



Phenolic compounds with NF- κ B inhibitory effects from the fungus *Phellinus baumii*

Chang-Sheng Wu^a, Zhao-Min Lin^a, Li-Ning Wang^a, Dong-Xiao Guo^a, Shu-Qi Wang^a, Yong-Qing Liu^a, Hui-Qing Yuan^b, Hong-Xiang Lou^{a,*}

^a Department of Natural Products Chemistry, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Shandong University, 44 West Wenhua Road, Jinan 250012, People's Republic of China

^b Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, School of Medicine, Shandong University, 44 West Wenhua Road, Jinan 250012, People's Republic of China

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ABSTRACT

Chemical investigation of the fungus *Phellinus baumii* has resulted in characterization of five previously undescribed hispidin derivatives, phellibaumins A–E (**1–5**), as well as two pairs of new non-equivalent epimeric benzyl dihydroflavones, methylphelligrin A (**9**), *epi*-methylphelligrin A (**10**), methylphelligrin B (**11**), and *epi*-methylphelligrin B (**12**), together with five known compounds, interfungin B (**6**), phelligrin H (**7**), phelligrin A (**8**), phelligrin A (**13**), and *epi*-phelligrin A (**14**). Phellibaumin A (**1**) was a novel hispidin derivative with a unique 3,4-dihydroxybenzofuran unit. These compounds exhibited NF- κ B inhibitory activity with IC₅₀ values of 52.96 μ M (**1**), 41.40 μ M (**2**), 52.92 μ M (**5**), 36.44 μ M (**9** and **10**), and 22.46 μ M (**11** and **12**), respectively.

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Phellinus baumii Pilát, a fungus belonging to the family Hymenochaetaceae, known as ‘Forest Gold’, preferably hosts on the stems of genus *Prunus*, *Syringa*, *Crataegus*, and other hardwood trees.¹ Its fruiting body has been traditionally used for treatment of gastrointestinal cancer, liver or heart diseases, and stomach ailments in China.² Previous chemical investigation of *Phellinus* fungi indicated that they produce a variety of yellowish polyphenols with a styrylpyrone skeleton (hispidin),^{3–10} which exhibit antioxidative and free radical scavenging activities.^{11–19}

In our ongoing research of natural phenolic compounds,^{20,22} chemical investigation on the fruit body of *P. baumii* has led to the characterization of nine new compounds, including five hispidin-derived polyphenols phellibaumins A–E (**1–5**) and two pairs of epimeric benzyl dihydroflavones (**9–12**), along with five known phenolic compounds (**6–8**, **13**, and **14**). The absolute structures of the epimeric benzyl dihydroflavones were determined by HPLC-CD analysis,^{21–24} we found these epimeric pairs were non-equivalently present in nature. Inhibitory activities of **1–14** against NF- κ B have also been tested.

The EtOH extract of the fruit body of the fungus *P. baumii* was evaporated to dryness and then suspended in water followed by partitioned with EtOAc and *n*-butanol. The EtOAc-soluble extract

was subjected to column chromatography and semi-preparative HPLC in the reversed phase mode to yield compounds **1–14** (Fig. 1).

Compound **1** was obtained as a yellowish amorphous powder. Its molecular formula, C₁₉H₁₂O₇, was established by the HRESIMS ion peak at *m/z* 351.1895 [M–H][–] (calcd for C₁₉H₁₁O₇, 351.1899). The ¹H NMR spectrum of **1** (Table 1) exhibited signals including a 1,3,4-trisubstituted phenyl moiety at δ_{H} 7.18 (d, 1H, *J* = 1.8 Hz, H-9), 7.02 (dd, 1H, *J* = 8.4, 1.8 Hz, H-13), and 6.86 (d, 1H, *J* = 8.4 Hz, H-12), a *trans*-disubstituted double bond at δ_{H} 6.85 and 7.34 (1H each, d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, H-6 and H-7), three singlet aromatic protons at δ_{H} 6.91, 7.35, and 7.13 (1H each, s, H-4, H-2', and H-5'). Its ¹³C NMR spectrum (Table 1) revealed the presence of 19 sp² carbons. The long-range correlations between H-4/C-2 (δ_{C} 104.4), C-3 (δ_{C} 163.5), C-5 (δ_{C} 158.6), and C-6 (δ_{C} 116.6), H-6/C-4 (δ_{C} 95.7), C-5, and C-8 (δ_{C} 127.7), H-7/C-5, C-9 (δ_{C} 113.6), and C-13 (δ_{C} 120.6), H-9/C-7 (δ_{C} 134.6), C-10 (δ_{C} 145.9), C-11 (δ_{C} 147.2), and C-13, H-12/C-8 and C-10, H-13/C-7, C-9, and C-11 observed in HMBC determined the hispidin moiety (Fig. 2). Besides the 13 carbons of hispidin, a tetrasubstituted benzene moiety was revealed by the splitting pattern of two methine singlets at δ_{H} 7.35 (s, H-2') and 7.13 (s, H-5'). To satisfy the molecular formula C₁₉H₁₂O₇ and 14 degrees of unsaturation, a furan ring should exist in **1**, which was further confirmed by the HMBC correlations between H-2'/C-2, C-4' (δ_{C} 144.3), and C-6' (δ_{C} 149.7), H-5'/C-1' (δ_{C} 114.4), C-3' (δ_{C} 145.6). Consequently, the structure of **1** was finally determined as shown and named as phellibaumin A.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +86 531 88382012; fax: +86 531 88382019.

E-mail address: louhongxiang@sdu.edu.cn (H.-X. Lou).

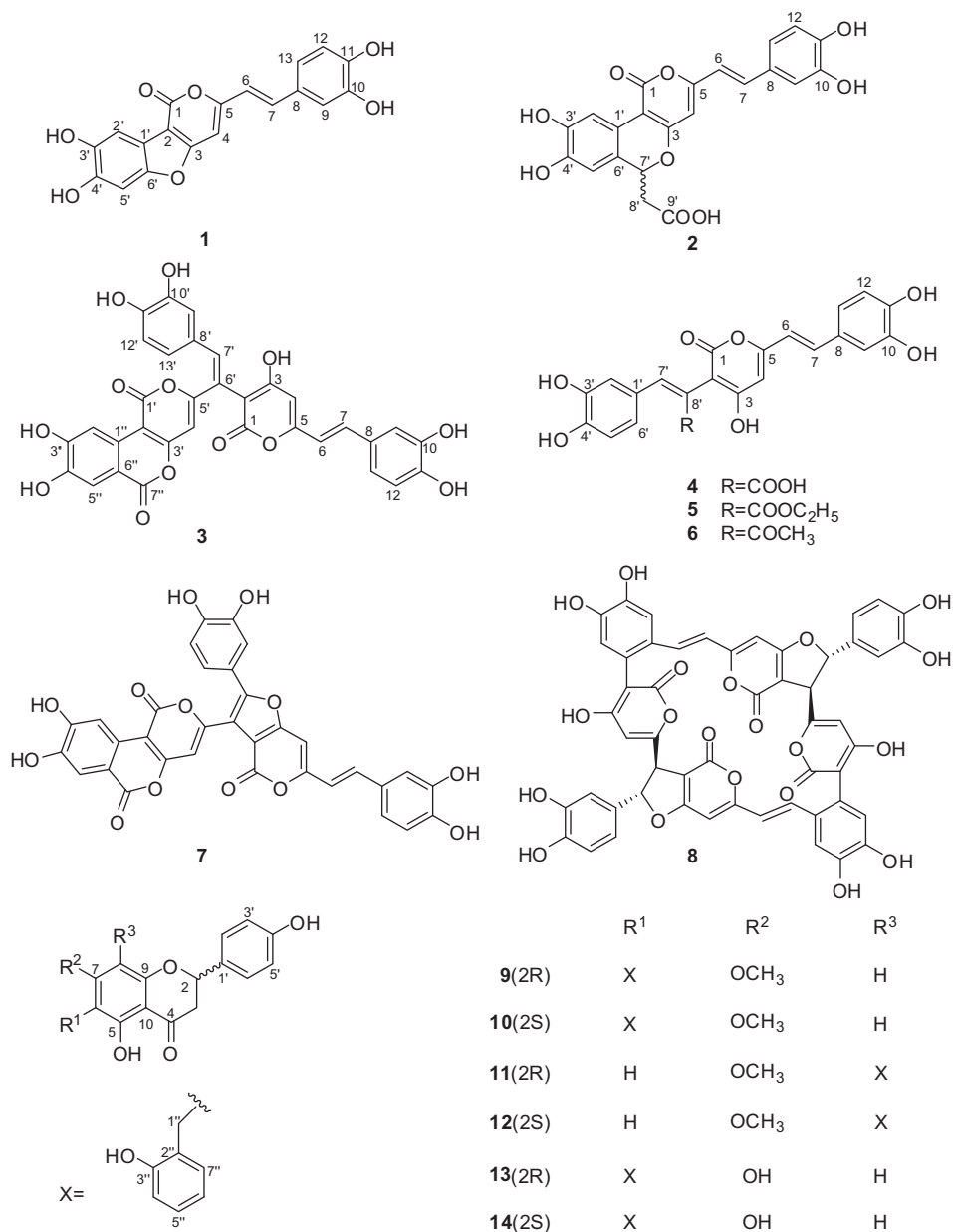


Figure 1. Structures of isolated phenolic compounds (**1–14**) from *P. baumii*.

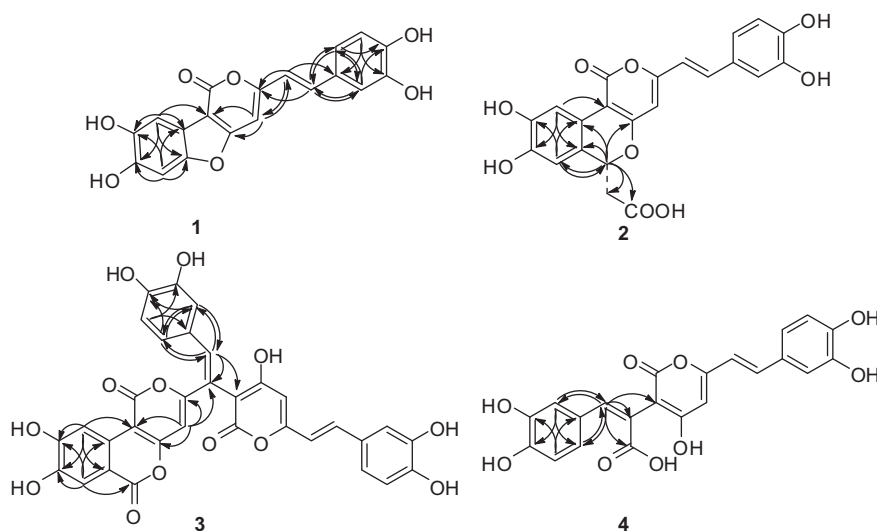
Compound **2**, a yellowish amorphous powder, has a molecular formula C₂₂H₁₆O₉ as determined for the m/z 423.0704 [M–H][–] in HRESIMS (calcd for C₂₂H₁₅O₉, 423.0709). Besides the characteristic signals of a hispidin moiety, the ¹H NMR spectrum of **2** (Table 1) showed two additional aromatic singlets at δ_H 7.90 and 6.61 (1H each, s, H-2' and H-5'), a methine multiplet at δ_H 5.66 (dd, 1H, J = 4.8, 9.0 Hz, H-7'), two protons at δ_H 2.74 (dd, 1H, J = 9.0, 15.6 Hz, H-8'a) and 2.70 (dd, 1H, J = 4.8, 15.6 Hz, H-8'b) attributable to one methylene group. The ¹³C NMR (Table 1) and HSQC spectra revealed the presence of 20 sp² and 2 sp³ carbons. The HMBC correlations of the hispidin moiety were consistent with those of **1**. Meanwhile, long-range correlations between H-2'/C-6' (δ_C 121.3), C-4' (δ_C 145.2), and C-2 (δ_C 99.5), H-5'/C-1' (δ_C 116.3), C-3' (δ_C 145.0), and C-7' (δ_C 75.1) revealed the presence of a 1,2,4,5-tetrasubstituted phenyl moiety. The oxygen-bearing sp³ carbon of C-7' was adjacent to C-6' and C-8' (δ_C 40.5), which was assigned by the HMBC correlations between H-7'/C-6', C-5' (δ_C 111.8), C-1', C-8', and C-3 (δ_C 162.0), H-8'/C-6' and C-7', together

with COSY correlation between H-7' and H-8'. A remaining –COOH (δ_C 170.7, C-9') was unequivocally connected to C-8', which was further confirmed by the HMBC correlations between H-7'/C-9' (δ_C 170.7) and H-8'/C-9'. Accordingly, the structure of **2** (phellibauamin B) was finally determined. It is a new hispidin derivative with an undetermined configuration at C-7'.

Compound **3** was an orange, amorphous powder with a molecular formula C₃₃H₂₀O₁₃ as determined by HRESIMS at m/z 623.1753 [M–H][–] (calcd for C₃₃H₁₉O₁₃, 623.1759). By comparison of its NMR spectra (Table 2) with the known compound **7** (phelligridin H) which was previously isolated from the fungus *Phellinus igniarius*,¹⁵ the main difference was that the furan ring of **7** was opened in **3** as revealed by the presence of an additional methine and absence of an unsaturation in **3**. The final structure of **3** was established by the interpretation of relevant 2D NMR spectra. In the HMBC spectrum, the correlations of the hispidin moiety were consistent with those of **1**. The pyranobenzopyran moiety was assigned by the HMBC correlations between H-4'/C-2' (δ_C 98.6), C-3' (δ_C 161.2),

Table 1
¹H and ¹³C NMR Data for **1**, **2**, and **4**

No.	1^a		2^b		4^c	
	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)
1	158.5		159.8		165.0	
2	104.4		99.5		99.5	
3	163.5		162.0		170.2	
4	95.7	6.91 s	100.4	6.34 s	101.9	6.17 s
5	158.6		157.9		159.0	
6	116.6	6.85 d (15.6)	115.7	6.72 d (15.6)	115.8	6.65 d (15.6)
7	134.6	7.34 d (15.6)	134.4	7.19 d (15.6)	135.2	7.35 d (15.6)
8	127.7		126.7		127.4	
9	113.6	7.18 d (1.8)	113.8	7.04 d (1.8)	113.4	7.06 d (1.8)
10	145.9		145.5		144.8	
11	147.2		147.4		147.0	
12	115.5	6.86 d (8.4)	115.7	6.77 d (7.8)	114.7	6.72 d (8.4)
13	120.6	7.02 dd (8.4, 1.8)	120.5	6.97 dd (7.8, 1.8)	120.4	6.96 dd (8.4, 1.8)
1'	114.4		116.3		127.7	
2'	104.8	7.35 s	111.2	7.90 s	115.8	6.98 d (1.8)
3'	145.6		145.0		145.4	
4'	144.3		145.2		147.1	
5'	98.3	7.13 s	111.8	6.61 s	115.2	6.79 d (8.4)
6'	149.7		121.3		123.1	6.85 dd (8.4, 1.8)
7'			75.1	5.66 dd (4.8, 9)	143.3	7.76 s
8'			40.5	2.74 dd (9, 15.6)	120.2	
9'			170.7	2.70 dd (4.8, 15.6)	170.8	

^a Recorded in acetone-*d*₆.^b Recorded in DMSO-*d*₆.^c Recorded in CD₃OD. Proton coupling constants (*J*) in Hertz are given in parentheses. ¹H and ¹³C NMR were recorded at 600 and 150 MHz, respectively. All chemical shift assignments were done on the basis of 1D and 2D NMR techniques.**Figure 2.** Key HMBC correlations of **1**–**4**.

and C-5' (δ_C 160.9), H-5''/C-3'' (δ_C 153.6), C-1'' (δ_C 127.8), C-4'' (δ_C 146.7), and C-7'' (δ_C 159.9), H-2''/C-2' (δ_C 98.6), C-3'', C-4'', and C-6'' (δ_C 111.8) (Fig. 2). The 3,4-dihydroxybenzylidene moiety was unequivocally established by the correlations of H-7'/C-9' (δ_C 116.1) and C-13' (δ_C 123.2), H-9'/C-7' (δ_C 136.8), C-13', and C-11' (δ_C 147.0), H-13'/C-9', C-11', and C-7', H-12'/C-8' (δ_C 127.8), and C-10' (δ_C 145.3). The linkage of the above three moieties through a quaternary carbon C-6' at δ_C 120.5 was determined on the basis of the HMBC correlations between H-7'/C-6', C-5', and C-2 (δ_C 96.5), and H-4'/C-6'. Although the geometry of the $\Delta^{6,7'}$ double bond has not been established, the proposed biosynthesis of phelligrudin H (**7**) suggested the stereochemistry to be *cis*.^{15,19} In addition, compared with other protons, the chemical shift of H-7' (δ_H 7.70) located in comparatively lower magnetic field, partly because

of the potential deshielding effect originating from the carbonyl of C-3. Accordingly, the structure of **3** (phellibaumin C) was determined as an analogue of phelligrudin H.

The molecular formula of compound **4** was determined to be C₂₂H₁₆O₉ by HRESIMS at *m/z* 423.0714 [M–H][–] (calcd for C₂₂H₁₅O₉, 423.0711). ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of **4** (Table 1) showed the presence of a hispidin moiety and a caffeic acid moiety. The above-mentioned partial structures were unambiguously connected to each other on the basis of the HMBC correlation between H-7'/C-2 (δ_C 99.5). Therefore, the structure of **4** was assigned as depicted and named phellibaumin D.

The molecular formula of **5** was determined as C₂₄H₂₀O₉ by HRESIMS at *m/z* 451.1019 [M–H][–] (calcd for C₂₄H₁₉O₉, 451.1024). It was an ethyl ester of **4** as determined by the addi-

Table 2
¹H and ¹³C NMR data for **3** and **5**^a

No.	3		5	
	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)
1	165.6		165.5	
2	96.5		98.7	
3	171.2		170.2	
4	104.4	6.15 s	103.6	6.10 s
5	159.1		158.5	
6	116.2	6.67 d (15.6)	116.2	6.63 d (15.6)
7	135.0	7.36 d (15.6)	134.7	7.33 d (15.6)
8	128.1		127.8	
9	113.3	7.08 br s	113.2	7.06 d (1.8)
10	144.8		145.3	
11	146.8		146.9	
12	114.8	6.73 d (8.4)	115.1	6.79 d (8.4)
13	120.4	6.98 br d (8.4)	120.3	6.98 dd (8.4, 1.8)
1'	162.0		127.5	
2'	98.6		116.0	7.02 d (1.8)
3'	161.2		144.7	
4'	96.5	6.30 s	147.0	
5'	160.9		114.6	6.70 d (8.4)
6'	120.5		123.3	6.90 dd (8.4, 1.8)
7'	136.8	7.70 s	143.1	7.75 s
8'	127.8		120.2	
9'	116.1	7.07 br s	168.7	
10'	145.3		60.5	4.24 q (7.2)
11'	147.0		13.2	1.31 t (7.2)
12'	115.1	6.80 d (8.4)		
13'	123.2	6.95 br d (8.4)		
1''	127.8			
2''	110.3	8.44 s		
3''	153.6			
4''	146.7			
5''	114.1	7.59 s		
6''	111.8			
7''	159.9			

^a Recorded in CD₃OD. Proton coupling constants (J) in Hertz are given in parentheses. ¹H and ¹³C NMR were recorded at 600 and 150 MHz, respectively. All chemical shift assignments were done on the basis of 1D and 2D NMR techniques.

tional signals at δ_H 4.24 (q, 1H, J = 7.2 Hz, H-10') and 1.31 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, H-11') in ¹H NMR, along with δ_C 60.5 (C-10') and 13.2 (C-11') in the ¹³C NMR spectrum (Table 2). The long-range HMBC correlation between H-10'/C-9' (δ_C 168.7) confirmed the ethoxyl linkage at C-9'. It was also a new compound and named as phellibaumin E.

Methylphelligrin A (**9–10**) was obtained as a white amorphous powder. Its molecular formula was determined as C₂₃H₂₀O₆ by the negative mode HRESIMS [M–H][–] found at m/z 391.2640 (calcd 391.2645). It was a methylated derivative of phelligrin A (**13–14**)¹⁰ as determined by comparison of their ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra (Table 3). A long-range correlation of the methoxyl protons at δ_H 3.88 to C-7 (δ_C 165.8) in the HMBC spectrum also confirmed the conclusion. To investigate the absolute configuration of methylphelligrin A, an on-line chiral HPLC–CD coupling technique was developed. Although the peaks (**9** and **10**) were not well separated with the chiral HPLC–CD at the given condition, one positive signal (**9**) and a negative signal (**10**) in the CD trace were well differentiated (Fig. 3A). The opposite Cotton Effects (CE) as revealed by the CD curves indicated methylphelligrin A was a mixture of a pair of enantiomers with the first peak (**10**) about thirty times larger than the second peak (**9**). In the CD spectrum of **9**, an obvious negative cotton effect (CE) at 340 nm for n→π* absorption band and a positive CE at 290 nm for π→π* absorption band established a R-configuration at C-2.^{25–27} Meanwhile, compound **10**, the enantiomer of **9**, was 2S-configuration, for the positive CE at 340 nm and negative CE at 290 nm (Fig. 3B). Compounds **9** and **10** were named as methylphelligrin A (+) and *epi*-methylphelligrin A (–), respectively.

Methylphelligrin B (**11** and **12**), a white amorphous powder, possessed the same molecular formula as methylphelligrin A for the ion [M–H][–] at m/z 391.2635 (calcd 391.2641) found in HRESIMS. The ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectrometric data (Table 3) resembled those of methylphelligrin A as well. However, in the HMBC spectrum, the long-range correlations between H-1''/C-7 (δ_C 166.7), C-8 (δ_C 107.7), and C-9 (δ_C 160.5) determined the linkage of *ortho*-

Table 3
¹H and ¹³C NMR data of compounds **9–12**^a

No.	9 and 10			11 and 12	
	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)	HMBC	δ_C	δ_H (J in Hz)
2	79.4	5.52 dd (13.2, 3.0)	1', 2', 6'	79.7	5.48 dd (12.0, 3.0)
3	42.5	3.26 dd (16.8, 13.2)	4, 10	43.4	3.19 dd (17.4, 12.0)
		2.78 dd (16.8, 3.0)	2, 4, 1'		2.84 dd (17.4, 3.0)
4	197.1			198.1	
5	160.2			164.1	
6	107.5			93.2	6.22 s
7	165.8			166.7	
8	91.3	6.24 s	6, 7, 9, 10	107.7	
9	162.4			160.5	
10	102.6			103.7	
1'	129.8			130.7	
2'	128.2	7.43 br d (8.4)	2, 4', 6'	128.8	7.30 br d (8.4)
3'	115.3	6.92 br d (8.4)	1', 4', 5'	116.1	6.83 br d (8.4)
4'	157.9			158.6	
5'	116.2	6.94 br d (8.4)	1', 3', 4'	116.1	6.85 br d (8.4)
6'	129.1	7.45 br d (8.4)	2, 2', 4'	128.8	7.32 br d (7.8)
1''	21.4	3.87 s	5, 6, 7, 2'', 3'', 7''	22.8	3.88 s
2''	126.5			127.5	
3''	155.0			155.8	
4''	114.9	6.81 br d (7.8)	2'', 6''	115.6	6.78 br d (8.4)
5''	126.7	6.98 m	3'', 7''	127.4	6.97 m
6''	119.2	6.67 m	2'', 4''	120.1	6.66 m
7''	128.9	6.87 br d (7.8)	3'', 5''	129.7	6.81 br d (7.2)
7-OCH ₃	55.7	3.88 s	7	56.6	3.87 s

^a Recorded in acetone-d₆. Proton coupling constants (J) in Hertz are given in parentheses. ¹H and ¹³C NMR were recorded at 600 and 150 MHz, respectively. All chemical shift assignments were done on the basis of 1D and 2D NMR techniques.

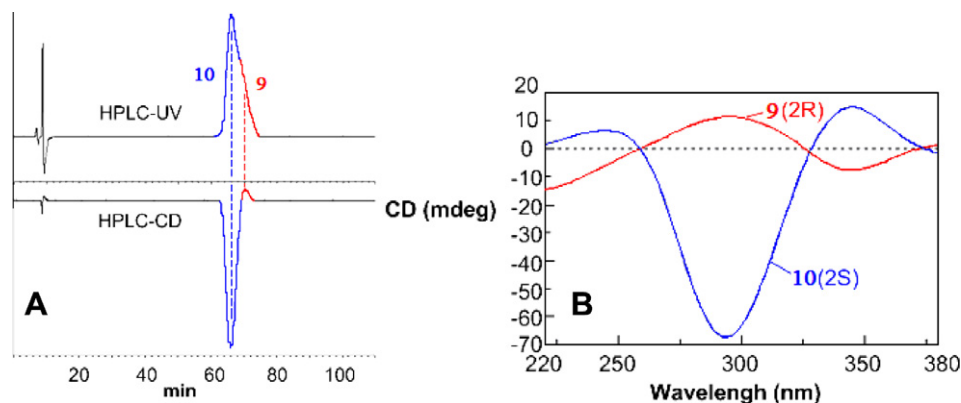


Figure 3. HPLC–UV and HPLC–CD analysis of methylphelligrin A using a chiral phase and assignment of the absolute configurations of methylphelligrin A by CD spectrum.

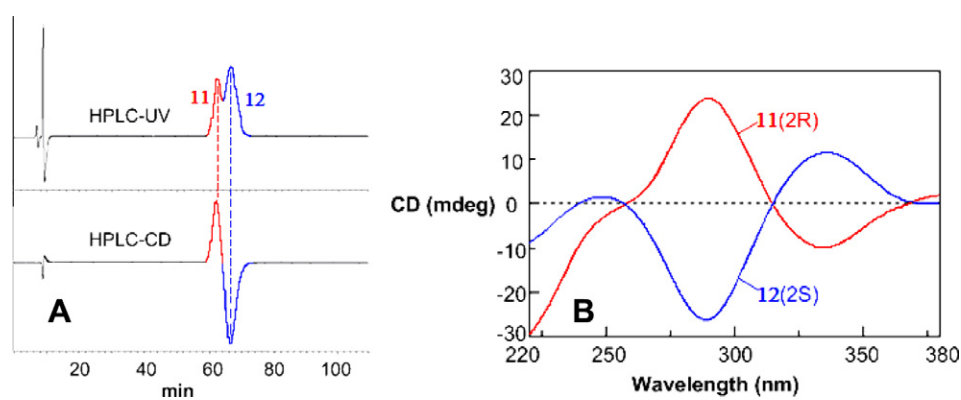


Figure 4. HPLC–UV and HPLC–CD analysis of methylphelligrin B using a chiral phase and assignment of the absolute configurations of methylphelligrin B by CD spectrum.

disubstituted phenyl moiety at C-8 through a methylene other than C-6 (δ_c 93.2). Again, separation of methylphelligrin B with the chiral HPLC–CD coupling technique provided one positive peak (11) and a negative peak (12) in the CD trace with two opposite CD curves. The ratio of quantity of 11 and 12 was nearly 5:6 according to the area of respective peak (Fig. 4A). A negative CE at 340 nm and a positive CE at 290 nm in the on-line measured CD determined a 2*R*-configuration for methylphelligrin B (11) while the opposite CD determined a 2*S*-configuration for *epi*-methylphelligrin B (12) (Fig. 4B).

Phelligrin A (13 and 14) was a known compound, however, its C-2 absolute configuration had not been determined.¹⁰ The chiral HPLC–CD separated two peaks, a positive one (13) and a negative

one (14) in the CD trace, corresponding to two enantiomers with the ratio of 13:14 nearly 1:2 (Fig. 5A). The negative CE at 340 nm and a positive CE at 290 nm in the CD spectrum determined 13 was 2*R*-configuration and named phelligrin A while the opposite CD data determined 14 (*epi*-phelligrin A) to be 2*S*-configuration (Fig. 5B).

The mushrooms belonging to *Phellinus* and *Inonotus* produce a wide variety of hispidin derivatives possessing unprecedented carbon skeletons. These compounds were proposed to be biogenerated by the oxidative coupling of the precursor hispidin with phenolic compounds or additional hispidins catalyzed by peroxidase.^{8–18} Based on the previous postulated biogenetic pathway of hispidin class compounds,^{8–13,15–18} we proposed the plausible

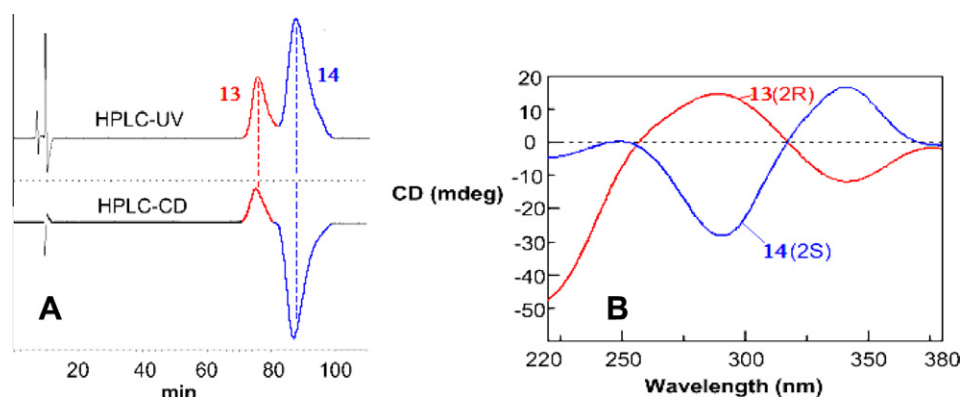
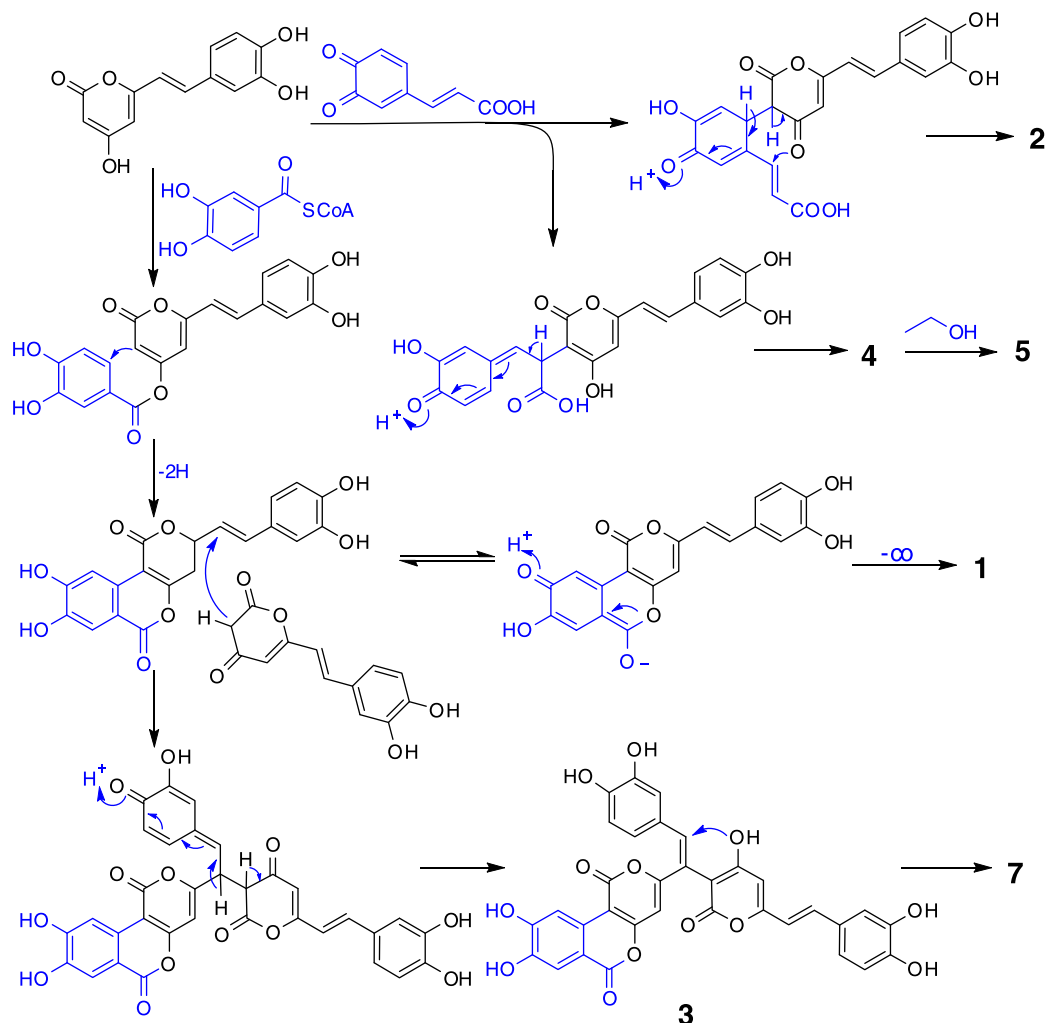


Figure 5. HPLC–UV and HPLC–CD analysis of phelligrin A using a chiral phase and assignment of the absolute configurations of phelligrin A by CD spectrum.



Scheme 1. Proposed biogenesis of phellibaumins A–E.

biogenesis of phellibaumins A–E (**1–5**) (Scheme 1). Phellibaumins B and D may be both formed by coupling between a molecule of hispidin and a molecule of activated caffeic acid, but different oxidative styles result in two disparate compounds. Further coupling of phellibaumin D with ethanol generates phellibaumin E. Phellibaumin C is supposed to be just the precursor of phelligrin H,¹⁵ which has actually been deduced by a previous review.¹⁹ Phellibaumin A may be derived from the decarboxylation of phelligrin D.¹¹

The transcriptional activator, nuclear factor kappa-B (NF-κB) has gained much attention as an inhibitor of apoptosis because NF-κB regulated genes are involved in tumor cell proliferation and metastasis. Therefore, intercepting NF-κB signaling might be an attractive antitumor approach.²⁸ NF-κB has been shown to be constitutively activated in human androgen independent prostate cancer cell lines and contribute to the progression of prostate cancer.²⁹ Effects of dihydroflavones and hispidin derivatives from *P. baumii* on NF-κB activation in prostate cancer cells were examined in a luciferase gene reporter assay. PC-3 cells, an androgen-insensitive cell line, are IKKs (inhibitor of NF-κB kinases) aberrant with high basal activities of NF-κB.³⁰ Treatment of PC-3 cells with desired compounds (**1–14**) decreased the basal NF-κB activity in a dose-dependent manner except that of phelligrin A (**8**) (Table 4). In addition, we treated androgen-sensitive LNCaP cells with phelligrin A, methylphelligrins A and B, resulting in the inhibition of NF-κB activity in response to LPS stimulation, an activator for

NF-κB activation. The result indicated that pretreatment of cells with phelligrin A, methylphelligrins A and B substantially inhibited LPS-induced NF-κB activation. Phelligrin A displayed a dose-dependent reduction in reporter activity by 18.4%, 29.4%, and 81.5% at the desired concentrations, methylphelligrin A by 35.0%, 84.2%, and 85.8%, and methylphelligrin B by 62.5%, 63.5%, and 70.8%, respectively. These preliminary bioassay data indicated that the phenolics in *P. baumii* play an important role in blocking both LPS-induced and constitutive NF-κB activity in human prostate cancer cells.

Table 4
Inhibitory effects of compounds **1–14** on NF-κB activation in PC-3 cells

Compound	IC ₅₀ (μM)
1	52.96 ± 2.26
2	41.40 ± 1.46
3	62.28 ± 4.31
4	74.62 ± 2.38
5	52.92 ± 0.21
6	71.19 ± 1.99
7	84.90 ± 1.11
8	— ^a
9, 10	36.44 ± 2.11
11, 12	22.46 ± 2.04
13, 14	54.50 ± 1.02

^a No inhibition.

Acknowledgments

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Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.bmcl.2011.04.025](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bmcl.2011.04.025).

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