

1 **L-amino acid oxidase from snake venom: Biotransformation and induction of apoptosis in**
2 **human colon cancer cells**

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24 **Abstract**

25 This study evaluated the potential of antitumor activity of snake venom from *Vipera ammodytes*
26 and L-amino acid oxidase from *Crotalus adamanteus* on different colorectal cancer cell lines
27 through determination of cytotoxic activity by MTT assay, pro-apoptotic activity by acridine
28 orange/ethidium bromide staining, and concentrations of redox status parameters (superoxide,
29 reduced glutathione, lipid peroxidation) by colorimetric methods. The expression of genes
30 involved in the biotransformation process and metabolite efflux was determined by qPCR
31 method, while protein expression of glutathione synthetase and P-glycoprotein were analysed by
32 immunocytochemistry. The analysis of cell death shows that snake venom dominantly leads cells
33 to necrosis. Induction of apoptosis by L-amino acid oxidase was in correlation with oxidative
34 disbalance in cancer cells. Gene expression profile of membrane transporters and *CYP* genes
35 were different in each cell line and in correlation with their sensitivity of treatment. Our results
36 show that L-amino acid oxidase from snake venom is a potent cytotoxic substance with
37 pronounced pro-apoptotic activity. The inhibition of P-glycoprotein suggests that L-amino acid
38 oxidase is a good substance for further research of antitumor effect, with unexpressed potential for
39 occurrence of drug resistance *in vitro*.

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41 **Keywords**

42 Anticancer, ABC transporters, drug resistance, *Vipera ammodytes*

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49 **1. Introduction**

50 There is an increased incidence of colorectal cancer globally, taking the third position in
51 frequency ranking among the most common cancers according to the data of World Health
52 Organization (Sung et al., 2020). The conventional treatment of this disease is demanding, and in
53 addition to standard procedure requires the examination of new therapeutic agents. Recently, due
54 to their numerous favourable pharmacological effects, additional therapies with substances of
55 natural origin have proved to be excellent. Among them, animal products mainly from animal
56 venoms have been increasingly investigated (Roy and Bharadvaja, 2020).

57 Snake venom is a mixture of many substances with numerous side effects on humans; however,
58 some of them can be useful. Nose-horned viper (*Vipera ammodytes*) is the most venomous snake
59 in Europe (Latinović et al., 2016). It belongs to the subfamily of Viperinae, characterized by
60 venoms, composed of a combination of neuro and chemo toxins (Latinović et al., 2016). It
61 contains many active compounds mostly of protein structure such as proteinases, lipases,
62 disintegrins, L-amino acid oxidases, and other molecules (Georgieva et al., 2008). L-amino acid
63 oxidase is a flavoprotein, the enzyme that catalyzes oxidation of L-amino acids. On antitumor
64 investigation, L-amino acid oxidases are only reported to induce apoptosis and disbalance of
65 redox status in cancer cells by producing hydrogen peroxide (Izidoro et al., 2014). Thus, they are
66 a good starting point in preclinical testing of anticancer properties of snake venom, regardless of
67 the fact that they are not a predominant component of the venom, with destructive effects on
68 human cells (Du and Clemetson, 2002).

69 In anticancer treatment, one of the main mechanism of action of natural products is their ability
70 to induce apoptosis (Wang et al., 2018; Milutinović et al., 2019; Nikodijević et al., 2019). Cancer
71 cells avoid apoptosis, which may be associated with the development of resistance to potential
72 anticancer agents. Numerous intracellular mechanisms can lead to resistance such as avoiding

73 apoptosis, biotransformation of drug, reducing accumulation of an antitumor drug in cells which
74 is a direct consequence of their active ejection from the cell, etc. (Komarova and Wodarz, 2005;
75 Torigoe, 2005; Hall et al., 2008; Podolski-Renić et al., 2013). The first phase of
76 biotransformation process in a cancer cell involves hydrolysis, reduction, and oxidation of
77 anticancer drug-mediated by CYP family of enzymes (proteins), which results in its increased
78 solubility (Guengerich, 2007). The second phase involves reactions of glucuronidation,
79 sulfonation, acetylation, methylation, and conjugation with glutathione by GST, Glutathione S-
80 Transferase. At the end of the biotransformation process, the elimination of xenobiotics from the
81 cell is performed by ABC transporters (ATP Binding Cassette) on the cell membrane. Multidrug
82 resistance-associated proteins (MRPs) are a transporter protein family that export drugs
83 previously conjugated to glutathione (Leslie et al., 2005). The MRP1 and MRP2 transporters are
84 members of this family, expressed in both colon cancer tissue and normal intestinal tissue (Kerb
85 et al., 2001; Sandusky et al., 2002; Hoffman et al., 2004). However, the most common
86 transporter, associated with the occurrence of resistance in antitumor therapy is P-glycoprotein
87 (Multidrug resistance protein 1, PGP1). It ejects a large spectrum of xenobiotics and does not
88 require conjugation of substrates with glutathione (Haber et al., 2006).

89 In this study we evaluated the effects of snake venom (SV) from *Vipera ammodytes* and L-amino
90 acid oxidase (LAAO) from *Crotalus adamanteus* against colorectal cancer cell lines (HCT-116,
91 SW-480, and HT-29). A potential cytotoxic effect of SV and LAAO was also observed on
92 normal human keratinocytes (HaCaT). Furthermore, LAAO was examined regarding its impact
93 on redox status parameters (O_2^- , GSH, and lipid peroxidation) and expression of genes (*CYP1A1*,
94 *CYP1B1*, *GSTP1*, *MRP-1*, *MRP-2*, *PGP1*) and proteins (GSS - glutathione synthetase, and
95 PGP1) related to biotransformation process and cancer cell resistance.

96 **2. Materials and methods**

97 **2.1. Chemicals and reagents**

98 Primary antibody GSS, Trichloroacetic acid, Thiobarbituric and Hydrochloric acids were
99 obtained from Sigma Aldrich. Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM) and Ethidium
100 bromide (EB), 3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl]-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT), NBT
101 (Nitro Blue Tetrazolium), absolute ethanol, and chloroform were obtained from SERVA,
102 Germany. Acridine Orange (AO) was from Acros organics, New Jersey, USA. Reverse
103 Transcription Kit and qPCR MasterMix, secondary antibody conjugated with Cy3, Diamidino-2-
104 phenylindole (DAPI), and primary antibody PGP1 were from Thermo Fisher Scientific, US. All
105 solvents and chemicals were of analytical grade.

106 **2.2. Snake venom collection**

107 Snake venom (SV) was collected from *Vipera ammodytes* females in laboratory conditions at
108 Institute for Biological Research "Siniša Stanković" in Belgrade, Serbia in 2018 (permission for
109 animal capture by Serbian Ministry for Energy, Development, and Environmental Protection No:
110 353-01-212/2018-04; permission by Ethical Committee for the use the animals for experimental
111 purposes No: 02-09/18). Snake venom was dried (powder was stored at -20 °C), and dissolved in
112 distilled water before use. Dilutions were made in DMEM. L-amino acid oxidase from snake
113 venom (powder) was purchased, stored at -20 °C, and dissolved in the same way. L-amino acid
114 oxidase from *Crotalus adamanteus* (dry powder), was commercially produced by Sigma Aldrich
115 Co. LLC (<https://www.sigmaaldrich.com/catalog/product/sigma/a9253?lang=en®ion=US>).

116 **2.3. Investigated cell lines**

117 Human cancer cells - HCT-116 colorectal carcinoma cell line, SW-480 and HT-29 colorectal
118 adenocarcinoma cell lines were obtained from American Type Culture Collection, USA. Normal

119 human keratinocytes - HaCaT cell line was obtained from Cell Lines Service, Eppelheim,
120 Germany. All cell lines were cultivated in DMEM, under laboratory conditions described
121 previously (Milutinović et al., 2019).

122 **2.4. MTT assay**

123 The effects of SV and LAAO on colorectal carcinoma HCT-116, SW-480, HT-29 cells, and
124 normal HaCaT keratinocytes viability were examined by MTT assay (Mosmann, 1983). The
125 cells were seeded in a 96-well plate (10^4 cells/well) and after a pre-incubation period of 24 h
126 were treated with 100 μ l of SV (concentration range of 0.01-10 μ g/ml) and LAAO
127 (concentration range of 1-50 μ g/ml). Normal cells were treated with concentration range of 1-
128 200 μ g/ml by SV and 1-250 μ g/ml by LAAO. Yellow MTT was reduced in live cells to purple
129 formazan and dissolved in DMSO. Untreated cells served as a control. At the end of the
130 incubation with MTT, 150 μ l of DMSO was added to each well and the absorbances were read
131 on an ELISA reader at 550 nm. Percentages of cell viability were obtained as the ratio between
132 the absorbance of treated and untreated cells, multiplied by 100. The IC_{50} values were performed
133 from the dose response curves by CalcuSyn program. The assay was performed 24 and 72 h after
134 the applied treatments.

135 **2.5. Cell death quantification**

136 The type of induced cell death in HCT-116, SW-480, HT-29, under the influence of SV and
137 LAAO was performed by Acridine orange/ethidium bromide (AO/EB) double staining assay
138 (Baskić *et al.* 2006). The cells were seeded in a 96-well plate (10^4 cells/well) and after a pre-
139 incubation period of 24 h treated with 100 μ l of SV and LAAO (2 and 5 μ g/ml). Untreated cells
140 served as controls. After the incubation of treatment, 10 μ l of AO and EB dye were added to
141 each sample, and the cells were counted immediately after staining. The dyes were pre-dissolved,

142 100 µg per milliliter of distilled water. The percentages of viable (V), apoptosis (early - EA, and
143 late - LA), and necrosis (N) cells were calculated proportionally, concerning the total cell
144 number per sample (a minimum of 300 cells was counted in each sample). The assay was
145 performed using an inverted fluorescent microscope (Nikon Ti-Eclipse) at 400x magnification,
146 24 h after treatment.

147 **2.6. Impact of treatments on redox status parameters**

148 **2.6.1. Determination of superoxide anion radical**

149 The level of superoxide anion radical ($O_2^{\cdot-}$) was determined by NBT assay (Auclair and Voisin,
150 1985). The cells were seeded in a 96-well plate (10^4 cells/well) and treated with 100 µl of LAAO
151 (1, 2, 5, and 10 µg/ml). After the end of the treatment, 10 µl of NBT solution at the concentration
152 of 5 mg/ml was added to the each well, followed by an incubation period of 45 min at 37 °C. At
153 the end of the incubation, 10 µl of DMSO was added to each well and the absorbances were read
154 on an ELISA reader at 550 nm. The absorbances were used to calculate the concentration of $O_2^{\cdot-}$,
155 expressed in nmol/ml, according to the formula: $\text{nmol NBT/ml} = A/0.015 \times V_{\text{cuv}} / V_{\text{ex}}$ (A -
156 absorbance; V_{cuv} - total volume of solution in the well = 120 µl; V_{ex} - cell volume with
157 treatment = 100 µl; 0.015 - molar extinction coefficient for monoformazan ($15,000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$).
158 The results were firstly expressed in nmol/ml and then calculated according to the number of
159 viable cells in each applied concentration (data obtained by MTT).

160 **2.6.2. Determination of reduced glutathione**

161 The concentration of reduced GSH was determined by the colorimetric method (Baker et al.,
162 1990). The cells were seeded in a 96-well plate (5×10^4 cells/well) and treated with 100 µl of
163 LAAO (1, 2, 5, and 10 µg/ml). At the end of the treatment incubation time, the plate was
164 centrifuged at 1000 rpm for 10 min. The medium was replaced with 100 µl 2.5% sulfosalicylic

165 acid followed by incubation on ice for 15 min. After the incubation time, the plate was
166 centrifuged for 15 min at 1000 rpm. 50 µl of each sample was added to new microtiter plate in
167 triplicate. then 100 µl of reaction mixture was added to each well (reaction mixture containing 1
168 mM NADPH, 0.7 U GSH reductase per milliliter of reaction mixture, 1 mM DTNB, dissolved in
169 DMSO and supplemented with PBS to the required volume). Colour reaction was measured by
170 spectrophotometer at 405 nm. The results were firstly expressed in nmol/ml (related to standard
171 curve constituted of known molar BSA concentrations), and then calculated concerning the
172 number of viable cells (related to the results of MTT assay) after 24 h.

173 **2.6.3. Determination of malondialdehyde**

174 The concentration of malondialdehyde (MDA) as an indicator of lipid and membrane damage
175 under conditions of oxidative stress was determined by TBARS assay (Buege and Aust, 1987).
176 The cells were seeded in a 6-well plate (10^6 cells/well) and treated with 100 µl of LAAO (1, 2, 5,
177 and 10 µg/ml). Absorbances were observed on a biophotometer at 405 nm (Eppendorf
178 BioPhotometer plus), and protein concentration was determined based on the standard curve
179 factor. The rest of the supernatant was mixed with 1 ml of the reaction mixture TCA-TBA-HCl
180 (15% of Trichloroacetic acid; 0.375% of Thiobarbituric and 0.25 M Hydrochloric acid).
181 Supernatant with reaction mixture was warmed at 90 °C, 30 min, then refrigerated for 5 min on
182 ice, and vortexed (10 min on 6600 rpm, 4 °C). The supernatant was transferred to 96 well plate
183 (100 µl per well) and absorbance was measured at 405 nm on Microplate Reader (ELISA RT-
184 2100C). The concentration of MDA was calculated by the formula previously described in
185 Buege and Aust, 1987. The results were presented in pmol/mg of protein.

186 **2.7. Immunocytochemistry**

187 The effects of LAAO on GSS and PGP1 protein expression in HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29
188 cells treated with LAAO were detected by the immunofluorescence method (Higuchi et al.,
189 2001). Untreated cells served as control. The cells were seeded in 6-well plate on glass
190 coverslips (5×10^4 cells/well) and after a pre-incubation period of 24 h were treated with 2 ml of
191 LAAO (2 and 5 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). At the end of the treatment time, the supernatant was aspirated, cells
192 were washed with PBS and fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde (20 min, RT). This was followed
193 by a series of three washings with PBS and permeabilization of the cell membrane with methanol
194 at -20°C , for a few seconds, and then Methanol was also washed three times with PBS, followed
195 by blocking the cells with 1% BSA for 20 min. The cells were directly transferred from BSA to
196 the primary antibody (GSS and PGP1) of a certain concentration or ratio (PGP1 at the
197 concentration of 10 $\mu\text{g/ml}$, and GSS in the ratio 1:100), and incubated for 1 h. After the
198 incubation, the primary antibody was washed with PBS three times for 15 min. Under the same
199 procedure, the cells were incubated with the secondary antibody. The secondary antibody was
200 conjugated to the fluorescent dye Cy3 (in the dark, RT). The ratio in which the secondary
201 antibody was added was 1:200, and in addition to the fluorescent dye it possessed, the dye was
202 added to detect nuclei at a dilution of 1:1000 (DAPI). The secondary antibody was washed in the
203 same manner, and then the coverslips were glued to the glass slides with polyvinyl alcohol
204 medium, so that the cells were immersed in it. The preparations were dried and stored in the
205 dark. The cells were visualized using an inverted fluorescent microscope (Nikon Ti-Eclipse) at
206 600x magnification, 24 h after treatment. Micrograph processing and quantification was
207 performed by ImageJ software package (Wayne Rasband, ImageJ, <http://rsb.info.nih.gov/ij/>).
208 Measuring cell fluorescence using ImageJ was described in detail

209 (<https://theolb.readthedocs.io/en/latest/imaging/measuring-cell-fluorescence-using-imagej.html>)

210 The results are presented as relative fluorescence per cell.

211 **2.8. Relative gene expression analysis - qPCR**

212 Isolation of total RNA from HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29 control and cells treated with LAAO
213 was performed by the published method (Chomczynski and Sacchi, 1987). RNA concentration in
214 all samples was measured on a biophotometer. The samples were stored at -80 °C until analysis.
215 The cells were seeded in a T25 cm² flask and treated with 5 ml of LAAO (2 and 5 µg/ml).
216 Transcription of single-stranded RNA to complementary DNA was performed on Eppendorf
217 Mastercycler PCR by commercial kits for Reverse Transcription (cDNA Reverse Transcription
218 Kit, Applied Biosystems). Quantification of mRNA expression of target genes by qPCR (qPCR
219 MasterMix, Applied Biosystems) on Quantitative Real-Time system (Applied Biosystems
220 7500/7500 Fast Real-Time PCR Software v2.0), was previously described in Nikodijević et al.,
221 2019. The analysis was performed 24 h after treatment. Gene-specific primers are shown in
222 Table S.1.

223 **2.9. Statistical analysis**

224 The data are expressed as mean ± standard error (SE). All analyses were examined in three
225 individual experiments (in triplicate for each dose). Statistical significance was determined using
226 the Student's t-test or the one-way ANOVA test for multiple comparisons. A p-value < 0.05 was
227 considered significant.

228 **3. Results**

229 **3.1. Cytotoxic effects of SV and LAAO**

230 The effects of SV and LAAO on colon cancer (HCT-116, SW-480 and HT-29) and normal
231 (HaCaT) cell viability were measured by MTT colorimetric assay. Both SV with all components

232 and LAAO induced a significant reduction of cell viability on all investigated cell lines (Fig.
 233 S.1). IC₅₀ values were calculated from cell viability curves by using CalcuSyn program and
 234 expressed in µg/ml, 24 and 72 h after treatments (Table 1). The data are means ± SE of two
 235 independent experiments.

236 **Table 1.** SV and LAAO cytotoxic effect on HCT-116, SW-480, HT-29, and HaCaT cells
 237 expressed by IC₅₀.

Cell line	SV (µg/ml)		LAAO (µg/ml)	
	24 h	72 h	24 h	72 h
HCT-116	1.45±0.04	1.16±0.03	1.69±0.02	0.92±0.01
SW-480	1.19±0.01	2.16±0.03	1.84±0.06	1.51±0.01
HT-29	2.88±0.06	2.05±0.05	7.80±0.08	1.41±0.06
HaCaT	7.34±0.08	1.99±0.03	7.51±0.08	3.80±0.11

238 According to IC₅₀ values, SV and LAAO induced pronounced time-dependent cytotoxicity, with
 239 the exception of SW-480 cells treated by SV. Normally, HaCaT cell line is less sensitive to
 240 treatments compared to cancer cells. The comparison of the sensitivity between different cancer
 241 cell lines from the colon evidently showed that the HT-29 cell line was the least sensitive 24 h
 242 after the applied treatment.

243 3.2. Influence of SV and LAAO on type of cell death

244 The type of induced cell death in the investigated treatments was determined by the cell staining
 245 with AO and EB, and observed on fluorescent microscope. Micrographs clearly showed
 246 morphological changes of the cells after the application of both treatments. Morphological
 247 changes on apoptotic cells were observed through different stages of cell condensation and
 248 marked as early (EA) and late (LA) stages of apoptosis. Necrotic cells (NC) were red-colored on
 249 micrographs (Fig. 1).

250 The venom from *Vipera ammodytes* induced a high percentage of apoptosis followed by necrosis
251 especially in concentration of 2 µg/ml, compared to LAAO treatment. Necrosis was dominant
252 type of cell death in treatment by 5 µg/ml of SV (Fig. 2, Table S.2). The results showed that
253 LAAO induced apoptosis dominantly on all tested cell lines (early and late stages), while the
254 percentage of necrosis was non-significant (Fig. 2, Table S.2).

255 **3.3. Influence of LAAO on redox status**

256 The concentration of superoxide anion radical in HCT-116 and SW-480 cells under the influence
257 of LAAO significantly increased dose-dependently compared to controls (Fig. 3A). HT-29 cells
258 were stable and maintained approximately the same level of O₂⁻ in control and treated cells, with
259 the exception of higher concentration (10 µg/ml), where the increase of tested parameter was
260 evident (Fig. 3A).

261 The level of reduced glutathione GSH significantly increased under the dose-dependend influence
262 of LAAO on HCT-116 and SW-480 cell lines compared to controls. In HT-29 cells the smallest
263 change in concentration of glutathione was observed, except in the highest concentration of 10
264 µg/ml, where the increase was significant (Fig. 3B).

265 The concentration of MDA significantly and dose-dependently increased in HCT-116 cells. In
266 SW-480 and HT-29 cells the dose-dependent effect was not detected, and results showed a
267 significant decrease of MDA concentration concerning control, except the lowest concentration
268 in the HT-29 cell line, which was unchanged (Fig. 3C).

269 **3.4. P-glycoprotein 1 and glutathione synthetase protein expression**

270 Protein expression of PGP1 was determined by immunostaining and fluorescent microscope
271 observation. The level of this protein decreased in all cells under the influence of LAAO, except

272 in HT-29 (in a concentration of 2 µg/ml), where it slightly increased compared to controls (Fig. 4
 273 and 5).

274 The level of GSS protein expression increased in HCT-116 and HT-29 in relation to control. An
 275 increased level of GSS protein expression in the SW-480 cell line was nonsignificant.

276 3.5. Expression of biotransformation-related genes

277 The influence of LAAO on mRNA expression of genes involved in metabolic process and efflux
 278 of xenobiotics (*CYP1A1*, *CYP1B1*, *GSTP1*, *MRP1*, *MRP2*, and *PGPI*) in HCT-116, SW-480,
 279 and HT-29 cells was detected by the qPCR method.

280 The mRNA expression for metabolic enzymes (*CYP1A1*, *CYP1B1*, *GSTP1*) significantly
 281 increased in a dose-dependent manner under the influence of LAAO on treated HCT-116 cells
 282 compared to controls. In SW-480 cells, the level of mRNA for *CYP1B1* (in higher
 283 concentration) and *GSTP1* (in both applied concentrations) genes slightly increased, while the
 284 LAAO did not affect *CYP1A1* gene expression. In HT-29 cells, *CYP1A1* and *CYP1B1*
 285 significantly increased, while the *GSTP1* slightly increased compared to controls (Table 2).

286 **Table 2.** Expression of mRNA of genes involved in biotransformation process on HCT-116,
 287 SW-480, and HT-29 cells, under the influence of LAAO. The data are means ± SE of two
 288 independent experiments. *p < 0.05 compared to untreated cells. The result is presented as the
 289 fold change in mRNA expression in a target sample, relative to a control sample normalized to a
 290 reference gene. The relative gene expression was calculated according to the $2^{(-\Delta\Delta Ct)}$ method.

291

		LAAO (µg/ml)					
		<i>CYP1A1</i>	<i>CYP1B1</i>	<i>GSTP1</i>	<i>MRP1</i>	<i>MRP2</i>	<i>PGPI</i>
	Ctrl	1	1	1	1	1	1
HCT-116	2	7.52±0.04*	2.43±0.01*	1.34±0.01*	0.37±0.001*	1.55±0.01*	15.89±0.90*

	5	8.94±0.02*	4.59±0.001*	2.36±0.005*	1.05±0.001	1.91±0.01*	20.97±1.20*
SW-480	2	1.01±0.001	1.02±0.0001	1.22±0.001*	0.90±0.001*	1.20±0.01*	0.30±0.001*
	5	1.00±0.0001	1.71±0.001*	1.41±0.001*	1.06±0.001	1.42±0.01*	0.34±0.001*
HT-29	2	3.32±0.02*	3.81±0.0001*	1.08±0.001	1.74±0.001*	1.32±0.01*	0.71±0.001*
	5	2.35±0.01*	4.56±0.001*	1.02±0.001	1.56±0.001*	1.20±0.001*	0.65±0.001*

292

293 The efflux of metabolized treatment (substance) in the cells was examined by membrane
 294 transporters (MRP1, MRP2, PGP1). In HCT-116 and SW-480 cells, the expression of the *MRP1*
 295 gene decreased in smaller concentration of LAAO, while it remained almost unchanged in higher
 296 concentration. The expression of *MRP2* gene increased. In HT-29 cells, both tested genes
 297 increased (dose dependence was not observed) (Table 2). The expression of mRNA for *PGP1*
 298 gene significantly increased in HCT-116 cells. In SW-480 and HT-29, the decrease in *PGP1*
 299 expression was observed.

300 4. Discussion

301 Considering the fact that animal products and their active compounds conform some positive and
 302 useful effects in therapy against cancer (Nikodijević et al., 2019; Roy and Bharadvaya, 2020), the
 303 investigation in this field is necessary. Snake venoms have been less studied due to their
 304 destructive activity on normal cells, so in literature there are only a few data about anticancer
 305 properties of their components (Izidoro, 2014).

306 Our results point to significant cytotoxicity of SV and LAAO, due to inhibition of proliferation
 307 in all examined cell lines originating from colon cancer (HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29), and
 308 lower sensitivity to normal HaCaT keratinocytes used as control for cytotoxicity.

309 The observed IC₅₀ values and proapoptotic activity of LAAO on colon cancer cells indicate
 310 noticeable activity, compared to commercial cytostatic, 5-fluorouracil (IC₅₀ values of 3.2, 10.07,

311 and 10.00 μ M for HCT-116, SW and HT-29 respectively) after 72 h of treatment (Ikehata et al.,
312 2014). Among different colon cancer cells, the HT-29 cell line is the least sensitive, while the
313 HCT-116 was the most sensitive to LAAO treatment. Other authors reported similar sensitivity
314 to the commercial cytostatic 5-fluorouracil, where HCT-116 cells were more sensitive compared
315 to SW-480 and HT-29 (Ikehata et al., 2014). It has been reported that various mechanisms are
316 included in different sensitivity of these cell lines, such as high expression of microRNA 21 in
317 HT-29 (Deng et al., 2013) and different phenotype (Rodrigues et al., 1990). In most cancers,
318 including colorectal, chromosomal instability (CIN) occurred, thus leading to an abnormal
319 number of chromosomes and microsatellite instability – MIN (Rodrigues et al., 1990;
320 Bhattacharyya et al., 1994). The SW-480 and HT-29 lines have the CIN phenotype (Loeb, 1991;
321 Camps, 2006), mutation in p53 gene and preserved mismatch repair system, while the HCT-
322 116 has MIN phenotype, p53 wild-type, with damaged system for repair (Rodrigues et al.,
323 1990; Yao et al., 2005; Howells et al., 2007).

324 In addition to the cytotoxicity of SV and LAAO, the mechanism of their activity is very
325 important for further investigation of potential targets and therapeutic application. Although the
326 SV is a potent cytotoxic agent, our results observed by AO/EB microscope method, show that
327 SV dominantly induced necrosis when applied in higher concentration. The occurrence of cancer
328 cell necrosis in high percentages under the treatment by SV as a mixture of components is an
329 unfavorable type of induced cell death and is not applicable as further therapy. Therefore, for
330 further evaluation of antitumor potential, only the LAAO was considered, as a substance with
331 dominant pro-apoptotic activity and insignificant necrotic activity.

332 The induction of apoptosis is commonly related to oxidative imbalance in cancer cells as a result
333 of the application of cytotoxic substances (Milutinović et al., 2019). The concentrations of

334 monitored redox status parameters, O_2^- , and reduced glutathione increase and correlate with the
335 observed cytotoxic and proapoptotic activity (Matés et al., 2008). In our paper, the changes in
336 their concentrations under the influence of LAAO were least pronounced in the HT-29 line, and
337 the most increased in the HCT-116. The increased O_2^- mainly leads to induction of apoptosis
338 through disturbance of mitochondria membrane integrity and activation of mitochondrial
339 apoptotic pathway (Matés et al., 2008; Milutinović et al., 2019). The increased GSH, as part of
340 the antioxidant defense system, indicates that the cells are protecting themselves from aggressive
341 treatments that produce high levels of oxidative stress (Lushchak, 2012). This was confirmed by
342 increased protein expression of GSS, the enzymes involved in glutathione *de novo* synthesis in
343 the highest applied concentration of LAAO. Oxidative stress can lead to damages of cells and
344 cellular components, such as lipids in cell membrane (Avery, 2011). The concentration of
345 malondialdehyde (MDA), as an indicator of oxidative damage of membrane lipids, significantly
346 dose-dependently increased in LAAO treated HCT-116 cells, compared to controls, which was
347 not observed in SW-480 and HT-29 cells, thus suggesting no damage of the membrane. Rapid
348 disintegration of the membrane due to oxidative stress leads to necrosis (Jaeschke and
349 Ramachandran, 2018), which was not observed in the LAAO treatment.

350 One of the main problems in anticancer therapy lies in the development of cancer cell resistance
351 to drugs (Housman et al., 2014). The metabolism of drugs in cancer cells has an important role in
352 their future activity, whereby more or less toxic compounds may be formed or ejected from the
353 cell (Gao et al., 2013). Our study presents an expression profile for membrane transporter genes,
354 potentially responsible for the development of resistance to the LAAO, as a potent cytotoxin in
355 three different colon cancer cell lines. It has previously been reported that PGP1 is the highest
356 expressed in colon cancers, followed by MRP1 and MRP2 (Berggren et al., 2007). Our results

357 indicate differences in membrane transporter gene expression between different cell lines
358 originated from the colon. The *PGP1* mRNA expression increased in HCT-116 cells, while in
359 SW-480 and HT-29 it decreased on both gene and protein levels. The increase of *PGP1* on gene-
360 level indicates that HCT-116 may develop resistance to the investigated treatment in the future,
361 or after a long time of exposure to the treatment, because the level of PGP1 protein expression
362 reduces after 24 h. This explains several previously published results where HCT-116 cells
363 recover after prolonged exposure to different treatments (Ćurčić et al., 2012; Alimpić et al.,
364 2015). On the other hand, decreased PGP1 gene and protein expression in SW-480 and HT-29
365 cells is a precious outcome in terms of developing LAAO as an inhibitor of membrane
366 transporter and overcoming of resistance. Many natural substances mainly phenols from plants
367 possess this ability to reduce the expression or activity of efflux pumps, which can be used to
368 improve the efficacy of the anticancer treatment (Sjostedt et al., 2017; Milutinović et al., 2019).
369 Other investigated transporters were unequally expressed in different colon cell lines treated by
370 LAAO. Besides P-gp, *MRP2* mRNA expression also increased in HCT-116 cells as well as in
371 SW-480, while *MRP1* decreased or unchanged in SW-480. Both, *MRP1* and 2 increased in HT-
372 29, suggesting that these transporters may have a role in the ejection of LAAO from HT-29 cells
373 and be responsible for the lowest sensitivity to the treatment.

374 For their activity, the mentioned transporters mainly required previously metabolized drugs by
375 CYP and other enzymes, conjugated to glutathione (as part of the glutathione detoxification
376 system) by *GSTP1* (Bredel, 2001). According to the results and increased mRNA expression for
377 genes involved in the biotransformation process and drug metabolism, it is evident that LAAO is
378 a substrate for these enzymes. The most pronounced expression of the *CYP* genes (*CYP1A1* and
379 *CYP1B1*) in HCT-116 cells indicates the need for an intensive metabolism of LAAO. However,

380 the results of observed cytotoxicity in this cell line may in that case suggest formation of more
381 active metabolite or production of ROS (Reactive oxygen species) as a mediator of apoptosis and
382 cytotoxicity.

383 This study provides significant results about insufficiently investigated L-amino acid oxidases
384 from snake venom, as potent cytotoxic and proapoptotic agents for colon cancer cells.
385 Additionally, our results highlight the main mechanism of their activity and achieved anticancer
386 properties, and induction of apoptosis mediated by changes in redox status. A novel result is that
387 the LAAO changes mRNA expression of genes associated with biotransformation processes and
388 the development of drug resistance. The result indicates different expression profiles in different
389 colon cancer cells and potential prediction for long-term treatment, with minimum possibility for
390 occurrence of drug resistance.

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395 **Declaration of interest statement**

396 There is no conflict of interests.

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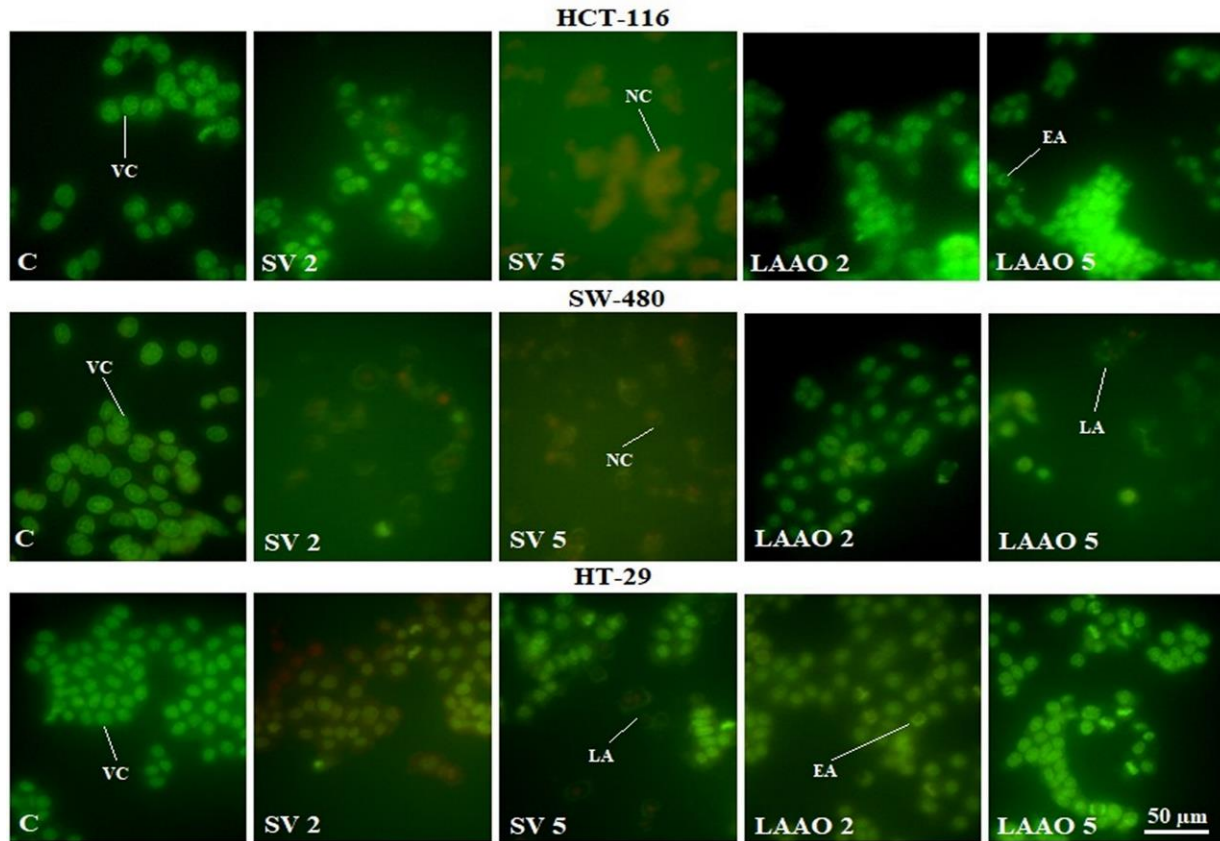
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547 **Figure captions**

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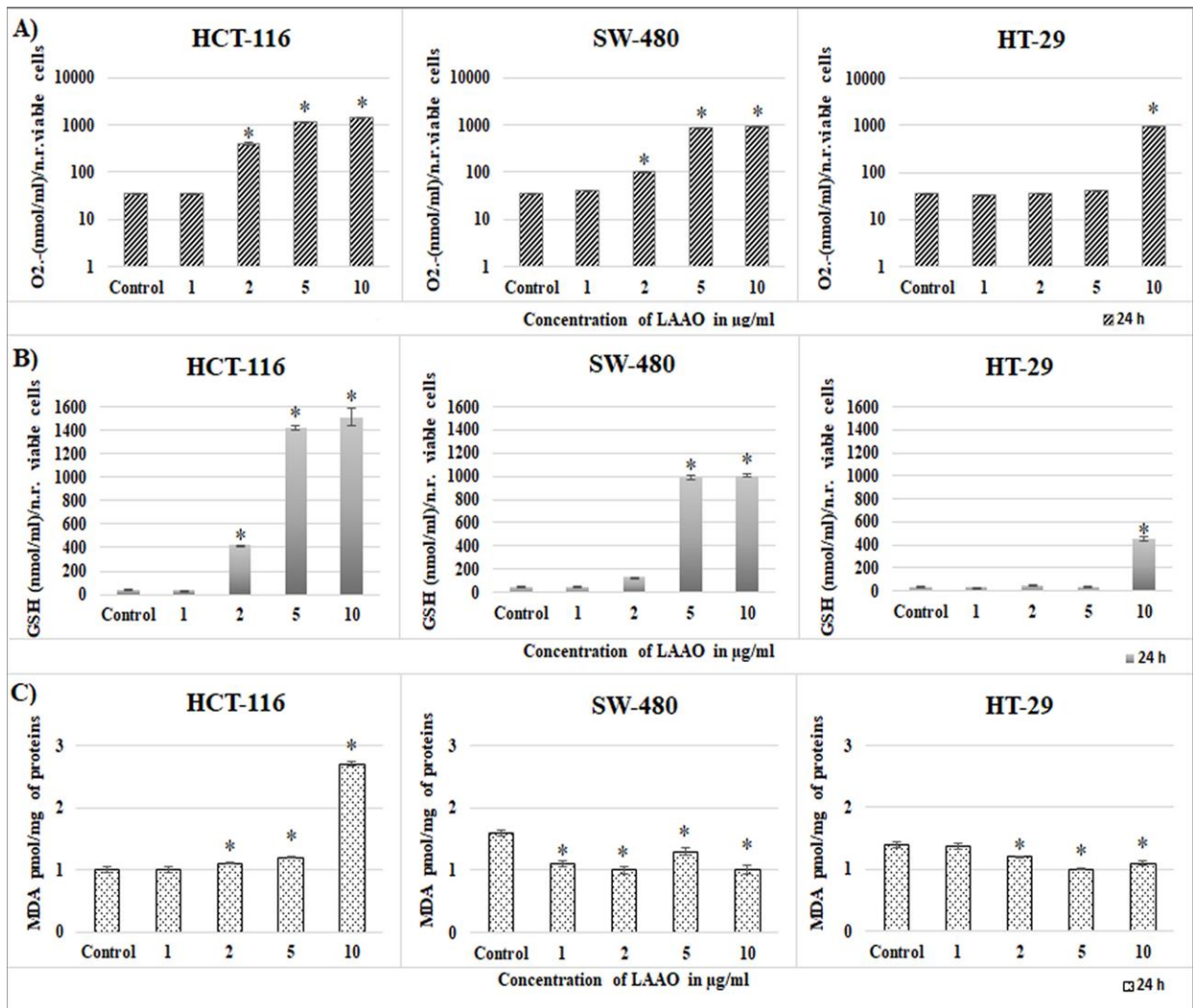
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550 **Fig. 1.** Morphology of HCT-116, SW-480 and HT-29 control (C) and cells treated by LAAO and
 551 SV in a concentration of 2 and 5 $\mu\text{g/ml}$, detected by AO/EB double staining, 24 h after
 552 treatments (VC – viable cells, EA – Early Apoptosis; LA -Late Apoptosis; NC – Necrosis).



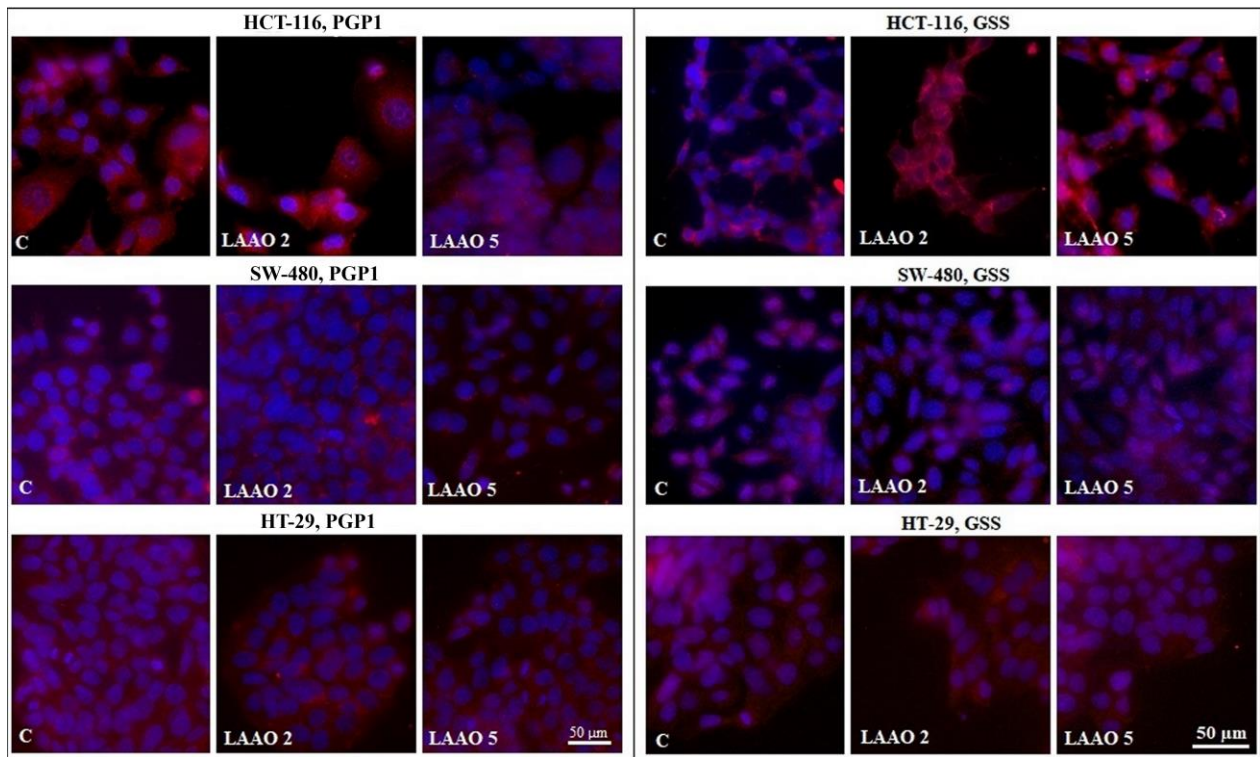
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554 **Fig. 2.** Percentage of viable (VC), apoptotic (EA - Early Apoptosis; LA -Late Apoptosis) and
 555 necrotic (NC) HCT-116, SW-480 and HT-29 cells after 24h of treatment with SV (2 and 5
 556 µg/ml) or LAAO (2 and 5 µg/ml).



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558 **Fig. 3.** Influence of LAAO on redox status parameters on HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29 cells,
 559 after 24 h; **A)** The concentration of superoxide anion radical, presented in nmol/ml and
 560 calculated per number of viable cells; **B)** The concentration of GSH, presented in nmol/ml and
 561 calculated per number of viable cells; **C)** The concentration of MDA, presented in pmol/mg of
 562 protein. The data are means \pm SE of two independent experiments. * $p < 0.05$ compared to
 563 untreated cells.

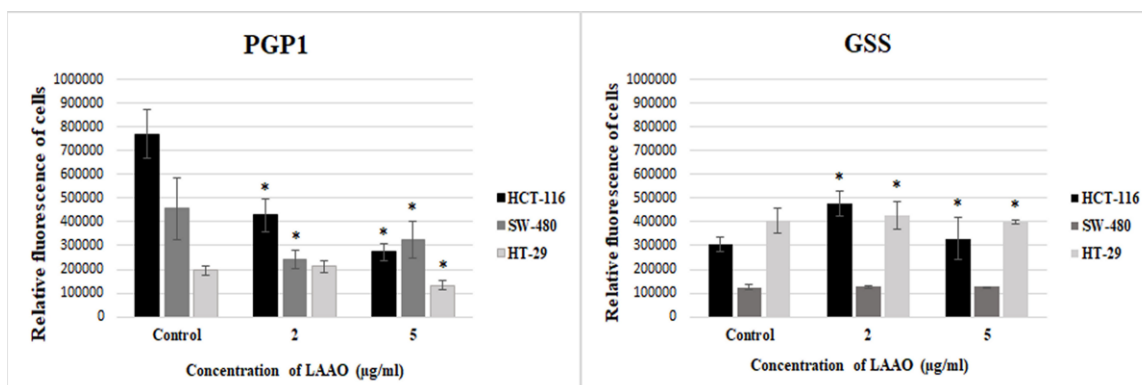


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565 **Fig. 4.** Protein expression of P-gp on HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29 control (C) and cells treated
 566 with LAAO (2 and 5 $\mu\text{g/ml}$), 24 h after treatments. The cells were visualized using an inverted
 567 fluorescent microscope at 600x magnification. The nuclei are colored blue (DAPI color), P-gp is
 568 red (secondary antibody conjugated to Cy3). The relative intensity of fluorescence in control and
 569 treated cells was measured by the ImageJ program.

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 573 **Fig. 5.** The level of P-gp and GSS on HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29 control and cells treated
 574 with LAAO (2 and 5 µg/ml), 24 h after treatments. The data are means ± SE of two independent
 575 experiments. *p < 0.05 compared to untreated cells.

576
 577 Supplementary material

578 **Table 1.** Specific human gene primers.

Genes	Forward sequence	Reverse sequence
<i>β-actin</i>	5'-AAGCAGGAGTATGACGAGTCCG-3'	5'-GCCTTCATACATCTCAAGTTGG-3'
<i>CYP1A1</i>	5'-TAGACACTGATCTGGCTGCAG-3'	5'-GGGAAGGCTCCATCAGCATC-3'
<i>CYP1B1</i>	5'-TGATGGACGCCTTTATCCTCTC-3'	5'-CATAAAGGAAGGCCAGGACATA-3'
<i>GSTP1</i>	5'-TCAAAGCCTCCTGCCTATAC-3'	5'-AGGTGACGCAGGATGGTATT-3'
<i>MRP1</i>	5'-ACCCTAATCCCTGCCAGAG-3'	5'-CGCATTCCTTCTTCCAGTTC-3'
<i>MRP2</i>	5'-ATACCAATCCAAGCCTCTAC-3'	5'-GAATTGTCACCCTGTAAGAG-3'
<i>PGP1</i>	5'- GCCTGGCAGCTGGAAGACAAATACACAA AATT-3'	5'- CAGACAGCAGCTGACAGTCCAAGAACAGGA CT-3'

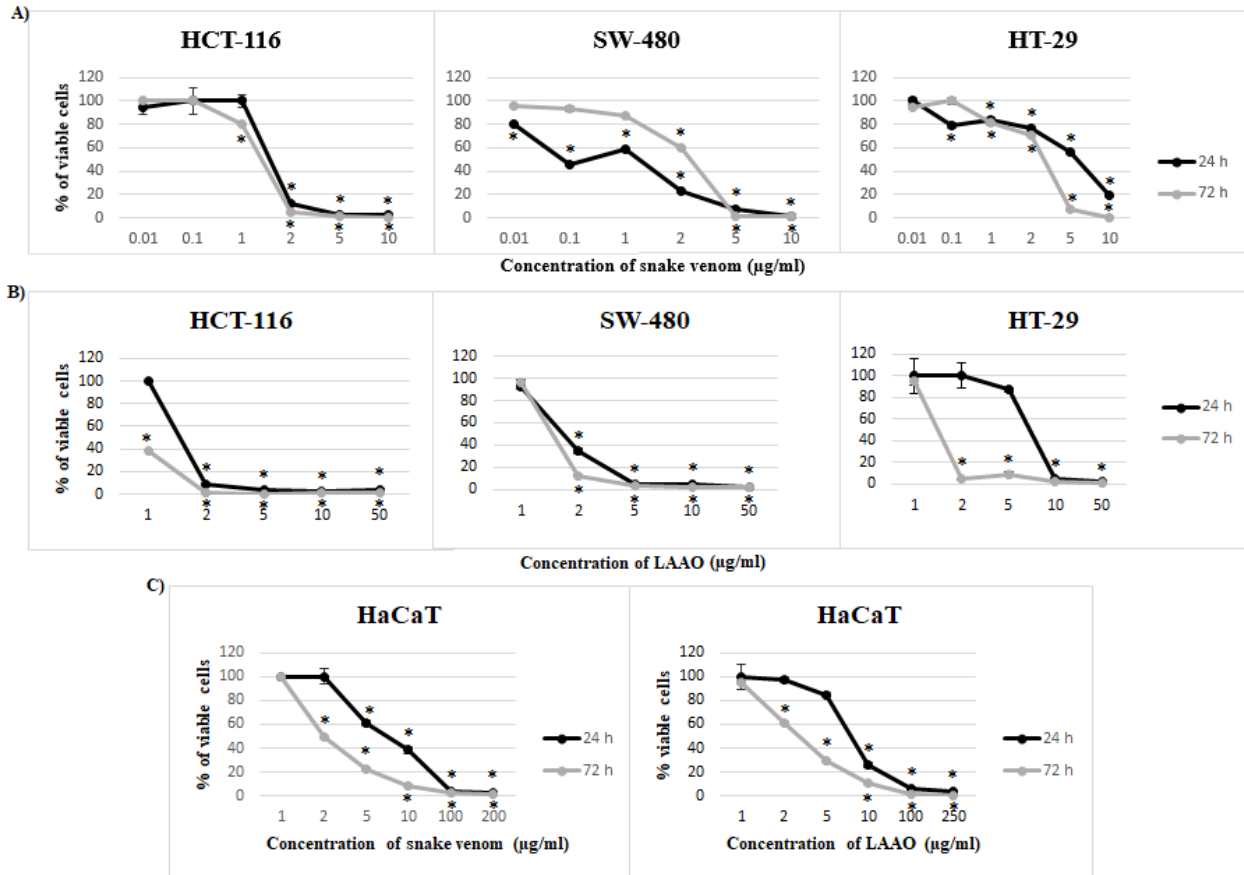
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585 **Table 2.** Effect of SV and LAAO on HCT-116, SW-480, and HT-29 cells. Results are presented
 586 as percentage of viable (VC), apoptotic (early-EA, late-LA) and necrotic (N) cells, 24 h after
 587 treatments by SV and LAAO (2 and 5 µg/ml). The results are presented as the mean of three
 588 independent experiments ± standard error. Statistically significant difference (p <0.05): * in
 589 relation to control values; # HCT-116 in relation to SW-480 cells; & HCT-116 in relation to HT-
 590 29 cells; \$ HT-29 in relation to SW-480 cells.

SV					LAAO				
µg/ml	VC	EA	LA	NC	µg/ml	VC	EA	LA	NC
HCT-116									
0	96.23±0.05	3.77±0.01	/	/	0	96.23±0.05	3.77±0.01	/	/
2	55.34±0.02*#	14.33±0.01*#	22.75±0.03*#	7.58±0.01*#	2	68.63±0.05*#	28.10±0.02*#	3.27±0.01*#	/
5	0.35±0.01*#	1.06±0.001*	32.86±0.05*#	65.73±0.05*#	5	51.03±0.03*#	29.33±0.02*#	18.77±0.02*#	0.87±0.001*#
SW-480									
0	97.23±0.01	2.77±0.01	/	/	0	97.23±0.01	2.77±0.01	/	/
2	25.58±0.3*\$	6.20±0.5*\$	55.43±0.5*\$	12.79±0.01*\$	2	75.89±0.05*\$	22.19±0.1*\$	1.28±0.01*\$	0.64±0.001*\$
5	3.09±0.01*\$	1.03±0.001	36.09±0.1*\$	59.79±0.5*\$	5	28.57±0.02*\$	11.64±0.1*\$	58.20±0.5*\$	1.59±0.001*\$
HT-29									
0	98.15±0.01	1.85±0.05	/	/	0	98.15±0.01	1.85±0.05	/	/
2	68.11±0.23*&	20.27±0.15*&	3.98±0.05*&	7.64±0.50*&	2	84.51±0.05*&	14.55±0.01*&	/	0.94±0.001*&
5	50.99±0.25*&	14.74±0.05*&	8.38±0.01*&	25.89±0.30*&	5	59.58±0.15*&	31.84±0.22*&	5.31±0.05*&	3.27±0.001*&

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604 **Figure 1.** The effects of LAAO (A) and SV (B) on HCT-116, SW-480, HT-29 colorectal
 605 carcinoma cell viabilities, and normal HaCaT cells (C). The results are presented as the mean of
 606 three independent experiments \pm standard error. * Statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in
 607 relation to control values.



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609