AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY

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Synthesis, Antiviral Activity and Induction of Plant Resistance of Indole Analogues Bearing Dithioacetal Moiety

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Figure 1. Chemical structures of Ningnanmycin, Ribavirin, and Indole.

162x32mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 2. Design of target compounds.

127x112mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 3. Synthetic route for target compounds D1-D25.

243x140mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 4. Synthetic route for target compounds D26-D28.

113x65mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 5. Effects of compound D21 on chlorophyll a (A), chlorophyll b (B) and chlorophyll total (C), chlorophyll a/b (D) in tobacco leaves. Straight bars signify mean \pm SD (n = 3).



Figure 6. Effects of compound D21 on superoxide dismutase (SOD, A), peroxidase (POD, B), phenylalanine ammonia lyase (PAL, C), and catalase (CAT, D) activity in tobacco leaves. Straight bars signify mean \pm SD (n= 3).



Figure 7. Venn diagram shows that the proteome distribution between the D21+PVY and CK+PVY groups changes uniquely and shares proteins.



Figure 8. Volcano plot of the relative protein abundance changes between the D21+PVY and CK+PVY treatments. The red points show significantly up-regulated proteins, whereas the blue points show significantly down-regulated proteins.

34x24mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 9. MDH signaling pathway in tobacco response to D21. Red color represents the up-regulated proteins in this pathway. (Fd, Ferredoxin; FNR, ferredoxin-NADP reductase; FTR, Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductase; MDH, malate dehydrogenase; NTRC, chloroplast NADPH-thioredoxin reductase; OAA, oxaloacetate; OMT, malate/OAA translocators; PS I, photosystem I; PS I, photosystem I; ROS, reactive oxygen species; Trx, thioredoxin).

210x136mm (300 x 300 DPI)





272x208mm (300 x 300 DPI)



84x47mm (600 x 600 DPI)

Synthesis, Antiviral Activity and Induction of Plant Resistance of Indole Analogues Bearing Dithioacetal Moiety Chunle Wei, Jian Zhang, Jing Shi, Xiuhai Gan, Deyu Hu,* Baoan Song * State Key Laboratory Breeding Base of Green Pesticide and Agricultural Bioengineering, Key Laboratory of Green Pesticide and Agricultural Bioengineering, Ministry of Education, Guizhou University, Huaxi District, Guiyang 550025, China. *Corresponding author (Tel.: 86-851-88292170; Fax: 86-851-88292170; E-mail: dyhu@gzu.edu.cn; songbaoan22@yahoo.com).

23	ABSTRACT: A series of compounds with potential activity to induce plant resistance
24	was synthesized from indole and thiol compounds, and methodically evaluated for
25	antiviral activity. The results indicated that some of the synthesized compounds had
26	high anti-potato virus Y (PVY), anti-cucumber mosaic virus (CMV) and anti-tobacco
27	mosaic virus (TMV) activities. Notably, compound D21 exhibited the best activity
28	against PVY among these compounds in vivo, and the 50% effective concentrations
29	(EC ₅₀) of protection activity is 122 μ g/mL, which was distinctively better than the
30	corresponding values for Ribavirin (653 μ g/mL), Ningnanmycin (464 μ g/mL), and
31	Xiangcaoliusuobingmi (279 μ g/mL). Interestingly, we found the protection activity of
32	D21 was associated with improvement of chlorophyll content and defense-related
33	enzyme activities. Moreover, D21 could trigger the malate dehydrogenase (MDH)
34	signaling pathway, as further confirmed by the MDH activity evaluation. Hence, D21
35	can protected plants against viral activity, and has potential as a novel activator for
36	plant resistance induction.
37	KEYWORDS : indole, dithioacetal, antiviral activity, plant resistance induction,
38	malate dehydrogenase.
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- 44

45 **INTRODUCTION**

Plant viruses cause heavy losses throughout the history of agricultural development. 46 47 Potato virus Y (PVY), cucumber mosaic virus (CMV), and tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) are common plant viruses that affect crop quality and vield in many areas of 48 49 the world¹. Especially, PVY causes significant problems in terms of economic losses in a broad range of important crops. It has a wide host range and naturally causes 50 substantial damage in tobacco, tomato, and pepper². The methods used to reduce the 51 incidence of viral disease are based on chemical agents, such as Ningnanmycin and 52 Ribavirin (Figure 1), but show unsatisfactory field efficacy³⁻⁵. Therefore, novel, 53 highly active, and environmentally friendly antiviral agents need to be developed to 54 manage the risk of a virus epidemic. 55

56

Figure 1

Natural products and their derivatives have a long history as important sources of 57 and inspiration for the discovery of novel agrochemicals. The demand for new 58 nature-derived agrochemicals and environmentally friendly sources has increased 59 owing to the increasingly stringent environmental, toxicological, and regulatory 60 requirements⁶⁻⁹. Indole (Figure 1) skeleton and its derivatives occur broadly in many 61 natural products, plants, animals, and marine organisms¹⁰. Indole derivatives comprise 62 an important class of active compounds in heterocyclic compounds, which are 63 associated with pharmacological activities¹¹, such as antiviral^{4, 5, 12, 13}, protein kinase 64 inhibitory¹⁴, antibacterial^{15, 16}, and anticancer activities¹⁷⁻¹⁹. Considering the important 65 active structures, indoles may have the most important structure category in drug 66

of

67	discovery ²⁰⁻²² . Indole derivatives have a unique property that mimics the structure of
68	peptides, and it reversibly binds to enzymes ^{23, 24} , thus, they have attracted the attention
69	of pharmacologists.
70	In our previous work, the novel dithioacetal derivative Xiangcaoliusuobingmi
71	(XCLSBM) (Figure 2) was discovered as an efficient antiviral agent ^{25, 26} . As an
72	extension to our research in dithioacetal and systematic study of dithioacetal
73	derivatives, a series of compounds with potential activator to induce plant resistance
74	was designed based on lead compound XCLSBM and synthesized (Figure 2) from
75	indole and 10 kinds thiol compounds. Their antiviral activities against PVY, CMV
76	and TMV and effect on defense-related enzyme activity, chlorophyll content, and
77	differentially expressed proteins (DEPs) were investigated in this study.
78	Figure 2
78 79	Figure 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS
78 79 80	Figure 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS Chemicals and Instruments. ¹ H, and ¹³ C NMR spectra were obtained using a 500
78 79 80 81	Figure 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS Chemicals and Instruments. ¹ H, and ¹³ C NMR spectra were obtained using a 500 or 400-MHz (100 MHz for ¹³ C) instrument (Bruker, Germany) in acetone- <i>d</i> ₆ ,
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89 otherwise stated.

General Procedure for Intermediates A1-A4, B, and C1-C4. The synthetic 90 91 route for a novel indole series containing dithioacetal moiety is shown in Figure 3. The synthesis of intermediates A1-A4 was based on previously reported methods²⁷. 92 Intermediate **B** has been widely reported²⁸. Intermediates **B** (5 mmol) and substituted 93 94 1H-indole-3-carbaldehyde (5 mmol) were added into acetonitrile (30 mL) with potassium carbonate (6 mmol) and were heated to reflux, until the reaction was 95 completion. Then, the solvent was concentrated in vacuo, and the solids were washed 96 97 with water and filtered. Intermediates C1–C4 were recrystallized from ethanol. General Synthesis Procedure for the Indole Derivatives Containing 98 Dithioacetal Moiety D1–D27. Various types of thiol compounds (1.38 mmol) were 99 100 selectively converted to intermediates C1-C4 (0.519 mmol) in dichloromethane (25

mL) in the presence of NaHSO₄/SiO₂ (0.01 mmol) at room temperature. Upon reaction completion, silica was removed via filtration, and the filtrate was evaporated. Crude products were purified by using flash chromatography with EtOAc/*n*-hexane (1:3, v/v) to obtain **D1–D25** (Figure 3).

105

Figure 3

General Synthetic Procedures for D26–D28. 1,2-Ethanedithiol (1.38 mmol) was selectively converted to intermediates C1–C3 (0.519 mmol) in dichloromethane (25 mL) in the presence of NaHSO₄/SiO₂ (0.01 mmol) at room temperature. Upon reaction completion, silica was removed by filtration, and the filtrate was evaporated. The crude product was purified via flash chromatography with EtOAc/*n*-hexane (1:3, 111 v/v) to obtain the target compounds **D26–D28** (Figure 4).

112

Figure 4

Antiviral Activity Assay. *Extraction of PVY*²⁹ and *CMV*³⁰. Viruses were propagated in *Nicotiana. tabacum* cv. K326, ground in phosphate buffer and filtered with a double-layer pledget. The extract was centrifuged for 5 min at $10000 \times g$, and the supernatant was used as the crude extract of the virus. The extraction process was carried out at 4 °C.

*Extraction of TMV*³¹. Viruses were propagated in *Nicotiana. tabacum* cv. K326, ground in phosphate buffer and filtered with a double-layer pledget. The extract was centrifuged for 5 min at $10000 \times g$, treated twice through polyethylene glycol 6000, and then centrifuged again. The extraction process was carried out at 4 °C. The absorbance values were tested using an ultraviolet spectrophotometer at 260 nm:

Virus concentration (mg mL⁻¹) =
$$\frac{A_{260} \times \text{dilution ratio}}{E^{0.1\%}_{1\text{cm}}}$$

where E represents the extinction coefficient for TMV; $E^{0.1\%}_{1cm} e^{260nm}$ is 3.1.

Curative Activities of Target Compounds against PVY and CMV³² in vivo. 125 Chenopodium amaranticolor plants were used to evaluate the anti-PVY and 126 anti-CMV activities. The crude extracts of PVY (CMV) were dipped and inoculated 127 on the whole leaves, which were scattered with silicon carbide beforehand. The leaves 128 were washed with water after inoculation for 30 minutes and then dried. The target 129 130 compound solution was smeared on the right side of the leaves, and solvent was 131 smeared on the left side, which served as the control. All the plants were cultivated in an incubator under an illumination of 10 000 lx at 28±2 °C. The number of local 132

lesions appearing 5 to 6 days after inoculation was counted. Measurements wereperformed in triplicate.

Protective Activities of Target Compounds against PVY and CMV in vivo. The 135 target compound solution was smeared on the right side of the leaves, and solvent was 136 smeared on the left side, which served as the control. Chenopodium amaranticolor 137 plants were inoculated with PVY (CMV) after 24 hours. The leaves were washed with 138 water after inoculation for 30 minutes. All the plants were cultivated in an incubator 139 under an illumination of 10 000 lx at 28±2 °C. The number of local lesions appearing 140 141 5 to 6 days after inoculation was counted. Measurements were performed in triplicate. Measurements were performed in triplicate. 142

Curative Activities of Target Compounds against TMV in vivo. Nicotiana. tabacum 143 144 L. plants were used to evaluate the anti-TMV activities. TMV at a concentration of 6×10^{-3} mg mL⁻¹ was dipped and inoculated on the whole leaves, which were 145 scattered with silicon carbide beforehand. The leaves were washed with water after 146 147 inoculation for 30 minutes and then dried. The target compound solution was smeared on the right side of the leaves, and solvent was smeared on the left side, which served 148 as the control. All the plants were cultivated in an incubator under an illumination of 149 10 000 lx at 28±2 °C. The number of local lesions appearing 3 to 4 days after 150 inoculation was counted. Measurements were performed in triplicate. 151

152 Protective Activities of Target Compounds against TMV in vivo. The target 153 compound solution was smeared on the right side of the leaves, and solvent was 154 smeared on the left side, which served as the control. *Nicotiana. tabacum* L. plants

155	were inoculated with TMV after 24 hours. The leaves were washed with water after
156	inoculation for 30 minutes. All the plants were cultivated in an incubator under an
157	illumination of 10 000 lx at 28±2 °C. The number of local lesions appearing 3 to 4
158	days after inoculation was counted. Measurements were performed in triplicate.
159	Measurements were performed in triplicate.
160	The inhibitory rate of each compound was calculated as follows ('av' means
161	average):
	av no.of local lesions of control (not treated
	with compound) — av no.of lesions
	Inhibition rate $(\%) = \frac{\text{smeared with compound}}{100\%} \times 100\%$

Inhibition rate $(\%) = \frac{1}{\text{av no.of local lesions of control}} \times 100\%$ (not treated with compound)

162

Physiological and Biochemical Analysis. Compound Treatments and Sampling. 163 Nicotiana. tabacum cv. K326 plants were selected until the four- to six-leaf stage. 164 165 Exactly 500 μ g/mL of **D21** solution was sprayed on the plants, comprising the treatment group, whereas XCLSBM and water belonged to the positive and negative 166 (CK) controls, respectively. The five treatments were CK, D21, CK+PVY, 167 168 XCLSBM+PVY, and D21+PVY. Plant leaves were collected at 1, 3, 5, and 7 days after infection with PVY for the defensive enzyme activity assay, and to determine the 169 chlorophyll content and DEPs. All the test plants were cultivated in an incubator 170 under an illumination of 10 000 lx at 28±2 °C. Measurements were repeated in 171 triplicate. 172

173 *Determination of Enzyme Activities*. The activities of catalase (CAT), phenylalanine 174 ammonia lyase (PAL), peroxidase (POD), and superoxide dismutase (SOD) were 175 tested using enzyme assay reagent kits (Suzhou Comin Bioengineering Institute, Jiangsu, China). MDH activity assay was performed based on the reagent kits from
Beijing Solarbio Science & Technology Co., Ltd.

178 *Chlorophyll Content Test.* Chlorophyll content assay was conducted as previously 179 described³³. The absorption spectra of chlorophyll a (C_a) and b (C_b) were detected at 180 663 and 645 nm, respectively, and chlorophyll total (C_t) were calculated as: $C_t = C_a + C_b$. 181 Measurements were performed in triplicate.

DEPs Analysis. Extraction of Total Tobacco Protein. Total tobacco proteins were 182 extracted as previously described with slight modification^{31, 32}. Approximately 1.5 g 183 184 of leaf sample was ground in liquid nitrogen to power, and homogenized in 5 mL sucrose lysis buffer (0.04 M dithiothreitol, 0.05 M EDTA, 100 mM KCl, 500 mM 185 Tris-HCl, 700 mM sucrose, pH 7.5) at 25 °C for 30 minutes. 5 mL of Tris-phenol was 186 187 added, and then shaken for 30 minutes at 4 °C. Centrifugation for 8 minutes at 6000 rpm, the upper phenol layer was collected. Five volumes of 100 mM ice-cold 188 ammonium acetate in methanol was added, and the sample was stored for 12 hours at 189 -20 °C. Then the sample was centrifuged at 4 °C and 6000 rpm for 15 minutes. The 190 precipitate was collected and washed thrice with cold acetone. The precipitate was 191 dried in Speed Vac (SIM International Group Co., Ltd., NJ, USA) for 5 hours and 192 solubilized in 1 mL of rehydration solution (PH 8.5, 0.04 M DTT, 0.1 M Tris, 8 M 193 urea) for 50 minutes at 37 °C. Protein concentration was measured by the Bradford 194 method. Afterward, solutions containing 100 μ g proteins were collected and alkylated 195 with equal volume of 55 mM iodoacetamide. The mixture was incubated at 25 °C for 196 40 minutes in the dark, and then centrifuged with 3 kDa Millipore for 20 minutes at 197

198	12000 rpm and 4 °C. Next, the protein was digested in 40 μ L of 25 mM NH ₄ HCO ₃
199	with 5 μ g of trypsin (Promega, Madison, USA) at 37 °C and 800 rpm for 8 hours. The
200	suspension was centrifuged for 40 minutes at 12000 rpm and 4 °C. Finally, peptide
201	solution was collected, dried, and solubilized in 45 μ L of H ₂ O (LC/MS grade)
202	containing 0.1 % formic acid (FA) for liquid chromatography-tandem MS
203	(LC-MS/MS) analysis.

Protein Identification. Every peptide sample was resolved using a Nano 204 LC-1DTM plus system with triple-of-flight 5600 mass spectrometer (AB Sciex, 205 206 Foster City, CA, USA). Then, peptide $(8 \ \mu L)$ was obtained via a full-loop injection and then desalted on a ChromXP Trap column (Nano LC TRAP Column, 0.5 207 mm×350 µm, 3 µm C18-CL, 120 Å, AB Sciex, Foster City, CA, USA). The sample 208 209 was washed into a second analytical column (3C18-CL column, 15 cm \times 75 μ m, AB Sciex, Foster City, CA, USA) by using a linear gradient composed of mobile phase 210 A (0.1 % FA, 95% ACN) and B (0.1 % FA, 5 % ACN) for 1.5 h at a flow rate of 5 211 nL/s. Three times TOF 5,600 MS was ran in data-dependent mode to conversion 212 between product ion acquisition and TOF-MS by using the Analyst (R) software 213 (TF1.6) (AB SCIEX, Foster City, CA, USA). Beta-galactosidase digestion was used 214 to calibrate each pair of samples by elution for 10 min and identification for 30 215 minutes. 216

217 *Proteomics Data Analysis.* The MaxQuant³⁴ version 1.5.2.8 of the Andromeda 218 search engine was used, and the LC-MS/MS data was analyzed and quantified based 219 on the PVY proteome downloaded from UniProt (http://www.uniprot.org/). In

Andromeda's main research, the original mass tolerances for the debris and mass of 220 precursors are 20 and 6 ppm, respectively. The global false discovery rate (FDR) 221 222 cut-off was set to 0.01 in protein and peptide identification. Normalized protein intensity was decided via label-free quantification³⁵. The algorithm of the 223 intensity-based absolute quantification (iBAQ) was sorted with the absolute 224 abundance of DEPs³⁶. Protein tables were filtered by eliminating identifications of 225 common contaminants and reverse database. Differentially accumulated proteins 226 were identified by Unpaired two-samples t-test of iBAQ data between control and 227 228 treatment groups.

Bioinformatics Analysis. For functional analyses, we used cluster samples to test the increase/decrease in DEPs common for all three replicates. The Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG) annotation was retrieved from the KEGG Pathway database (http://www.genome.jp/Pathway). The databases were searched using the Uniprot software.

234

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chemistry. Figure 3 shows the synthetic routes of indole derivatives containing a
dithioacetal group. 2-Chloro, 2-bromo, 5-bromo-2-chloro, and 2-methyl-1H-indole-3carbaldehyde A1–A4 were synthesized via Vilsmeier–Haack reaction to determine the
effects of electron-donating and electron-withdrawing groups on the antiviral activity.
C1–C4 were obtained by stirring and refluxing the corresponding A1–A4, B, and
potassium carbonate in acetonitrile for about 3 hours to obtain a yield of 87 % to 93 %.
To systematically study the effect of dithioacetal structure on the virus, we

242	synthesized the target compounds D1-D25 via C1-C4 and nine different thiols
243	(mercaptoethanol, ethyl mercaptan, propanethiol, isopropyl mercaptan,
244	1,2-ethanedithiol, 4-chlorothiophenol, 2,4-dichlorothiophenol, butyl mercaptan
245	<i>n</i> -butyl mercaptan, and dodecyl mercaptan) via Michael addition and achieved a yield
246	of 70 %-95 %. The dithioacetal moiety was further synthesized into a closed loop
247	(Figure 4). The chemical structures of key intermediates C1-C4 and target
248	compounds D1-D28 were identified by NMR and HRMS (Supporting Information
249	I).

Antiviral Activity. *Anti-PVY Activity in Vivo*. The anti-PVY activities of **D1–D28** are summarized in Table 1. **D21** displayed higher antiviral curative activities against PVY with values of 61.6 %, than that of Ningnanmycin (50.1 %), Ribavirin (40.2 %), and lead compound XCLSBM (55.2 %). **D21** exhibited excellent protective activities on PVY with values of 70.1 %, superior to Ningnanmycin (50.8 %), Ribavirin (41.2 %), and lead compound XCLSBM (57.7 %).

256

Table 1

To further confirm the anti-PVY activity of the target compounds, the EC₅₀ of the target compounds anti-PVY were tested and the results were listed in Table 2. Evidently, **D5**, **D21**, and **D24** exhibited good curative activity anti-PVY with EC₅₀ values of 272, 217, and 288 μ g/mL, respectively, which higher than that of Ribavirin (686 μ g/mL), Ningnanmycin (468 μ g/mL), and lead compound XCLSBM (292 μ g/mL). **D2**, **D21**, **D23**, and **D24** exhibited higher protective activity anti-PVY with EC₅₀ of 212, 122, 268, and 244 μ g/mL, respectively, than that of Ribavirin (653 $\mu g/mL$), Ningnanmycin (464 $\mu g/mL$), and lead compound XCLSBM (279 $\mu g/mL$).

Anti-CMV Activity in Vivo. The anti-CMV activities of D1-D28 are displayed in 265 Tables 1 and 2. The protective activities of **D2**, **D11**, and **D21** with EC_{50} of 187, 200, 266 and 156 μ g/mL, respectively, which were higher than that of Ribavirin (690 μ g/mL), 267 Ningnanmycin (439 μ g/mL), and lead compound XCLSBM (240 μ g/mL). The 268 curative effects of D2, D3, D5, D9, D11, D12, D19, D20, and D21 with EC₅₀ levels of 269 199, 220, 202, 194, 225, 224, 217, 202, and 179 µg/mL, respectively, also surpassed 270 that of Ribavirin (704 μ g/mL), Ningnanmycin (498 μ g/mL), and lead compound 271 272 XCLSBM (275 μg/mL). Anti-TMV Activity in Vivo. The anti-TMV activities of D1-D28 were measured 273 and shown in Tables 1 and 2. The protective activities anti-TMV EC_{50} values of **D10**, 274 275 D19, and D21 is 207, 212, and 200 μ g/mL, respectively, which similar to Ningnanmycin (198 μ g/mL), but higher than that of Ribavirin (568 μ g/mL) and lead 276 compound XCLSBM (497 µg/mL). D1-D3, D5, D10, D12, D14, D19–D23, and D25 277 had curative activities with EC₅₀ levels of 225, 255, 209, 215, 322, 220, 364, 342, 212, 278 209, 293, 293, and 241 μ g/mL, respectively, which were higher than that of Ribavirin 279 (668 μ g/mL), Ningnanmycin 382 μ g/mL), and lead compound XCLSBM (517 280 $\mu g/mL$). 281 Table 2 282

283 *Structure–Activity Relationships (SARs)*. Results of preliminary SARs illustrated 284 that the presence of different thiol compounds influenced the anti-PVY activity of 285 indole derivatives containing dithioacetal moiety. This notion was proven by the

286	following data, D21 ($R^2 = Propyl$) > D17 ($R^2 = Tert$ -butyl), D24 ($R^2 = Propyl$) > D8
287	$(R^2 = Tert-butyl)$. Thiol compounds in a linear chain had higher antiviral activity than
288	non-directly linked thiol compounds in which D3 ($R^2 = Propyl$) > D4 ($R^2 = Isopropyl$),
289	D12 ($R^2 = Propyl$) > D13 ($R^2 = Isopropyl$), D16 ($R^2 = Butyl$) > D17 ($R^2 = Tert$ -butyl).
290	No change was observed in terms of the activity when electron-withdrawing (halogen)
291	or donating (methyl group) groups were introduced at the 2 position of the indole.
292	This phenomenon was verified by the following data, D10 (X = Br) \approx D22 (X = CH ₃),
293	D2 (X = Cl) \approx D23 (X = CH ₃), and D5 (X = Cl) \approx D25 (X = CH ₃). The closed-loop
294	structure of dithioacetals were not contribute to antiviral activity (D26, D27, and D28
295	have weak antiviral activity). Hence, the dithioacetal structures are essential for
296	inducing plant resistance, and when $R^1 = Br$, $R^2 = Propyl$, and $X = Cl$, the target
297	compound was the best activator for plant resistance induction.

Physiological and Biochemical Analysis. Plants' immune system is activated 298 when infected with various aggressive pathogens. A range of defense responses can 299 cause strong physiological and biochemical changes in green plants, which can 300 significantly increase chlorophyll content and defense enzyme activity^{39,40}. 301

Effect on Chlorophyll Contents. Chlorophyll content is closely related to 302 photosynthesis and plays a major role in the growth process of plants. $C_{a},\,C_{b},\,\text{and}\,\,C_{t}$ 303 content (Figure 5) decreased after PVY infected the Nicotiana tabacum cv. K326 304 plants in our study. In the **D21** and **D21+PVY** groups, chlorophyll content gradually 305 increased from day 1 to day 5, and the maximum content was observed on day 5 306 (Figure 5A-C). So, D21 can increase chlorophyll content and promote photosynthesis, 307

thereby enhancing defense responses and promoting plant host disease resistance.

309

Figure 5

Influences of Defense Enzyme Activity. Induced resistance is associated to enhance 310 activities of defensive enzymes, such as SOD, POD, PAL, and CAT. SOD is a 311 superoxide anion scavenging enzyme. POD can eliminate the toxicity of hydrogen 312 peroxide, phenols and amines to plants. PAL plays an important role in the normal 313 growth and development of plants and resists bacterial infection. And CAT can 314 scavenge reactive oxygen species. The antioxidant defense mechanisms of these 315 316 enzymes protect plants from oxidative stress induced by reactive oxygen species (ROS)⁴¹. Hence, we systematically analyzed the defense enzyme activity of *Nicotiana* 317 tabacum cv. K326 after D21 treatment. After being infected by PVY, the SOD 318 319 activity of tobacco increased slightly on the first day and then decreased. After D21 treatment, the SOD activity of **D21** group was remarkably higher than that of the 320 CK+PVY group, which reached the maximum on the 3rd day and increased by 46.6% 321 compared with CK group (Figure 6A). The POD activities of the CK+PVY, 322 D21+PVY, and XCLSBM+PVY groups notably increased after infecting the tobacco 323 plant with PVY. Simultaneously, the D21+PVY and XCLSBM+PVY groups reached 324 the maximum (731 and 622 U/mg prot) on the first day. The POD activity of the D21 325 and D21+PVY groups were higher than that of the CK and CK+PVY groups, 326 respectively, during the first to the 7th day (Figure 6B). The PAL activities of the **D21**, 327 D21+PVY and XCLSBM+PVY groups were higher than those of the CK group. The 328 D21+PVY group had the highest activity. The D21+PVY group reached maximum 329

330	on the third day, which was 95.3% higher than the CK+PVY group (Figure 6C).
331	After PVY infection, the CAT activities of the D21 and D21+PVY groups increased
332	than those of the other treatment groups during the monitoring period. The CAT
333	activity of D21, D21+PVY and XCLSBM+PVY treatments first increased and then
334	decreased during the monitoring period, and reached the maximum on the third day
335	(Figure 6D). The results of defense enzyme activity evaluation indicated that D21 can
336	increase the activities of some defensive enzymes (SOD, POD, PAL, and CAT),
337	thereby enhancing defense responses and improving plant resistance.
338	Figure 6
339	Proteomics Analysis. In the determination of physiological and biochemical
340	properties, the most remarkable change in tobacco after D21 treatment was observed
341	on the third day. Therefore, the total proteins of the CK+PVY and D21+PVY groups
342	on the third day were analyzed through label-free LC-MS/MS. The results displayed
343	that 844 proteins were identified (Supporting Information II , Table 2). A total of 785
344	and 733 proteins were identified in the D21+PVY and CK+PVY groups, respectively
345	(Figure 7). In total, 111 (13.2 %) and 59 (7 %) proteins were discovered in the
346	CK+TMV and D21+TMV groups, respectively.
347	Figure 7
348	Figure 8 shows that the down-regulated (blue dots) and up-regulated (red dots) (p <
349	0.05, fold changes > 2.0) in the different treatment groups were 6 and 201 in the

350 CK+PVY and D21+PVY groups, respectively. To determine the expression levels of

these DEPs, a volcanic map was employed.

352

Figure 8

Functional Classification by KEGG. The possible biological pathway of DEPs 353 between the D21+PVY and CK+PVY groups were identified via KEGG analysis. 354 The mode of action triggered by **D21** was determined. The KEGG database categories 355 mapped DEPs at a level of P < 0.05. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 10, five MDHs 356 (EC 1.1.1.37), Malic enzyme, four Thioredoxin (Trxs), calvin cycle protein CP12-3, 357 Ferredoxin (Fd), two Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductases (FTRs), four NADH 358 dehydrogenases, Peroxidase (EC 1.11.1.7) (POD), five Peroxiredoxins (EC 1.11.1.15) 359 360 (Prxs), and photosystem I reaction center subunit IV B (PS I) were upregulated. These specific proteins played an important role in the MDH signaling pathway 361 (Figure 9). They can catalyze the reversible conversion between oxaloacetate (OAA) 362 363 and malate, which are involved in photosynthesis, C4 cycle, TCA cycle, and other metabolic pathways^{43, 44}. The electron transfer components from photosystem I to the 364 target enzyme are ferredoxin, FTRs and thioredoxin⁴⁵. Calvin cycle protein CP12-3 365 acts as a linker and is essential in the assembly of a core complex of PRK/GAPDH. 366 The reversible inactivation of chloroplast enzymes GAPDH and PRK is coordinated 367 during darkness in photosynthetic tissues⁴⁶. Trxs are widely present in plant 368 chloroplasts, and photosynthetic enzymes are photoregulated by FTRs. Trxs are 369 critical for the redox regulation of protein function and signaling through thiol redox 370 regulation⁴⁷. NADH dehydrogenases are involved in the electron transport from 371 light-produced NADPH and Fd to the intersystem plastoquinone pool⁴⁸. The 372 H₂O₂-decomposing antioxidant enzyme group consisted of Prxs. Prx proteins 373

374	disintegrate peroxynitrites and alkyl hydroperoxides and lead to reduction in $H_2O_2^{49}$.
375	PODs increase the plant defense against pathogens by reducing some aromatic
376	compounds (electron donors) and the toxicity of peroxides, and catalyzing the ability
377	of H_2O_2 -dependent redox reduction ⁵⁰ . In this study, D21 increased the protein to
378	regulate the expression level of the MDH and photoreaction system in the chloroplast.
379	Moreover, D21 increased the defense enzyme activity, thereby increasing plant
380	disease resistance.
381	Table 3
382	Figure 9
383	MDH Activity. To verify the effect of D21 on the MDH signaling pathway, we
384	tested the NADP-MDH and NAD-MDH activities. Results (Figure 10) showed that
385	the NAD-MDH and NADP-MDH activities of the D21+PVY group increased by
386	8.4% and 85.5%, respectively, compared with the CK+PVY group on the third day
387	after PVY infection. D21 increased the MDH activity and acted on the MDH
388	signaling pathway.
389	Figure 10
390	In summary, Twenty-eight novel indole derivatives containing dithioacetal moiety
391	were designed, synthesized, and their activities against plant viruses were evaluated
392	methodically. Bioassay results indicated that D21 exhibited higher antiviral protective
393	activity than others target compounds, and superior to the commercial Ribavirin,
394	Ningnanmycin, and lead compound XCLSBM. The excellent antiviral protective
395	activity of D21 was attributed to potential activator for plant resistance induction,

396 which was associated with improvement of chlorophyll content and defense enzyme

397 activities in tobacco treated with D21. KEGG analysis indicated that D21+PVY

398 versus **CK+PVY** group regulated the stress response and related proteins of the MDH

- 399 signaling pathway, as confirmed by the MDH activity evaluation. Therefore, **D21** has
- 400 potential as a novel type of antiviral agent for plants.

401 CONTENT ASSOCIATED

402 Supporting Information

- ⁴⁰³ ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectrum of intermediate C1-C4 and target compound
- 404 **D1–D28** are shown in Supplementary Information I. All identified proteins are shown
- 405 in Support Information II.

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418	Notes
419	The authors declare no competing financial interest.
420	ABRREVIATIONS
421	PVY, potato virus Y; CMV, Cucumber mosaic virus; TMV, tobacco mosaic virus;
422	EC ₅₀ , effective concentrations; XCLSBM, Xiangcaoliusuobingmi; SOD, superoxide
423	dismutase; POD, peroxidase; PAL, phenylalanine ammonia lyase; CAT, catalase; Ca,
424	chlorophyll a; C _b , hlorophyll b; Ct, chlorophyll total; DEPs, differentially expressed
425	proteins; FDR, false discovery rate; iBAQ, intensity-based absolute quantification;
426	KEGG, Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes; SARs, Structure-activity
427	Relationships; Fd, Ferredoxin; FNR, ferredoxin-NADP reductase; FTR,
428	Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductase; MDH, malate dehydrogenase; NTRC, chloroplast
429	NADPH-thioredoxin reductase; OAA, oxaloacetate; OMT, malate/OAA translocators;
430	PS I, photosystem I ; PS II, photosystem I ; ROS, reactive oxygen species; Trx,
431	thioredoxin; TCA, tricarboxylic acid cycle; GAPDH, glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate
432	dehydrogenase; PRK, phosphoribulokinase.

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588 **Information of Figure**

- 589 Figure 1. Chemical structures of Ningnanmycin, Ribavirin, and Indole.
- 590 Figure 2. Design of target compounds.
- 591 Figure 3. Synthetic route for target compounds **D1-D25**.
- 592 Figure 4. Synthetic route for target compounds **D26-D28**.
- 593 Figure 5. Effects of compound D21 on chlorophyll a (A), chlorophyll b (B) and
- chlorophyll total (C), chlorophyll a/b (D) in tobacco leaves. Straight bars signify mean
- 595 \pm SD (n = 3).
- 596 Figure 6. Effects of compound D21 on superoxide dismutase (SOD, A), peroxidase
- 597 (POD, B), phenylalanine ammonia lyase (PAL, C), and catalase (CAT, D) activity in
- tobacco leaves. Straight bars signify mean \pm SD (n= 3).
- 599 Figure 7. Venn diagram shows that the proteome distribution between the D21+PVY

and **CK+PVY** groups changes uniquely and shares proteins.

- 601 Figure 8. Volcano plot of the relative protein abundance changes between the
- 602 **D21+PVY** and **CK+PVY** treatments. The red points show significantly up-regulated
- ⁶⁰³ proteins, whereas the blue points show significantly down-regulated proteins.
- Figure 9. MDH signaling pathway in tobacco response to **D21**. Red color represents
- 605 the up-regulated proteins in this pathway. (Fd, Ferredoxin; FNR, ferredoxin-NADP
- 606 reductase; FTR, Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductase; MDH, malate dehydrogenase;
- 607 NTRC, chloroplast NADPH-thioredoxin reductase; OAA, oxaloacetate; OMT,
- malate/OAA translocators; PS I, photosystem I; PS II, photosystem I; ROS,
- 609 reactive oxygen species; Trx, thioredoxin).

- 610 Figure 10. **D21** effects on the NAD-MDH and NADP-MDH activities of tobacco
- 611 leaves at day 3. Straight bars signify mean \pm SD (n= 3).

				Anti-PVY		Anti-CMV		Anti-TMV	
Compd.	R ¹	R ²	х .	curative	protective	curative	protective	curative	protective
				effect (%)					
D1	Н	2-Hydroxyethyl	Cl	53.1±3.69	57.9±1.69	53.8±2.15	57.4±4.17	59.9±2.93	52.9±2.94
D2	Н	Ethyl	Cl	55.7±3.44	60.1±3.56	60.3±3.03	60.1±3.80	59.5±3.91	55.2±3.23
D3	Н	Propyl	Cl	52.8±1.20	53.1±1.95	59.7±3.87	57.8±4.37	60.4±3.07	58.4±3.90
D4	Н	Isopropyl	Cl	32.0±3.33	31.7±3.50	25.2±0.58	33.6±3.03	44.4±1.66	25.9±3.22
D5	Н	4-Chlorophenyl	Cl	57.4±1.87	56.7±3.02	60.6±4.13	54.3±3.71	61.1±3.34	53.3±4.45
D6	Н	2,4-Dichlorophenyl	Cl	50.7±2.22	50.5±1.70	48.6±3.66	47.0±1.20	53.3±4.11	33.9±3.18
D7	Н	Butyl	Cl	28.6±2.23	21.1±3.67	35.7±3.86	20.4±2.60	33.3±1.93	28.1±4.09
D8	Н	Tert-buty	Cl	25.5±1.40	24.9±2.95	25.5±1.40	21.1±2.19	31.7±3.62	36.1±1.80
D9	Н	Dodecyl	Br	50.2±2.73	47.7±1.29	60.2±3.65	57.3±3.30	51.6±2.70	56.9±3.28
D10	Н	2-Hydroxyethyl	Br	52.9±2.39	49.1±3.74	50.8±2.10	57.7±2.52	56.7±2.62	65.1±3.67
D11	Н	Ethyl	Br	51.0±2.05	45.2±3.30	57.9±2.80	59.2±3.13	50.6±1.91	62.0±2.49
D12	Н	Propyl	Br	51.2±3.24	40.8±3.36	57.9±3.32	55.4±3.14	61.2±1.77	62.1±3.72
D13	Н	Isopropyl	Br	33.6±1.62	32.9±2.52	34.5±2.50	36.8±1.28	40.3±4.15	39.3±1.40
D14	Н	4-Chlorophenyl	Br	47.8±2.38	49.1±0.07	55.7±2.67	53.2±3.82	56.8±3.85	58.4±2.24
D15	Н	2,4-Dichlorophenyl	Br	32.7±1.48	30.7±2.50	49.8±3.38	47.3±3.23	48.5±3.04	55.6±4.44
D16	Н	Butyl	Br	27.9±3.73	45.8±1.65	32.4±3.61	29.6±2.66	33.4±3.17	44.0±4.73
D17	Н	Tert-buty	Br	19.3±3.89	23.3±3.00	28.3±1.64	26.4±3.32	30.1±4.22	33.3±5.01
D18	Н	Dodecyl	Br	45.1±1.96	55.2±4.35	53.5±2.65	52.4±3.43	54.6±3.36	52.7±4.97
D19	5-Br	2-Hydroxyethyl	Cl	35.0±1.08	35.5±3.60	60.8±3.57	55.3±3.52	56.3±3.94	64.3±3.53
D20	5-Br	4-Chlorophenyl	Cl	51.8±3.33	48.4±3.99	60.8±3.39	53.3±2.64	60.1±3.61	50.2±3.30
D21	5-Br	Propyl	Cl	61.6±2.49	70.1±1.45	61.1±2.39	63.2±3.16	59.7±3.46	63.1±3.39
D22	Н	2-Hydroxyethyl	CH_3	50.0±2.40	55.1±2.39	54.5±2.36	50.2±1.46	57.5±2.76	59.1±3.79
D23	Н	Ethyl	CH_3	55.5±3.17	57.8±3.73	53.2±4.19	51.1±1.71	58.4±3.97	60.1±4.73
D24	Н	Propyl	CH_3	57.7±2.25	61.4±3.31	58.5±3.06	50.5±2.52	53.1±2.73	60.6±2.17
D25	Н	4-Chlorophenyl	CH_3	55.7±3.40	55.3±1.63	44.1±3.97	46.1±3.14	58.6±3.84	58.7±4.38
D26	Н	-	Cl	53.8±2.37	42.7±3.19	47.4±3.62	53.9±3.03	51.3±1.50	48.9±3.69
D27	Н	-	Br	43.9±3.82	31.0±4.43	48.4±2.15	50.6±3.36	45±3.39	55.5±4.97
D28	5-Br	-	Cl	54.3±2.88	47.5±3.72	51.8±2.69	52.3±2.75	25.8±3.90	41.7±3.09
Ningnanmycin ^b	-	-	-	50.1±2.88	50.8±2.04	48.2±2.55	49.6±2.71	53.3±1.55	66.6±2.84
XCLSBM ^c	-	-	-	55.2±2.29	57.7±2.62	54.9±2.56	57.8±3.53	48.7±2.70	49.1±1.62
Ribavirin ^d	-	-	-	40.2±2.26	41.2±2.30	41.7±2.07	43.1±2.53	45.5±3.77	48.6±2.05

Table 1. Antiviral Activity of the Target Compounds against PVY, CMV, and TMV at 500 μg/mL^a

⁶¹⁵ ^{*a*}Average of three replicates; ^{*b*}Ningnanmycin, ^{*c*}XCLSBM, and ^{*d*}Ribavirin were used as control, and

616 XCLSBM is lead compound Xiangcaoliusuobingmi.

Table 2. EC₅₀ Values of the Target Compounds against PVY, CMV, and TMV 618 (µg/mL) ^a 619

	EC ₅₀ f	or PVY	EC ₅₀ fo	r CMV	EC ₅₀ for TMV		
Compd.	Curative	Protective	Curative	Protective	Curative	Protective	
	activity	activity	activity	activity	activity	activity	
D1	425±9.13	282±10.6	381±8.43	241±9.46	225±7.82	434±8.31	
D2	285±9.32	212±7.81	199±6.47	187±8.95	255±8.14	366±6.24	
D3	462±7.56	430±8.23	220±7.33	235±6.53	209±6.85	261±9.24	
D4	1620±10.4	1760±6.37	-	1630±10.3	621±9.47	-	
D5	272±7.77	365±9.88	202±7.83	356±7.37	215±8.57	428±6.46	
D6	489±9.61	504±9.91	486±5.72	616±8.86	420±10.3	1570±9.78	
D7	-	-	1470±8.67	-	-	-	
D9	511±11.3	568±5.82	194±6.22	240±8.91	457±5.92	304±7.24	
D10	434±6.97	484±6.55	438±7.13	223±5.73	322±9.24	207±6.73	
D11	462±8.75	627±7.37	225±10.3	200±9.35	423±7.16	228±11.7	
D12	507±6.72	821±8.42	224±6.48	297±5.92	220±9.17	216±7.65	
D13	1450±9.48	1550±7.91	1550±8.85	1430±6.28	-	-	
D14	552±10.4	503±7.86	284±8.43	285±5.23	364±5.66	273±9.53	
D15	1540±5.91	1780±6.95	457±5.62	584±7.75	523±7.92	312±8.55	
D16	-	618±4.18	1720±7.13	-	1650±8.47	723±7.75	
D18	582±8.43	348±8.60	292±9.13	419±8.45	395±5.89	439±5.53	
D19	1170±8.34	1090±5.72	217±6.95	313±6.76	342±8.82	212±8.12	
D20	455±8.83	549±7.14	202±8.94	276±11.0	212±7.51	514±7.28	
D21	217±9.96	122±7.86	179±5.38	156±8.87	209±6.45	200±10.1	
D22	493±9.29	358±6.92	281±4.92	413±7.54	293±7.46	243±7.53	
D23	313±7.86	268±9.84	293±6.54	386±6.46	293±10.4	250±8.22	
D24	288±5.33	244±6.97	234±8.57	403±8.37	432±9.67	241±6.36	
D25	302±10.3	362±10.1	673±9.38	592±9.66	241±6.42	238±9.93	
D26	418±8.26	652±7.74	526±9.24	369±11.6	464±7.42	515±8.36	
D27	632±9.69	1700±5.54	597±6.83	403±7.36	626±8.84	363±5.38	
D28	399±10.6	558±6.26	373±9.44	362±9.33	-	-	
Ningnanmycin ^b	468±4.67	464±8.52	498±6.47	439±7.45	382 ±6.13	198±10.7	
XCLSBM ^c	292±7.48	279±7.67	275±6.94	240±6.77	517 ± 5.72	497±5.88	
Ribavirin ^d	686±8.29	653 ± 5.83	704±9.45	690±5.38	668 ± 7.22	568±8.46	

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^aAverage of three replicates; ^bNingnanmycin, ^cXCLSBM, and ^dRibavirin were used as control, and 620 XCLSBM is lead compound Xiangcaoliusuobingmi.

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625 Table 3. DEPs involved in MDH pathway

Protein ID	Protein Name	Length	Log Ratio	p-Value	Sig Specific
A0A1S4BCV5_TOBAC	Malate dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.37)	220	3.29	1.26×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4A5W5_TOBAC	Malate dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.37)	598	1.11	1.31×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3X0Y5_TOBAC	Malate dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.37)	362	3.21	2.68×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3X2I0_TOBAC	Malate dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.37)	174	2.68	3.61×10 ⁻³	up
A0A1S4D2Y9_TOBAC	Malate dehydrogenase, glyoxysomal-like	215	1.58	4.48×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3X756_TOBAC	Malic enzyme	199	3.28	2.11×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4CY61_TOBAC	Thioredoxin	83	1.22	7.31×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4B5N2_TOBAC	Thioredoxin	164	1.04	4.58×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4C5L2_TOBAC	Thioredoxin Y1	143	5.27	2.65×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4D4V1_TOBAC	Thioredoxin-like	164	1.08	4.81×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3YXG6_TOBAC	Calvin cycle protein CP12-3, chloroplastic	341	10.0		up
A0A1S4BCB4_TOBAC	Ferredoxin	226	2.26	3.09×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4D678_TOBAC	Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductase, catalytic chain (EC 1.8.7.2)	229	3.48	2.27×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4DK72_TOBAC	Ferredoxin-thioredoxin reductase, variable chain-like	162	1.62	4.10×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3ZUX0_TOBAC	NADH dehydrogenase [ubiquinone] 1 alpha subcomplex subunit 2-like	123	1.13	1.77×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4AA06_TOBAC	NADH dehydrogenase [ubiquinone] 1 alpha subcomplex subunit 8-B-like	118	3.87	1.40×10 ⁻³	up
A0A1S4AQI3_TOBAC	NADH dehydrogenase [ubiquinone] 1 beta subcomplex subunit 7-like	184	2.31	8.49×10 ⁻³	up
A0A1S4D700_TOBAC	NADH dehydrogenase [ubiquinone] iron-sulfur protein 5-B-like	186	10.0		up
A0A1S4C8V8_TOBAC	NADH dehydrogenase [ubiquinone] iron-sulfur protein 6	126	-10.0		down
A0A1S4CFV4_TOBAC	Peroxidase (EC 1.11.1.7)	93	10.0		up
D2K7Z2_TOBAC	Peroxiredoxin (EC 1.11.1.15)	168	1.95	2.58×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4A969_TOBAC	Peroxiredoxin (EC 1.11.1.15)	234	1.80	1.02×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S3XK17_TOBAC	Peroxiredoxin (EC 1.11.1.15)	95	1.13	4.49×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4CVN6_TOBAC	Peroxiredoxin (EC 1.11.1.15)	123	3.29	2.52×10 ⁻³	up
A0A1S4DAA2_TOBAC	Peroxiredoxin (EC 1.11.1.15)	258	1.51	1.40×10 ⁻²	up
A0A1S4AFD5_TOBAC	Photosystem I reaction center subunit IV B	180	1.07	9.33×10 ⁻³	up