

Anthocyanidins and anthocyanins: colored pigments as food, pharmaceutical ingredients, and the potential health benefits

ABSTRACT

Anthocyanins are colored water-soluble pigments belonging to the phenolic group. The pigments are in glycosylated forms. Anthocyanins responsible for the colors, red, purple, and blue, are in fruits and vegetables. Berries, currants, grapes, and some tropical fruits have high anthocyanins content. Red to purplish blue-colored leafy vegetables, grains, roots, and tubers are the edible vegetables that contain a high level of anthocyanins. Among the anthocyanin pigments, cyanidin-3-glucoside is the major anthocyanin found in most of the plants. The colored anthocyanin pigments have been traditionally used as a natural food colorant. The color and stability of these pigments are influenced by pH, light, temperature, and structure. In acidic condition, anthocyanins appear as red but turn blue when the pH increases. Chromatography has been largely applied in extraction, separation, and quantification of anthocyanins. Besides the use of anthocyanidins and anthocyanins as natural dyes, these colored pigments are potential pharmaceutical ingredients that give various beneficial health effects. Scientific studies, such as cell culture studies, animal models, and human clinical trials, show that anthocyanidins and anthocyanins possess antioxidative and antimicrobial activities, improve visual and neurological health, and protect against various non-communicable diseases. These studies confer the health effects of anthocyanidins and anthocyanins, which are due to their potent antioxidant properties. Different mechanisms and pathways are involved in the protective effects, including free-radical scavenging pathway, cyclooxygenase pathway, mitogen-activated protein kinase pathway, and inflammatory cytokines signaling. Therefore, this review focuses on the role of anthocyanidins and anthocyanins as natural food colorants and their nutraceutical properties for health. Abbreviations: CVD: Cardiovascular disease VEGF: Vascular endothelial growth factor.

Keyword: CVD; Cardiovascular disease VEGF; Vascular endothelial growth factor