

Design, synthesis, anticancer evaluation, and molecular modeling studies of novel tolmetin derivatives as potential VEGFR-2 inhibitors and apoptosis inducers

Novel tolmetin derivatives **5a–f** to **8a–c** were designed, synthesized, and evaluated for antiproliferative activity by NCI (USA) against a panel of 60 tumor cell lines. The cytotoxic activity of the most active tolmetin derivatives **5b** and **5c** was examined against HL-60, HCT-15, and UO-31 tumor cell lines. Compound **5b** was found to be the most potent derivative against HL-60, HCT-15, and UO-31 cell lines with IC₅₀ values of 10.32 ± 0.55 , 6.62 ± 0.35 , and $7.69 \pm 0.41 \mu$ M, respectively. Molecular modeling studies of derivative **5b** towards the VEGFR-2 active site were performed. Compound **5b** displayed high inhibitory activity against VEGFR-2 (IC₅₀ = 0.20 μ M). It extremely reduced the HUVECs migration potential exhibiting deeply reduced wound healing patterns after 72 h. It induced apoptosis in HCT-15 cells (52.72-fold). This evidence was supported by an increase in the level of apoptotic caspases-3, -8, and -9 by 7.808-, 1.867-, and 7.622-fold, respectively. Compound **5b** possessed promising pharmacokinetic properties.