, indicating that the inhibitory effects of CAPE,  
263 resveratrol, and EGCG are not related to the ability of these phenolics to interfere with

264 host transcription factors like NF- $\kappa$ B (**Fig. 2**). Rather, the more pronounced inhibitory  
265 effects of CAPE and resveratrol on UPEC entry into BECs were linked with the  
266 dysregulation of host actin dynamics via the suppression of FAK phosphorylation at  
267 Y576. The disruption of FAK signaling appears to be an effect of many plant-derived  
268 phenolic compounds (e.g. curcumin, enterolactone, glabridin (99-101, 110-114)), and  
269 may help explain some of the reported benefits of these molecules for the prevention or  
270 treatment of infections, cancers, and other ailments.

271           Extracts from a variety of medicinal plants, including *Citrus reticulata* Blanco  
272 (mandarin seeds), *Amaranthus caudatus* (a flowering plant that thrives in temperate-  
273 tropical areas), *Clinopodium bolivianum* (an aromatic shrub from the Andes region of  
274 South America), and *Lactuca indica* (Vietnamese dandelion) have been shown to inhibit  
275 both UPEC adherence to and invasion of bladder cells *in vitro* (115-118). Like  
276 cranberry, these plants are rich in phenolic compounds (117, 119-122), but the specific  
277 extract components that inhibit UPEC entry into BECs were not defined.  
278 Mechanistically, these extracts did not have any direct antibacterial activities and  
279 instead appeared to interfere with the invasion process by downregulating host cell  
280 receptors for type 1 pili or by suppressing downstream cell signaling events (115-118).

281           In the case of *L. indica* extract, the inhibition of BEC invasion by UPEC was  
282 partially attributable to the attenuation of FAK phosphorylation at Y397 (118). The  
283 autophosphorylation of this site, as noted above, is a proximal step leading to the  
284 recruitment of other signaling factors like PI3K and Src kinase that precede full  
285 activation of FAK and the instigation of FAK-modulated actin cytoskeletal  
286 rearrangements (87). In our assays, the effects of CAPE and resveratrol on the

287 phosphorylation of FAK(Y397) were much less pronounced than those observed with  
288 FAK(Y576) (see **Fig. 3**), suggesting that these two phenolic compounds act further  
289 downstream in the FAK activation pathway than *L. indica* extract. Our experiments with  
290 FAK-null cells confirm that FAK is a major, though likely not the sole, host cell target  
291 that explains the inhibitory effects of CAPE and resveratrol on BEC invasion by UPEC  
292 (**Fig. 5**). This conclusion is corroborated by observations showing that CAPE and  
293 resveratrol treatments both lead to marked increases in the numbers of FAs, coordinate  
294 with alterations in the actin cytoskeleton (see **Fig. 4**).

295 Our observations with *S. Typhimurium*, *S. flexneri*, and recombinant *E. coli*  
296 expressing the invasin protein from *Y. pseudotuberculosis* reveal that the anti-invasion  
297 effects of CAPE and, especially, resveratrol can extend beyond UPEC (see **Fig. 6**). Of  
298 note, FAK can modulate host cell entry by each of these microbes (102, 104, 105).  
299 However, the differential effects of CAPE and resveratrol on host cell entry by a  
300 pathogen like *S. Typhimurium* (see **Fig. 6F**) suggest that these phenolics can have  
301 additional, non-overlapping effects on host cell processes that promote invasion,  
302 independent of FAK. This possibility is supported by multiple reports indicating that both  
303 CAPE and resveratrol can disrupt various host factors and signaling cascades that  
304 might directly or indirectly impact host cell invasion and intracellular trafficking by  
305 bacterial pathogens (e.g. (123-128)). The potential of plant-derived phenolic compounds  
306 to interfere with host cell invasion independent of effects on FAK is exemplified by  
307 luteolin, a secondary polyphenolic metabolite that is found in many fruits, vegetables,  
308 and medicinal herbs (129). Luteolin can limit UPEC entry into BECs by inhibiting host

309 cAMP-phosphodiesterases, which in turn interferes with actin rearrangements driven by  
310 the activation of Rac1 GTPase.

311         There is growing interest in the development of therapeutics that can ameliorate  
312 disease by targeting host factors that are hijacked by microbial pathogens rather than  
313 the pathogens themselves (130-132). If effective, such host-directed therapeutics are  
314 expected to help sidestep the growing challenge of antibiotic resistance. Results with  
315 resveratrol-treated mice (**Fig. 7**) indicate that this phenolic, or compounds with similar  
316 activities, could be valuable therapeutic options that can deny UPEC refuge within host  
317 cells. Without the ability to hide within host cells, UPEC would be more susceptible to  
318 clearance by host defenses and antibiotic treatments that are often ineffective against  
319 intracellular microbes (16, 50). Phenolic compounds derived from cranberry, if able to  
320 act within the urinary tract in a similar fashion to resveratrol, could help explain the  
321 potentially beneficial effects of consuming cranberry products by some individuals who  
322 suffer from rUTI (32-34). The benefits of such phenolics could vary dependent on the  
323 cause, or source, of the rUTIs. These recurrent infections may arise via repeated  
324 inoculation of the urinary tract by pathogens acquired from environmental sources, from  
325 bacterial reservoirs within the gut, or from the resurgence of intracellular populations  
326 that can persist within the vaginal or bladder mucosa (21, 37-40). We speculate that  
327 inhibitors of UPEC invasion like CAPE and resveratrol might primarily aid the latter  
328 group, by interrupting cycles of intracellular persistence, growth, resurgence, and re-  
329 invasion of host cells within the genitourinary tract.

330         Though the use of resveratrol, CAPE, or functionally homologous compounds  
331 from cranberry or other sources as a means to combat UTI is an appealing notion, it



332 should be tempered with an appreciation of the many obstacles associated with such an  
333 approach. Instillation of phenolic compounds by intravesical catheterization is not facile  
334 nor cost-effective, and agents delivered in this manner may not remain soluble or might  
335 not effectively penetrate target host cells within the mucosa. Furthermore, timing of this  
336 treatment approach may be complicated if the compounds need to be present prior to  
337 invasion, or re-invasion, of the mucosa by UPEC. Oral administration of anti-invasion  
338 phenolic compounds faces similar challenges, in addition to potential problems with  
339 absorption and modification by metabolic processes and microbes within the gut (53,  
340 69, 133-135). Furthermore, the intake of very high amounts of plant-derived phenolics  
341 might have detrimental effects, such as iron depletion, liver and kidney toxicity, and  
342 irritation of the gastrointestinal tract (10, 12, 136-138). Despite these limitations, the  
343 work presented here highlights the potential therapeutic utility of plant-derived phenolic  
344 compounds as a means to inhibit host cell invasion by UPEC which, if optimized, could  
345 help disrupt cycles of rUTIs in some individuals.

## 346 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 347 Bacterial strains, cell culture, and inhibitors

348 The UPEC cystitis isolate UTI89 was grown statically from frozen stocks for 24 h at  
349 37°C in either LB (Difco) or modified M9 minimal medium to induce expression of type 1  
350 pili (6 g L<sup>-1</sup> Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 3 g L<sup>-1</sup> KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 0.5 g L<sup>-1</sup> NaCl, 0.1 mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 1 g L<sup>-1</sup> NH<sub>4</sub>Cl, 1  
351 mM MgSO<sub>4</sub>, 0.1% Glucose, 0.0025% nicotinic acid, 0.2% casein amino acids, and 16.5  
352 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> thiamine) (23, 38). *S. Typhimurium* (SL1344) and *S. flexneri* (ATCC 12022)  
353 were grown shaking at 37°C in LB overnight, then diluted 1:33 in fresh LB and grown for  
354 an additional 3.5 h, as previously described (139). AAEC185/pRI203 was grown  
355 shaking in LB to stationary phase prior to use (78, 140).

356 The bladder carcinoma cell line 5637 (ATCC HTB-9) was grown and maintained  
357 in RPMI1640 (HyClone) supplemented with 10% heat inactivated fetal bovine serum  
358 (FBS; HyClone) in a 37°C humidified incubator with 5% CO<sub>2</sub>. FAK +/+ (ATCC CRL-  
359 2645) and FAK -/- (ATCC CRL-2655) MEFs were grown and maintained in DMEM  
360 (HyClone) supplemented with 10% heat inactivated FBS.

361 FAK14 (a.k.a. Y15) was purchased from Cayman Chemical, while CAPE,  
362 resveratrol, EGCG, and catechin were from Sigma-Aldrich, Biomol, or Cayman  
363 Chemical. These compounds were prepared as 1000X stocks in DMSO. Actinomycin D  
364 and cycloheximide were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich and solubilized in ethanol.

365

### 366 Bacterial cell association and invasion assays

367 Bacterial host cell association and invasion assays were performed using established  
368 protocols (78, 141). Briefly, 5637 or MEF cells were seeded into 24-well tissue culture

369 plates and grown for about 24 h to near confluency. Where indicated, cell monolayers  
370 were treated with CAPE (100.7  $\mu$ M; 25  $\mu$ g/mL), resveratrol (100  $\mu$ M; 22.9  $\mu$ g/mL),  
371 EGCG (54.5  $\mu$ M; 25  $\mu$ g/mL), catechin (86.1  $\mu$ M; 25  $\mu$ g/mL), FAK14 (10  $\mu$ g/mL; 35  $\mu$ M),  
372 or DMSO (carrier, 0.1% final concentration) in complete media for 1 h prior to infection.  
373 Alternatively, host cells were treated with actinomycin D (5  $\mu$ g/mL), cycloheximide (26  
374  $\mu$ M), or an equal volume of ethanol (diluent) for 30 min prior to infection. Triplicate sets  
375 of host cells were then infected with UTI89 or AAEC185/pRI203 using an MOI of  
376 approximately 15, while an MOI of 100 was used with *S. flexneri* and *S. Typhimurium*.  
377 Plates were centrifuged at 600 X g for 5 min to accelerate and synchronize bacterial  
378 contact with the host cells. UTI89- and AAEC185/pRI203-infected monolayers were  
379 then incubated at 37°C in the continued presence of the compounds or carrier, washed  
380 4 times with PBS containing Mg<sup>+2</sup> and Ca<sup>+2</sup> (PBS<sup>+2</sup>), and lysed in PBS with 0.4% Triton-  
381 X 100. Serial dilutions of these lysates were plated on LB agar to determine numbers of  
382 cell-associated bacteria. Alternatively, sets of triplicate wells were washed twice with  
383 PBS<sup>+2</sup> and treated for 2 h with complete media containing gentamicin (100  $\mu$ g/mL) to kill  
384 extracellular bacteria. Subsequently, monolayers were washed 4 times with PBS<sup>+2</sup> and  
385 lysed and plated as noted above to quantify the numbers of surviving intracellular  
386 bacteria. Experiments with *S. Typhimurium* and *S. flexneri* used 30-min infection  
387 periods for the cell association assays, followed by 1-h incubations with gentamicin for  
388 the invasion assays. Results from the invasion assays were normalized by dividing the  
389 numbers of intracellular bacteria by the total number of cell-associated bacteria,  
390 accounting for any differences in host cell numbers. All assays were repeated at least 3  
391 times in triplicate.

392 Potential effects of the phenolic compounds and FAK14 on bacterial growth and  
393 viability were assessed by adding bacteria to complete RPMI media in 24-well plates  
394 using the same times and drug concentrations as used for the cell association assays,  
395 but in the absence of host cells. Bacterial titers were then determined by plating serial  
396 dilutions of the media on LB agar. These assays were independently repeated 3 times.

397

#### 398 Signal Transduction Protein Phospho-site Profiling

399 Sub-confluent 5637 BEC monolayers in 6-well plates were treated with CAPE (25  
400  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ) or DMSO alone for 1 h, infected with UTI89 (MOI~15), and centrifuged at 600 X  
401 g for 5 min. After an additional 15 min incubation at 37°C in the continued presence of  
402 CAPE or DMSO, wells were washed 3 times with PBS<sup>+</sup>, then lysed on ice with cold  
403 buffer containing 50 mM Tris (pH 7.4), 1 mM NaCl, 1% NP-40, complete protease  
404 inhibitor cocktail (Roche Applied Science), 1 mM PMSF, 1 mM NaF, 0.4 mM  
405 orthovanadate, 5  $\mu\text{M}$  leupeptin, and 1 mM aprotinin. Protein concentrations were  
406 determined using a BCA reagent system (Pierce). Lysates were diluted in 4X Kinexus  
407 sample buffer to a final concentration of 0.8  $\mu\text{g}/\mu\text{L}$  and shipped to Kinexus (Vancouver,  
408 Canada) for multi-immunoblotting analysis using the Kinetworks signal transduction  
409 protein phospho-site profiling service (KPSS 7.0 Profile).

410

#### 411 Western blot analysis

412 Nearly confluent BEC monolayers grown in 12-well plates were serum starved  
413 overnight, treated with the specified phenolic compounds or 0.1% DMSO alone for 1 h,  
414 and infected with UTI89 from M9 cultures using an MOI of about 25. The cell culture

415 media was not exchanged when adding either the compounds or during the infection  
416 process. After a 5-min spin at 600 X g, the plates were incubated for 15 min at 37°C,  
417 washed 3 times with PBS<sup>+2</sup>, and then lysed in ice-cold RIPA buffer supplemented  
418 complete protease inhibitor cocktail (Roche Applied Science), 1 mM PMSF, 1 mM NaF,  
419 and 0.4 mM orthovanadate. Equivalent protein amounts (as determined by BCA assays;  
420 Pierce) were resolved by SDS-PAGE, transferred to Immobilon PVDF-FL membrane  
421 (Millipore), and processed for western blot analysis using mouse anti-FAK antibody (BD  
422 Biosciences) or phosphosite-specific mouse anti-pFAK(Y397) (BD Biosciences) and  
423 rabbit anti-pFAK (Y576) (Upstate Biotechnology) primary antibodies, and horseradish  
424 peroxidase-conjugated secondary antibodies (78, 141, 142).

425

#### 426 Visualization and Quantification of Focal Adhesions

427 5637 BECs were seeded onto 12 mm diameter coverslips in 24-well plates and grown  
428 overnight until nearly confluent. Cells were treated with CAPE (25 µg/mL), resveratrol  
429 (22.9 µg/mL), EGCG (25 µg/mL), catechin (25 µg/mL), or DMSO (carrier, 0.1%) alone in  
430 complete RPMI media for 3 h, washed 3 times with PBS<sup>+2</sup>, and then fixed for 20 min  
431 with 3.7% paraformaldehyde dissolved in PBS. After 3 washes in PBS, cells were  
432 blocked and permeabilized using PBS containing 1% powdered milk, 3% bovine serum  
433 albumin, and 0.1% saponin. The cells were then labeled using primary mouse anti-  
434 vinculin antibody (1:100; Sigma-Aldrich) and donkey anti-mouse Alexa Fluor 555-  
435 conjugated secondary antibody (1:400; Abcam). F-actin and nuclei were stained using  
436 Oregon Green 488-conjugated phalloidin (1:200; ThermoFisher) and Hoechst (1:1000;

437 Sigma-Aldrich), respectively. Coverslips were mounted in FluorSave (Calbiochem) and  
438 imaged using a Nikon A1 series confocal microscope with NIS Elements software.

439 Quantitative analysis of vinculin-positive focal adhesions was performed as  
440 previously described, with slight modifications (91). Briefly, using the Fiji processing  
441 package with ImageJ software the background for each image of vinculin-stained cells  
442 was subtracted and local contrast enhanced using the CLAHE plugin (143). Next, a  
443 mathematical exponential was utilized via the Exp function to further reduce  
444 background, and brightness and contrast were adjusted automatically. A Gaussian filter  
445 was applied using the Log3D plugin with sigma X=1.5 and sigma Y=1.5. An automatic  
446 threshold function was then used to create binary images in which pixels were assigned  
447 to either a background or foreground signal. Particles (representing focal adhesions)  
448 within the binary images were enumerated and sized using the ANALYZE PARTICLES  
449 command in ImageJ, with the size parameter set at 14.5-infinity.

450

#### 451 Mouse Infections

452 Using established protocols approved by the University of Utah and Institutional Animal  
453 Care and Use Committee (IACUC), 8 to 9-week-old female CBA/JCrHsd mice (Harlan  
454 Laboratories) were inoculated via transurethral catheterization with  $10^7$  CFU of UTI89 in  
455 50  $\mu$ L PBS containing 300  $\mu$ M resveratrol or DMSO (144). Mice were sacrificed 1 h  
456 post-catheterization and the bladders were harvested aseptically, quadrisectioned, and  
457 incubated for 30 min at 37°C in PBS with gentamicin (100  $\mu$ g/mL) to kill extracellular  
458 bacteria. The bladder pieces were then washed 3 times with PBS and homogenized in  
459 PBS containing 0.025% Triton X-100. Serial dilutions of each homogenate were plated

460 on LB agar to determine numbers of intracellular bacteria. A total of 11 mice from two  
461 independent experiments were tested for each treatment.

462

### 463 Statistics

464 For the mouse experiments, data distribution normality (Gaussian) was not assumed.  
465 Mann–Whitney *U* tests and unpaired two-tailed Student’s *t* tests were performed using  
466 Prism 9.0.0 (GraphPad Software). *P* values of less than or equal to 0.05 were  
467 considered significant.

468

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477

### 478 **CONTRIBUTIONS**

479 Conceived and designed the studies: M.A.M., A.C.R., A.J.L., B.J.K., and D.S.E.  
480 Collected the data: A.C.R., A.J.L., A.A.M, B.J.K., D.S.E., T.A.J., J.L.S., and M.A.M. Data

481 analysis: A.C.R., A.J.L., M.A.M., and B.J.K. Created the figures: A.C.R. and M.A.M.

482 Wrote the paper: M.A.M., A.C.R, and A.J.L.

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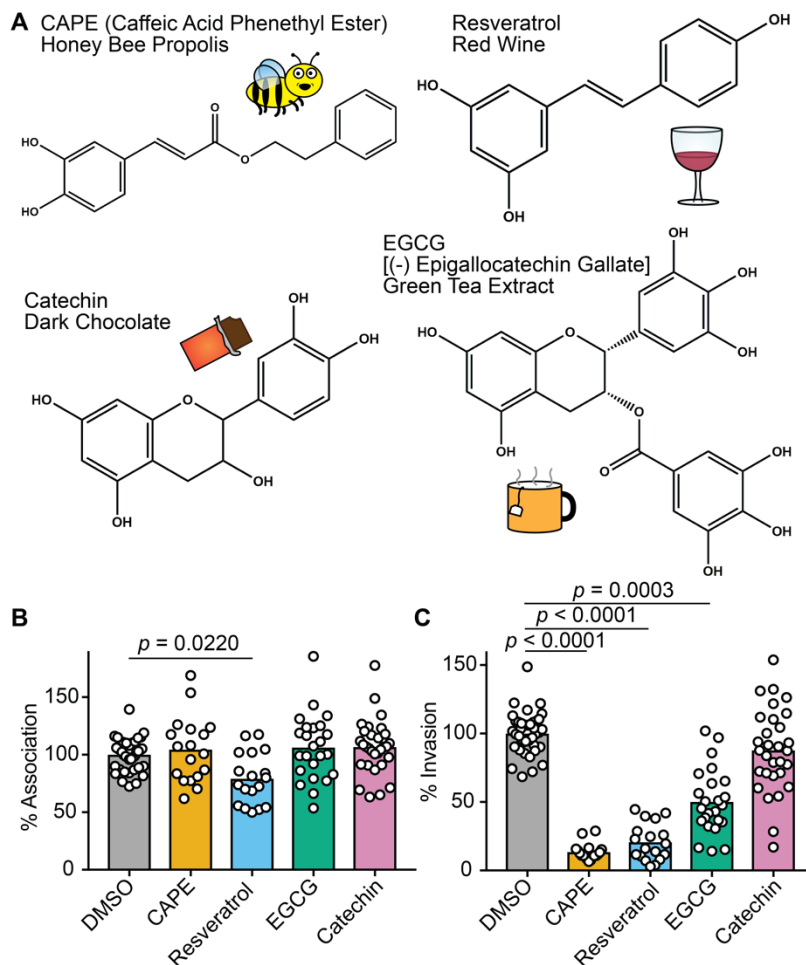
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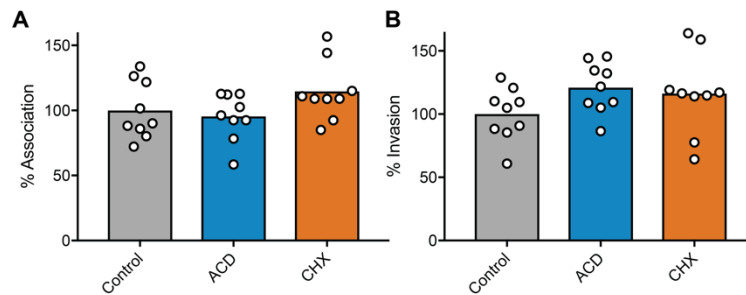
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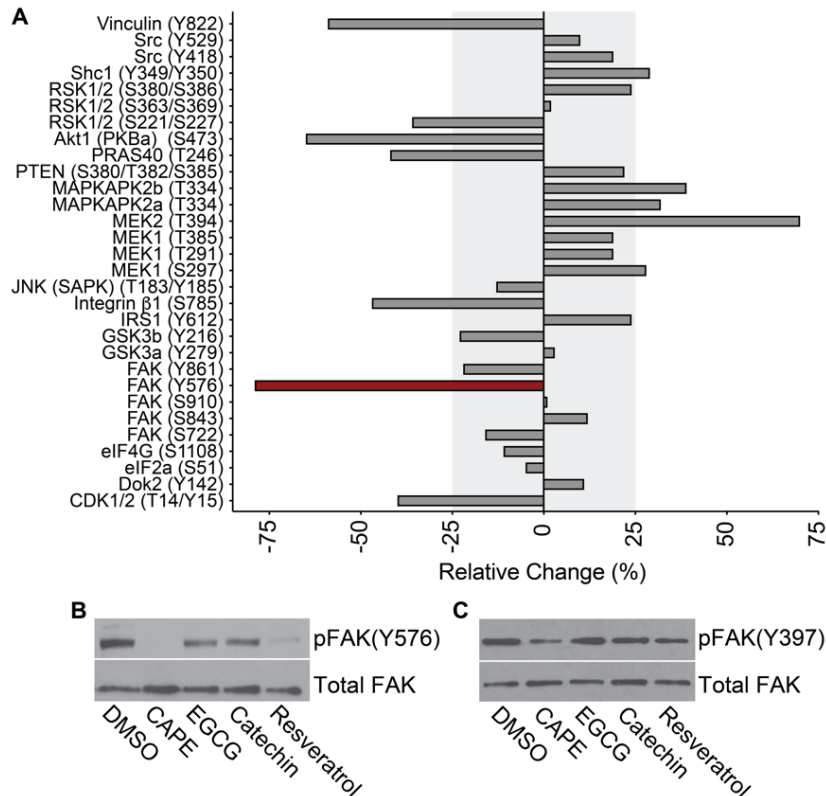
## Figures



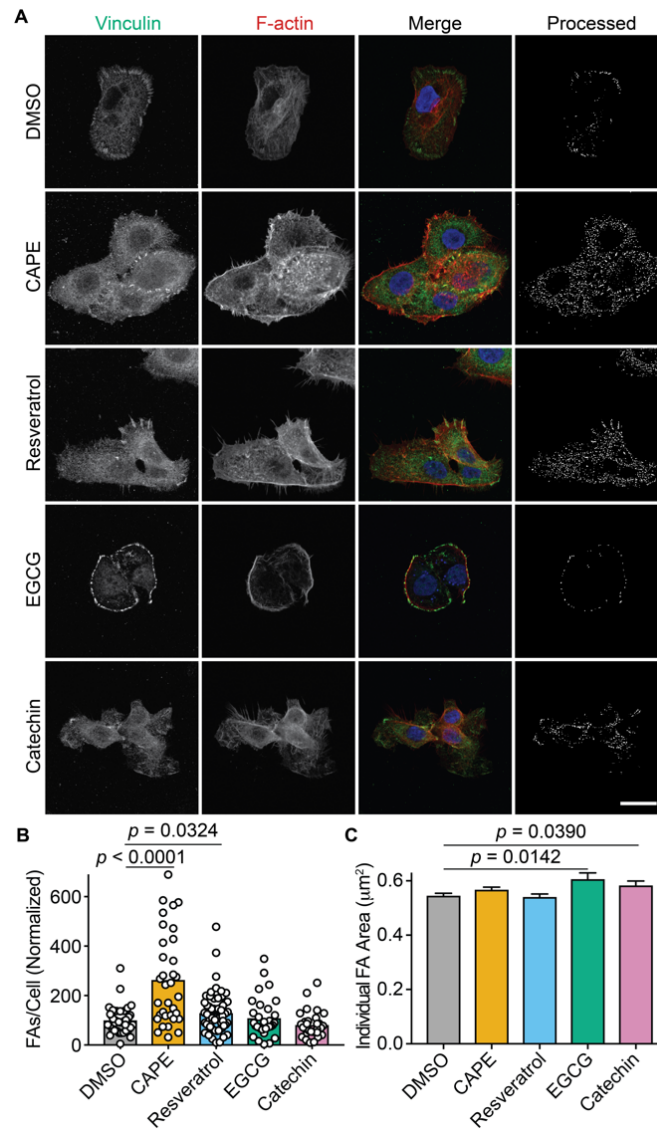
915 **Fig 1. Phenolic compounds can inhibit host cell invasion by UPEC.** (A) Skeletal  
916 structures of the phenolic compounds used in this study are depicted, with key dietary  
917 sources indicated via text and illustrations. (B and C) BECs were pretreated with CAPE  
918 (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), resveratrol (22.9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), EGCG (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), catechin (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), or carrier  
919 alone (0.1% DMSO) for 1 h prior to infection with UTI89. Cells were then incubated for  
920 2 h in the continued presence of the compounds, followed by a final 2-h incubation in  
921 medium containing gentamicin. Graphs indicate relative numbers of (B) cell-associated  
922 bacteria present prior to the addition of gentamicin and (C) intracellular, gentamicin-  
923 protected bacteria calculated as a fraction of the cell-associated bacteria. Data are  
924 normalized to DMSO-treated controls, with bars denoting mean values from at least  
925 three independent experiments performed in triplicate. *P* values were determined by  
926 Student's *t* tests.



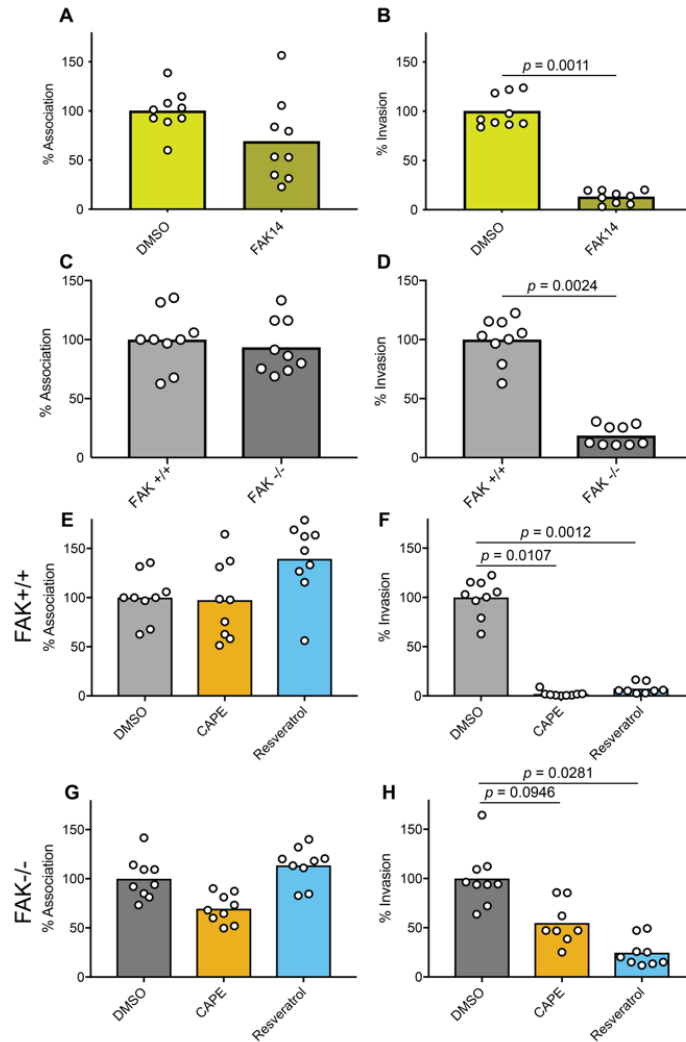
927 **Fig 2. Host cell invasion by UPEC does not require active host transcription or**  
928 **protein synthesis.** BECs were treated with actinomycin D (ACD, 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ),  
929 cycloheximide (CHX, 26  $\mu\text{M}$ ), or carrier (ethanol) alone for 30 min and then infected in  
930 the continued presence of the inhibitors with UTI89 for 2 h followed by a 2-h incubation  
931 in medium containing gentamicin. Graphs show levels of (A) host cell-associated  
932 bacteria and (B) intracellular, gentamicin-protected bacteria, with bars indicating mean  
933 values. Data from three independent experiments performed in triplicate are expressed  
934 relative to controls that were treated with carrier (EtOH) alone. *P* values, as calculated  
935 by Student's *t* tests, were all  $\geq 0.28$ .



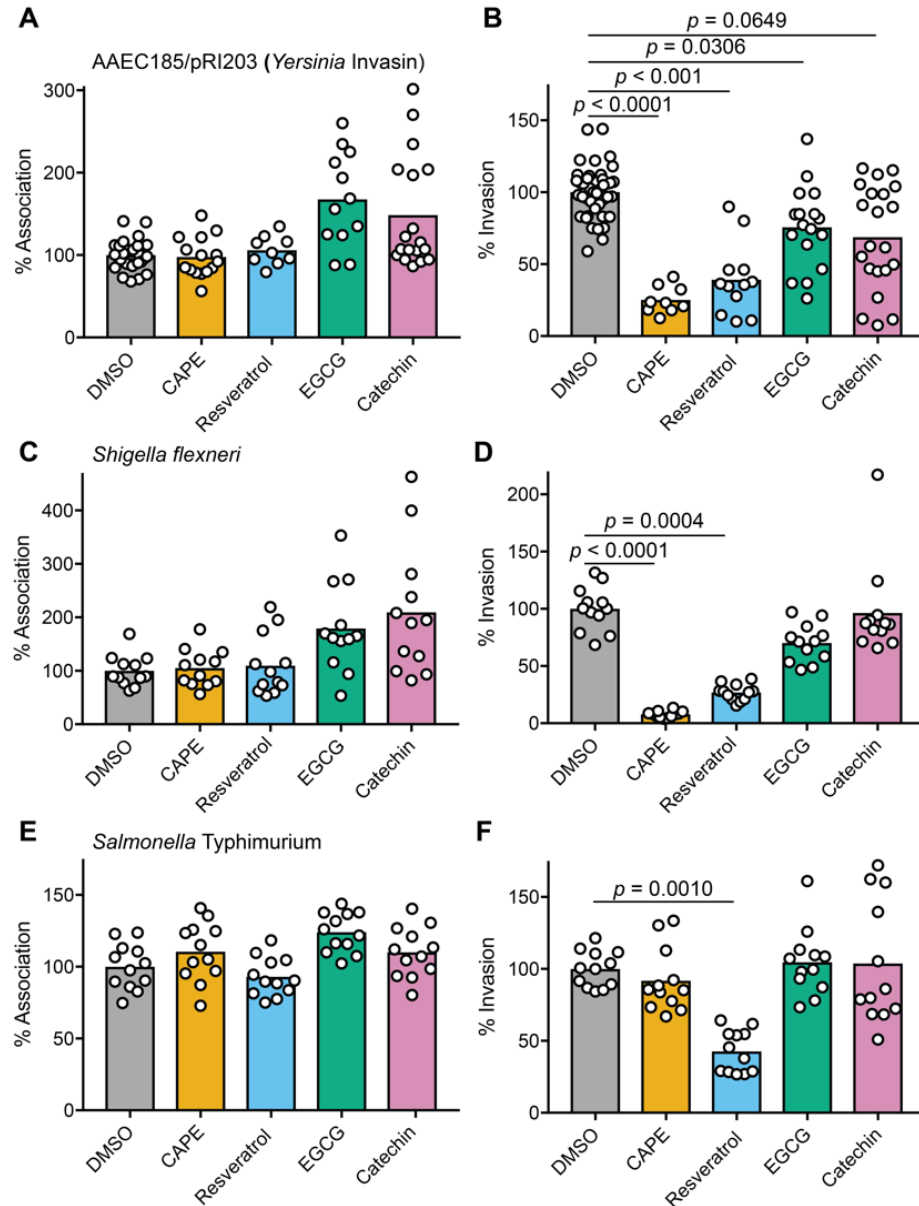
936 **Fig 3. CAPE and resveratrol ablate phosphorylation of FAK at Y576.** (A) Graph  
 937 shows results from a Kinetworks Phospho-Site screen (KPSS 7.0), in which  
 938 phosphorylation levels of each of the indicated residues (in parentheses) were  
 939 quantified in CAPE- and DMSO-treated BECs after a 15-min infection with UTI89.  
 940 Differences between samples are presented as percentages of the DMSO-treated,  
 941 UTI89-infected controls:  $[(\text{CAPE-treated} - \text{DMSO-treated})/\text{DMSO-treated} * 100]$ .  
 942 Shaded areas denote relative changes of 25% or less, and the red bar highlights  
 943 FAK(Y576) as the phospho-site most altered by CAPE treatment in this analysis (B and  
 944 C) BECs were treated with carrier alone (0.1% DMSO), CAPE (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), EGCG (25  
 945  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), catechin (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ), or resveratrol (22.9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ) for 1 h prior to a 15-min  
 946 infection with UTI89 in the continued presence of each reagent. BEC lysates were then  
 947 collected, resolved by SDS-PAGE, and probed by western blot analysis to assess (B)  
 948 pFAK(Y576) and (C) pFAK(Y397) levels relative to total FAK in each sample.



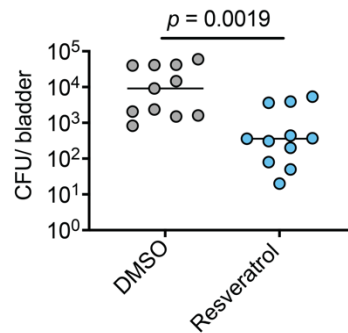
949 **Fig 4. CAPE and resveratrol increase focal adhesion numbers.** (A) Confocal  
 950 microscopy images of BECs that were treated for 3 h with carrier alone (DMSO), CAPE  
 951 (25 µg/mL), resveratrol (22.9 µg/mL), EGCG (25 µg/mL), or catechin (25 µg/mL), and  
 952 then fixed and stained for vinculin (green), F-actin (red), and nuclei (blue). Single  
 953 channel and merged images are indicated. The final panel in each row shows the cell  
 954 images after processing to highlight focal adhesions for quantification. Scale bar, 10 µm.  
 955 At least 30 cells from 3 independent experiments were processed to determine focal  
 956 adhesion (B) numbers and (C) areas following the indicated treatments. Bars denote  
 957 mean values ( $\pm$ SEM in C). *P* values were calculated relative to DMSO-treated controls  
 958 by Student's *t* tests.



959 **Fig 5. FAK inhibition and deletion mirror the effects of CAPE and resveratrol on**  
 960 **host cell invasion by UPEC. (A and B) BECs or (C-H) FAK<sup>+/+</sup> and FAK<sup>-/-</sup> MEFs were**  
 961 **treated with FAK14 (10  $\mu$ g/mL), CAPE (25  $\mu$ g/mL), resveratrol (22.9  $\mu$ g/mL), carrier**  
 962 **(DMSO) alone, or left untreated, as indicated, for 1 h prior to and during a 2-h infection**  
 963 **with UTI89. Monolayers were then washed and processed to determine total numbers**  
 964 **of host cell-associated bacteria or incubated for an additional 2-h period with gentamicin**  
 965 **to eradicate extracellular bacteria. Graphs show relative levels of (A, C, E, G) host cell-**  
 966 **associated bacteria and (B, D, F, H) intracellular, gentamicin-protected bacteria. Data**  
 967 **were normalized to DMSO-treated controls or to wild-type (FAK<sup>+/+</sup>) MEFs, as**  
 968 **applicable, with bars representing mean values from 3 independent experiments carried**  
 969 **out in triplicate. P values were determined by Student's *t* tests.**

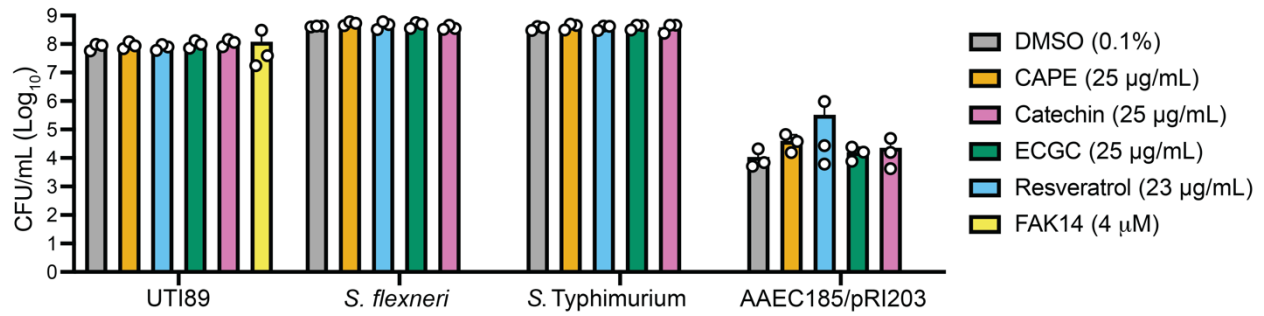


970 **Fig 6. CAPE and resveratrol can inhibit host cell entry by other invasive bacteria.**  
971 BECs were treated with the indicated phenolic compounds or DMSO alone for 1 h prior  
972 to infection with (A and B) AAEC185/pRI203, (C and D) *S. flexneri* (E and F), or *S.*  
973 *Typhimurium*. Monolayers were then incubated for 2 h in the continued presence of the  
974 compounds, followed by a 2-h incubation in the presence of gentamicin. Graphs show  
975 mean values of (A, C, E) cell-associated and (B, D, F) gentamicin-protected,  
976 intracellular bacteria from at least 3 independent experiments performed in triplicate.  
977 Data are expressed relative to DMSO-treated controls. *P* values were calculated using  
978 Student's *t* tests.



979 **Fig 7. Resveratrol inhibits bacterial invasion of the bladder mucosa.** Adult female  
980 CBA/JCrHsd mice were inoculated via trans-urethral catheterization with 10<sup>7</sup> CFU of  
981 UTI89 suspended in PBS containing either DMSO or resveratrol (300  $\mu$ M). Bladders  
982 were extracted 1 h later and the numbers of intracellular, gentamicin-protected bacteria  
983 were determined. Bars indicate median values; n=11 mice from two independent  
984 experiments. *P* value determined using the Mann-Whitney U test.





985 **Fig S1. Impact of the phenolic compounds and FAK14 on bacterial viability.**  
986 Bacteria were inoculated into 24-well plates containing complete RPMI medium ± the  
987 indicated drugs or DMSO (carrier alone), as described for the cell association and  
988 invasion assays but without host cells present. After 2-h incubations in a humidified CO<sub>2</sub>  
989 incubator at 37°C, bacterial titers were enumerated by plating serial dilutions. Bars  
990 indicate mean values from 3 independent assays (with SD).