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Article

Sesquiterpene and Acetogenin Derivatives from the Marine Red Alga *Laurencia okamurai*

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Abstract: In addition to 13 known compounds, four new bisabolane sesquiterpenes, okamurenes A–D (1–4), a new chamigrane derivative, okamurene E (5), and a new C₁₂-acetogenin, okamuragenin (6), were isolated from the marine red alga *Laurencia okamurai*. The structures of these compounds were determined through detailed spectroscopic analyses. Of these, okamurenes A and B (1 and 2) are the first examples of bromobisabolane sesquiterpenes possessing a phenyl moiety among *Laurencia*-derived sesquiterpenes, while okamuragenin (6) was the first acetogenin aldehyde possessing a C₁₂-carbon skeleton. Each of the isolated compounds was evaluated for the brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*) lethal assay and 7-hydroxylaurene displayed potent lethality with LD₅₀ 1.8 μ M.

Keywords: marine alga; *Laurencia okamurai*; bisabolane sesquiterpene; C₁₂-acetogenin; brine shrimp lethality

1. Introduction

Marine red algae of the genus *Laurencia* are prolific sources of diversified secondary metabolites, predominantly sesquiterpenoids, diterpenoids, and nonterpenoid C_{15} -acetogenins [1]. The red alga *Laurencia okamurai*, widely distributed along the coast of China, mainly yields sesquiterpenes and C_{15} -acetogenins [2]. These compounds, with structurally diverse skeletons, have attracted much

attention for total syntheses [3] as well as chemotaxonomic research [4–6]. In the past five years, we have systematically conducted chemical investigation towards eight *Laurencia* species, which have resulted in the isolation of more than 30 new compounds [2,7–11]. In the course of our phytochemical studies on *Laurencia okamurai*, a new, rearranged chamigrane sesquiterpene, laurenokamurin, was previously characterized [10]. Continuous effort on the chemical investigation of five new sesquiterpenes, okamurenes A–E (1–5), one new C₁₂-acetogenin, okamuragenin (6) (Figure 1), as well as nine known sesquiterpenes and four known C₁₅-acetogenins. We present herein the isolation, structure elucidation, and bioactivity of these compounds.

Figure 1. Structures of the isolated new compounds 1–6 from *L. okamurai*.



2. Results and Discussion

Structure Elucidation of the New Compounds

Okamurene A (1) was obtained as a colorless oil and its molecular formula was established by HRESIMS to be $C_{15}H_{21}BrO$, corresponding to five degrees of unsaturation. The ¹H NMR spectrum of 1 (Table 1) exhibited resonances for a *para*-substituted phenyl unit, four methyl groups, and a brominated or oxygenated methine group. There were also four signals for two diastereotopic methylene protons. The ¹³C NMR and DEPT spectroscopic data (Table 1) revealed the presence of 15 carbon signals including six aromatic carbons (corresponding to a *para*-substituted phenyl unit) and nine aliphatic carbons (corresponding to four methyls, two methylenes, one brominated methine, and two oxygenated quaternary carbons). These units accounted for 4 degrees of unsaturation, requiring one additional ring to be present in 1.

Na	1 (CDC	Cl ₃)	2		
INO.	$\delta_{ m H}$ (J in Hz)	$oldsymbol{\delta}_{ ext{C}}$	$\delta_{ m H}(J{ m in}{ m Hz})$	$\delta_{ m C}$	
1/5	7.34, d (8.0)	124.8, CH	7.34, d (8.1)	126.0, CH	
2/4	7.11, d (8.0)	128.7, CH	7.12, d (8.1)	128.6, CH	
3		136.1, C		136.4, C	
6		146.0, C		143.2, C	
7		74.6, C		74.4, C	
8 _{eq}	2.16, m	34.1, CH ₂	2.56, m	36.0, CH ₂	
8 _{ax}	2.10, m		2.18, m		
9_{eq}	2.28, m	28.2, CH ₂	2.27, m	29.4, CH ₂	
9 _{ax}	2.25, m		1.82, m		

Table 1. ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR data of compounds 1 and 2 in CDCl₃ ^a.

10	4.05, dd (7.9, 4.4)	59.1, CH	4.04, dd (12.1, 4.1)	59.0, CH
11		75.2, C		76.4, C
12	1.47, s	27.8, CH ₃	1.35, s	22.5, CH ₃
13	1.14, s	29.4, CH ₃	0.78, s	30.8, CH ₃
14	1.50, s	31.8, CH ₃	1.36, s	35.8, CH ₃
15	2.23, s	20.9, CH ₃	2.34, s	21.0, CH ₃

 Table 1. Cont.

 $^{\rm a}$ Measured at 500 MHz for $^{\rm 1}{\rm H}$ and 125 MHz for $^{\rm 13}{\rm C}.$

The structure of the non-phenyl portion of **1** was determined by analysis of 2D NMR data (${}^{1}\text{H}-{}^{1}\text{H}$ COSY, HSQC, and HMBC). The ${}^{1}\text{H}-{}^{1}\text{H}$ COSY experiment established the connectivity for a -CH₂-CH₂-CH- unit (C-8 through C-10, Figure 2). The C-10 methine of this unit was connected to CH₃-12 and CH₃-13 via the oxygenated quaternary carbon C-11 (δ_{C} 75.2) as evidenced by the observed HMBC correlations from the methyl protons H₃-12 and H₃-13 to C-10 and C-11, while the C-8 methylene was linked to the CH₃-14 via the oxygenated quaternary carbon C-7 (δ_{C} 74.6) as supported by the observed HMBC correlation from the methyl protons H₃-14 to C-8 (Figure 2). Given the fact that only one oxygen atom existed in the structure, the linkage of C-7/O/C-11 could be constructed, leading to the formation of a tetrahydropyran moiety, which accounted for the remaining degree of unsaturation. Thus, the planar structure of **1** was assigned.

Figure 2. Key COSY (bold lines) and HMBC (arrows) correlations for compounds 1, 3/4, 5, and 6.



Analysis of the proton coupling constants and NOESY data enabled assignment of the relative configuration of **1**. The appearance of the bromomethine proton H-10 as a double doublet, with coupling constants of 7.9 and 4.4 Hz, suggesting the equatorial orientation of H-10 for **1**. In the NOESY spectrum, NOE correlations of H₃-13 with both H-10 and H₃-14 placed the methyl groups CH_3 -13 and CH_3 -14 on the same face (axial or pseudoaxial) of the tetrahydropyran ring (Figure 3). On the basis of the above evidence, the structure of **1** was determined, and the trivial name okamurene A was assigned.

Figure 3. Key NOESY correlations for compounds 1 and 2.



The ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectroscopic data of okamurene B (2), an isomer of 1 as established by HRESIMS data, were very similar to those of 1 except for some chemical shift variations of signals corresponding to the C-8, C-9, and C-12 through C-14 (Table 1). Therefore, compound 2 was presumed to be a stereoisomer of 1. Detailed analysis of the ¹H and ¹³C NMR data as well as ¹H–¹H COSY and HMBC correlations supported the conclusion that 2 possesses the same planar structure as 1. However, comparisons of the *J*-value and NOESY data of 2 with those of 1 revealed a difference in relative configuration at C-10. A *trans*-diaxial *J*-value for H_{ax}-10 and H_{ax}-9 (12.1 Hz) indicated an equatorial orientation for the Br-atom at C-10. The NOE correlation from H-10 to H₃-12 in the NOESY spectrum indicated an equatorial face of CH₃-12, while the NOE correlation from H₃-13 to H₃-14 placed these two methyl groups in axial orientation (Figure 3). Based on the above data, the structure of compound 2 was identified and it was named okamurene B.

Okamurenes C (3) and D (4) were obtained as a colorless oily mixture in a 2:1 ratio, as indicated by the ¹H NMR spectrum. Attempts to separate the mixture by various CC steps using different solvent systems failed. On the other hand, there is no conjugated system in compounds 3 and 4, making these compounds unsuitable for HPLC separation using the available UV detector. A similar unseparable mixture containing (9*S*)- and (9*R*)-2-bromo-3-chloro-6,9-epoxybisabola-7(14),10-diene from *L. saitoi* was previously described [11]. Most of the NMR signals for compounds 3 and 4 were duplicated or overlapped. By detailed analysis of 1D and 2D NMR data, their structures were determined to be C-9 epimer of 6,9-epoxybisabola-2,7(14),10-triene.

The molecular formula of compounds 3 and 4 were determined to be C₁₅H₂₂O (five degrees of unsaturation) on the basis of HRESIMS data. Examination of the ¹H and ¹³C NMR data (Table 2) revealed that they resembled 9S- and/or 9R-2-bromo-3-chloro-6,9-epoxybisabola-7(14),10-diene [11], except for the presence of signals for a trisubstituted vinyl group at C-2 and, accordingly, the lack of the resonances due to a brominated methine at C-2 and a chlorinated quaternary carbon at C-3 [11]. The chemical shifts for the vinyl carbons at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 119.1/119.0 (C-2) and 133.4/133.7 (C-3) as well as for one of the neighboring methylene groups C-4 ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 27.7/28.0) in the ¹³C NMR spectrum of **3** and **4** were very similar to those reported for 8-bromochamigra-1,11(12)-dien-9-ol (with C-2 at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 119.4, C-3 at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 132.9, and C-4 at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 27.5) [12], and these data strongly supported the presence of the trisubstituted vinyl group at C-2 in 3/4. These data indicated that compounds 3 and 4 were the dehalogenated derivatives corresponding to 9S- and/or 9R-2-bromo-3-chloro-6,9-epoxybisabola-7(14),10-diene [11]. The ${}^{1}H-{}^{1}H$ COSY and HMBC correlations (Figure 2) further verified the planar structures of 3/4 to be 6,9-epoxybisabola-2,7(14),10-triene. Assignment of the relative configuration at C-6 by NOESY experiment is not applicable for compounds 3 and 4 since there is no proton around C-6 in the tetrahydrofuran ring. However, the C-6 relative configuration was tentatively assigned to be the same as that of 9S- and/or 9R-2-bromo-3-chloro-6,9-epoxybisabola-7(14),10-diene based on the similar NMR data around the chiral center, as well as on biogenetic consideration [11].

Okamurene E (5), a colorless oil, was shown to have the molecular formula of $C_{15}H_{23}BrO$ by the interpretation of HRESIMS data. The IR absorption at 3401 cm⁻¹ exhibited the presence of a hydroxyl group. The ¹H NMR spectrum (Table 2) delineated four methyl singlets, one double doublet ascribable to an oxygenated/halogenated methine, and one multiplet and two doublets attributable to three olefinic protons. The ¹³C and DEPT NMR spectra (Table 2) displayed four methyls, three methylenes, four methines, and four quaternary carbons. Compared to the reported NMR data for 10-bromo-7 α ,

8α-expoxychamigr-1-en-3-ol [12], compound **5** exhibited no resonances for the epoxy moiety in the NMR spectra. Instead, it showed additional signals at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 5.23 (H-8) and $\delta_{\rm C}$ 139.5 (C-7) and 120.8 (C-8) for a trisubstituted vinyl group, which was positioned at C-7 based on the observed HMBC correlations from H-14 to C-6, C-7, and C-8. Further analysis of the ¹H–¹H COSY and HMBC correlations (Figure 2) confirmed the structure of **5** as 10-bromo-1,7-chamigradien-3-ol. The relative configurations at C-3, C-6, and C-10 of **5** were deduced to be same as those of 10-bromo-7α, 8α-expoxychamigr-1-en-3-ol [12] by the NOESY correlation between H-5 and H-10 as well as by their similar NMR data.

	3		4		5		6	
No.	$\delta_{ m H}$ (J in Hz)	$\delta_{ m C}$	$\delta_{\rm H}$ (J in Hz)	$\delta_{ m C}$	$\delta_{\rm H}$ (J in Hz)	$\delta_{ m C}$	$\delta_{\rm H}$ (J in Hz)	$\delta_{ m C}$
1	2.25, m	38.1, CH ₂	2.18, m	36.8, CH ₂	5.54, d (10.4)	131.2, CH	9.80, br s	199.3, CH
2a	5.34, m	119.1, CH	5.34, m	119.0, CH	5.85, d (10.4)	136.5, CH	2.67, dd (17.5, 6.2)	42.4, CH ₂
2b							3.06, dd (17.3, 7.9)	
3		133.4, C		133.7, C		67.4, C	4.34, t (6.5)	72.7, CH
4a	1.93, m	27.7, CH ₂	1.93, m	28.0, CH ₂	1.56, m	28.5, CH ₂	4.65, dd (8.7, 5.0)	81.6, CH
4b	2.22, m		2.22, m		1.99, m			
5a	1.58, m	31.5, CH ₂	1.66, m	34.5, CH ₂	1.78, m	36.3, CH ₂	2.75, m	21.7, CH ₂
5b	1.82, m		1.75, m				2.91, m	
6		80.9, C		80.8, C		47.4, C	4.97, m	80.9, CH
7		156.3, C		156.5, C		139.5, C	4.21, m	50.4, CH
8a	2.38, m	40.1, CH ₂	2.38, m	40.3, CH ₂	5.23, m	120.8, CH	2.42, dd (14.1, 5.8)	41.7, CH ₂
8b	2.71, dd (15.7, 9.7)		2.61, dd (15.6, 9.5)				2.61, m	
9	4.63, m	71.8, CH	4.63, m	72.8, CH	2.58, m	36.1, CH ₂	4.50, dd (7.4, 3.5)	74.4, CH
10	5.22, m	126.0, CH	5.22, m	126.2, CH	4.64, dd (10.6, 6.4)	61.4, CH	3.80, dt (11.5, 3.5)	64.1, CH
11a		136.2, C		135.5, C		41.6, C	1.77, m	27.4, CH ₂
11b							1.88, m	
12	1.69, s	18.2, CH ₃	1.70, s	18.3, CH ₃	1.02, s	18.1, CH ₃	1.07, t (7.7)	12.8, CH ₃
13	1.71, s	25.8, CH ₃	1.71, s	25.8, CH ₃	1.11, s	26.3, CH ₃		
14a	4.78, br s	103.5, CH ₂	4.78, br s	103.8, CH ₂	1.57, s	21.9, CH ₃		
14b	4.90, br s		4.91, br s					
15	1.66, s	23.4, CH ₃	1.66, s	23.4, CH ₃	1.31, s	28.8, CH ₃		

Table 2. ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR data of compounds 3–6 in CDCl₃^a.

^a Measured at 500 MHz for ¹H and 125 MHz for ¹³C.

Okamuragenin (6), isolated as a colorless oil, was assigned the molecular formula $C_{12}H_{18}Br_2O_3$ on the basis of HRESIMS, consistent with three degrees of unsaturation. The IR spectrum exhibited strong absorptions at 2762 and 1728 cm⁻¹, indicating the existence of an aldehyde group. In accordance with the IR signals, the ¹H and ¹³C NMR data (Table 2) also indicated the presence of an aldehyde group at δ_H (9.80, H-1) and δ_C 199.3 (CH, C-1). The ¹H–¹H COSY spectrum revealed that the aldehyde

group was extended to a straight spin system consisting of six methines, four methylenes, and terminated by a methyl group (Figure 2). Compound **6** was deduced to be bicyclic, since no other unsaturated functionalities were indicated by the NMR data (Table 2). The connectivity of C-3/O/C-9 was deduced by the correlation from H-3 to C-9 in the HMBC spectrum (Figure 2). Taking into account the downfield chemical shifts of C-4 (δ_C 81.6) and C-6 (δ_C 80.9) and the calculated 3 degrees of unsaturation, C-4 and C-6 had to be linked through an oxygen atom. Finally, the two remaining Br-atoms indicated by the molecular formula could only be located at C-7 and C-10 based on the chemical shifts [13]. The relative configuration was determined by NOESY experiment. The same orientation of CH₂-2, H-4, and H-9 was evidenced by the NOE correlations of H-2 to H-4 and H-9, while H-9 was *syn* to H-7 based on the NOE correlation between them. The above data established the structure of **6**, trivially named okamuragenin.

In addition to the six new compounds, the other nine sesquiterpenes including isobromocuparene [14], 7-hydroxylaurene [15], laurene [16], filiformin [17], debromofiliformin [18], 6-bromo-filiformin [19], deoxyprepacifenol [20], 2-bromo-3-chloro-2,7-epoxy-9-chamigren-8 α -ol [11], and 2,10-dibromo-3-chloro-7-chamigren-9-ol [21], together with four C₁₅-acetogenins including 3*E*, 12*Z*-laurediol [22], neolaurallene [23], *E*-stereoisomer of neoisoprelaurefucin [24], and 3*Z*-laurentin [25], were all identified by comparison of their spectral data with those previously reported.

The isolated compounds were evaluated for the brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*) lethal activity [26,27]. Among them, 7-hydroxylaurene was found to possess potent lethality with LD₅₀ 1.8 μ M, which is more active than that of 7-hydroxylaurene acetate, allolaurinterol acetate, and laurene [12]. Analysis of structure-activity relationship showed that the 7-hydroxyl group in laurene sesquiterpenes may play a key role in the brine shrimp toxicity, and the activity reduced significantly after acetylation. The above data suggested that 7-hydroxylaurene may be a potent chemical defensive agent with cytotoxicity, although the hatchability test was not performed [27]. The other tested compounds only displayed moderate or weak activity (data not shown).

3. Experimental Section

3.1. General

IR spectra were measured on a Nicolet NEXUS 470 FT-IR spectrophotometer. Optical rotations were recorded on an Atago Polax-L polarimeter. UV spectra were determined on a Spectrumlab 54 UV-visible spectrophotometer. HRESIMS were run on a VG Autospec 3000 mass spectrometer. 1D and 2D NMR spectra were obtained at 500 and 125 MHz for ¹H and ¹³C, respectively, on a Bruker Advance 500 MHz NMR spectrometer in CDCl₃ with TMS as internal standard. Column chromatography (CC) was performed on Si gel (200–300 mesh, Qingdao Haiyang Chemical Co., Qingdao, China) and Sephadex LH-20 (Sigma). TLC was carried out with precoated Si gel plates (GF-254, Qingdao Haiyang Chemical Co., Qingdao, China).

3.2. Algal Material

The marine red alga *Laurencia okamurai* Yamada was collected along Weihai coastline in Shandong Province, China, in May, 2007, and was identified by B.-M. Xia, Institute of Oceanology,

Chinese Academy of Sciences (IOCAS). A voucher specimen (HZ0705) has been deposited at the Key Laboratory of Experimental Marine Biology of IOCAS.

3.3. Extraction and Isolation

The dried and powdered alga *L. okamurai* (3.8 kg) was extracted with a mixture of CHCl₃ and MeOH (1:1, v/v). The concentrated extracts were partitioned between H₂O and EtOAc. The EtOAc-soluble fraction was loaded to Si gel column, eluting with a step gradient of increasing EtOAc (0%–100%) in petroleum ether (PE) to give eight fractions I–VIII. Fraction II eluted with PE/EtOAc 100:1 and was further purified by preparative TLC to afford a mixture of **3** and **4** (5.6 mg). Fraction IV eluted with PE/acetone 100:1 and was further separated by preparative TLC to afford **1** (3.7 mg), **2** (4.7 mg), **6** (13.1 mg). Fraction VI eluted with PE/acetone 30:1 and was further separated by Sephadex LH-20 (MeOH) CC and preparative TLC to afford **5** (10.7 mg).

3.4. Computational Details

Okamurene A (1): Colorless oil; $[α]^{18}{}_D$ +2.3 (*c* 0.11, MeOH); UV (MeOH) $λ_{max}$ (log ε) 221 (3.56) nm; IR (KBr) v_{max} 3065, 2964, 2857, 1514, 1479, and 1205 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS *m/z* 297.0748 [M + H]⁺ (calcd for C₁₅H₂₂⁷⁹BrO, 297.0854).

Okamurene B (2): Colorless oil; $[α]^{18}{}_{D}$ +3.6 (*c* 0.06, MeOH); UV (MeOH) $λ_{max}$ (log ε) 221 (3.66) nm; IR (KBr) v_{max} 3068, 2964, 2857, 1514, 1477, and 1208 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS *m/z* 319.0726 [M + Na]⁺ (calcd for C₁₅H₂₁BrONa, 319.0673).

Okamurenes C (**3**) and D (**4**): Colorless oil; IR (KBr) v_{max} 3096, 2924, 2854, 1637, 1457, and 1024 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 2; HRESIMS *m*/*z* 219.1757 [M + H]⁺ (calcd for C₁₅H₂₃O, 219.1749).

Okamurene E (**5**): Colorless oil; $[\alpha]^{18}_{D}$ +7.6 (*c* 0.09, MeOH); IR (KBr) ν_{max} 3401, 2971, 2928, 1549, 1447, 1367 and 1121 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 2; HRESIMS *m/z* 281.0846 [M – H₂O + H]⁺ (calcd for C₁₅H₂₂⁷⁹Br, 281.0905), and 283.0860 [M – H₂O + H]⁺ (calcd for C₁₅H₂₂⁸¹Br, 283.0884).

Okamuragenin (6): Colorless oil; $[\alpha]^{18}_{D}$ +11.2 (*c* 0.18, MeOH); IR (KBr) ν_{max} 3060, 2926, 2854, 2762, 1728, 1421, and 1134 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 2; HRESIMS *m/z* 385.9926 [M + NH₄]⁺ (calcd for C₁₂H₂₂N⁷⁹Br₂O₃, 385.9966), 387.9986 [M + NH₄]⁺ (calcd for C₁₂H₂₂N⁷⁹Br⁸¹BrO₃, 387.9946).

3.5. Brine Shrimp Toxicity

Brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*) toxicity of crude extract and pure compounds was determined as detailed previously [26,27].

4. Conclusions

Four new bisabolane sesquiterpenes, okamurenes A–D (1–4), a new chamigrane derivative, okamurene E (5), and a new C_{12} -acetogenin, okamuragenin (6), together with 13 known related metabolites, were isolated from the marine red alga *L. okamurai*. Among them, okamurenes A and B

(1 and 2) are first examples of bromobisabolane sesquiterpenes possessing a phenyl moiety among *Laurencia*-derived sesquiterpenes, while okamuragenin (6) was the first acetogenin aldehyde possessing a C_{12} -carbon skeleton. Each of the isolated compounds was evaluated for the brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*) lethal assay and 7-hydroxylaurene displayed potent lethality with LD₅₀ 1.8 μ M.

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