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Characterization of Two Acidic Polysaccharides Having Immunological Activities from the Root of Panax ginseng*

Masashi Томода, Kenji Такеда, Noriko Shimizu, Ryōko Gonda, Naoko Ōнака, Katsutoshi Такада and Keiko Hirabayashi

友田正司, 武田健治, 清水訓子, 権田良子, 大原直子, 高田勝利, 平林啓子

Two acidic polysaccharides, named ginsenan PA and ginsenan PB, were isolated from the root of *Panax ginseng* C. A. Meyer. They were homogeneous on electrophoresis and gel chromatography, and their molecular masses were estimated to be 1.6×10^5 and 5.5×10^4 , respectively. They are composed of L-arabinose: D-galactose: L-rhamnose: D-galacturonic acid: D-glucuronic acid in the molar ratios of 11:22:1:6:1 (ginsenan PA) and 3:7:2:8:1 (ginsenan PB), in addition to small amounts of O-acetyl groups. Almost all (ginsenan PA) and part (ginsenan PB) of the hexuronic acid residues exist as methyl esters. Reduction of carboxyl groups, methylation analysis, nuclear magnetic resonance and periodate oxidation studies indicated that their structural features include mainly both α -arabino- β -3,6-galactan type and rhamnogalacturonan type structural units. Both polysaccharides showed remarkable reticuloendothelial system-potentiating activity in a carbon clearance test, pronounced anti-complementary activity and alkaline phosphatase-inducing activity in a dose dependent manner.

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