



PTP1B Inhibitors from Indonesian Plants and Its Structure-Activity Relationship: A Review

Magie M. Kapojos^{1*}, Mario Walean¹, Delfly B. Abdjul^{1,2}¹Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Science and Technology, Prisma University, Manado 95126, Indonesia.²North Sulawesi Research and Development Agency, Manado 95040, Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT

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Diabetes is still a world health problem because of the large number of sufferers and from year to year shows a trend of increasing the number. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type found as well as the largest contributor to diabetes cases, with a percentage of more than 90%. To overcome this problem, more potent and efficient type 2 diabetes drugs are urgently needed. Protein tyrosine phosphatase 1B (PTP1B) is one of the enzyme targets in the discovery of new drugs for type 2 diabetes because it has an important contribution as a negative regulator in the blood sugar transport mechanism, especially in the insulin and leptin signaling pathways. Based on this role, compounds that can act as PTP1B inhibitors have great potential to be developed as new drug candidates for type 2 diabetes. Natural products derived from plants with extraordinary structural diversity are expected to provide potential PTP1B inhibitor scaffolds for developing type 2 diabetes drugs. This review focuses on the structure-activity relationship (SAR) of compounds derived from Indonesian plants that have shown PTP1B inhibitory activity to provide information about the correlation between chemical structures and PTP1B activity that can be useful for the selection of potential scaffolds for type 2 diabetes drug development.

Keywords: PTP1B inhibitors; Structure-activity relationship; plants; Indonesia.

Introduction

Type 2 diabetes is characterized by hyperglycemia and insulin resistance, which cause severe complications including cardiovascular disease, nephropathy, retinopathy, and neuropathy.¹ Type 2 diabetes is the most common type found as well as the largest contributor to diabetes cases, with a percentage of more than 90%, and from year to year shows a trend of increasing the number of sufferers.^{2,3} The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) reports that in 2021, around 536.6 million adults aged between 20 and 79 years in the world (around 10.5% of the total population in that age group) will suffer from diabetes. It is estimated that this will increase to 642.7 million (11.3%) in 2030 and 783.2 million (12.2%) in 2045, or an increase of around 73.6 million compared to the number of sufferers in 2019 (463 million).⁴

Protein tyrosine phosphatase 1B (PTP1B) is one of the enzyme targets in the discovery of new drugs for type 2 diabetes because it has an important contribution as a negative regulator in the blood sugar transport mechanism, especially in the insulin and leptin signaling pathways.^{5,6} Based on this role, compounds that can act as inhibitors of PTP1B have great potential to be developed as new drug candidates for type 2 diabetes.

Natural products have historically been widely acknowledged as an important part of new drug discovery due to their enormous structural diversity and bioactivity. Related to approval drugs, natural sources account for 70% of the 1562 new drugs that were approved between 1981 and 2014.⁷

*Corresponding author. E mail: magie_kapojos@yahoo.com
Tel: +62 811-431-180

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Moreover, nine drugs derived from natural products were among the 38 small-molecule drugs approved by the US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in 2019.⁸ The use of natural products is not only limited to final pharmaceutical products but can be a source for the development of new drug discoveries by providing new chemical scaffolds through the guidance of the structure-activity relationship (SAR).^{9,10} SAR is an approach for determining connections between a compound's target biological activity and its chemical structure.¹¹ This method can provide essential structural information to help medicinal chemists synthesize desirable new compounds.^{11,12}

Plants are a source of natural medicine that humans have used for thousands of years to overcome their health problems.^{13,14} This utilization is closely related to the local wisdom of each region as a result of the trial-and-error exercise to alleviate disease symptoms.¹⁵ The usage of these plants has been increasingly refined through generations, and it is now known as traditional medicine in many contexts.¹⁶ The evolution and development of science in the fields of medicine and chemistry are very helpful in discovering new medicines from plants.^{17,18} This development plays an important role in the discovery of medicines from plants such as paclitaxel (ovarian and breast cancer), artemisinin (malaria), and silymarin (heart disease).^{19,20} Moreover, even at the beginning of the 21st century, around 11% of the 252 types of medicines categorized by the WHO as basic and essential medicines originated from flowering plants.²¹ Over the past few decades, various plants have been examined for novel drugs and bioactive substances.²² Regarding the discovery of bioactive compounds for the development of new drugs, plants are still the source that attracts the attention of researchers. Presently, approximately 200,000 secondary metabolites have been discovered and identified,²³ and some of them showed PTP1B activity.²⁴⁻²⁷

Although qualitative SAR involvement can forecast bioactivities and generate an idea about them, its application in the early phases of natural product investigation is still uncommon.²⁸ The current article focuses on the structure-activity relationship (SAR) of compounds derived from Indonesian plants that have shown PTP1B inhibitory activity. Understanding the SAR of these compounds can provide valuable insights into their mode of action and help identify key structural

features responsible for their PTP1B activity. Additionally, studying the SAR can aid in the design and synthesis of novel derivatives with improved potency and selectivity against PTP1B, potentially leading to the development of new type 2 diabetes drugs.

Methods

Several databases, including the American Chemical Society, Elsevier, PubMed, MDPI, and Google Scholar, are used to find articles that contained terms such as 'PTP1B', 'protein tyrosine phosphatase 1B', 'plants', and 'Indonesian'.

Results and Discussion

Sesquiterpenes

Chemical investigation to find PTP1B inhibitors on the leaves of *Blumea balsamifera* (L.) led to the isolation of eight sesquiterpenes (1–8) (Figure 1), including a new guaiane sesquiterpene (1).²⁹ Samboginone (7), a eudesmane sesquiterpene, inhibited the activity of PTP1B by 25.8 μM of IC_{50} . On the other hand, compound 8 was inactive despite having a similar structure to 7. Therefore, the activity of the eudesman-type, as shown in 7 and 8, is influenced by the addition of functional groups attached to the rings of these compounds. Unfortunately, the PTP1B activity was also absent for the other sesquiterpenes (1–6) isolated from this plant. This finding suggests that the eudesman-type is more favorable for the activity against PTP1B than the guaianes (1–5) or caryophyllene (6). The active compound 7 was evaluated for the TCPTP activity to understand the selectivity. However, compound 7 (IC_{50} 12.5 μM) also exhibited the inhibitory activity of TCPTP.

Another series of sesquiterpenes (Figure 2) were obtained from the aerial parts of *Wedelia prostrata* (Hemsl) with two new rare-type eudesmanolide analogs (9 and 10) together with five known compounds (11–15).³⁰ Wedelolide D (12) displayed PTP1B activity with 32% inhibition at 20 μM , while the other eudesmanolide compounds (9–11 and 13–15) were inactive at the same concentration. A comparison of 12 with the similar compounds 10 and 11 reveals that the ester moiety attached at C-8 slightly influences the activity, which is that the tigloyloxy group is more favorable than methacryloxy or isobutyryloxy. In addition, substituting the isobutyryloxy unit at C-6 in 11 with methacryloxy as seen in 9 did not enhance the activity.

Five humulane-type sesquiterpenes were isolated from the *Zingiber aromaticum* (Val) rhizome (Figure 3).³¹ (5*R*)-2,6,9-humulatrien-5-ol-8-one (19) was the most active compound against PTP1B with 27.7 μM of IC_{50} . Other isolated compounds (16–18 and 20) had lower activity, ranging from 15.9 to 62.6% of PTP1B inhibition at 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$. Although

it has a similar structure, compound 20 (15.9% inhibition at 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$) exhibited lower activity than compound 19, indicating that the hydroxyl group at C-5 is essential for PTP1B activity. Moreover, adding an epoxy moiety, as seen in 16–18, was unfavorable to inhibiting PTP1B.

Diterpenes

Two diterpenes from the *ent-kaurene* class (21 and 22) were isolated from the aerial parts of *W. prostrata* (Figure 4).³⁰ Further phytochemical investigation of the residual fractions of this plant afforded ten more *ent-kaurene* diterpene analogs (23–32) (Figure 4).³² *ent*-3 β -cinnamoyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (21) and *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid (25) are the most potent PTP1B inhibitors among all isolated compounds, with IC_{50} values of 8.3 and 7.7 μM , respectively. Despite having a similar structure, compound 22 showed much reduced PTP1B activity compared with 21, suggesting that the additional functional group in the C-3 position is essential for the activity. This finding is supported by comparing compounds 29 (29% inhibition at 33 μM) and 30 (IC_{50} 13 μM). Furthermore, the other compounds with variations of the C-3 moiety, angeloyloxy (23 and 27), tigloyloxy (24 and 28), and hydroxyl (30), displayed less PTP1B inhibition, indicating the cinnamoyloxy group, as seen in 21 and 25, is more favorable for this activity. In addition, PTP1B activity is more prone to diterpenes with a 9-H framework (21–24) than 9-unsaturated bond analogs (29 and 30), a secondary alcohol (31), a lactone (32), and 9-OH analogs (25–28).

Triterpenes

The methanol extract of *Melaleuca leucadendron* (L) fruits demonstrated good PTP1B inhibitory activity with an IC_{50} of 2.05 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$.³³ Further chemical investigation of this extract led to the isolation of two pentacyclic triterpenes, betulinic acid (33) and ursolic acid (34) (Figure 5). Compounds 33 and 34 showed remarkable PTP1B inhibitory activity, with IC_{50} values of 1.5 and 2.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$, respectively. Moreover, compound 33 showed slightly higher activity than 34, indicating that PTP1B activity was more susceptible to pentacyclic triterpenes with a cyclopentane ring in 33 than cyclohexane in 34. Ursolic acid (34) and a related compound, asiatic acid (35), were also reported from the leaves of *Syzygium polyanthum* (Wight) (Figure 5).³⁴ Compound 35 (IC_{50} 5.7 μM) had lower activity than 34 (IC_{50} 4.3 μM) in the PTP1B assay. Therefore, the hydroxylation at C-2 and C-24 was unfavorable for the activity. Furthermore, two more ursolic acid analogs (36 and 37) were identified from the aerial parts of the *Lantana camara* (L) (Figure 5).³⁵ Pomonic acid (36) and pomolic acid (37) inhibit the PTP1B with IC_{50} values of 10.5 and 10.6 μM , respectively. The hydroxylation at the C-19 position in 37 reduced more than two fold the PTP1B activity compared to the parent compound 34.

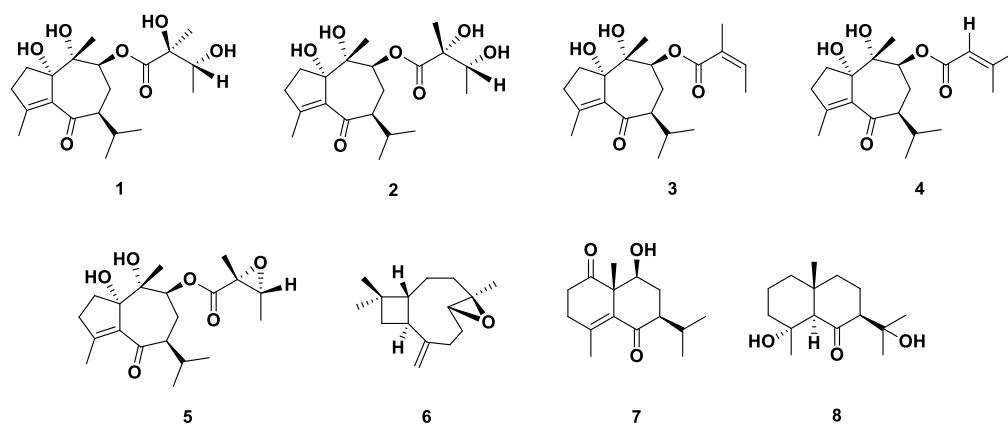


Figure 1: Sesquiterpenes isolated from *B. balsamifera*

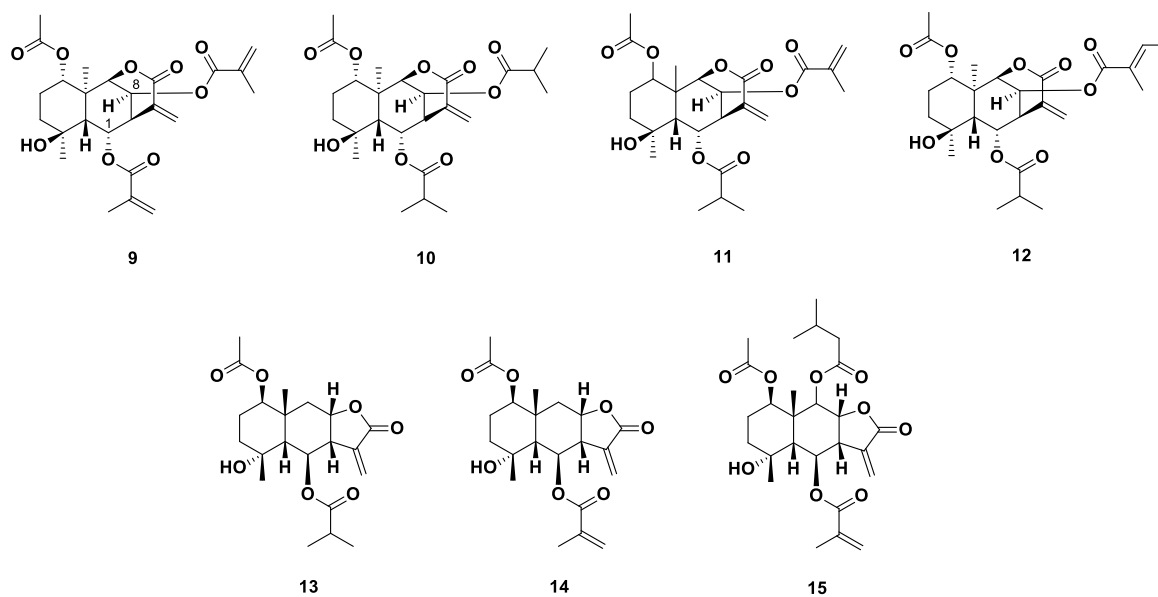


Figure 2: Sesquiterpenes isolated from *W. prostrata*

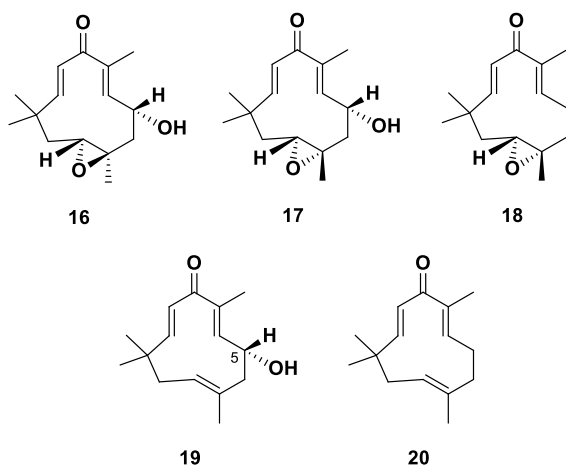


Figure 3: Sesquiterpenes isolated from *Z. aromaticum*

Besides two ursolic acid derivatives (36 and 37), separation of the ethanol extract of *L. camara* (aerial part) using bioassay guidance resulted in the isolation of eighteen more oleanane triterpenes (38–55), including four new compounds (38–41) (Figure 6).³⁵ Among the triterpenes found in this plant, oleanolic acid (45) is the most potent PTP1B inhibitor with a 2.0 μM IC_{50} value. The PTP1B activity of compound 52 (IC_{50} 6.9 μM), a closely related skeleton of 45, exhibited threefold weaker, suggesting that the additional moiety at the C-3 position is important for PTP1B activity and the hydroxyl, as seen in 45, is more suitable than the ketone group in 52. The new compounds (38–41), characterized by hydroxylation at C-24, and the ether linkage type represented by 54 and 55 also showed weaker PTP1B activity compared to the oleanolic acid analogs (44–48). Therefore, pentacyclic triterpenes with C-24 hydroxylation, C-3 oxidation, or ether linkage types are unfavorable for PTP1B activity. Moreover, the other analogs of 45 with an additional group at C-22, such as methylbutanoyloxy (44, IC_{50} 7.3 μM), hydroxyl (46, IC_{50} 7.9 μM), angeloyloxy (47, IC_{50} 7.2 μM), and dimethylacryloyloxy (48, IC_{50} 5.1 μM), had less PTP1B activity, indicating the group type attached at this position enhanced the

PTP1B activity. This finding is supported by the similar pattern of activity displayed by the structure comparison of C-3 oxidation groups (49–53), C-24 hydroxylation groups (38–43), or the ether linkage types (54 and 55). Moreover, oleanolic acid was also isolated together with its derivative, arjunolic acid (56) from *S. polyanthum* (Figure 6).³⁴ However, hydroxylation at C-2 and C-23 in 56 (IC_{50} 3.3 μM) decreased the PTP1B activity compared to compound 45.

Steroids

S. polyanthum leaves produce three steroid compounds (Figure 7): campest-4-en-3-one (57), campesterol (58), and cycloartenone (59). Compound 57 (IC_{50} 10.4 μM) showed the strongest PTP1B activity.³⁶ Replacement of the ketone at C-3 with a hydroxyl, as seen in 58, results in a loss of PTP1B activity, indicating that the substituent at the C-3 position is important for the activity. In addition, several functional group variations in the steroid framework, as shown in 59, could not increase PTP1B activity.

Acylbenzenes

Four novel acylbenzene compounds (60–63) were isolated from the leaves of *S. polyanthum* collected in Bantul, Jogjakarta, during the investigation to find PTP1B inhibitors from Indonesian medicinal plants (Figure 8).³⁶ Compound 62 showed the most potent PTP1B activity, with an IC_{50} of 4.0 μM . Although they have a similar framework, compound 61 (IC_{50} 5.8 μM) showed less activity than compound 62. Therefore, a double bond in the acyl chain, as shown in compound 62, enhances PTP1B activity. Moreover, structural comparison between 60 (IC_{50} 13.1 μM) and 61 (IC_{50} 5.8 μM) revealed that the methyl group attached at the tip of the acyl chain, as seen in 61, was more favorable than the carboxylic acid in 61. Furthermore, compound 63 displayed weaker PTP1B activity than compound 60, suggesting that the length of the acyl chain is important for PTP1B activity.

Further phytochemical investigation of this plant collected in Manado, North Sulawesi, yielded five acylbenzene compounds (60–61 and 64–66) (Figure 8).³⁴ Compound 64 was reported as a new compound. The comparison between 64 (IC_{50} 9.6 μM) and 60 (IC_{50} 13.1 μM) confirmed previous findings that PTP1B activity in acylbenzenes is influenced by acyl chain length; the longer acyl chain exhibited higher activity. This finding is also supported by the results of the structural comparison between 65 (IC_{50} 14.0 μM) and 66 (IC_{50} 9.5 μM).

Alkylamide

A novel alkylamide compound (67) and three known analogs (68–70) were obtained using bioassay-guided purification of the aerial part of *Spilanthes paniculata* (DC) (Figure 9).³⁷ Compound 68 showed PTP1B activity with 24 μM of IC_{50} . In contrast, compounds 67, 69, and 70 were inactive at 38–45 μM . Thus, the presence of endoperoxide in 67, and variations of double bonds as seen in 69 and 70, are not favorable for PTP1B activity.

Conclusion

Potential PTP1B inhibitor compounds isolated from Indonesian plants with IC_{50} values less than 10 μM are dominated by the triterpene group and followed by the acylbenzene derivatives, which contributed eighteen and four compounds, respectively. Structural comparisons revealed several suggestions that influence PTP1B activity in the triterpene group. The group attached at C-3 is essential for PTP1B activity, and the hydroxyl group in this position is more suitable than the ketone group. Another finding revealed that the pentacyclic triterpenes with a cyclopentane ring as seen in betulinic acid (33) showed stronger PTP1B activity compared to a similar compound without this ring (34). Among all isolated compounds, oleanolic acid (45) is the most potent PTP1B inhibitor with a 2.0 μM IC_{50} . In some experiments, this compound is also used as the PTP1B assay's positive control.^{38–40} Moreover, there were three important findings affecting the activity of the acylbenzene derivative (60–66), *i.e.*, the presence of a double bond at the acyl chain, the length of the acyl chain, and the functional group at the tip of the acyl chain.

Indonesia, known for its rich biodiversity, has great promise for discovering PTP1B inhibitor compounds as new scaffolds for the development of type 2 diabetes drugs. Regrettably, there hasn't been much study done on PTP1B inhibitors made from Indonesian botanicals. Thus far, in the search for PTP1B inhibitors in Indonesian plants, 70 compounds have been identified, 22 of which have strong PTP1B inhibitory activity ($\text{IC}_{50} < 10 \mu\text{M}$). From this point of view, Indonesian plants are still an attractive source for finding new PTP1B inhibitors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' Declaration

The authors hereby declare that the work presented in this article is original and that any liability for claims relating to the content of this article will be borne by them.

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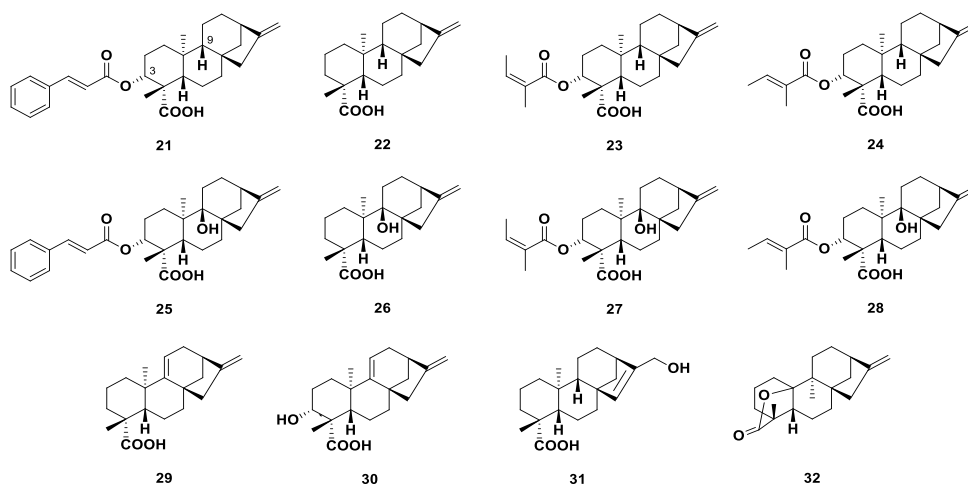


Figure 4: Diterpenes isolated from *W. prostrata*

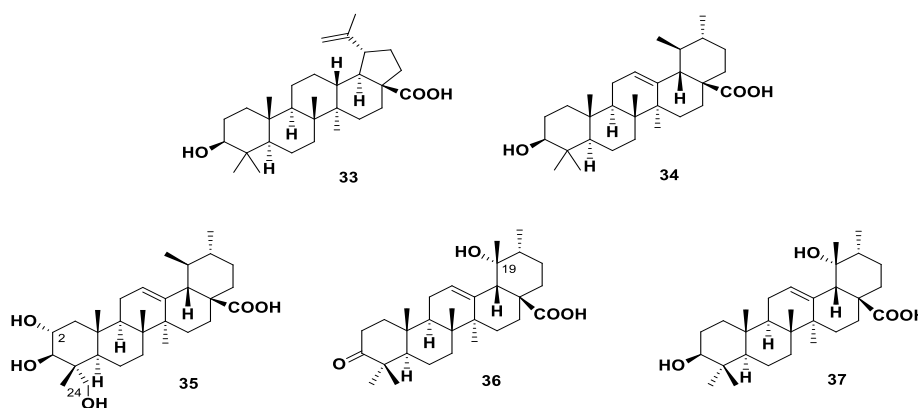
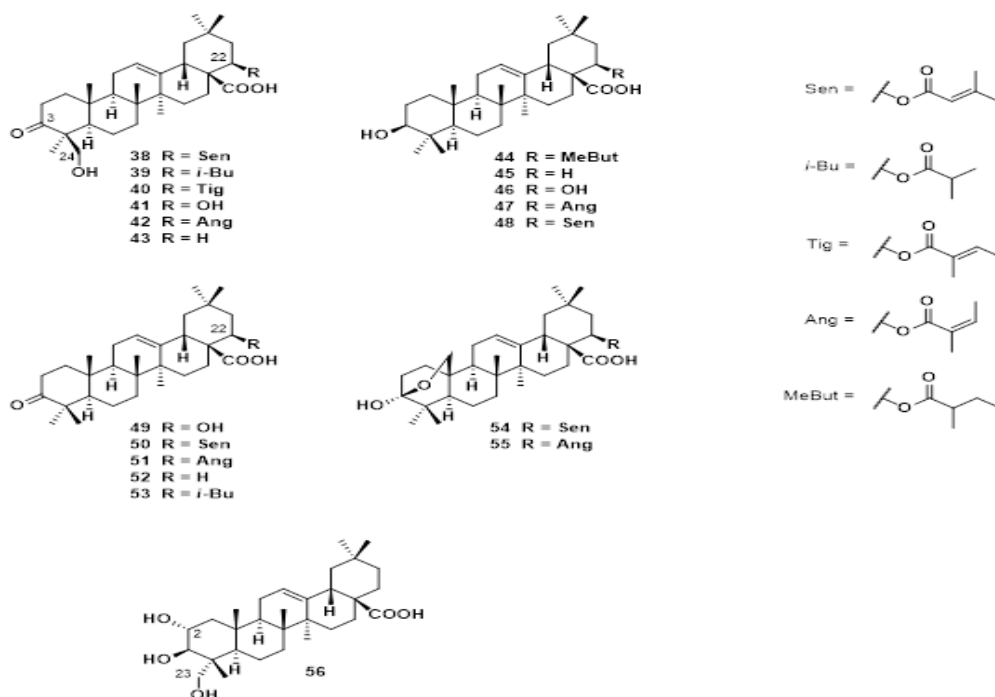
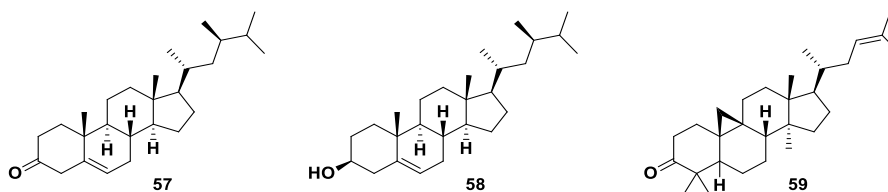
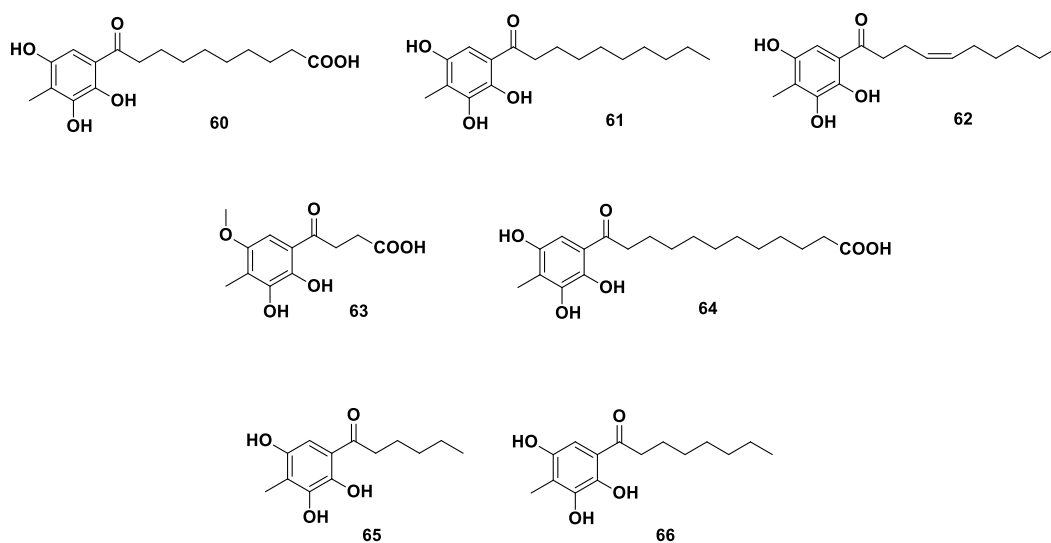


Figure 5: Triterpenes isolated from *M. leucadendron*, *S. polyanthum*, and *L. camara*

Figure 6: Other triterpenes isolated from *L. camara* and *S. polyantum*Figure 7: Steroids isolated from *S. polyantum*Figure 8: Acylbenzenes isolated from *S. polyantum*

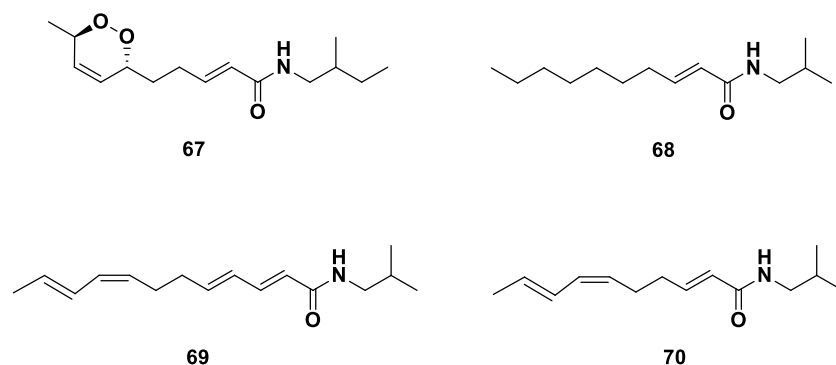


Figure 9: Alkylamides isolated from *S. paniculata*

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