

Polyphenols: Potential Future Arsenals in the Treatment of Diabetes

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Abstract: Diabetes mellitus (DM) is one of the most common endocrine metabolic disorders. In addition to exercise and diet, oral anti-diabetic drugs have been used as a part of the management strategy worldwide. Unfortunately, none of the conventional anti-diabetic drugs are without side effects, and these drugs pose an economic burden. Therefore, the investigation of novel anti-diabetic regimens is a major challenge for researchers, in which nature has been the primary resource for the discovery of potential therapeutics. Many plants have been shown to act as anti-diabetic agents, in which the main active constituents are believed to be polyphenols. Natural products containing high polyphenol levels can control carbohydrate metabolism by various mechanisms, such as protecting and restoring beta-cell integrity, enhancing insulin releasing activity, and increasing cellular glucose uptake. Blackberries, red grapes, apricots, eggplant and popular drinks such as coffee, cocoa and green tea are all rich in polyphenols, which may dampen insulin resistance and be natural alternatives in the treatment of diabetes. Therefore, the aim of this review is to report on the available anti-diabetic polyphenols (medicinal plants, fruits and vegetables), their mechanisms in the various pathways of DM and their correlations with DM. Additionally, this review emphasizes the types of polyphenols that could be potential future resources in the treatment of DM via either novel regimens or as supplementary agents.

Keywords: Diabetes mellitus, polyphenols, insulin resistance, glucose transport, gluconeogenesis.

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is one of the most common systemic metabolic disorders and is characterized by a high blood glucose level (hyperglycemia). It is associated with impairment in insulin secretion and/or insulin activity in target cells. Additional abnormalities in intermediary metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids and proteins are also commonly seen [1]. DM is the world's leading endocrine disease with an estimated 382 million people worldwide with diabetes in 2013, and this number is expected to reach as high as 592 million by the year 2035 [2]. Most diabetic patients live in low and middle income countries, and increased incidence is expected among those with poor income around the world especially in the next 22 years [2].

Both types [type 1 DM (T1DM) and type 2 DM] can cause serious health complications, including ketoacidosis, heart disease, kidney failure, blurred vision, itchiness, peripheral neuropathy, fatigue and even coma [3]. Usually, patients are diagnosed with diabetes when clinical signs such as excessive thirst, urination and hunger are detected [4].

Conventionally, DM is classified based on whether the patient is insulin dependent or independent [5]. Recently, some studies have classified DM and their etiopathogenetic mechanisms as (i) type 1A (auto-immune mediated), (ii) type 1B (idiopathic or non-auto-immune mediated), (iii) type 2 (insulin resistance), (iv) gestational (identified for the first time in pregnancy but generally characterized by insulin resistance) and (v) other specific etiologies (secondary to other diseases and recognized gene mutations) [6, 7]. Although the direct symptoms of T2DM may be insignificant and cause negligible interruption to activities of daily living, the complications that lead to impairment of vital organs may cause substantial morbidity and mortality. Hence, the treatment of this

universal threat is approached first with appropriate diet and exercise in addition to insulin treatment and oral hypoglycemic drugs (i.e., thiazolidines, biguanides, meglitinide analogs, sulfonylureas, D-phenylalanine and α -glucosidase inhibitors) [8].

Generally medications are needed for the patients who fail in preliminary therapy. Generally medications are needed for patients who fail the preliminary therapy.

However, no oral medication can be deemed the ideal treatment due to their side effect profiles, high costs and, sometimes, attenuation in response after prolonged use [9, 10]. For example, the highly utilised anti-diabetic drug metformin causes lactic acidosis, and general sickness with the use of alcohol while sulphonylurea generally causes hypoglycemia, skin rash or itching [11]. In addition, α -glucosidase inhibitors can lead to bloating and diarrhea [12] while meglitinides contribute to weight gain as well as hypoglycemia [13] whereas thiazolidinediones have direct effect on weight gain and risk of liver diseases [14].

To overcome these challenges associated with existing synthetic oral hypoglycemic agents, a search for novel targets or newer drugs is needed. Therefore, based on their traditional use, several phytoconstituents and phyto-products have become potential alternative sources for developing new antioxidant and anti-diabetic agents. It has been reported that there are approximately 200 pure compounds, including various types of polyphenols, isolated from plant sources with blood glucose lowering activity, fewer side effects and low costs [15].

Polyphenols are secondary metabolites that are generally involved in the defense against ultraviolet radiation or infection by pathogens [16]. From the beginning of the 21st century, epidemiological studies and associated meta-analyses strongly suggested that long-term consumption of diets rich in plant polyphenols offered some resistance against the development of diabetes, cancers, osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases and neurodegenerative diseases [17, 18]. The mechanisms of polyphenol and phenolic compounds in controlling blood glucose in diabetic patients include inhibition of glucose absorption, protection of pancreatic β -cell damage, im-

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provement of insulin release and sensitivity, diminution of inflammation, modulation of the carbohydrate metabolism pathway and regulation of insulin dependent and independent signaling pathways [15, 19, 20]. As a result, these polyphenolic compounds have gained scientific interest to more precisely and accurately investigate the mechanisms of their anti-diabetic effects. Therefore, the aim of this review is to accumulate all the available data on polyphenols as potential anti-diabetic agents from medicinal plants, fruits and vegetables with their respective mechanisms. These compounds may be a potential future resource in discovering novel regimens and/or developing existing synthetic anti-diabetic drugs with fewer or no side effects.

PATHOGENESIS OF DIABETES

Genetically susceptible individuals are the target of T1DM, and it is assumed to be triggered by viruses and one or more environmental agents. The genetic markers, immune markers and metabolic markers of T1DM individuals are detectable after birth, after the initiation of the autoimmune process and after the destruction of enough β -cells to be detected by sensitive tests [21]. Unfortunately, autoimmune destruction is rarely prevented by immunosuppressive drugs due to side effects. A meta-analysis of genome-wide association studies confirmed the association of genetic polymorphisms with the risk of T1DM [22-24]. T2DM is considered to be a more predominant form of diabetes. Recently, it has become well-known that the functional pancreatic β -cell mass decreases over time if glucolipotoxicity is left untreated, which further continues the progression of T2DM [25]. Despite insulin resistance and impaired insulin secretion, the following metabolic defects are crucial to the development of T2DM: (1) increased glucagon secretion and reduced incretin response; (2) expansion of subcutaneous adipose tissue, (3) hypo adiponectinemia; (4) inflammation of adipose tissue and (5) increased endogenous glucose production [26, 27]. Although the main metabolic defects of T2DM are present to some extent in most patients, this disorder is extremely diverse. Overeating, obesity, stress, smoking, high blood pressure, alcohol intake, increase in cortisol, abnormality in sex hormone secretion, physical inactivity, genetic factors, gestational diabetes, intrauterine growth restriction, aging, lifestyle changes and gut microbiota are considered responsible for the onset of the disease. Insulin resistance, which is largely caused by obesity and physical inactivity, both precedes and predicts T2DM, whereas impaired insulin action, at least in part, is genetically determined. Various susceptibility genes associated with T2DM have been identified that interact with environmental factors during gestation, early childhood and later in life [28-30].

POLYPHENOLS

Polyphenols, which are secondary metabolites of plants, are responsible mainly for the flavor and color of fruits and other plant products. They are present in fresh fruits and vegetables and found in various natural beverages such as red wines, teas and cocoa. Structurally, they are mainly divided into two types - flavonoids and non-flavonoids. Flavonoids are sub-divided into six classes: (i) flavonols (i.e., quercetin, myricetin and rutin), (ii) flavones (i.e., chrysin), (iii) isoflavones (i.e., genistein), (iv) flavanones (i.e., naringenin), (v) anthocyanidins (i.e., malvidin) and (vi) flavanols [i.e., catechin, epicatechin (EC) and epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG)]. The major non-flavonoids are phenolic acids, which are subdivided into derivatives of benzoic acid (gallic and protocatechuic acids) and derivatives of cinnamic acid (coumaric, caffeic and ferulic acids). Other non-flavonoids include stilbenes (*cis* and *trans* resveratrol), lignans (secoisolariciresinol) and tannins (i.e., ellagitannin) [31, 32].

Edible natural products (i.e., fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants) have long been considered a source of natural polyphenols. Dietary polyphenols were found to exert various biological protec-

tive activities against human diseases including Alzheimer's disease [33-36], various cancers [37-46], thalassemia [47-49], gastrointestinal diseases [50-53], cardiovascular diseases [54-57], infectious diseases [31, 58-60] and diabetes [61-66]. Due to its diverse biological activities, polyphenols are therefore believed to be a potential future resource in the development of therapeutic substances [65, 66]. Here, we discuss and highlight the most potential natural polyphenols that exert their effects in various pathogenic pathways of diabetes (Fig. 1); they can be expected to be an emerging source of anti-diabetic drug discovery and development.

Inhibition of α -Amylase and α -Glucosidase

α -amylase is a digestive enzyme found in saliva and pancreatic juice and is primarily responsible for the hydrolysis of the α -bonds of large α -linked polysaccharides (starch, glycogen and other glucose polymers), yielding glucose and maltose [67, 68]. α -glucosidase is a brush border enzyme located in the small intestine that acts on 1, 4- α bonds and breaks down starch and disaccharides to monosaccharides [69]. Usually, the products of these enzymes are absorbed by specific transporters in the small intestine [70].

In diabetic patients, the inhibition of carbohydrate catalytic digestive enzymes is considered an effective therapeutic tool that can significantly reduce postprandial blood glucose levels [71]. In addition to the use of currently available anti-diabetic drugs, many polyphenols containing medicinal herbs and plants have been recommended in the treatment of diabetes and can decrease particular adverse effects of conventional regimens (i.e., hypoglycemia at higher doses, hepatic problems, lactic acidosis and diarrhea).

McDougall and Stewart (2005) [72] reviewed the effects of polyphenols from berries on these digestive enzymes. They showed that anthocyanins and ellagitannins have the ability to inhibit α -glucosidase and α -amylase, respectively, which helps to reduce blood glucose levels after starch-rich meals (Fig. 1). An *in vitro* study showed that molecules with the ability to form quinones or lactones or substances with a 4-oxo-pyran structure induce an inhibiting effect on α -amylase activity [73]. Herbs containing rosmarinic acid as a main phenolic component have inhibitory effects on pancreatic amylase activity, and they have been used in traditional medicine for a long time to treat DM [74]. Quercetin, a flavonoid, inhibits intestinal α -glucosidase and reduces maltose-induced postprandial hyperglycemia in type 2 diabetes [75]. Another flavonoid, luteolin, which is more precisely known as citrus bioflavonoid, is reported to inhibit α -glucosidase and α -amylase, suggesting that it can suppress postprandial hyperglycemia in patients with non-insulin-dependent DM [76]. *Nerium indicum* extract contains the polyphenol compounds quercetin and catechins, which inhibit α -glucosidase and suppress the postprandial rise of blood glucose [77]. Various polyphenolic components of soft fruits such as *Fragaria ananassa*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Ribes nigrum*, and *Brassica oleracea* inhibit both α -amylase and α -glucosidase enzymes [78]. Mai et al. (2007) found positive correlations between the inhibitory effects of α -glucosidase and polyphenol contents of select Vietnamese edible plants [79].

Inhibition of Sodium-Dependent Glucose Transporters

Glucose transporters (GLUT) comprise a large group of membrane proteins that assist the intra-transportation of glucose through the plasma membranes of cells. Each GLUT isoform plays a precise role in glucose metabolism determined by its pattern of tissue expression, substrate specificity, transport kinetics and regulated expression in various physiological conditions [80]. Two classes of glucose carriers have been defined in mammalian cells: sodium dependent glucose transporters (SGLTs) and the facilitative GLUTs [81, 82]. SGLT1, SGLT2 and SGLT3 are major members of the SGLT family and are expressed in the intestine, trachea, kidney, heart, brain, testis, liver, thyroid, muscle and prostate [83]. They actively transport glucose from the lumen of the intestine or from

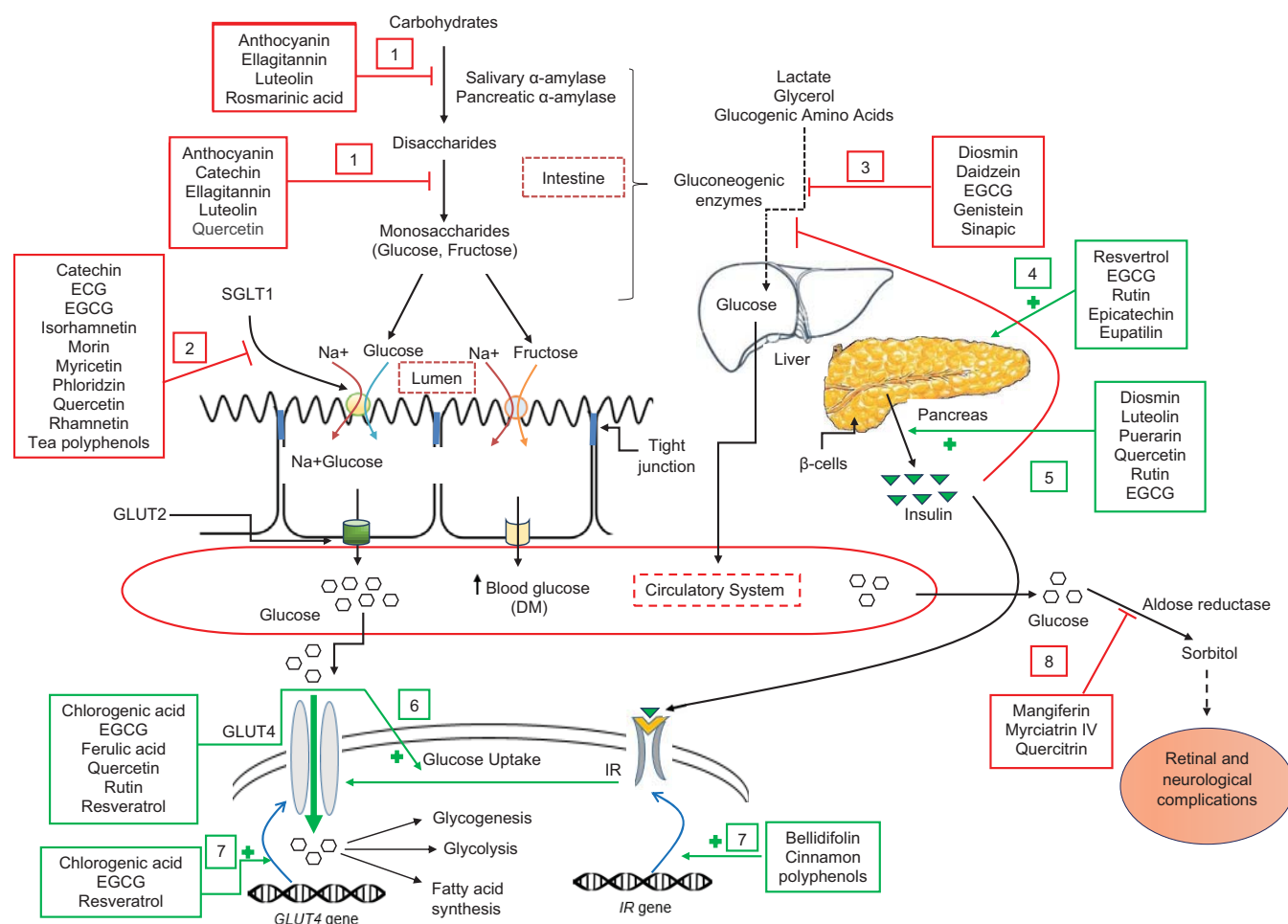


Fig. (1). Possible anti-diabetic treatment strategies with polyphenols. (1) Inhibition of alpha-amylase and alpha-glucosidase by anthocyanine, ellagitannin, luteolin, rosmarinic acid, and quercetin; (2) Inhibition of SGLT1 by catechin, ECG, EGCG, isorhamnetin, morin, myricetin, phloridzin, quercetin, rhamnetin and tea polyphenols; (3) Inhibition of gluconeogenic enzymes by diosmin, daidzein, EGCG, and sinapic; (4) Protection of β-cells by resveratrol, EGCG, rutin, epicatechin, and eupatilin; (5) Increase of insulin secretion by diosmin, luteolin, puerarin, quercetin, EGCG, and rutin; (6) Enhancement of glucose uptake through GLUT4 by chlorogenic acid, EGCG, ferulic acid, quercetin, rutin, and resveratrol; (7) Increase of GLUT4 and IR expression by chlorogenic acid, EGCG, resveratrol and bellidifolin, and cinnamon polyphenols; (8) Blockage of aldose reductase enzyme activity by mangiferin, myricitrin IV and quercitrin.

the other extra cellular spaces against its concentration gradient by coupling glucose uptake with that of sodium (Na^+), which is being transported down its concentration gradient. The Na^+ gradient is conserved by the active transport of Na^+ across the basolateral (anti-luminal) surface of the brush border cells by membrane-bound $\text{Na}^+\text{-K}^+$ ATPase [83, 84]. As these transporters play major roles in the regulation of plasma glucose levels, they can be targeted in the treatment of patients with DM.

Many studies of the treatment of diabetic patients have shown inhibition of these GLUTs by plant polyphenols (Fig. 1). For instance, by using rabbit intestinal brush-border membrane vesicles and by an electrophysiological method, Kobayashi *et al.* (2000) [85] showed that tea polyphenols reduce the blood glucose level by inhibiting intestinal glucose transporters (SGLT1). Welsch *et al.* (1989) [86] have reported that catechin, a major tea polyphenol derivative, has the ability to inhibit SGLT1. This inhibitory activity is most pronounced in polyphenols because of galloyl residues such as epicatechin gallate (ECG) and EGCG [85].

Another polyphenol, quercetin, is also reported to provoke an anti-diabetic effect by inhibiting glucose uptake at the level of the GLUTs [87]. To evaluate the effect of quercetin on Caco-2E intestinal cells, the study by Kwon *et al.* (2007) [88] reported that transportation of fructose and glucose by GLUT2 is strongly inhibited

by quercetin. Phloridzin, a phytochemical that belongs to a class of polyphenols found in the bark of pear (*Pyrus communis*), apple, cherry and other fruit trees (*Rosaceae*), has been reported to block intestinal SGLT1 [89]. Phloridzin also helps to excrete glucose into the urine by reducing the SGLT-mediated reabsorption of glucose in renal epithelial cells and to lower the blood glucose level in diabetic animal models [90]. Strobel *et al.* (2005) [91] showed that the flavonoids catechin-gallate, quercetin and myricetin inhibit the uptake of methylglucose (a substrate that enters the cells through the facilitative hexose transporter GLUT4) in insulin-stimulated rat adipocytes. Another important facilitative glucose transporter (GLUT1) is inhibited by genistein, quercetin, myricetin, morin, rhamnetin and isorhamnetin via a direct interaction with this membrane protein [92, 93].

Generally, insulin motivates glucose transport in adipocytes through a mechanism involving the translocation of GLUT4, in which tyrosine phosphorylation plays a crucial role in the signal-transduction cascade [94]. However, genistein, quercetin, apigenin and kaempferol have been described as tyrosine kinase inhibitors in the concentration range of 0.7-100.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ [95]. Through these mechanisms, the above polyphenols directly or indirectly inhibit various glucose transporters and ultimately suppress the elevation of plasma glucose.

Inhibition of Gluconeogenic Enzymes

Gluconeogenic enzymes such as glucose-6-phosphatase (G6Pase) and fructose-1, 6-bisphosphatase (F1, 6-BPase), are involved in gluconeogenesis, an anabolic pathway in which glucose is synthesized from smaller and simpler non-carbohydrate carbon substrates (i.e., pyruvate, lactate or glycerol) [96]. The gluconeogenesis pathway is a potential therapeutic target in type 2 diabetes, in which glucose formation can be inhibited and glucose uptake can be stimulated by cells [97].

Polyphenols from various medicinal plants and herbs play vital roles in inhibiting several enzymes involved in glucose formation and exhibit potential anti-hyperglycemic effects (Fig. 1). A study showed that the administration of diosmin (flavone) for 45 days significantly lowered plasma glucose by increasing the activities of hepatic glycolytic enzymes and decreasing gluconeogenic enzymes (i.e., G6Pase and F1, 6-BPase) in streptozotocin-nicotinamide treated rats with anti-hyperglycemic properties [98]. Sinapic acid, a member of the phenylpropanoid family, possesses potential hyperglycemic effects through an increase in insulin production associated with a subsequent increase in the activity of hexokinase and a decrease in the activity of G6Pase and F1, 6-BPase [99]. Ong *et al.* [100] described that polyphenol-rich *Vernonia amygdalina* has anti-diabetic effects by suppressing an integral hepatic gluconeogenic enzyme G6Pase (40% inhibition) in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats. Tea catechins (i.e., epigallocatechin or EGC) and their effects on liver glucose metabolism have also been effectively studied in animal and cell culture models that showed decreased blood glucose levels and concomitant decreases in the effects of DM. For instance, EGCG decreased glucose production by inhibiting the expression of gluconeogenic enzymes [i.e., phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase (PEPCK) and G6Pase] [101, 102].

Similar to green tea, soy and soy isoflavones, genistein and daidzein supplementation (0.2 g/kg) have also been found to decrease blood glucose levels and reduce liver TG concentrations in a db/db mice model [103] and in non-obese diabetic mice [104]. Both studies were found to reduce G6Pase and PEPCK liver activities and increase glucokinase activities, suggesting that genistein and daidzein suppress liver glucose output. Studies have also shown that feeding a polyphenol rich fraction of *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn or *Phyllanthus emblica* Linn (colloquially known as Indian gooseberry or amla) (84 days) to alloxan-induced type I diabetic rats was effective in reducing the activity of G6Pase and glucokinase and increasing the levels of glycogen in the liver and skeletal muscles [105]. Many extracts of plants and vegetables also inhibit gluconeogenic enzymes and exhibit hypoglycemic effects; however, their mechanisms of action have not yet been revealed.

Enhancement of Pancreatic β -cell Protection

β -cells are unique cells in the pancreas. They are located in the islets of Langerhans. The main function of a β -cell is to produce, store and release the hormone insulin, which is responsible for controlling blood glucose levels [106]. During digestion, blood glucose starts to rise. At that time, β -cells of the pancreas control the rise of blood glucose by secreting stored insulin and simultaneously producing more. Glucose is transported into β -cells through facilitated diffusion of GLUT2. Intracellular glucose is converted to glucose-6-phosphate by glucokinase. Then, it is metabolized to ATP by phosphorylation, leading to the increase in the ATP/ADP ratio in the cells, causing inactivation of ATP-sensitive potassium channels on the cell membrane. As a result, cell membranes become depolarized. The voltage-gated calcium channels are opened. Calcium ions (Ca^{2+}) then enter into the cell. Increased Ca^{2+} concentration causes the release of insulin by exocytosis from existing storage granules [107-109].

DM occurs when β -cells of the pancreas are unable to meet insulin demands in the body due to the failure or destruction of the β -cell mass or increased insulin needs due to insulin resistance or

growth that are higher than the insulin producing capacity [110]. There are many reasons for the failure or destruction of the β -cells, including hyperglycemia, glucotoxicity, lipotoxicity, autoimmunity or inflammation, adipokines, islet amyloid, incretins and insulin resistance [106]. Researchers have confirmed that dietary polyphenols play an important role in preventing DM by protecting β -cells in islets (Fig. 1). Resveratrol and curcumin polyphenols are found in fruits (Table 1) and turmeric. In DM, they increase pancreatic β -cell function under both low and high blood glucose concentrations. Administration of either resveratrol or curcumin can lead to an increase in insulin secretion in mouse β -Min6 cells, as well as human islets. They enhanced intracellular levels of cAMP β -Min6, which is an important secondary messenger in the insulin secretion pathway. They also restore pancreatic β -cell function by inhibiting phosphodiesterase activity in pancreatic β -cells [111].

EGCG and rutin are able to remove glucotoxicity in rat insulin that is secreted from pancreatic β -cells (RIN m5F) [112]. When insulin secretion is suppressed by glucotoxicity in diabetic rats, both EGCG and rutin promote insulin secretion under high blood glucose concentrations. (-) Epicatechin regenerates functional β -cells in the islets of the pancreas in alloxan-induced diabetic rats [113]. Quercetin, a flavonoid antioxidant, prevents and protects β -cell damage in rat pancreas [114]. The eupatilina type of flavonoids isolated from *Artemisia princeps* Pampanini enhances hepatic glucose metabolism and pancreatic β -cell function in T2DM mice by maintaining β -cell integrity. Additionally, eupatiline supplementation for 6 weeks significantly decreased fasting blood glucose concentrations, hemoglobin A1c, plasma glucagon levels, hepatic G-6-pase and phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase activities and increased glucokinase activity in the liver, hepatic glycogen content, and plasma insulin and adiponectin levels [115].

Enhancing Insulin Secretion and Activity

Insulin is a peptide hormone that is produced by the β -cells in the pancreas. It regulates the metabolism of carbohydrates and fats by promoting the absorption of glucose from the blood to skeletal muscles, fat tissues, as well as inhibiting hepatic glucose production [116]. In normal physiological energy metabolism and functions, a sufficient amount of insulin secretion and its proper actions are essential. If there are any disturbances in carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism associated with absolute or relative deficiency in insulin secretion or action, DM arises as a consequence. However, polyphenols, the most abundant antioxidants in the diet and widespread constituents of fruits, vegetables, cereals, dry legumes, chocolate and beverages (i.e., tea, coffee or wine), display particular anti-diabetic properties by increasing insulin secretion and action (Fig. 1) [117].

Quercetin, a widely distributed flavonoid in nature, protects pancreatic β -cells against oxidative damage and conserves their integrity, which leads to insulin secretion [114]. Youl *et al.* (2010) [118] reported that quercetin is a potent flavonoid that can elevate insulin secretion in insulin secreting cell lines (INS-1) induced by glucose and Glibenclamide by ERK1/2 mediated pathway. Another study found that quercetin from sea buckthorn berries stimulates glucose metabolism by enhancing hepatic glucokinase activity and increases insulin release from β -cells by rising intra cytosolic calcium concentration [119]. Puerarin, an isoflavone extracted from the Chinese herb radix of *Pueraria lobata*, had protected against hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) induced rat pancreatic islet damage. It also inhibited H_2O_2 induced free radical production and increased catalase and superoxide dismutase (SOD) activities in the isolated pancreatic islets, which caused optimum secretion [120].

Rutin is a citrus flavonoid glycoside that is abundantly found in onions, apples, tea and red wine. It has shown the ability to scavenge free radicals and inhibit lipid peroxidation. Additionally, it has proved to prevent streptozotocin-induced oxidative stress and protects pancreatic β -cells, resulting in the augmentation of insulin

Table 1. Major anti-diabetic polyphenols in edible fruits and vegetables.

Polyphenols	Sources (Name)		Origins	References
	Scientific name	English name		
Fruits				
Anthocyanin	<i>Vacciniummyrtillus</i> L. <i>Chrysophyllumcainito</i> <i>Ficuscarica</i> L. <i>Prunuscerasus</i> <i>Reynosiajamaicensis</i> <i>Rubusrosifolius</i> <i>Rubusracemosus</i> <i>Kadsuracoccinea</i> <i>Prunusarmeniaca</i> L.	Bilberry Star apple Fig Sour cherry Blackberry Red raspberry Black raspberry Black tiger Apricot	Lithuania USA Israel Hungary Jamaica Jamaica Jamaica China France	[185-191]
Ellagitannin	<i>Punicagranatum</i> L. <i>Rubusrosifolius</i> <i>Rubusfruticosus</i> <i>Dovyalishebecarpa</i> <i>Fragariaananassa</i> <i>Hippophaerhamnoides</i>	Pomegranate Raspberry Blackberry Gooseberry Strawberry Sea buckthorn berry	Brazil Italy Italy Brazil Finland Finland	[192-195]
Luteolin	<i>Actinidiadeliciosa</i> <i>Psidiumguajava</i> <i>Oleaeuropaea</i> L.	Kiwi Guava Olive	Hungary China Turkey	[196-198]
Rosmarinic acids	<i>Citrus paradise</i> <i>Citrussinensis</i> <i>Citrus limon</i>	Grapefruit Orange Lemon	Hungary Greece Spain	[199]
Catechin	<i>Ribesuva-crispa</i> L. <i>Vitisvinifera</i> L. <i>Prunusarmeniaca</i> L. <i>Prunuspersica</i> <i>Prunusdomestica</i> <i>Prunusavium</i> <i>Vitisvinifera</i> <i>Diospyros kaki</i>	Gooseberry Black grape Apricot Peach Plum Sweet Cherry White Grape Persimmon	Netherlands Netherlands Netherlands Netherlands Bulgaria Bulgaria Bulgaria Japan	[200-202]
Quercetin	<i>Prunusarmeniaca</i> L. <i>Maluspumila</i> <i>Morus alba</i> <i>Sorbusaucuparia</i> <i>Amelanchieralnifolia</i>	Apricot Apple Mulberry Rowan Saskatoon berry	Pakistan Pakistan Pakistan Poland Canada	[203-205]
Resveratrol	<i>Vitisrotundifolia</i> <i>Fragariaananassa</i> <i>Vacciniummyrtillus</i> <i>Vacciniumvitis-idaea</i> <i>Citrus paradise</i>	Muscadine grapes Strawberry Bilberry Cowberry Grapefruit	Georgia USA Estonia Estonia Canada	[206-209]

(Table 1) Contd....

Polyphenols	Sources (Name)		Origins	References
	Scientific name	English name		
Rutin	<i>Prunusavium</i>	Sweet Cherry	Bulgaria	[210, 211]
	<i>Aronias</i> sp.	Aronia	Bulgaria	
	<i>Maluspumila</i>	Apple	Poland	
Diosmin	<i>Citrus limon</i>	Lemon	Spain	[212, 213]
	<i>citrus aurantifolia</i>	Lime	Japan	
Myricetin	<i>Maluspumila</i>	Apple	Pakistan	[203, 206]
	<i>Fragariaananassa</i>	Strawberry	Pakistan	
	<i>Prunusdomestica</i>	Plum	Pakistan	
	<i>Prunusarmeniaca</i> L.	Apricot	Pakistan	
	<i>Vitisrotundifolia</i>	Muscadine grapes	Georgia	
Vegetables				
Anthocyanin	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> cv. <i>Ayamurasaki</i>	Sweet potato	Japan	[214-218]
	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	French bean	India, USA	
	<i>Lactuca sativa</i> L.	Lettuce	Spain	
	<i>Solanummelongena</i>	Eggplant	USA	
	<i>Raphanussativus</i>	Red radish	USA	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i> f. <i>rubra</i>	Red cabbage	USA	
	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Red onion	Canada	
	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i> var. <i>violetto</i>	Purple asparagus	Canada	
	<i>Solanumtuberosum</i>	Red potato	Canada	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>	Purple cauliflower	Canada	
Quercetin	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Onion	India, Japan, Pakistan	[203, 218-224]
	<i>Moringaoleifera</i>	Indigenous vegetable	India	
	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	French bean	India	
	<i>Pisumsativum</i>	Peas	Pakistan	
	<i>Solanumlycopersicum</i>	Tomato	India, Turkey	
	<i>Anethumgraveolens</i>	Dill	Hungary	
	<i>Brassica napobrassica</i>	Swedish Turnip	Hungary	
	<i>Armoracia rusticana</i>	Horse radish	Hungary	
Myricetin	<i>Pisumsativum</i>	Peas	Pakistan	[203, 222-224]
	<i>Daucuscarota</i>	Carrot	Pakistan	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Cauliflower	Pakistan	
	<i>Spinaciaoleracea</i>	Spinach	Pakistan	
	<i>Brassica rapa</i>	Turnip	Pakistan	
	<i>Solanumlycopersicum</i>	Tomato	India, Turkey	
	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Onion	India	
	<i>Anethumgraveolens</i>	Dill	Hungary	
	<i>Apiumgraveolens</i> var. <i>dulce</i>	Celery	Hungary	
	<i>Brassica napobrassica</i>	Swedish Turnip	Hungary	

(Table 1) Contd....

Polyphenols	Sources (Name)		Origins	References
	Scientific name	English name		
Kaempferol	<i>Pisumsativum</i>	Peas	Pakistan	[203, 223]
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Cabbage	Pakistan	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Cauliflower	Pakistan	
	<i>Spinaciaoleracea</i>	Spinach	Pakistan	
	<i>Brassica rapa</i>	Turnip	Pakistan	
	<i>Solanumlycopersicum</i>	Tomato	Turkey	
	<i>Brassica napobrassica</i>	Swedish Turnip	Hungary	
	<i>Armoracia rusticana</i>	Horse radish	Hungary	
	<i>Brassica oleracea var. italica</i>	Broccoli	Hungary	
Rutin	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Onion	Switzerland	[210, 225, 226]
	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Red pepper	Bulgaria	
	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Asparagus	USA	
Caffeic acid	<i>Lactuca sativa</i> L.	Lettuce	Spain	[215, 227-231]
	<i>Brassica oleracea var. botrytis</i>	Cauliflower	China	
	<i>Solanummelongena</i>	Eggplant	Poland	
	<i>Lycopersumesculentum</i>	Tomato	Spain	
	<i>Cichoriumintybus</i>	Chicory	Italy	
	<i>Daucuscarota</i>	Carrot	UK	
	<i>Solanumtuberosum</i>	Potato	Germany	
Luteolin	<i>Brassica oleracea var. gongylodes</i>	Kohlrabi	Hungary	[224, 232]
	<i>Brassica oleracea var. capitata</i>	White cabbage	Hungary	
	<i>Spinaciaoleracea</i>	Spinach	Hungary	
	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	Pumpkin	Hungary	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Broccoli	Malaysia	
	<i>Capsicum annum</i>	Green chilli	Malaysia	
	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	French bean	Malaysia	
Catechins	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	Potato	Turkey	[233]
	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Onion	Turkey	
	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>	Spring onion	Turkey	
	<i>Raphanussativus</i>	Red radish	Turkey	
	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Red cabbage	Turkey	

secretion and reduction of blood glucose levels [121]. Srinivasan *et al.* (2012) [122] stated that diosmin (a flavonoid), which can be isolated from various plant sources and citrus fruits, lowers plasma glucose, and increases plasma insulin levels in diabetic rats by ameliorating streptozotocin- and nicotinamide-induced oxidative stress.

Another flavonoid, luteolin, which is widely distributed in various plants, such as *Thymus vulgaris*, *Chamomilla recutita*, *Cynara scolymus*, *Limonium sinuatum*, and *Reseda luteola* L., also showed anti-diabetic properties by increasing blood insulin levels [123]. Zarzuelo *et al.* (1996) [124] studied the hypoglycemic effect of luteolin, and they observed a significant decrease in glycemia levels (> 50%), a 2.5-fold increase in blood insulin levels and elevated pancreatic insulin and DNA content. Recently, luteolin was found to influence insulin action and production of adipokines/cytokines in adipocytes by activating the peroxisome proliferator-activated

receptor gamma (PPAR γ) pathway, suggesting its role in preventing insulin resistance and T2DM [125]. PPAR γ is one of the main regulatory proteins which is the target for the treatment of T2DM as it improves the sensitivity of insulin receptors (IRs). In addition, capsaicin and curcumin have some effects on PPAR γ with anti-diabetic activities [126]. Another study has demonstrated that gallic acid, a naturally abundant plant phenol from *Punica granatum* flower extract is responsible for activation of PPAR γ thus exerting its anti-diabetic actions [127]. A clinical study revealed that EGCG from *Camellia sinensis* (green tea) protects pancreatic β -cells from free-radical damage and increases insulin secretion [128]. According to the study by Lee *et al.* [129], polyphenols from *Fagopyrum tataricum* (buckwheat) improved glycemia by inducing β -cell regeneration and increasing insulin secretion in diabetic rats compared with controls.

Enhancement of Glucose Uptake

Enhancing peripheral glucose uptake in both insulin-sensitive and non-insulin-sensitive tissues is a major therapeutic approach to treat diabetes. The uptake of peripheral glucose is mediated by GLUT4, which can be found in insulin-responsive tissues, skeletal muscle, adipose tissues and the heart [130].

A study confirmed that the EGCG polyphenol isolated from *Camellia sinensis* (green tea) enhances glucose uptake in muscle [128]. Rutin and quercetin polyphenols isolated from *Fagopyrum tataricum* (buckwheat) enhance glucose uptake in insulin-resistant cells [129]. Chlorogenic acid, a polyphenol of *Coffea arabica* (coffee), increases the uptake of glucose by peripheral tissues (Fig. 1) [131]. Two plant phenolic compounds, namely chlorogenic and ferulic acids, stimulated glucose uptake with a comparable performance to those of metformin and thiazolidinedione, which are common oral hypoglycemic drugs [132]. Resveratrol increased glucose uptake in C2C12 skeletal muscle cells by activating the AMP-activated protein kinase pathway. If insulin is present, resveratrol stimulates the activity of insulin on glucose uptake via the AMP-activated protein kinase and PI3K-Akt signaling pathways. If insulin is absent, the activity of resveratrol on glucose uptake depends on 5' AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) activation only (i.e., without the involvement of the PI3K pathway) [133].

Production of IR and GLUT4

IR is a member of the tyrosine kinase receptor family, which is activated by insulin and plays a key role in the regulation of glucose homeostasis [134]. Insulin binds to IR in the cell membrane and

initiates an intracellular signaling cascade, which triggers translocation of GLUT4 vesicles to the membrane. Following integration into the cell membrane, GLUT4 transporters start to transport glucose into the cell [135]. Therefore, the expression of GLUT4, the main glucose transporter in adipose tissues and striated muscle (skeletal and cardiac), is important to delineate targets in the treatment of diabetes. Resveratrol again has demonstrated promising effects on glucose metabolism improvement by enhancing the capacity of muscle to transport glucose by increasing the expression of insulin-sensitive GLUT4 (Fig. 1) [136] and/or by increasing responsiveness to insulin [137]. A clinical study discovered that EGCG from green tea enhances glucose uptake in muscle and fat cells by influencing glucose GLUT4 expression [128]. A recent study by Ali *et al.* [138] reported that cocoa polyphenols reduced hyperinsulinemia and hyperglycemia by improving obesity and enhancing adiponectin secretion and GLUT4 expression in skeletal muscle.

In another study in db/db mice, chlorogenic acid increased the glucose transport in striated muscle tissue through GLUT4 translocation and decreased fasting blood glucose levels [139]. IR deficiency or dysfunction causes clinical manifestations, including diabetes and cancer [140, 141]. Some studies reported that polyphenols improve glucose and lipid profiles in people with T2DM by affecting the protein and mRNA levels of IR. For instance, Cao *et al.* (2007) [142] reported a novel finding that cinnamon polyphenols with procyanidin type-A polymers may increase the amount of IR β protein and IR mRNA levels in mouse 3T3-L1 adipocytes.

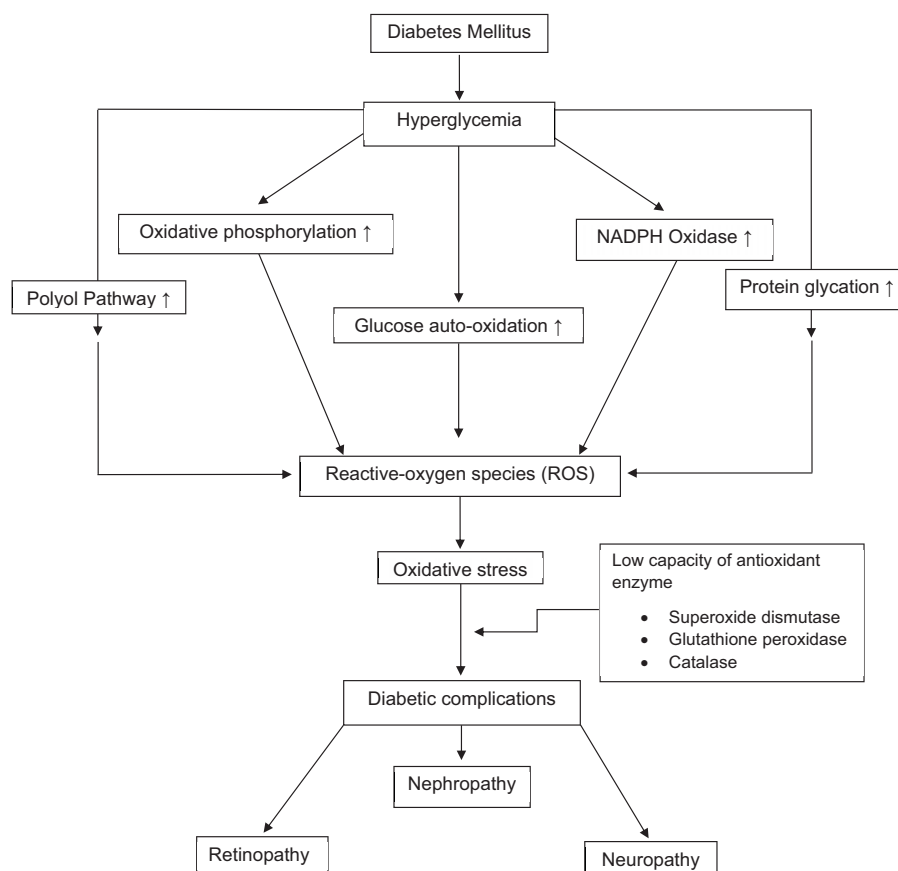


Fig. (2). Effect of oxidative stress on diabetic complications.

A type of legume, *Trigonella foenumgraecum* (fenugreek), which is broadly cultivated in India, North Africa and the Mediterranean was found to have hypoglycemic effects by slowing carbohydrate absorption, inhibiting glucose transport from the fiber content, and increasing erythrocyte IRs, and these effects were associated with the fiber, saponins, proteins and polyphenols of the plant [143, 144]. Further research should be conducted to isolate active components and more precisely explain the anti-diabetic mechanism. Another polyphenolic compound, bellidifolin (isolated from *Swertia chirata* and *Gentianella campestris*), demonstrated hypoglycemic activity through stimulating glucose uptake in streptozotocin (STZ)-induced diabetic rats expressing IRs [145, 146].

Inhibition of Aldose Reductase

Aldose reductase is the first enzyme in the polyol pathway. It catalyzes the reduction of glucose to sorbitol, which is the first step in the polyol pathway of glucose metabolism. It reduces toxic aldehydes and carbonyls and is an important factor in the pathogenesis of many diseases associated with DM, such as retinopathy [147], neuropathy [148], nephropathy [149] and cataract [150]. Therapeutic strategies involving inhibitors of aldose reductase have been proposed to prevent or ameliorate long-term diabetic complications.

Acylated flavanone glucoside myricitrin IV isolated from the leaves of *M. multiflora* inhibits rat lens aldose reductase (Fig. 1) [151]. Flavone derivatives such as quercitrin and quercitrin 2''-acetate are highly potent inhibitors of aldose reductase and can prevent diabetic cataracts [152]. Mangiferin was found to inhibit aldose reductase [153].

Reduction of Oxidative Stress

Oxidative stress is an imbalance between the production of reactive oxygen species (free radicals) and the ability of the body to detoxify their harmful effects through neutralization by antioxidants [154]. It is considered to be a potential contributor to the development of diabetes complications. Oxidative stress causes tissue damage in DM [154] and leads to many pathophysiological conditions in the body. Some of these include neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease [155] and Alzheimer's disease [156], gene mutations and cancers [157], nephropathy [158], atherosclerosis [159], retinopathy [160], myocardial injury [161] and inflammatory diseases [162]. A relationship has been established between hyperglycemia and oxidative stress in DM. Hyperglycemia promotes auto-oxidation of glucose and stimulates activity of NADPH oxidase, oxidative phosphorylation, protein, glycation and polyol pathway. All these mechanisms generate reactive-oxygen species. As a result, oxidative stress occurs, and oxidative stress is a major factor in the occurrence of DM (Fig. 2).

Antioxidants are effective in reducing oxidative stress, indicating that it may be beneficial to either ingest natural antioxidants or through dietary supplementation [163, 164]. Therefore, the supplementation of antioxidants in diabetic animals may reduce oxidative stress. Dietary polyphenols also act as antioxidants, and supplementation of these polyphenols might play a role in the treatment of diabetes. Green tea polyphenols (GTP) contain galliccatechin (GC), EGC, EC, EGCG and ECG, which reduced oxidative stress in experimental diabetes by inhibiting lipid peroxidation (LP), scavenge hydroxyl and superoxide radicals [165]. Cocoa polyphenols contain catechin, EC and procyanidins. Those bioactive polyphenols in cocoa reduced oxidative stress in diabetes [166]. Red wine polyphenols such as resveratrol, quercetin, catechins, and anthocyanins reduced oxidative stress in streptozotocin-diabetic rats [167]. Resveratrol, a plant polyphenol, acts as an antioxidant in the central nervous system without cellular proliferative effects during experimental diabetes [168]. Quercetin prevents oxidative stress by various mechanisms, including scavenging free radicals, inhibiting xanthine oxidase and lipid peroxidation and chelating metal ions [169]. The anti-diabetic action of 7-O-galloyl-D-sedoheptulose, a

polyphenol from *Cornifrutus*, reduced inflammation-related oxidative stress in the pancreas of type 2 diabetics. Fruit peel polyphenols of *psidium guajava* reduced oxidative stress of the pancreas in a streptozotocin-induced diabetic rat model [170].

Insulin Mimetic Action

Insulin is a peptide hormone secreted by the β -cells in the pancreas. It regulates the blood glucose level in the body. Increased blood glucose levels in the body ultimately elevate concentrations of glucose in systemic circulation, which subsequently stimulates the release of insulin. This insulin acts on cells throughout the body to stimulate uptake, utilization and storage of glucose. The body begins to use stored glucose through metabolic pathways (glycogenolysis and gluconeogenesis) when blood glucose levels decrease under a particular level. DM is a metabolic disorder that occurs if insulin levels become lower than the normal level in the body. T1DM occurs when insulin is not produced in a sufficient amount due to the destruction of pancreatic β -cells. T2DM occurs when target tissues fail to respond to insulin.

Few studies have shown that regular dietary intake of polyphenol containing foods has been associated with insulin mimetic action. Quercetin, a flavonoid, increases insulin release in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats through the regeneration of the pancreatic islets [171]. Kaempferitrin (kaempferol-3, 7-O-(α -l-dirhamnoside) is the major flavonol glycoside isolated from *Bauhinia forficata* leaves and plays an important role in lowering blood glucose level in diabetic rats and stimulates glucose uptake by secreting insulin [172]. EGCG, a green tea flavonoid, has a glucose lowering effect in experimental animals. It decreases hepatic glucose production and increases tyrosine phosphorylation of the insulin receptor substrate-1 (IRS-1) and has an insulin mimetic action by increasing the activities of PI3 and MAP Kinase [102].

Catechin isolated from *Cassia fistula* reduced the blood glucose levels in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats by increasing tissue glycogen and 14C-glucose oxidation without causing any change in plasma insulin and C-peptide. It also restored the levels of altered glucokinase, G6Pase, glycogen synthase and glycogen phosphorylase in a diabetic rat model. Overall, this information showed that catechin has hypoglycemic, glucose-oxidizing and insulin-mimetic activities [173]. Additionally, (-) epicatechin isolated from the bark of *Pterocarpus marsupium* has been reported to have insulin-mimetic action on the osmotic fragility of human erythrocytes [174].

Inhibition of Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs)

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are non-enzymatic yields formed as a result of a Maillard or 'browning' reaction in which glucose forms adducts with proteins, lipids and nucleic acids. They are a group of chemically heterogeneous compounds which are produced as a result of successive chemical reactions like dehydration, oxidation, rearrangement and fragmentation. Usually, they accumulated due to progressive aging, a process that is further enhanced under hyperglycemic and oxidative stress conditions [175]. The formation of AGEs contribute to structural and functional changes in proteins such as collagen, elastin and albumin, thus leading to the development of numerous complications associated with diabetes including angiopathy, neuropathy, nephropathy, retinopathy and cataract [176]. Therefore, developing pharmacological inhibitors that hinder AGEs formation may be a basis for a unique therapeutic approach for delaying and averting diabetic complications.

Some recent studies have shown interesting outcomes indicating that naturally occurring phenolic compounds exert inhibitory effects on the formation of AGEs. Wu *et al.* [177] have reported that oligomeric procyanidins of lotus seedpod can reduce hyperglycemic and diabetes-related complications via its antioxidant and

Table 2. Clinical studies on diabetes mellitus using intervention with polyphenol-containing natural products.

No	Type of study	Participants	Age (Years)	Intervention	Comparison / Control	Polyphenols	Period of intervention	Outcomes	Year, References
1	RCT	First-degree relatives of T2D patients (n = 38; 18 M and 20 F)	30 - 65	Grape polyphenols (2 g / day)	Placebo	ND	9 weeks (but in the final 6 days both groups received 3 g /kg of fat-free mass/day of fructose)	Grape polyphenols at nutritional doses effectively prevent fructose-induced oxidative stress and insulin resistance.	2013, [234]
2	RCT	Both males and females (n = 114) with new onset of T2D	40 - 65	Polyphenol-rich supplement of pomegranate extract (500 mg), green tea extract (300 mg) and ascorbic acid (60 mg) (n = 56; 22 M and 34 F)	Placebo (n = 58, 21 M and 37 F)	ND	3 months	Polyphenol-rich antioxidant supplementations produced antagonizing effects on oxidative stress and lipid peroxidation	2010, [235]
3	RCT	T2D subjects (n = 13; 6 F and 7 M)	59 - 64	Sweetened dried cranberries (SDC), raw cranberries (RC), SDC containing less sugar (SDC-LS) in T2D subjects	White bread (WB) as control in T2D subjects	5-caffeoylquinic acid Quercetin-3-galactoside Quercetin-3-rhamnoside 3-caffeoylquinic acid 4-caffeoylquinic acid Myricetin-3-galactoside Quercetin-3-arabinopyranoside Quercetin-3-arabinofuranoside Quercetin Quercetin-3-benzoylgalactoside Epicatechin (found in SDC and SDC-LS)	Not stated	SDC-LS favored glycemic and insulinemic responses in T2D subjects	2010, [236]
4	RCT	Subjects with borderline T2D (n = 60; 49 M and 11 F)	32 - 73	Early intervention group (n = 7): Green tea-extract powder (GTEP) for the first 2 months and then entered the 2-month non-intervention period	Later intervention (comparison) group (n = 9): Under observation for first 2 months and then consumed GTEP for the subsequent 2 months	GTEP containing 544 mg polyphenols (456 mg catechins)	2 months, daily administration	Lowered the glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) levels in both groups	2008, [237]

(Table 2) Contd....

No	Type of study	Participants	Age (Years)	Intervention	Comparison / Control	Polyphenols	Period of intervention	Outcomes	Year, References
5	Randomized crossover trial	T2D volunteers (n = 9) Healthy volunteers (n = 10)	-	Brown rice (BR) intake in both T2D and healthy volunteers	Milled rice (MR) intake in both T2D and healthy volunteers	BR with 70% total polyphenols (undefined) MR with 40% total polyphenols (undefined)	-	In healthy volunteers with BR, the glycemic area (19.8%) and glycemic index (12.1%) was lower ($p < 0.05$) than MR. In diabetics with BR, the glycemic area were 35.2% while glycemic index were 35.6% lower than MR.	2006, [238]
6	Controlled Clinical Trial	Healthy controls (n = 10) T2D subjects (n = 10)	35 - 71	Pomegranate juice (PJ) consumption in T2D group	PJ consumption in healthy control group	ND	3 months, 50 ml daily	PJ consumption by diabetic patients did not worsen the diabetic parameters and exhibited anti-oxidative effects on serum and macrophages	2006, [239]
7	RCT	T2D subjects [n = 29; Muscadine grape juice (MJ) = 10, Muscadine grape wine (MW) = 10, or dealcoholised muscadine grape wine (Dz-W) = 9] Control subjects (n = 15) Non-diabetics with MJ (n = 8)	50 - 60	(MJ, MW and Dz-W supplement in T2D group	Control group without supplement Non-diabetics group consumed MJ	ND	28 days, 150 mL daily after dinner	MW or Dz-W with meals lowered blood glucose, insulin, and HbA1c level among diabetics compared with diabetics given MJ	2006, [240]
8	RCT	Subjects with borderline diabetes or diabetes (n = 66; 53 M and 13 F)	32 - 73	A packet of GTEP	Control group were simply followed	544 mg of polyphenols (456 mg catechins)	2 months, daily after every meal or snack	The effects of polyphenol intake on blood glucose level, HbA1c level, insulin resistance or inflammation markers were unclear.	2005, [241]

Randomized Controlled Trial = RCT; Male = M, Female = F; Not defined = ND; Sweetened dried cranberries = SDC; SDC containing less sugar = SDC-LS; White bread = WB; Green tea-extract powder = GTEP; Milled rice = MR, Brown rice = BR; Pomegranate juice = PJ; Type 2 diabetes = T2D; n = Total number of subjects; Muscadine grape juice = MJ; Muscadine grape wine = MW; de-alcoholized muscadine grape wine = Dz-W; HbA1c = Glycated hemoglobin.

insulin potentiating activities. Another study showed that luteolin has the most potent inhibitory effects on each stage of protein glycation which provides a protective effect against hyperglycemia-mediated protein damage [178]. A new flavonoid 2'', 4''-O-diacetylquercitrin (which can be extracted from the aerial parts of *Melastoma sanguineum*) have shown strong inhibitory activities

against AGEs formation thus revealing a promising agent that can be used in prevention or treatment of diabetic complications and other related diseases [179]. The anti-glycation activities of polyphenols are dependent on their properties and molecular structures such as hydroxylation on A, B or C rings, methylation, glycosyla-

tion of hydroxyl group and galloyl groups in phenolic compounds [180].

CLINICAL TRIALS

To determine appropriate clinical trials based on polyphenols among diabetic patients, PubMed and Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) were searched to yield 28 clinical trials. However, only eight studies were shortlisted (Table 2) based on the precise population (DM), intervention (natural compounds containing polyphenols) and available outcomes [metabolic markers of diabetes (levels of blood glucose and HbA1c, glycemic area and index, effects on insulin resistance and oxidative stress)]. Most of the RCTs did not mention the precise type of polyphenols used although some intervention strategies involved mainly green tea, brown rice, pomegranate juice, grape and cranberries (fresh and dry).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Natural products have long been an important resource in the discovery of innovative drugs due to their diverse chemical compounds and ability to act on numerous biological targets. Polyphenols from natural products are currently the focus of attention for drug discovery and drug development, as many of these compounds are potential therapeutics that interfere in various stages of diabetes development. Because *in vitro* and animal studies provide evidence of positive effects of many polyphenols on glucose homeostasis, extensive studies of each polyphenol are needed to provide information about their potential to be used as pharmaceutical agents in the treatment of diabetes. Polyphenols in fruits, vegetables, green tea and edible plants represented in table 1 can be used as prophylactics or as synergistic compounds in addition to conventional regimens against DM. In addition to nutraceutical use, promising new drugs with a specific target pathway in diabetes pathogenesis and dosage can be designed and produced to reduce the burden of diabetes.

For clinical applications, the inadequate supply of polyphenols due to costly chemical synthesis or minimal isolation from natural sources needs to be remedied. To meet the demand of polyphenols, model microorganisms (such as *Escherichia coli* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) can be used to provide sufficient quantities of polyphenols from inexpensive substrates by metabolic engineering or recombinant technology. For example, in the past few years, some studies have reported the production of plant-specific polyphenols such as pinosylvin, naringenin and resveratrol in microorganisms [181-183].

Currently, the aldose reductase inhibition property of polyphenols has gained importance in diabetes treatment. Polyphenols such as gallic, vanillic, syringic, ferulic, protocatechuic and cinnamic acids found in the genus *Scrophularia* have been reported to inhibit aldose reductase enzyme activity. A more recently published study has given molecular insights into receptor-ligand interactions in the development of novel aldose reductase inhibitors from the genus *Scrophularia* [184]. Therefore, polyphenols can also be used to identify new ligand binding sites on target proteins using computational approaches such as molecular docking and molecular dynamics. In addition with the numbers of both *in vitro* and *in vivo* experiments, to date, there are a number of controlled trials for clinical evaluation of polyphenols in the treatment of DM. However more appropriately designed RCTs are warranted to assess the clinical implications of precise polyphenols as complementary natural regimens besides the use of conventional anti-diabetic drugs.

CONCLUSION

Based on all compiled evidences presented in this review, it is concluded that polyphenols exert anti-diabetic activities via different mechanistic pathways. However, more detailed *in vivo*, *in vitro* or *ex vivo* investigations are warranted to confirm the anti-diabetic

mechanisms of polyphenols before they can be used as good alternative and supplementary resources in the management of diabetic patients as well as potential future sources for drug development and discovery.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DM	=	Diabetes mellitus
EGCG	=	Eepigallocatechin gallate
F1, 6-BPase	=	Fructose-1, 6-bisphosphatase
GLUT	=	Glucose transporters
G6Pase	=	Glucose-6-phosphatase
IR	=	Insulin receptor:
SGLT	=	Sodium dependent glucose transporters
T1DM	=	Type 1 diabetes mellitus
T2DM	=	Type 2 diabetes mellitus

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that this article content has no conflict of interest.

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