speciosissimus. On chromatograms a color reaction with acids (or acidified ninhydrin) can be observed. This has perhaps led to Testa's erroneous assignment of these steroids as peptides[3]. We did not find any substances referable to cortinarins in methanol extracts of mushrooms from different locations, collected over a period of several years.

Summarizing our results we can state: a) The trifluoroacetic acid hydrolysis of Cortinarin C is inexplicable and cannot be corroborated with a model peptide, b) Our NMR spectra of synthetic 4-methoxyindole are distinctly different from data given by Tebbett (according to the original papers measured at 250 MHz, not 90 MHz). Despite the rapid H/D exchange in deuterated methanol, a sharp indole-NH signal was found by Tebbett. We only detected this signal by measuring in chloroform. c) The instability of hydroxylated tryptophanes and their ethers in acids has been extensively documented by Wieland and others. Nevertheless, 4-methoxytryptophane was isolated in excellent yield after hydrolysis of Cortinarin C. In polar *C. speciosissimus* extracts, not even traces of 4-hydroxy- and 4-methoxytryptophane were found by us after hydrogenation and hydrolysis, though suitable protection procedures were used and the synthetic acids served as internal standards.

Meanwhile orellanin has also been found in *Cortinarius brunneofulvus, C. fluorescens, C. henrici, C. orelannoides* and *C. rainieresis*[4]. Therefore we agree that the ingestion of *Cortinarius* mushrooms should be strictly avoided. Other *Cortinarius* mushrooms may contain further toxic components, but we question the involvence of peptides with structures of the cortinarins; all details leading to this result have been published.

1) Richard, T. M. et al., Arch. Tox. *62* (1988) 242.
2) Prast, H. et al., Arch Tox. *62* (1988) 81.
3) Testa, E., Rass. Micol. Tic. *2* (1970) 89.
4) Rapior, S. et al., Mycologia *80* (1988) 741.

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Announcements

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