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Chemical study on Cyathula officinalis Kuan

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Four new compounds, 4-[(1-ethoxy-2-hydroxy)ethyl]phenol (1), 2,3-isopropylidene cyasterone (2), 24-hydroxycyasterone (3) and 2,3-isopropylidene isocyasterone (4), together with fourteen known compounds, have been isolated from the roots of *Cyathula officinalis* Kuan. Their structures have been elucidated predominantly by spectroscopic methods.

Keywords: Cyathula officinalis Kuan; Phytoecdysterone; Cyasterone; Isocyasterone; Phenol

1. Introduction

The air-dried roots of *Cyathula officinalis* Kuan, a famous traditional Chinese medicinal herb, possess functions of removing blood stasis and restoring menstrual flow, easing joint movement, and inducing diuresis for treating stranguria [1]. Previous studies on the roots of *C. officinalis* Kuan led to the isolation of phytoecdysteroids [2–6], polysaccharide [7] and isoflavones [8]. To establish HPLC fingerprint analysis, a systematic chemical study on the roots of *C. officinalis* Kuan has been carried out. From the ethanolic extract 18 compounds were isolated. On the basis of spectral data, they were determined to be 4-[(1-ethoxy-2-hydroxy)ethyl]phenol (1), 2,3-isopropylidene cyasterone (2), 24-hydroxycyasterone (3), 2,3-isopropylidene isocyasterone (4), *N*-[(3,4,5-trimethoxy)phenyl]formamide (5) [9], 6,7-dimethoxycoumarin (6) [10], butanedioic acid (7), *p*-hydroxybenzoic acid (8) [11], betavulgarin (9) [12,13], daidzin (10) [14], puerarin (11) [14,15], phenyl 1- β -D-glucopyranoside (12) [16], cyasterone (13) [17], sengosterone (14) [18], amarasterone A (15) [3], precyasterone (16) [5], isocyasterone (17) [4] and makisterone B (18) [19]. Compounds 1–4 (figure 1) are new. Compounds 5, 7, 8, 10–12 and 18 were isolated from the roots of *C. officinalis* Kuan for the first time.

2. Results and discussion

Compound 1 was obtained as colorless crystals. When treated with 3% FeCl₃ (aq.), its acetone solution turned blue. The molecular formula was determined as $C_{10}H_{14}O_3$ by

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Figure 1. Structures of compounds 1-4, 13, and 17.

the quasi-molecular peak at m/z 181.0857 $[M - H]^-$ in negative ion HR-ESIMS spectrum. Its IR spectrum shows absorption bands for hydroxyl (3400 cm⁻¹) and aromatic ring (1600, 1510, 1465 cm⁻¹). The ¹H NMR signals at δ 7.15 and 6.81 (each 2H, d, J = 8.4 Hz) indicate a 1,4-disubstituted phenyl moiety. The signal at δ 8.26 (1H, s) is derived from phenolic hydroxyl proton. The presence of an ethoxyl group is concluded from the ¹H NMR signals at δ 3.37 (2H, m) and 1.15 (3H, t, J = 7.2 Hz), and ¹³C NMR signals at δ 63.7 and 14.8. ¹³C NMR signals at δ 82.8 and 67.0 suggest two oxygenated C-atoms. Accordingly, 1 could be determined as either 4-[(1-ethoxy-2-hydroxy)ethyl]phenol or 4-[(2-ethoxy-1-hydroxy)ethyl] phenol. From the HMBC experiment (figure 2) the structure of 1 was determined as 4-[(1-ethoxy-2-hydroxy)ethyl]phenol.

Compound **2** was obtained as colorless needles. Its molecular formula was determined as $C_{32}H_{48}O_8$ by the quasi-molecular peak at m/z 559.3251 $[M - H]^-$ in its negative ion HR-ESIMS spectrum. Its IR spectrum shows absorption bands for hydroxyl (3456 cm⁻¹), γ -lactone (1752 cm⁻¹) and α , β -unsaturated ketone (1643 cm⁻¹). The Liebermann-Burchard reaction of **2** gave a purple visualization. The ¹H NMR signals for seven methyl groups appear at δ 1.45 (3H, s, H-21), 1.38 (3H, d, J = 6.4 Hz, H-29), 1.26 (3H, d, J = 6.8 Hz, H-27), 1.31, 1.27 (each 3H, s, protons of -Me), 1.00 (3H, s, H-18), and 0.98 (3H, s, H-19). These data suggest that **2** might be an ecdysterone. Comparison of the ¹H NMR spectrum of **2** with that of cyasterone (**13**) shows that compound **2** has two more methyl groups, at δ 1.31 (3H, s) and 1.27 (3H, s). The ¹³C NMR spectrum of **2** contains three signals more, at δ 108.4 (O–C–O),



Figure 2. Key HMBC correlations of 1 and 4.

28.5 (-Me) and 26.4 (-Me), than that of **13**. The signals for C-2, C-3 and C-4 shifted from δ 67.8, 68.0 and 31.7 in **13** to 72.1, 71.6 and 26.7 in **2** respectively. Acid hydrolysis of **2** with 3 M HCl (aq.) afforded **13**. The above evidence indicates that **2** is 2,3-isopropylidene cyasterone.

Compound **3** was obtained as white powder. It turned purple upon reacting with the Liebermann–Burchard reagent. Hydroxyl (3436 cm^{-1}) , γ -lactone (1756 cm^{-1}) and α,β – unsaturated carbonyl (1646 cm⁻¹) groups are recognized from its IR spectrum. In the ¹H NMR spectrum, five methyl groups resonate at δ 1.61 (3H, s, H-21), 1.58 (3H, d, J = 6.6 Hz, H-29), 1.57 (1H, d, J = 7.2 Hz, H-27), 1.25 (3H, s, H-18) and 1.08 (3H, s, H-19). Thus, **3** could be an ecdysterone. From the ¹³C NMR spectra of **3** and cyasterone (**13**), it is concluded that compound **3** has an oxygenated quaternary carbon at δ 78.9 instead of the C-24 methine in cyasterone (**13**). The multiplicity of the ¹H NMR signals of **3** at δ 4.59 (1H, q, J = 6.6 Hz, H-28) and 3.14 (1H, q, J = 7.2 Hz, H-25) as well as the molecular formula C₂₉H₄₄O₉ provided by the ion peak at 559.2884 [M + Na]⁺ in the HR-ESIMS spectrum confirm that **3** is 24-hydroxycyasterone. Comparison of ¹³C NMR signals for C-20–C-22 (δ 76.4, s; 20.7, q; 73.3, d; respectively) in **3** with those of 20,22-dihydroxy sterols with different configurations (20 α , 22 β : δ 77.5, 23.8, 76.2; 20 β , 22 α : δ 76.5, 21.1, 76.5; 20 α , 22 α : δ 77.3, 24.2, 77.9; 20 β , 22 β : δ 76.5, 21.9, 78.3) suggest the presence of 20 β and 22 α hydroxyl groups in **3** [20]. The relative stereochemistry of **3** was assigned by a NOESY experiment (figure 3).

Compound 4 was obtained as colorless needles. Its molecular formula was determined as $C_{32}H_{48}O_8$ by the ion peak at m/z 559.3271 $[M - H]^-$ in its negative ion HR-ESIMS spectrum. The IR spectrum shows absorption bands for hydroxyl (3458 cm⁻¹), γ -lactone



Figure 3. Key NOESY of correlations of 3.

(1754 cm⁻¹) and α , β -unsaturated ketone (1656 cm⁻¹). The Liebermann–Burchard reaction of **4** gave a purple visualization. In the ¹H NMR spectrum, seven methyl signals appear at δ 1.59 (3H, s, H-21), 1.26 (3H, d, J = 6.6 Hz, H-29), 1.25 (3H, d, J = 7.8 Hz, H-27), 1.54, 1.30 (each 3H, s, protons of -Me), 1.18 (3H, s, H-18), and 0.99 (3H, s, H-19). Thus, **4** may be an ecdysterone. Comparing the ¹H NMR spectrum of **4** with that of **17**, compound **4** has two other methyl signals, at δ 1.54 (3H, s) and 1.30 (3H, s). Three more signals at δ 107.9 (O–C–O), 28.6 (-Me) and 26.4 (-Me) were recognized from the ¹³C NMR spectrum of **4** than for **17**. The signals for C-2, C-3 and C-4 shift from δ 68.1, 68.0 and 29.9 in **17** to 72.2, 71.9 and 26.7 in **4**, respectively. Acid hydrolysis of **4** with 3 M HCl (aq.) yielded **17**. Thus, compound **4** was determined as 2,3-isopropylidene isocyasterone. The HMBC experiment (figure 2) confirmed this conclusion.

Compounds 2 and 4 are derivatives of 13 and 17, respectively. To investigate whether compound 2 is an artifact, compound 13 was added to a mixture of acetone-light petroleum (4:1, v/v) and silica gel (1.5 g) according to the chromatographic conditions for isolating 2. After stirring the mixture at room temperature (10°C) for two days, no reaction had taken place; in addition, no reaction took place at 30, 50 and then 70°C for two days. Both 20- and 22-OH of cyasterone have been reported to be involved in the first acetonide formation in the presence of an acid like *p*-toluenesulfonic acid at room temperature [21]. Consequently, 2 and 4 may be not an artifact. This conclusion was further confirmed by the detection by HPLC analysis of 2 and 4 in the EtOAc fraction of the EtOH extract.

3. Experimental

3.1 General experimental procedures

Melting points were determined on an XRC-1 micromelting point apparatus and are uncorrected. Optical rotations were measured on a Perkin Elmer 341 automatic polarimeter. UV spectra and IR spectra were recorded on a Lambda 35 spectrometer and a Perkin-Elmer spectrum one FT-IR spectrometer (KBr disc), respectively. Mass spectra were obtained on a Finnigan-LCQ^{DECA} mass spectrometer (ESIMS), an API Q-STAR PULSAR i mass spectrometer (HR-ESIMS) and a VG7070E mass spectrometer (EIMS). NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Advance 600 spectrometer with TMS as internal standard. GC was carried out on a Varian CP-3380 gas chromatograph with a chirasil DEX CB column (ϕ 0.25 mm × L25 m). HPLC was carried out

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on a Perkin-Elmer Series 200 with Merck KGaA-Diol ($\phi 4 \text{ mm} \times L250 \text{ mm}$, 5 µm) column. Silica gel (200–300 mesh, Qingdao Marine Chemical Co., Ltd.) and Al₂O₃ (neutral, 200–300 mesh, Shanghai Ludu Chemical Reagent Plant) were used for column chromatography. TLC was carried out with precoated silica gel GF₂₅₄ plates and visualized by spraying with 7% H₂SO₄ (95% EtOH) followed by heating or under UV light (254 and 365 nm). All solvents used were distilled before use. Solvent systems for TLC: (A) CHCl₃–CH₃OH 20:1 (v/v); (B) n-hexane–acetone 3:1 (v/v); (C) light petroleum (bp 60–90°C)–ethyl acetate 1.5:1 (v/v).

3.2 Plant material

Roots of *Cyathula officinalis* Kuan were collected in November 2000 from Jin Kou He district of Leshan, China. The plant sample was identified by Prof. Fa-Ding Fu at Chengdu Institute of Biology, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). A voucher specimen (A-160) is deposited in the Department of Natural Products Research, Chengdu Institute of Biology, CAS.

3.3 Extraction and isolation

Air-dried, powdered roots of C. officinalis Kuan (8 kg) were percolated ($25 L \times 3$) with 95% ethanol at room temperature. After evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure a residue was obtained (801 g). The residue was suspended in water (1000 ml) and extracted with light petroleum (60–90°C, $2.5 L \times 7$), EtOAc ($2.5 L \times 10$) and n-BuOH ($2.5 L \times 8$) to give the corresponding fractions A (52.5 g), B (32 g) and C (112 g). Fraction A was chromatographed over silica gel (1000 g, $\phi 9 \times L50$ cm) eluted with light petroleum (60–90°C)-acetone (100:1-1:2, v/v) to give subfractions A₁-A₁₅ on the basis of TLC analysis. Subsequent purification of A₈ (2.5 g) by column chromatography over silica gel (ϕ 3.5 × L28 cm) eluted with light petroleum $(60-90^{\circ}C)$ -acetone (10:1, v/v) afforded 5 (15 mg) and 9 (5 mg). Fraction B was subjected to column chromatography (800 g, $\phi 8 \times L50$ cm) over silica gel eluted with CHCl₃-MeOH (90:1-0:1, v/v) to give subfractions B_1-B_{12} based on TLC analysis. The separation of B₂ (1.6 g) by column chromatography (ϕ 3 × L 28 cm) over silica gel eluted with CHCl₃-MeOH (30:1, v/v) afforded 6 (89 mg), 2 (12 mg) and 4 (6 mg). B₃ (1.2 g) was separated by column chromatography ($\phi 2 \times L25 \text{ cm}$) over silica gel eluted with CHCl₃-MeOH (18:1, v/v) to give 1 (15 mg) and 12 (8 mg). By silica-gel column chromatography ($\phi 2 \times L20$ cm) eluted with CHCl₃-MeOH (15:1, v/v), 14 (65 mg) was isolated from B_4 (0.9 g). Compound 13 (3.2 g) was obtained from B_5 (8 g) by column chromatography ($\phi 7.5 \times L50$ cm) over silica gel eluted with CHCl₃–MeOH (13:1, v/v). The separation of B₈ (3.4 g) by column chromatography over Al₂O₃ (200–300 mesh, $\phi 5 \times$ L38 cm eluted with EtOAc-MeOH (10:1, v/v) yielded **3** (14 mg), **16** (28 mg), **18** (6 mg), 15 (18 mg) and 17 (9 mg). By silica-gel column chromatography ($\phi 6 \times L37$ cm) eluted with CHCl₃-MeOH (8:1, v/v), **10** (35 mg) and **11** (31 mg) were obtained from B₁₀ (3.7 g). Compounds 7 (17 mg) and 8 (13 mg) were isolated from fraction B_{11} (1.7 g) by column chromatography over silica gel (ϕ 3.5 × L27 cm) eluted with CHCl₃–MeOH (5:1, v/v).

3.3.1 Acidic hydrolysis of 2 and 4. A mixture of **2** (2 mg) and 3 M HCl (aq.) (1 ml) was allowed to stand at room temperature for 10 min to give cyasterone, which was identified by comparison with authentic samples on TLC with solvent systems A, B, and C. Similarly, **4** (2 mg) was added to 3 M HCl (aq.) (1 ml) at room temperature. After 10 min, isocyasterone was detected along with authentic sample on TLC with solvent systems A, B, and C.

3.3.2 Reaction of cyasterone in acetone. Cyasterone (13, 10 mg) was added to a mixture of acetone–light petroleum (60–90°C) (4:1) and silica gel (1.5 g). After stirring for two days at 10, 30, 50 and 70°C no reaction had taken place based on TLC analysis.

3.3.3 Analysis of 2 and 4 by HPLC. The ethanolic extract of the roots of *C. officinalis* Kuan was fractionated with light petroleum (60–90°C), EtOAc and n-BuOH. The retention times of compounds 2 and 4 in the EtOAc fraction on HPLC were 20.59 and 21.99 min, respectively. Conditions for HPLC: solvents, $CH_2Cl_2-CH_3OH$ (98:2, v/v); flow rate, 1 ml min⁻¹; column pressure, 1020 psi; detection wavelength, 243 nm.

3.3.4 Analysis of 1 by GC. The retention times of compound 1 were 16.332 min (A, 97.06%) and 19.698 min (A, 0.59%) under the following conditions: column temperature 160°C; eluent gas: N_2 ; column inlet pressure (9 psi). Thus, compound 1 is an optically pure compound.

3.3.5 4-[(1-Ethoxy-2-hydroxy)ethyl]phenol (1). Colorless crystals (acetone), mp 99–100°C; $[\alpha]_D^{25} + 2.0^\circ$ (*c* 0.1, MeOH). IR (KBr) ν_{max} (cm⁻¹): 3400, 1600, 1510, 1465. ESIMS *m/z* 181 [M - H]⁻ (negative mode), 205 [M + Na]⁺ (positive mode). HR-ESIMS (negative mode) *m/z* 181.0857 ([M - 1]⁻, calcd for C₁₀H₁₃O₃, 181.0864). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, acetone-d₆) δ (ppm): 8.26 (1H, s, 1-OH), 7.15 (2H, d, J = 8.4 Hz, H-3, 5), 6.81 (2H, d, J = 8.4 Hz, H-2, 4), 4.27 (1H, dd, J = 7.8, 4.2 Hz, H-1'), 3.57 (1H, m, H-2'), 3.45 (1H, m, H-2'), 3.37 (2H, m, H-1″), 1.15 (3H, t, J = 7.2 Hz, H-2″). ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, acetone-d₆) δ (ppm): 156.9 (C-1), 131.0 (C-4), 128.0 (C-3, 5), 115.0 (C-2, 6), 82.8 (C-1'), 67.0 (C-2'), 63.7 (C-1″), 14.8 (C-2″).

3.3.6 2,3-Isopropylidene cyasterone (2). Colorless needles (CHCl₃–MeOH), mp 241–243°C; $[\alpha]_D^{25} + 30.9^\circ$ (*c* 0.11, MeOH). UV λ_{max} (nm) (log ε) in MeOH: 243 (3.95). IR (KBr) ν_{max} (cm⁻¹): 3456, 1752, 1643; ESIMS m/z 559 [M – H]⁻ (negative mode). 583 [M + Na]⁺, 1143 [2M + Na]⁺ (positive modes); HR-ESIMS (negative mode) m/z 559.3251 ([M – 1]⁻, calcd for C₃₂H₄₇O₈, 559.3270). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, acetone-d₆ and C₅D₅N) δ (ppm): 5.84 (1H, d, J = 2.0 Hz, H-7), 4.18 (1H, br.s, H-3), 4.16 (1H, m, H-2), 4.10 (1H, dq, J = 9.6 Hz, 6.4 Hz, H-28), 3.70 (1H, d, J = 10.0 Hz, H-22), 3.03 (1H, t, J = 8.4 Hz, H-9), 2.56 (1H, t, J = 9.2 Hz, H-17), 2.42 (1H, dq, J = 10.8 Hz, 6.8 Hz, H-25), 2.27 (1H, d, J = 11.6 Hz, H-5), 2.18 (1H, q, J = 10.8 Hz, H-16a), 1.45 (3H, s, H-21), 1.38 (3H, d, J = 6.4 Hz, H-29), 1.26 (3H, d, J = 6.8 Hz, H-27), 1.31, 1.27 (each 3H, s, protons of isopropylidene), 1.00 (3H, s, H-18), 0.98 (3H, s, H-19). ¹³C NMR data: see table 1.

3.3.7 24-Hydroxycyasterone (3). White powder, mp 181–183°C; $[\alpha]_D^{25} + 36.3^\circ$ (*c* 0.16, MeOH). UV λ_{max} (nm) (log ε) in MeOH: 243 (3.99). IR ν_{max} (KBr) (cm⁻¹): 3436, 1755.9, 1646. ESIMS m/z 535 [M – H]⁻, 1071 [2M – H]⁻ (negative modes). 559 [M + Na]⁺, 1095 [2M + Na]⁺ (positive modes). HR-ESIMS (positive mode) m/z 559.2884 ([M + Na]⁺, calcd for C₂₉H₄₄O₉Na, 559.2883). EI-MS (70 eV) m/z (rel. int.%) 500 [M – 2H₂O], 482 [M – 3H₂O], 363 (3), 345 (8), 327 (12), 301 (7), 105 (9), 91 (12), 83 (9), 81 (10), 79 (8), 55 (23), 43 (100), 40 (61), 29 (49); ¹H NMR (600 MHz, C₅D₅N,) δ (ppm): 6.30 (1H, d, J = 2.4 Hz, H-7), 4.59 (1H, q, J = 6.6 Hz, H-28), 4.28 (1H, d, J = 10.8 Hz, H-22), 4.26 (1H, br.s, H-3), 4.20 (1H, m, H-2), 3.60 (H, br.s, H-9), 3.14 (1H, q, J = 7.2 Hz, H-25), 3.04 (1H, dd, J = 3.6, 13.2 Hz, H-5), 2.90 (1H, t, J = 9.0 Hz, H-17), 2.63 (1H, dt, J = 12.6, 4.2 Hz, H-12e), 2.54 (1H, q, J = 10.2 Hz, H-16a), 1.61 (3H, s, H-21), 1.58 (3H, d, J = 6.6 Hz, H-29),

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С	2 ^a	2^{b}	3 ^{c,d}	4 ^{c,d}
1	37.6	37.9	38.4 t	38.0 t
2	72.1	72.5	67.8 d	72.2 d
3	71.6	72.1	67.8 d	71.9 d
4	26.7	26.8	32.1 t	26.7 t
5	50.8	51.5	51.5 d	51.3 d
6	202.6	201.7	203.2 s	202.0 s
7	121.7	121.2	121.6 d	121.8 d
8	162.6	164.4	165.5 s	165.1 s
9	34.4	34.9	34.4 d	34.8 d
10	37.8	38.2	37.2 s	37.8 s
11	20.5	21.0	20.8 t	20.9 t
12	31.3	31.3	31.8 t	31.4 t
13	48.2	49.0	48.0 s	48.1 s
14	84.5	84.1	83.9 s	83.8 s
15	31.7	31.9	31.6 t	31.7 t
16	20.3	20.5	21.2 t	21.4 t
17	48.9	49.7	49.7 d	49.7 d
18	17.4	17.5	17.6 q	17.5 q
19	23.6	23.6	24.2 q	23.6 q
20	77.0	76.6	76.4 s	76.5 s
21	20.4	21.0	20.7 q	21.1 q
22	73.2	74.0	73.3 đ	74.8 đ
23	33.7	34.1	37.8 t	26.4 t
24	47.7	48.2	78.9 s	39.6 d
25	42.3	42.3	45.6 d	26.4 d
26	179.1	178.6	178.3 s	179.8 s
27	15.7	15.4	8.9 q	12.6 q
28	80.1	79.8	82.1 d	78.4 đ
29	19.6	19.2	12.8 q	17.3 q
OCO	108.4	108.1	*	107.9 s
Me	28.5	28.5		28.6 q
	26.4	26.3		26.4 a

Table 1. ¹³C NMR data of 2-4 (δ in ppm).

 a In CDCl₃ at 150 MHz. b In acetone-d₆ and C₅D₅N at 100 MHz. c Multiplicity determined by DEPT. d In C₅D₅N at 150 MHz.

1.57 (1H, d, J = 7.2 Hz, H-27), 1.25 (3H, s, H-18), 1.08 (3H, s, H-19). ¹³C NMR data: see table 1.

3.3.8 2,3-Isopropylidene isocyasterone (4). Colorless needles (CHCl₃–MeOH); mp 260–262°C. $[\alpha]_D^{25} + 42.2^{\circ}$ (*c* 0.12, MeOH). UV λ_{max} (nm) (log ε) in MeOH: 242 (3.98). IR ν_{max} (KBr) (cm⁻¹): 3458, 1754, 1656. ESIMS *m*/*z* 559 [M – H]⁻ (negative mode), 583 [M + Na]⁺ and 1143 [2M + Na]⁺ (positive modes). HR-ESIMS (negative mode) *m*/*z*: 559.3271 ([M – 1]⁻, calcd for C₃₂H₄₇O₈, 559.3270). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, C₅D₅N) δ (ppm): 6.19 (1H, s, H-7), 4.63 (1H, qui, *J* = 6.6 Hz, H-28), 4.18 (1H, m, H-2), 4.08 (1H, br.s, H-3), 3.80 (1H, d, *J* = 10.8 Hz, H-22), 3.58 (1H, br.s, H-9), 3.19 (1H, qui, *J* = 7.8 Hz, H-25), 3.13 (1H, t, *J* = 9.0 Hz, H-17), 2.56 (1H, d, *J* = 12.0 Hz, H-5), 2.48 (1H, q, *J* = 11.2 Hz, H-16), 1.59 (3H, s, H-21), 1.54, 1.30 (each 3H, s, protons of isopropylidene), 1.26 (3H, d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, H-29), 1.25 (3H, d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, H-27), 1.18 (3H, s, H-18), 0.99 (3H, s, H-19). ¹³C NMR data: see table 1.

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