

# Cytotoxicity of Fucoidan from Three Tropical Brown Algae Against Breast and Colon Cancer Cell Lines

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Fucoidan is a sulfated polysaccharide that has a wide range of bioactivities including anti-cancer. This polysaccharide commonly is extracted from marine brown seaweed. There is lack of information on the fucoidan extracted from tropical brown algae and its anti-cancer activity. **Objectives:** The objectives of this study were to purify fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp. and *Padina* sp., and to evaluate their cytotoxicity against breast cancer (MCF-7) and colon cancer cells (WiDr). **Materials and Methods:** Fucoidan extraction was conducted by using acid extraction method. Purified fucoidans were obtained by DEAE cellulose column chromatography and confirmed by HPLC and FT-IR spectrometry. The cytotoxicity was evaluated by using the MTT (3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl] -2,5- diphenyltetrazolium bromide) assay. **Results:** Fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp. and *Turbinaria* sp. showed low cytotoxicity with IC<sub>50</sub> ranging between 461-663 µg/mL. Higher cytotoxicity against MCF-7 and WiDr was showed by fucoidan from *Padina* sp. with IC<sub>50</sub> of 144 and 118 µg/mL, respectively. While its IC<sub>50</sub> against Vero cells was 501 µg/mL. Standard fucoidan from *Fucus vesiculosus* exhibited IC<sub>50</sub> of 60, 63 and 211 µg/mL against MCF-7, WiDr and Vero Cells, respectively. Although the IC<sub>50</sub> was higher than that of standard fucoidan, *Padina* sp. fucoidan showed cytotoxicity comparable with standard fucoidan at concentrations below 100 µg/mL. **Conclusion:** These results indicated that *Padina* sp. fucoidan showed potential selective cytotoxicity, and promising for the development of an anti-cancer compound.

**Key words:** Fucoidan, Breast cancer, Colon cancer, Phaeophyta, Cytotoxicity.

## INTRODUCTION

Fucoidan is a polysaccharide of brown seaweed and marine invertebrates (such as sea urchin and sea cucumber) with a main component of L-fucose and sulfate ester group.<sup>1</sup> Chemical structure of fucoidan from brown seaweed is very complex and varies among seaweeds species.<sup>2</sup> The main difference is in the backbone structure of fucoidan.<sup>3,4</sup> Monosaccharides component of fucoidan affect their physiological and biological activities.<sup>5</sup> Fucoidan has a wide range of bioactivity among others as immunostimulan,<sup>6-9</sup> and antitumor/anticancer.<sup>4,10,11</sup>

Cancer is a disease that attacks the modern society globally, and as a major disease today and in the future. WHO have reported that there are 14 million new cases and 8.2 million cancer related death in 2012, and annual cancer cases will rise to 22 million within the next two decades.<sup>12</sup> Two cancers that cause the major deaths in men are lung cancer and colorectal cancer, whereas in women are breast cancer and lung cancer.<sup>13</sup> Girish *et al*<sup>14</sup> have found the potential activity of *Pavonia odorata* Willd extract against human breast and lung cancers. Breast cancer is also effectively inhibited by

β-mangostin isolated from *Cratoxylum arborescens* either *in vitro* or *in vivo*.<sup>15</sup> However, research on tropical brown seaweeds as sources of fucoidan for anti-cancer agent is still limited.

Cumashi *et al*<sup>16</sup> have found the potent anti-angiogenesis activity of fucoidan from *Laminaria saccharina*, *L. digitata*, *Fucus evanescens*, *F. serratus*, *F. distichus*, *F. spiralis*, *F. vesiculosus*, *Ascophyllum nodosum* and *Cladosiphon okamuranus*. Fucoidans from *L. saccharina*, *L. digitata*, *F. serratus*, *F. distichus*, and *F. vesiculosus* strongly blocks MDAMB-231 breast carcinoma cell adhesion to platelets. A commercial fucoidan from *F. vesiculosus* also active against HCT-15 colon carcinoma cells through apoptosis-inducing activity.<sup>16</sup> Senthilkumar *et al*<sup>17</sup> have reviewed the fucoidan from *F. vesiculosus*, *C. novae-caledoniae*, *C. okamuranus*, *S. japonica*, *U. pinnatifida* with cytotoxicity against cancer cells. Fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp. and *F. vesiculosus* also reduces viability of lung carcinoma and melanoma cells.<sup>18</sup> Fucoidan from *Eclonia cava*, *Sargassum hornery*, and *Costaria costata* from South Korea inhibits colony formation in human melanoma and colon cancer cells.<sup>19</sup> Murphy *et al*<sup>20</sup> have reviewed

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anticancer substance including fucoidan from brown seaweeds. Marudhupandi *et al.*<sup>21</sup> reported the cytotoxicity of fucoidan from a tropical brown seaweed, *Turbinaria* sp. collected from Tamilnadu India against the human lung cancer A549 cell line. In the present study we purified fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp. and *Padina* sp., and evaluated its anticancer activity against colon and breast cancer cell lines. To the best of our knowledge, the anticancer activities of fucoidan from these three brown seaweeds species against these two cancer cell lines have not been reported before.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sampling and Identification of Brown Seaweeds

Sampling was carried out in the intertidal zone during low tide. *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp. and *Padina* sp. were collected and then put in a cool box and transported to the laboratory. Identification was carried out based on Dhargalkar,<sup>22</sup> Trono.<sup>23</sup>

### Extraction and Purification

The seaweed samples were washed with fresh water, then air dried in the laboratory to obtain the dry biomass, and stored in plastic bags. Extraction was carried out by the method of Kim *et al.*<sup>13</sup> Purification was carried out by DEAE cellulose column chromatography (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) eluted with distilled water and gradient 0.5 to 3 M NaCl.<sup>24</sup> The total carbohydrate of the purified fucoidan in the fractions was determined by the phenol-sulfuric acid method according to Masuko *et al.*<sup>25</sup> using L-fucose as a reference. The fucoidan fractions were evaporated, dialysed (MW cut-off 12,300 Da) for 48 hours, then freeze-dried and stored at 4°C until use.

The purified fucoidan was analyzed by HPLC using Agilent Hi-Plex columns Ligand-Exchange (Agilent Hi-Plex H for Carbohydrate) 7.7 × 100 mm, with a refractive index detector (RID-10A, Shimadzu, Japan) with a flow rate of 0.7 mL/min at 60°C. HPLC using the autosampler (SIL-10ADVP, Shimadzu, Japan) with injection volume of 20 µL. Fucoidan sample concentration was 5 µg/mL. The measurement of sulphate in the fucoidan was based on the barium sulphate (BaSO<sub>4</sub>) determination using barium chloride (BaCl<sub>2</sub>),<sup>26</sup> using Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> as a standard.

### FTIR spectra

FTIR spectra were recorded by a FTIR spectrometer in KBr with a wave number range of 4000-450 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The ratio of fucoidan and KBr was approximately 1: 100 (2 mg sample + 200 mg KBr). The IR spectra of fucoidan from the seaweeds were compared with the IR spectrum of standard fucoidan (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA).

### Cytotoxicity Assay

Cell lines used in this assay were a colon cancer cells (human colon adenocarcinoma cells) (WiDr), breast cancer cells (human breast adenocarcinoma cells) (MCF-7) and a normal cells, an African green monkey kidney cells (vero cells). Each of these cells were cultured in RPMI or M199 medium (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) with the addition of 10% FBS (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA), antibiotics Panstrep (Gibco, Grand Island, NY, USA) and Fungison (Gibco). The cells were cultured at 37°C in a CO<sub>2</sub> incubator until confluent. After incubation, the medium was replaced with a new medium, then the cells were harvested and re-cultured in 96-well microplate at a density of 10<sup>4</sup> cells/100 µl/well using a medium containing 2% FBS. Then fucoidan with a serial dilution was added to wells. As a negative control cells were treated with sterile dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), whereas the positive control was treated with a standard fucoidan from *Fucus vesiculosus* (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA). Cells were then incubated in the same conditions as above. Cells proliferation was observed by MTT assay (3- [4,5-dimethylthiazol-

2-yl] -2,5- diphenyltetrazolium bromide [Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA]).<sup>27</sup> Growth was detected with a microplate reader at a wavelength of 570 nm. The growth rate of cells exposed to fucoidan compared to the positive and negative controls, and then the cells mortality expressed in percent (%) was calculated.

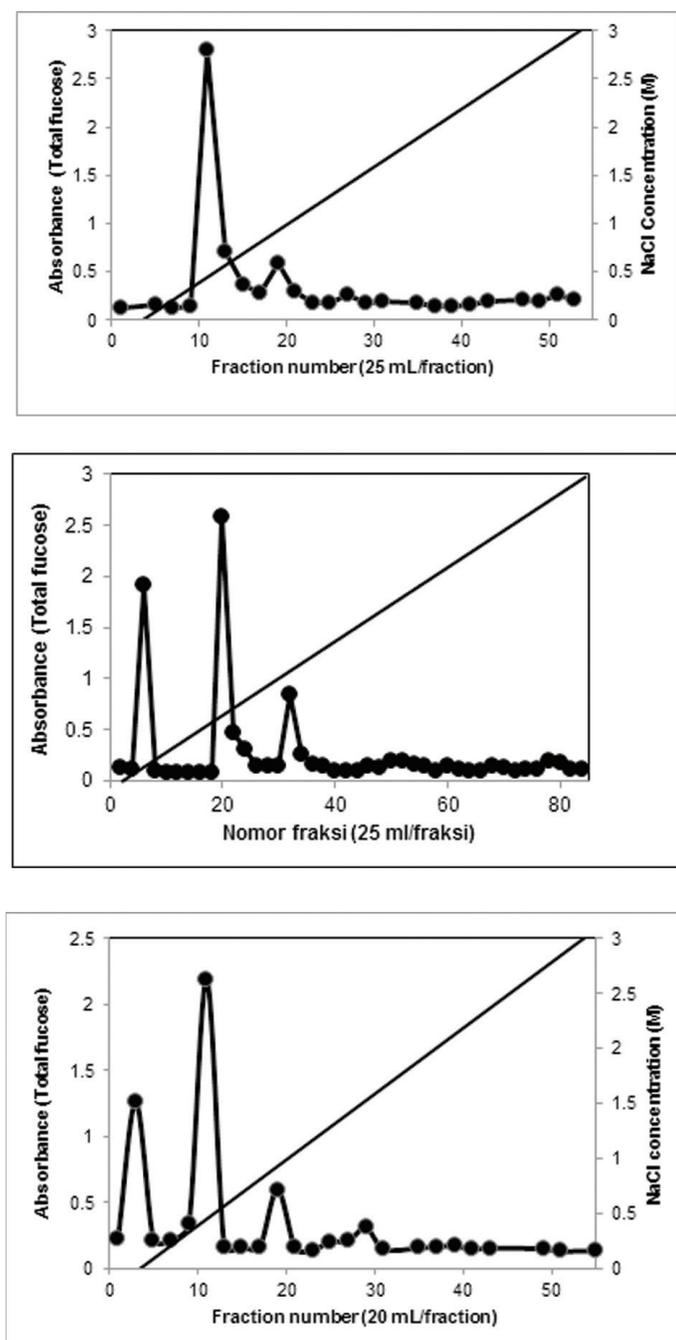
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crude fucoidan extracts were purified by DEAE cellulose eluted with distilled water followed by 0.5 to 3 M of NaCl. Each fraction was measured for total sugar content with fucose as a standard (Figure 1). Fractionation of *Sargassum* sp. crude fucoidan showed the separation of the dominant fraction and two minor fractions. The main fraction was used for subsequent study. The fractionation of *Turbinaria* sp. crude fucoidan, also found a similar pattern with that of crude fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., but there was a medium peak eluted before the main peak. The similar pattern was also found in the fractionation of *Padina* sp. crude fucoidan where a major fraction was obtained when the crude fucoidan was eluted with 0.5 M NaCl. This DEAE cellulose column chromatography showed that a major peak was appeared with 0.5 M NaCl elution either for *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp. or *Padina* sp. or fucoidan crude extracts. Each major peak was pooled and used for the subsequent experiments.

Pure fucoidans obtained from the DEAE cellulose column chromatography were confirmed by using HPLC (Figure 2) and FTIR spectra (Figure 3). HPLC produced a single peak with the same retention time with standard fucoidan from *F. vesiculosus*. FTIR spectra also confirmed that the obtained compound were fucoidan. The spectra showed the typical bands of polysaccharide. The broad band centered at 3435 cm<sup>-1</sup> assigned to hydrogen bonded O-H stretching vibration.<sup>28-30</sup> The band at 2939 cm<sup>-1</sup> was attributed the C-H stretching pyranoid ring and C6 of fucose and/or galactose units.<sup>13,30</sup> The band at 1614 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicated the stretching of asymmetric carboxylate O-C-O vibration.<sup>28,29</sup> The band at 1424 cm<sup>-1</sup> suggested C-OH deformation vibration with contribution of O-C-O symmetric stretching vibration of carboxylate group.<sup>29</sup> The presence of O=S=O stretching vibration of sulphate esters was indicated by a band at 1258 cm<sup>-1</sup>,<sup>28,29</sup> The band at 1040 cm<sup>-1</sup> corresponded to stretching vibration of C-O-C/C-OH.<sup>30</sup> The band at 820 cm<sup>-1</sup> assigned the C-O-S bending vibration of sulfate group.<sup>28-31</sup> The band at 580 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicated the asymmetric and symmetric O=S=O deformation of sulfate.<sup>31</sup> These FT-IR spectra analysis proved that the extraction and purification processes used and purification process used in this study were effective to obtain fucoidan from the three tropical brown algae.

To evaluate the potential bioactivity of fucoidan as an anti-cancer, a cytotoxicity test against colon cancer cells (human colon adenocarcinoma cells) (WiDr), breast cancer cells (human breast adenocarcinoma cells) (MCF-7) and a normal cells of green monkey kidney cells (Vero cells) was conducted. The cytotoxicity was compared with a standard fucoidan from *F. vesiculosus*. Results showed that standard fucoidan exhibited high cytotoxic activity against colon cancer and killed almost all cells at a dose of 1000 µg/mL (Figures 4 and 5). Lower cytotoxicity activity was found for three fucoidans from brown algae examined in this study. Fucoidan from *Padina* sp. showed cytotoxicity comparable with standard fucoidan at concentrations below 100 µg/mL. However, increase in the concentrations above 100 µg/mL did not significantly increase in the cytotoxicity activity. The same pattern of cytotoxicity was obtained against breast cancer cells (MCF-7) (Figure 4).

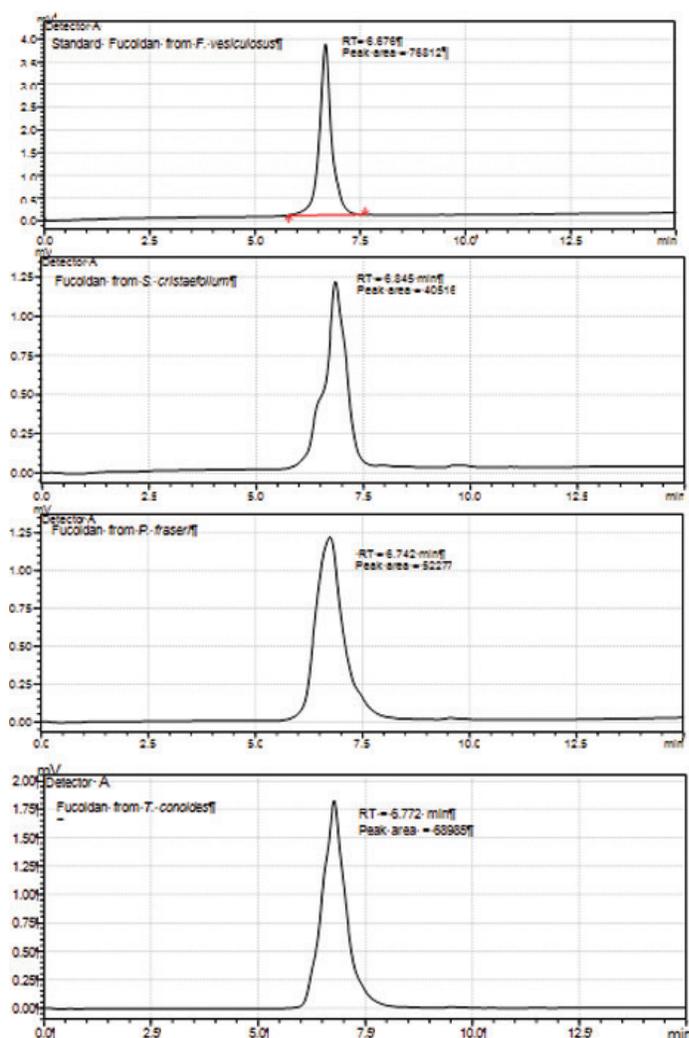
The results of cytotoxicity test also indicated that the cytotoxicity of fucoidan varied depending on the seaweeds species as their sources, and cell lines used. Fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp. and *Turbinaria* sp. exhibited low cytotoxic activity with IC<sub>50</sub> values in the range of 461-663 µg/mL. The cytotoxic activities were lower comparing to the standard fucoidan



**Figure 1:** Fractionation of crude fucoidan extracts of *Sargassum* sp.(A), *Turbinaria* sp.(B) and *Padina* sp.(C) based on total sugar content with fucose standard on DEAE cellulose column chromatography.

from *F. vesiculosus*. Fucoidan from *Padina* sp. exhibited higher cytotoxic activity with  $IC_{50}$  value of 144 and 118  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  against breast and colon cancer cells, respectively (Table 1). Cytotoxicity of *Padina* sp. fucoidan was higher than that of standard fucoidan against a normal Vero cells with  $IC_{50}$  511  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  and 211  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ , respectively, suggested that the former one might be more selective cytotoxic than the later one.

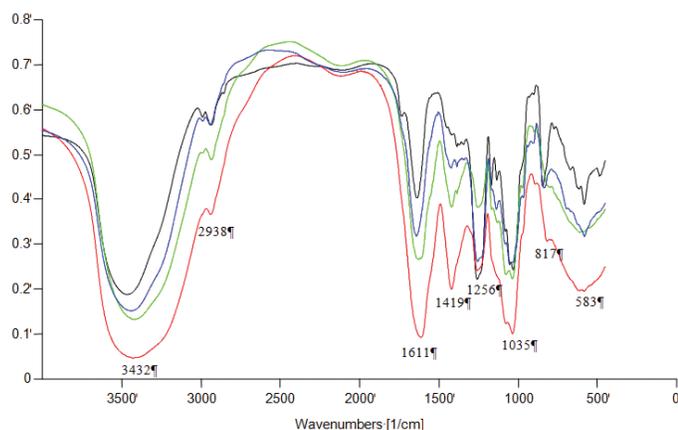
Ale *et al*<sup>18</sup> have evaluated anti-cancer activity of fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., against Lewis Lung Carcinoma cells (LLC) and melanoma B16 cells (MC) in low concentration of Fetal Bovine Serum (FBS) (2%) as used in this study. Results indicated that *Sargassum* sp. fucoidan reduces the viability of LLC cells up to  $40 \pm 7\%$  at 1,000  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ . The cell viability reduction



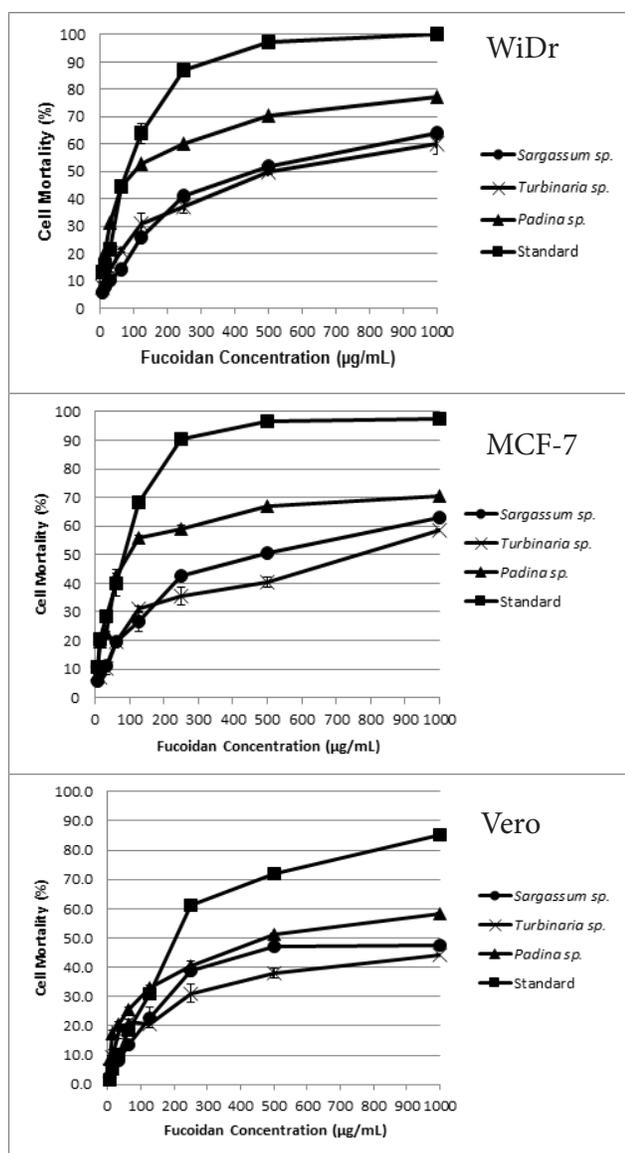
**Figure 2:** HPLC profile of standard fucoidan and purified fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp. and *Padina* sp.

is more significantly noted against MC cells, resulting in only  $56 \pm 5\%$  viable cells upon addition of 100 and 200  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ . Our study results confirmed that the different fucoidan sources and different cell lines used in cytotoxicity test resulted the variation of cytotoxicity activities. *Padina* sp. fucoidan used in our study has higher cytotoxicity comparing to that of *Sargassum* sp. and *Turbinaria* sp. Without considering the cell lines used in cytotoxicity test, fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp. against WiDr and MCF-7 exhibited the similar cytotoxicity level with *Sargassum* sp. used by Ale *et al*<sup>18</sup> against LLC cells.

Several studies have evaluated cytotoxicity of fucoidan against colon and breast cancer.<sup>5,10,16,19</sup> Cumashi *et al*<sup>5</sup> found that fucoidans from *L. saccharina*, *L. digitata*, *F. serratus*, *F. distichus* and *F. vesiculosus* at 100  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  strongly blocked MDAMB-231 breast carcinoma cell adhesion to platelets, an effect which might have critical implications in tumor-metastasis. Hyun *et al*<sup>16</sup> reported that fucoidan from *F. vesiculosus* at 100  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  demonstrates apoptotic activity against HCT-15 cells (human colon carcinoma cells). Fucoidans from *S. hornery*, *Eclonia cava* and *Costaria costata* have been reported non significant cytotoxic activity against human skin melanoma (SK-MEL-28) and colon cancer cells (DLD-1) after treatment during 24 h at concentration from 1 to 200  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ .<sup>19</sup> Fukahori *et al*<sup>19</sup> also have proved by evaluating cytotoxicity of fucoidan against 15 cancer cell lines with the broad range  $IC_{50}$  between



**Figure 3:** Overlaid FTIR spectra of standard fucoidan (black line) and purified fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp. (red line), *Turbinaria* sp. (green line) and *Padina* sp. (blue line).



**Figure 4:** Cytotoxicity of fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp., *Padina* sp. and standard fucoidan against human colon adenocarcinoma (WiDr) human breast adenocarcinoma (MCF-7) and kidney green monkey (Vero) cells.

**Table 1:** IC<sub>50</sub> of fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp., *Padina* sp. and fucoidan standard against human breast adenocarcinoma (MCF-7), human colon adenocarcinoma (WiDr) and kidney epithelial African green monkey (Vero) cells

Fucoidan Sample	IC <sub>50</sub> (µg/mL)		
	MCF-7	WiDr	Vero
<i>Sargassum</i> sp.	461	476	757
<i>Turbinaria</i> sp.	663	547	>1000
<i>Padina</i> sp.	144	118	501
Standard Fucoidan	60	63	211

18.71 and 299.20 µg/mL. The above reports indicate that the cytotoxicities of fucoidan are greatly vary depending on the sources of fucoidan and cell lines used in cytotoxicity assay. Results of our study confirmed fucoidans from three tropical brown seaweeds exhibits cytotoxicity variation. Fucoidan from *Padina* sp. shows selective cytotoxicity with IC<sub>50</sub> 118 to 144 µg/mL against cancer cell lines and 501 µg/mL against a normal cell line suggested that this brown seaweed may a prospective source of fucoidan for developing cytotoxic agent in cancer therapy especially against breast and colon cancer. The further studies are needed to investigate the variability of fucoidan related to the season, sampling location and extraction method, and also evaluation of the cytotoxicity against more broad range cancer cell lines.

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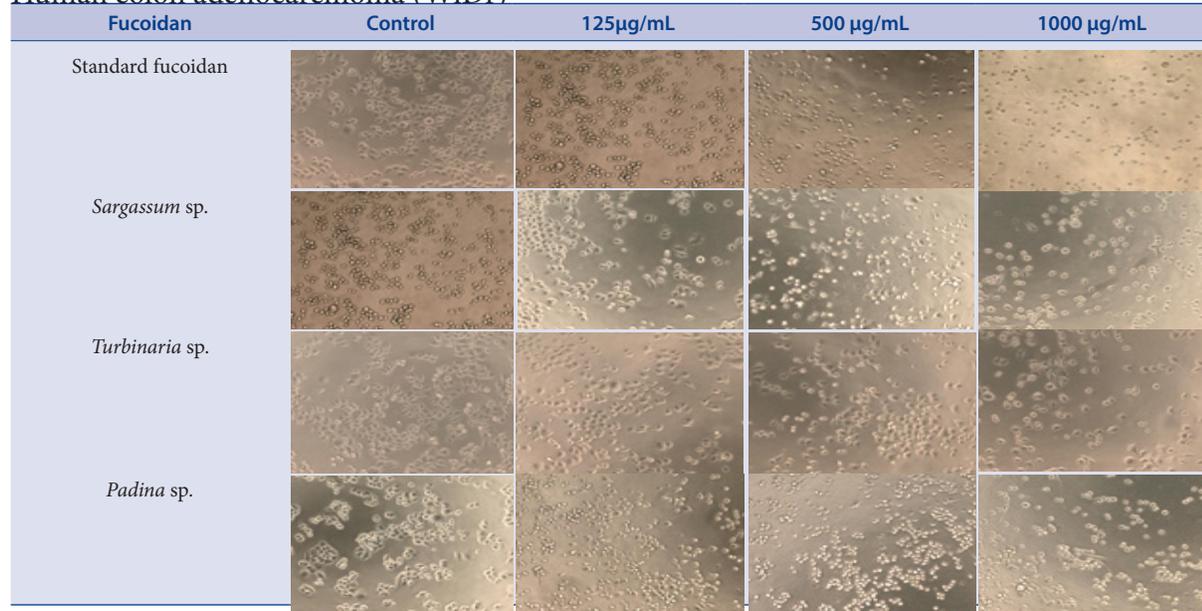
## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We do not have any conflict of interest.

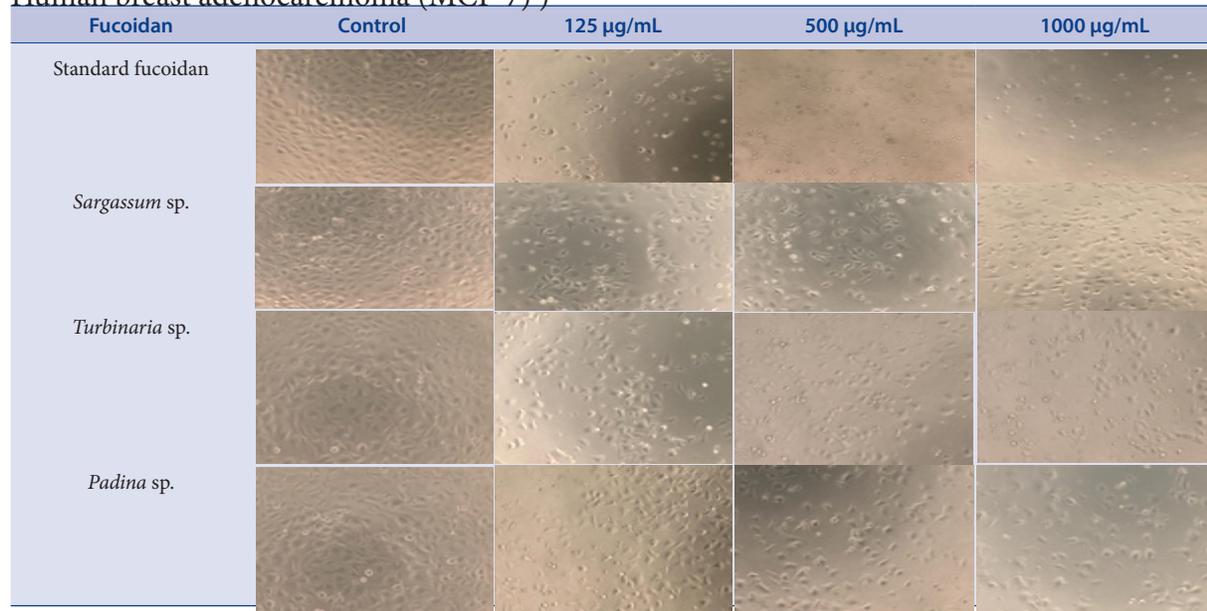
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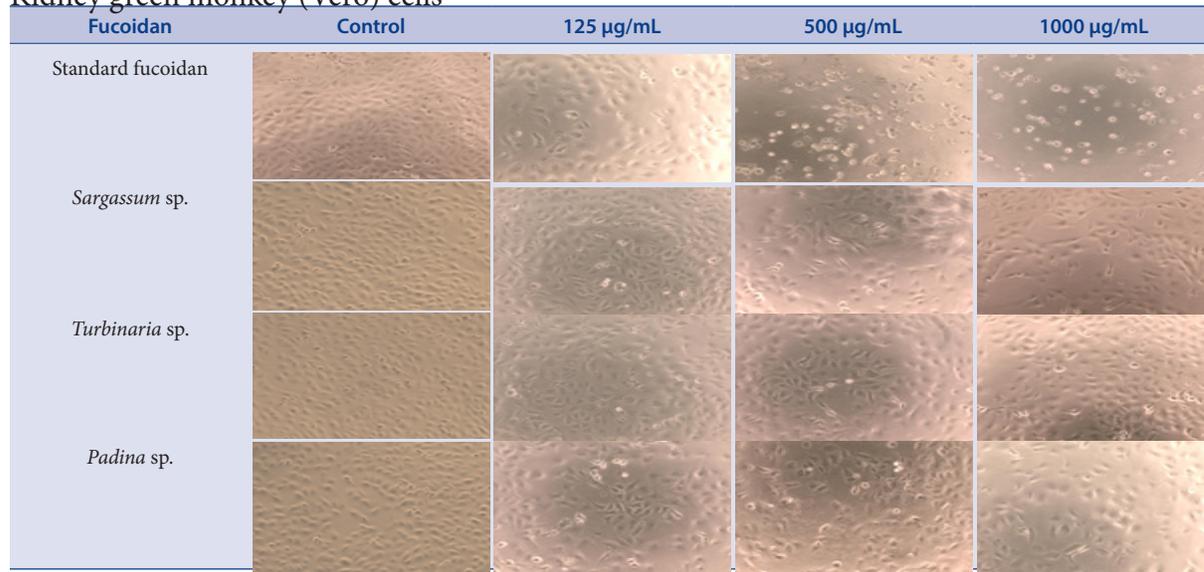
Human colon adenocarcinoma (WiDr)



Human breast adenocarcinoma (MCF-7)



## Kidney green monkey (Vero) cells



**Figure 5:** Morphology and density changes of human collagen adenocarcinoma (WiDr) human breast adenocarcinoma (MCF-7) and kidney green monkey (Vero) cells treated with standard fucoidan and fucoidan from *Sargassum* sp., *Turbinaria* sp., *Padina* sp. at various concentrations

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