Therapeutic Potential of Wogonin: A Naturally Occurring Flavonoid

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ABSTRACT

The search for flavonoids with novel therapeutic effects has been intense. Wogonin, as a naturally existing monoflavonoid, has been shown to have therapeutic potential *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Methods for its extraction from herbs and its chemical synthesis have been developed. Pharmacokinetic studies have shown a rapid tissue distribution and prolonged plasma elimination phase of wogonin. It has been shown experimentally that wogonin exerts anti-oxidant activity, which may, in part, underlie its antiinflammatory, anti-cancer, antiviral and neuroprotective actions. The recent discovery of its anxiolytic activity suggests a new mechanism of action, involving interaction with the benzodiazepine (BZD) binding site of the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor and modulation of this receptor activity. Although the safety record of wogonin is remarkable and voluminous literature about its pharmacological effects is available, it has not been used in Western medicine in the form of a pure chemical. In this article we review its therapeutic effects, its sources and pharmacokinetic profile to highlight its therapeutic potential.

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