Effects of Kaurane Diterpene Derivatives on Germination and Growth of *Lactuca sativa* Seedlings

Henriete S. Vieira, Jacqueline A. Takahashi, Lúcia P. S. Pimenta, and Maria Amélia D. Boaventura*

Departamento de Química, Instituto de Ciências Exatas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Av. Antônio Carlos, 6627, 31270-901, Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil.
Fax: 55 31 34 99 57 00. E-mail: dianadb@dedalus.lcc.ufmg.br

* Author for correspondence and reprint requests

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Kaurenoic and grandiflorenic acid, isolated from *Wedelia paludosa* (Asteraceae), some derivatives from these acids (alcohols, esters, amides, lactones, oximes) and other naturally occurring kaurane diterpenes were tested for their action on the growth of radical and shoot of *Lactuca sativa*. Gibberellic acid, GA₃, a commercially available phytohormone, belonging to the same class of diterpenes, was also tested. Some of the tested substances showed a remarkable activity either in the inhibition or in stimulation of *L. sativa* growth. The activity, in some cases, was even higher than that of GA₃.

Key words: Gibberellic Acid, Kaurenoic Acid, Allelopathic Activity

Introduction

A number of natural products with allelopathic activity has been reported and used in agriculture, as for example the gibberellins, a group of diterpene lactones. Kaurane diterpenes containing a rigid tetracyclic skeleton are intermediates in the biosynthesis of a number of plant and fungal metabolites, including gibberellins, and are widespread in the plant kingdom. Bioassay-guided fractionation in plant study made this class of diterpenes to be "rediscovered", due to their many biological activities (Ghisalberti, 1997), including plant growth regulation (Torrenegra and Tellez, 1996; Villalobos *et al*., 1994; Hanson *et al*., 1980; Becker and Kempf, 1976; Hüneck and Scheiber, 1972; Cross *et al*., 1970; Katsumi *et al*., 1964).

In the phytochemical study of *Wedelia paludosa* (Asteraceae) we have isolated a high amount (ca. 10% of crude extract, in some cases) of *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid [kaurenoic acid, (2)], together with a minor proportion (ca. 2–3% of crude extract) of *ent*-kaur-Δ⁹(11),16-dien-19-oic acid [grandiflorenic acid (3)], among other kaurane diterpenes 11–13 (Fig. 1); *ent*-kauran-16/Δ17-ol (5) was isolated from *Xylopia frutescens* (Anonaceae). Some bioassay systems were applied on these compounds (and derivatives obtained by chemical transformations of 2 and 3, Fig. 1), as for example, trypanocidal (Vieira *et al*., 2002) and allelopathic evaluations. We describe here the results of the lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) hypocotyl assay.

Results and Discussion

Compounds 2–20 (Fig. 1) were obtained by isolation from plant extracts and/or chemical transformations (Vieira *et al*., 2001, 2002; Takahashi *et al*., 1995, 2001). Lactones 21 and 22 are described here for the first time to our best knowledge. The structure of lactone 23 was previously elucidated by X-ray (Doriguetto *et al*., 2002). Their syntheses are showed in Scheme 1. Intermediary ketones 24 and 25 were obtained from 2 and 3, respectively, initially by exocyclic double bond oxidation (Castellaro *et al*., 1990), followed by Baeyer-Villiger rearrangement (Anastasia *et al*., 1985). Lactone 22 was obtained from triol 8 by oxidation with KMnO₄/CuSO₄ (Jefford and Wang, 1988).

The choice of concentrations to be used in allelopathic experiments was based on the work of Macías *et al*. (1994, 2000). According to them, substances with inhibitory activity against species used in standard allelopathic bioassays show a strong inhibitory effect (alternative herbicides) only at concentrations between 10⁻² and 10⁻³ M; at lower concentrations (10⁻⁵–10⁻⁹ M) this effect disappears or becomes stimulatory. Plants were measured after 5 d standing in the dark, according procedures described by Hoad *et al*. (1981) and Macías *et al*. 0939–5075/2005/0100–0072 $ 06.00 © 2005 Verlag der Zeitschrift für Naturforschung, Tübingen · http://www.znaturforsch.com · D
Fig. 1. Structures of gibberellic acid (1) and kaurane diterpenoids 2–20.

Gibberellins are physiologically defined by their ability to induce shoot elongation in certain dwarf plants which was demonstrated in various plant extracts using dwarf maize plants and dwarf peas. With *Lactuca sativa*, in the dark, Frankland and Wareing (1960) demonstrated that hypocotyl growth was very little affected by gibberellic acid treatment at $10^{-4}$ M.
The acids 1–4 presented stronger action on radical than on shoot growth (Fig. 2). The best activity for 1 was at $10^{-7}$ M and for 3 at $10^{-3}$ M, although the latter was active in all three tested concentrations. Gibberellic acid (1) inhibited radical growth at higher concentrations, contrary to kaurenoic acid (2), that acted in an opposite way. Brian et al. (1967) did not find activity for 2 in the lettuce hypocotyl assay at 10 ppm ($3.3 \times 10^{-5}$ M) concentration.

Acids 1–3 were active on shoot growth (Fig. 2); compound 4 (ent-3β-hydroxy-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid) showed activity only at $10^{-7}$ M, the presence of the hydroxyl group at C-3 being the differentiating structural factor. The stereochemistry of hydroxyl groups in gibberellins is important: 3β-hydroxy gibberellins, in the absence of a 2β-hydroxy group, are more active than the correspondent 3α-hydroxy derivatives (Hoad et al., 1981). Therefore, the small activity of compound 4, compared to the

Fig. 2. Effect of gibberellic acid (1), kaurane diterpene acids 2–4 and alcohols 5–8 on: (A) radical and (B) shoot length of L. sativa.
other acids, could be also associated with the α stereochemistry of the hydroxyl group at C-3.

Oppositely to the acids, the alcohols 5–8 showed better stimulating activity on shoot growth (Fig. 2), mainly ent-kauran-16β/H-17-ol (8) with the higher stimulatory effect at 10^{-3} M; in contrast, Brian et al. (1967) cited the slight activity presented by 5 in the lettuce hypocotyl assay at 10 ppm (3.5 × 10^{-5} M) concentration. Ent-kauran-16-en-19-ol (6), the higher inhibitor among alcohols, and diol 7 showed analogous activity on radical elongation; triol 8 acted in the opposite way on promoting shoot growth and inhibiting radical growth. Only gibberellic acid (1) stimulated the germination of L. sativa. (Fig. 3A). Among the esters (9–13), ent-3β-tgloyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (13) was the most active on radical growth, at 10^{-7} M, the lower dose (Fig. 4). Methyl ent-kauran-16-en-19-oate (9) was the best inhibitor on shoot growth at 10^{-3} M (Fig. 4). According to Villalobos et al. (1994), the presence of an angeloyloxy group at C-18, associated with a methyl ester at C-19, improves the activity. Both E oximes 15 and 16 showed analogous results on radical and on shoot growth. Here, the E stereochemistry of the oxime group seems to be the determinant factor for growth activity. The kaurenoic ester 9 showed the best germination results, at 10^{-5} M, among all tested compounds, followed by tygloyloxy ester 13 and ester Z oxime 14 (Fig. 3B). Amide 18 (ent-kaur-16-en-19-pyrrolidinamide) was active in both shoot and radical elongation and in all three concentrations (Fig. 5). In general, all three amides 17, 18 and 19 showed a total coherence in their results for radical and shoot growth. Tetrachirin (20) and lactone 23 showed similar activities in both radical and shoot growth (Fig. 5). Lactone 21, from kaurenoic acid, presented the best stimulatory (10^{-5} M) and the best inhibitory (10^{-3} M) effect on shoot elongation of L. sativa (Fig. 5).

Finally, only grandiflorenic acid (3) and ent-kauran-16-en-19-pyrrolidinamide (18) showed action on both shoot and radical length in all concentrations; kaurenoic acid (2) had analogous action in radical and shoot growth; gibberellic acid (1) acted.
in an opposite way compared to lactone 23: its profile activity in radical corresponds to the shoot in 23 and vice-versa. Results found for the inhibitory effect for most of the tested substances corroborate with the proposition found in the literature (Macias et al., 2000) that inhibition occurs mainly at concentrations around at 10^{-3} M. These substances are consequently potential alternative herbicides.

**Experimental**

**General procedure**

Melting points were determined with a Kofler hot plate apparatus and are uncorrected. The optical rotations were measured on a Perkin Elmer 341 polarimeter. IR spectra were recorded on a Shimadzu IR-408 spectrophotometer. IR absorption bands are expressed in cm^{-1}. \(^1\)H and \(^{13}\)C NMR spectra were recorded in CDCl\(_3\) at room temperature on a Bruker Advance DPX 200 operating at 200 and 50 MHz, respectively. The chemical shifts are reported in \(\delta\) values (ppm) relative to the solvent CDCl\(_3\) (\(\delta = 7.26\) for \(^1\)H NMR and 77.01 ppm for \(^{13}\)C NMR). Mass spectra (GC-EMS) were obtained from a GCO Finnigan-ION TRAP instrument and they were performed with an ionizing energy of 70 eV. Silica gel used for flash chromatography was obtained from Merck (WC4790-005, 230–400 mesh) and celite from Labsynth Ltda., São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

Gibberellic acid (1) was purchased from Sigma (USA). \(\text{Ent-kaur}-16\)-en-19-oic acid (kaurenoic acid, 2) was isolated from green fruits of both \(Xylopia\ frutescens\) (Takahashi et al., 1995) and \(Xylopia\ sericea\) (Takahashi et al., 2001) and aerial parts of \(Wedelia\ paludosa\) (9.6% of ethanolic crude extract). Grandiflorenic acid (3) was isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of \(Wedelia\ paludosa\) (2.4% of crude extract). \(\text{Ent-3\beta-}
hydroxy-\text{kaur}-16\)-en-19-oic acid (4) was obtained by alkaline hydrolysis from \(\text{Ent-3\beta-}
\text{cinamoyloxykaur}-16\)-en-19-oic acid (12, yield: 84%). \(\text{Ent-kauran}-16\beta\)-H-17-ol (5) was isolated from the hexanic extract of green fruits of \(Xylopia\ frutescens\) (2.2% of crude extract). \(\text{Ent-kauran-16}\)-en-19-ol (6) was obtained by reduction of 9 with LiAlH\(_4\) (yield: 86%). \(\text{Ent-kauran-16}\)-H-17,19-diol (7) and \(\text{ent-kauran-16}\beta\)-H-11\alpha,17,19-triol (8) were obtained from 2 and 3, respectively, by treatment with diborane/H\(_2\)O\(_2\) (Vieira et al., 2002). Methyl \(\text{ent-kaur}-16\)-en-19-oate (9) and methyl \(\text{ent-kaur-3\beta-}
hydroxy-16-en-19-oate (10) were obtained by treatment of 2 and 4, respectively, with diazomethane (quantitative yield). \(\text{Ent-3\beta-}
\text{angeloxylykaur}-16\)-en-19-oic acid (11, 2.4% of crude extract), \(\text{ent-3\beta-}
\text{cinamoyloxykaur}-16\)-en-19-oic acid (12, 1.9% of crude extract) and \(\text{ent-3\beta-}
tyglyloxykaur-16\)-en-19-oic acid (13, 0.065% of crude extract) were isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of \(Wedelia\ paludosa\) (Vieira et al., 2001). Methyl \(\text{ent-16Z-oxime-17-norkauran-19-oate (14), methyl ent-16E-oxime-17-norkauran-19-oate (15), ent-16E-oxime-17-norkauran-19-ol (16), ent-kaur-16-en-19-piperidinamide (17) ent-kaur-16-en-19-pyrolydinamide (18) and ent-kaur-16-en-19-N,N-diethylamide (19) were obtained according to the route described by Vieira et al. (2002). Tetraechrin (20, 0.068% of crude extract) was isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of \(Wedelia\ paludosa\) (Vieira et al., 2001).

\[\text{Ent-kauran-16-oxo-17-nor-19 oic acid (24) and ent-kauran-16-oxo-17-nor-11(9)-en-19-oic acid (25) (Castellaro et al., 1990). To a suspension containing a mixture (500 mg) of kaurenoic acid (2) and grandiflorenic acid (3) and 1.6 g (8.0 mmol) of NaIO\(_4\) in 50 ml of THF/H\(_2\)O 1:1 v/v a crystal of OsO\(_4\) was added. After overnight stirring at room temperature, work-up (treatment by NaHSO\(_3\)) and flash chromatography, 173 mg of 24 and 198 mg of 25 were obtained.}\]

\[\text{Ent-13a-hydroxy-17-nor-13,16-seco-kauran-16,19-dioic acid 16→13-lactone (21) and ent-5\alpha,15a-epoxy-9,10-friedo-10\beta,11\beta-dihaydroxy-16,11c,19,10\beta-diceto-17-norkauran-16,19-dioic acid 16→11,19→10-dilactone (23) (Anastasia et al., 1985). Trifluoroacetic acid was generated in situ by adding 148 mmol of trifluoroacetic anhydride to 31 mmol of 30% hydrogen peroxide at 0 °C in anhydrous CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\). Ketone (0.99 mmol), dissolved in anhydrous CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\), was added and the solution stirred for 1 h at room temperature. Work-up (2% K\(_2\)CO\(_3\) solution) and flash chromatography (n-hexane/ethyl acetate) furnished pure lactones (yields: 21: 80% and 23: 19%).}\]

\[\text{Ent-13a-hydroxy-17-nor-13,16-seco-kauran-16,19-dioic acid 16→13-lactone (21) White powder, C\(_{20}\)H\(_{30}\)O\(_4\) (334). M.p. 218–219 °C. – [\(\alpha\)]\(_D\)^2_5_0 = 110° (c = 0.002, CHCl\(_3\)). – IR (KBr) \(\nu_{\text{max}} = 3400, 1725, 1690, 1250–1111 \text{ cm}^{-1}. – \text{\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl}_3, 200 \text{ MHz):} \delta = 0.97 (3H, s, 19-CH), 1.26 (3H, s, 18-CH), 4.68 (1H, br s, 13-CH). – \text{\(^13\)C NMR (CDCl}_3, 50 \text{ MHz):} \delta = 40.9, 18.9, 37.3, 43.5, 56.6, 19.8, 42.9, 33.8, 53.0, 39.5, 16.3, 28.7, 75.8, 33.0, 76.0.}\]
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