## Supporting Information for

## **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

# Nobiletin and its derivatives overcome multidrug resistance (MDR) in cancer: total synthesis and discovery of potent MDR

## reversal agents

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#### Table of contents:

Section 1 Docking and molecular dynamics simulation methods	S2
Section 2 Cell viability assay, colony formation assay and animal models	S3
Section 3 <sup>1</sup> H NMR and <sup>13</sup> C NMR data for tested compounds	S5
Section 4 High-resolution mass spectra (HR-MS) data for tested compounds	S21
Section 5 Purity data of tested compounds	S38

#### Section 1 Docking and molecular dynamics simulation methods

The crystal structure of P-gp in complex with inhibitor QZ59-RRR (PDB ID 4M2S) was used for molecular docking. All of the residues in P-gp were protonated at pH 7.0. Partial charges of the atoms were assigned by the Sybyl force field. The protomol, which represents a set of molecular fragments to characterize the active site, was generated by a ligand-based approach, and the bound ligand was utilized for protomol generation. The proto-thresh and proto-bloat parameters represented how much the protomol could be buried within the protein and how far the protomol extended outside the cavity, respectively, which were assigned by the default values 0.5 and 0. For the reliability of the molecular docking method, the bound inhibitor QZ59-RRR was redocked back to the protein and the results showed an average RMSD of <1.5 Å between the docking poses and the ZQ59-RRR conformation in the crystal structure.

MD simulations were then applied for a more precise prediction of binding patterns using AMBER 14. Amber99SB force field and general amber force field (GAFF) were assigned for ligands and P-gp, respectively. The protonation states of each amino acid were set depending on an overall pH of 7.0. The systems of **29d**-(P-gp) and NOB-(P-gp) were solvated in an 8 Å TIP3P water box in the form of a truncated octahedron, and Cl- was added for electric neutrality. After energy minimization and heating in the NPT ensemble from 10 to 300 K over 25 ps, the systems were subjected to 8 ns MD simulations in the NPT ensemble with a constant pressure of 1 atm and temperature of 300 K in periodic boundary conditions. An 8 Å cutoff was assigned for long-range electrostatic interactions with particle mesh Ewald (PME) method. The time step was set to 2 fs with the SHAKE algorithm applied to bonds involving hydrogen atoms. Binding free energies of **29d** and NOB with P-gp were calculated using MM-PBSA method by extracting 100 snapshots of the last 1 ns trajectory with default parameters assigned.

#### Section 2 Cell viability assay, colony formation assay and animal models

1. Cell viability assay, colony formation assay

The degree of resistance was estimated by cytotoxicity using the sulforhodamine B (SRB) assay and by colony formation assay<sup>1</sup> for HCT8 human intestinal cancer cells, A549 human nonsmall cell lung cancer (NSCLC) cells and paclitaxel (PTX)-resistant cell lines HCT8/T and A549/T (KeyGen Biotech Co., Ltd., Nanjing, China). RPMI-1640 medium supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (GIBCO, Paisley, Scotland) was used for culturing cancer cells at 37 °C with a humidified 5% CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. To maintain drug resistance, PTX (0.94  $\mu$ mol/L for A2780/T and 0.24  $\mu$ mol/L for A549/T) was added to the culture medium. The reversal of resistance was defined as a ratio of the IC<sub>50</sub> values for the PTX cells without and with test compound (10  $\mu$ mol/L).

2. Apoptosis detection and cell cycle analysis

Flow cytometry analyses were performed to define the cell cycle distribution after treatment<sup>7</sup>. HCT8/T cells were harvested after 24 h of treatment and washed twice with ice-cold PBS, then fixed and permeabilized with 70% ice-cold ethanol overnight at 4 °C or 2 h at -20 °C. The cells were stained by a solution containing PI (20 µg/mL), RNase A (200 µg/mL) and 0.1% Triton X-100 (Sigma Aldrich) in PBS for 30 min at room temperature before analysis by a BD FACS Aria flow cytometer (BD Biosciences, San Jose, USA) with FlowJo software.

For the cell apoptosis assay, cells were collected, washed and suspended in 100  $\mu$ L of binding buffer (10 mmol/L *N*-2-hydroxyethylpiperazine-*N*-2-ethane sulfonic acid/NaOH, 140 mmol/L NaCl, 2.5 mmol/L CaCl<sub>2</sub>, pH 7.4). Apoptotic cells were identified by double supravital staining with 5  $\mu$ L recombinant FITC (fluorescein isothiocyanate)-conjugated annexin-V and 5  $\mu$ L PI (50  $\mu$ g/mL) and analyzed by a BD FACSAria flow cytometer with FlowJo software.

3. Xenograft model establishment

All animal studies were approved by the Animal Care and Use Committee at Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine (China, No #ZYYL20150807). Tumor-bearing mice were randomized into nine groups (n = 6): control group, 15 mg/kg PTX group, 50 mg/kg NOB group, 50 mg/kg **13** group, 50 mg/kg **29d** group, 50 mg/kg NOB + 15 mg/kg PTX group, 25 mg/kg **13** + 15 mg/kg PTX group, 50 mg/kg **13** + 15 mg/kg PTX group, 25 mg/kg **29d** + 15 mg/kg PTX group, and 50 mg/kg **29d** + 15 mg/kg PTX group. The mixture of  $5 \times 10^6$  A549/T cells was resuspended in 50 µL of RPMI 1640 medium and 50 µL of matrigel was injected into the armpits of the right forepaws of 8-week-old nude mice. Five days later, the mice with tumor formation were given intraperitoneal injection (i.p.) every 3 days. The tumor volume was monitored every 3 days and calculated using the following equation:

volume =  $(width^2 \times length)/2$ . On day 30, all nude mice were sacrificed, and the tumors were excised and then weighed using an electronic balance.

#### 4. Western blotting

The total cellular samples were harvested and rinsed twice with ice-cold PBS buffer. After lysis, the protein expression levels of P-gp, NRF2, ERK and AKT, as well as their phosphorylation levels, were measured in A2780 or A2780/T cells in the absence or presence of NOB and its derivatives by Western blotting, as described previously<sup>1</sup>.

#### 5. LC-MS/MS analysis

Tumor fractions were homogenized in PBS solution and extracted with 3 volumes of methanol. After centrifugation, the supernatant was analyzed with an Agilent 6460 Triple Quadrupole LC/MS System (Agilent Technologies, Inc., USA) equipped with a Waters ACQUITY UPLC<sup>®</sup> HSS T3 C18 column (1.8  $\mu$ m, 100 mm × 2.1 mm; Part No.186003539, Waters, Ireland). A linear gradient mobile phase composed of 0.1% aqueous formic acid (A) and 0.1% formic acid in acetonitrile (B) was optimized according to the following gradient program: 0–2 min (40% B); 2–8 min (40%–74% B); 8–8.5 min (74%–40% B). The injection volume was 10  $\mu$ L, and the flow rate was 0.35 mL/min. MS parameters were as follows: capillary voltage, 4000 V; fragmentation voltage, 150 V; drying gas, 10 L/min; drying gas temperature, 325 °C; nebulizer gas pressure, 40 psi; dwell time, 200 ms. Multiple reaction monitoring (MRM) was used for detection with the parent ion/product ion (*m*/*z*) for PTX at 876.9/308.1 (CE 25 V), docetaxel (DOX, internal standard) at 830.3/304.1 (CE 20 V), **29d** at 473.2/72.1 (CE 18 V) and NOB at 402.9/372.9 (CE 25 V). All UPLC–MS data were obtained by Agilent ChemStation Software (v6.03).

#### 6. Statistical analysis

All data were repeated in a minimum of three separate experiments, and the data were presented as the mean  $\pm$  SEM. *P* values were calculated using Student's *t*-test or one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by one-way ANOVA using GraphPad Software 6.0 (GraphPad Software, Inc., San Diego, USA). *P* < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

#### Reference:

1. Wen Y, Zhao RQ, Gupta P, Fan YF, Zhang YK, Huang ZG, et al. The epigallocatechin gallate derivative Y-6 reverses drug resistance mediated by the ABCB1 transporter both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. *Acta Pharm Sin B* 2019;**9**:316-323.



## Section 3 <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>C NMR data for tested compounds















## **S**12

















#### Section 4 High-resolution mass spectra (HR-MS) data for tested compounds







Elmt	Val.	Min	Max	Elmt	Val.	Min	Max	Elmt	Val.	Min	Max	Elmt	Val.	Min	Max	Use Adduct
Н	1	8	32	С	4	0	22	Si	4	0	0	K	1	0	0	Н
2H	1	0	0	Ν	3	0	0	Р	3	0	0	Se	2	0	0	
3H	1	0	0	0	2	0	10	S	2	0	0	Br	1	0	0	
В	3	0	0	F	1	0	0	CI	1	0	1	I I	3	0	0	
Error Margin (ppm): 50 HC Ratio: unlimited Max Isotopes: all MSn Iso RI (%): 75.00 BE Range: -50.0 - 50.0 Apply N Rule: yes Isotope RI (%): 1.00 MSn Logic Mode: AND						)		Electro Use MS Isotop Max R	n lons: in Info: e Res: esults:	both no 10000 500	D					

Event#: 1 MS(E+) Ret. Time : 0.947 Scan# : 143





C22 H24 O9 [M+H]+ : Predicted region for 433.1493 m/z







Measured region for 373.1285 m/z



C20 H21 O7 M+ : Predicted region for 373.1282 m/z

































Measured region for 373.1275 m/z



C20 H20 O7 [M+H]+ : Predicted region for 373.1282 m/z













#### Measured region for 444.2019 m/z



C24 H29 N O7 [M+H]+ : Predicted region for 444.2017 m/z





Event#: 1 MS(E+) Ret. Time : 0.947 Scan# : 143



Measured region for 460.1966 m/z









### Section 5 Purity data of tested compounds

SHIMADZU LC-20AT (column, Hypersil BDS C18, 5.0  $\mu$ m, 150 mm ×4.6 mm (Elite); detector, SPD-20A UV/Vis detector, UV detection at 254 nm; elution, MeOH in water (80%,  $\nu/\nu$ ); T = 25 °C; flow rate = 1.0 mL/min).





Peak#	Retention time (min)	Peak area	Peak height	Peak area%
1	3.035	11910155	1385792	99.8167
2	3.563	21872	2725	0.1833

Purity: 99.8%





Purity: 98.8%





Peak#	Retention time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak area%
1	1.985	524440	138566	2.9658
2	2.816	17158713	1600144	97.0342

Purity: 97.0%





**Purity: 99.9%** 





Peak#	Retention time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak area%
1	3.133	31094	2688	0.2226
2	4.161	13885159	1390251	99.3919
3	5.043	53865	4839	3.046

**Purity: 99.4%** 





Purity: 99.4%





**Purity: 96.9%** 



23b



Purity: 99.4%







**Purity: 99.4%** 





Purity: 97.7%





Purity: 98.3%





**Purity: 99.0%** 





Purity: 98.4%







Peak#	Retention time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak area%
1	2.300	118554	8306	0.6820
2	2.823	17042033	1504978	98.0308
3	3.470	223772	22138	2.259

**Purity: 98.0%** 





Purity: 97.1%