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(54) **NOVEL CHROMENONE POTASSIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS AND USES THEREOF**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to compounds useful in the modulation of potassium channel activity in cells, in particular the activity of Kv1.3 channels found in T cells. The invention also relates to the use of these compounds in the treatment or prevention of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, including multiple sclerosis, pharmaceutical compositions containing these compounds and methods for their preparation.

## NOVEL CHROMENONE POTASSIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS AND USES THEREOF

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

**[0001]** The present invention relates to compounds useful in the modulation of potassium channel activity in cells, in particular the activity of Kv1.3 channels found in T cells. The invention also relates to the use of these compounds in the treatment or prevention of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, including multiple sclerosis, pharmaceutical compositions containing these compounds and methods for their preparation.

### BACKGROUND

**[0002]** Many autoimmune and chronic inflammatory diseases are related to immunoregulatory abnormalities. Diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus, chronic rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and psoriasis have in common the appearance of autoantibodies and self-reactive lymphocytes.

**[0003]** Multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological disease of young people. It is believed to cost more in medical care and lost income than any other neurological disease of young adults.

**[0004]** Multiple sclerosis affects the myelin sheaths of nerves. Myelin is an insulating material that coats most axons and allows rapid signal conduction over long distances by salutatory conduction. It is thought that antibodies and specialised cells of the immune system attack the myelin coating. This process leads to inflammation and scarring (sclerosis) which damages blood vessels in the area by the formation of a lesion known as a plaque. These plaques are characterised by being infiltrated by macrophages and T cells. This results in demyelination with the consequential loss of the rapid signal conduction.

**[0005]** A possible method of treating these autoimmune and inflammatory diseases is by suppressing T-cell proliferation and modulating their activation.

**[0006]** The early stages of T-cell activation may be conceptually separated into pre-Ca<sup>2+</sup> and post-Ca<sup>2+</sup> events (Cahalan and Chandy 1997, *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 8 749). Following engagement of the T-cell receptor by an antigen, activation of tyrosine kinases and the generation of inositol 1,4,5-triphosphate lead to the influx of Ca<sup>2+</sup> and a rise in the cytoplasmic Ca<sup>2+</sup> concentration. The rise in Ca<sup>2+</sup> activates the phosphatase calcineurin, which then dephosphorylates a cytoplasmically localized transcription factor (N-FAT) enabling it to accumulate in the nucleus and bind to a promoter element of the interleukin-2 gene. Along with parallel events involving the activation of protein kinase C and ras, gene transcription leads to lymphokine secretion and to lymphocyte proliferation. Some genes require long-lasting Ca<sup>2+</sup> signals while others require only a transient rise of Ca<sup>2+</sup>.

**[0007]** Ion channels underlie the Ca<sup>2+</sup> signal of T-lymphocytes. Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions move across the plasma membrane through a channel termed the store-operated Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel or the calcium release-activated Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel. Two distinct types of potassium channels indirectly determine the driving force of calcium entry. The first is the voltage-gated Kv1.3 channel (Cahalan 1985, *J. Physiol.* 385: 197; Grissmer 1990, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 87 9411; Verheugen 1995, *J. Gen. Physiol.* 105 765; Aiyar 1996, *J. Biol. Chem.* 271 31013; Cahalan and Chandy 1997, *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 8 749)

and the second is the intermediate-conductance calcium-activated potassium channel, IKCa1 (Grissmer 1993, *J. Gen. Physiol.* 102 601; Fanger 1999 *J. Biol. Chem.* 274 5746; Rauer 1999, *J. Biol. Chem.* 274 21885; VanDorpe 1998, *J. Biol. Chem.* 273 21542; Joiner 1997, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 94 11013; Khanna 1999, *J. Biol. Chem.* 274 14838; Lodgson 1997, *J. Biol. Chem.* 272 32723; Ghanshani 1998, *Genomics* 51 160). When these potassium channels open, the resulting efflux of K<sup>+</sup> hyperpolarizes the membrane, which in turn accentuates the entry of Ca<sup>2+</sup>, which is absolutely required for downstream activation events (Cahalan and Chandy 1997, *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 8: 749). The predominant voltage-gated channel in human T-lymphocytes is encoded by Kv1.3, a Shaker-related gene. Kv1.3 has been characterised extensively at the molecular and physiological level and plays a vital role in controlling T-lymphocyte proliferation, mainly by maintaining the resting membrane potential of resting T-lymphocytes. Inhibition of this channel depolarises the cell membrane sufficiently to decrease the influx of Ca<sup>2+</sup> and thereby prevents downstream activation events. Advantageously the Kv1.3 channel is almost exclusively located in T-lymphocytes.

**[0008]** Accordingly, compounds which are selective Kv1.3 blockers are potential therapeutic agents as immunosuppressants for the prevention of graft rejection, and the treatment of autoimmune and inflammatory disorders. They could be used alone or in conjunction with other immunosuppressants, such as selective IKCa1 blockers or cyclosporin, in order to achieve synergism and/or to reduce toxicity, especially of cyclosporin.

**[0009]** Developments in the field of voltage-gated K-channel electrophysiology have strengthened the case for treating of multiple sclerosis and also diabetes mellitus by inhibiting the Kv1.3 channel. It was found that autoreactive T-cells from multiple sclerosis patients exhibit highly elevated levels of Kv1.3 (Wulff, H et al (2003) *J. Clin Invest.* 111 (11) 1703-1713). ShK-K22Dap, a selective peptide blocker of Kv1.3, potentially inhibited the proliferation of T-cells with this high-Kv1.3 phenotype. (Beeton, C. et al (2001) *PNAS* 98 13942-13947). The connection between T-cell replication and Kv1.3 blockade has also been shown through the use of a small molecule, a psoralen derivative, that is an active and relatively specific inhibitor of the Kv1.3 channel. The derivative showed specificity in inhibiting the proliferation of the high Kv1.3 T-cells over peripheral blood T-cells (Vennekamp et al (2004) *Mol. Pharm.* 65 1364-1374).

**[0010]** The Kv1.3 channel has also been associated with diabetes. Studies of Kv1.3 knockout mice found that the mice have increased insulin sensitivity. The selective blockage of the Kv1.3 channel also led to increased insulin sensitivity (Xu, J. et al. (2004) *PNAS* 101 (9), 3122-3117). It has been suggested by Wulff, who was involved in the electrophysiology on multiple sclerosis that diabetes also involves autoreactive T-cells that express very high levels of Kv1.3 (Wulff, H. et al. (2003) *Curr. Op. DDD.* 6 640-647).

**[0011]** At present there exist a number of non-selective potassium channel blockers that will inhibit lymphocyte proliferation, but have adverse side effects. Other potassium channels exist in a wide range of tissues including the heart and brain, and generally blocking these channels is undesirable. Accordingly it would be advantageous to provide or identify compounds, which are selective inhibitors of the Kv1.3 channel.

**[0012]** U.S. Pat. No. 5,494,895 discloses the use of a thirty-nine amino acid peptide, scorpion peptide margatoxin, as a selective inhibitor and probe of Kv1.3 channels present in human lymphocytes, and also as an immunosuppressant. However the use of this compound is limited by its potent toxicity.

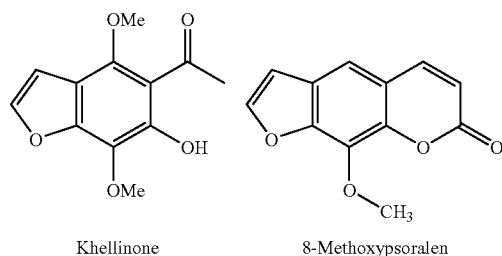
**[0013]** International Patent Application publication No's WO 97/16438 and WO 09/716,437, and U.S. Pat. No. 6,051,590 describe the use of the triterpene, correolide and related compounds as immunosuppressants. The potential for these compounds to become immunosuppressants was illustrated by experiments showing their attenuation of the delayed-type hypersensitivity (DTH) response in mini-swine.

**[0014]** U.S. Pat. No. 6,077,680 describes DNA segments and proteins derived from sea anemone species, more particularly ShK toxin from *Stichodactyla helianthus*. The ShK toxin was found to block Kv1.1, Kv1.3, Kv1.4 and Kv1.6, but a mutant ShK-K22DAP was found to selectively block Kv1.3. Unfortunately the mutant did not exhibit the requisite pharmacokinetic profile for clinical use. A recently reported ShK analog, ShK(L5), was at least 100-fold more active against Kv1.3 ( $K_d=69$  pM) than Kv1.1 and furthermore it showed at least 250-fold selectivity over every other relevant member of the Kv1 family (Beeton et al. (2005) *Mol. Pharm. In press*).

**[0015]** Both ShK toxin and ShK(L5) were shown to both prevent and treat experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis in Lewis rats, an animal model for human multiple sclerosis (Beeton, et al. (2001) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 98 13942), by selectively targeting T-cells chronically activated by the myelin antigen, MBP (myelin basic protein). The same study also indicated that chronically activated encephalitogenic rat T-cells express a unique channel phenotype characterized by high expression of Kv1.3 channels (approximately 1500 per cell) and low numbers of IKCa1 channels (approximately 120 per cell). This channel phenotype is distinct from that seen in quiescent and acutely activated cells and may be a functionally relevant marker for chronically activated rat T lymphocytes.

**[0016]** Other compounds which are blockers of Kv1.3 include psoralens (Vennekamp et al. (2004) *Mol. Pharm.* 65, 1365-1374 and Wulff et al., US 2006/0079535) and selected benzamides (Schalhofer et al. (2002) *Biochem.* 41, 7781-7794 and Schalhofer et al (2003) *Biochem.* 42, 4733-4743).

**[0017]** Khellinone, a substituted benzofuran and natural product from certain plants, and 8-Methoxypsoralen (8-MOP), both commercially available products, have been found to exhibit blocking activity on the Kv1.3 channel.



**[0018]** Khellinone, 8-MOP and four dimeric variants thereof were described in a Poster (abstract. No. 1078) at a meeting of the American Physiological Society in Snowmass, Colo. (*The Physiologist* 42: A12 (1999)). The authors were

testing whether linking two active units with a spacer, improved activity. Some of the bivalent derivatives were said to be ineffective, and others were said to block the Kv1.3 channel, but lack therapeutic utility due to their extreme sensitivity to hydrolysis (very poor stability) and high lipophilicity (poor solubility in clinical conditions).

**[0019]** European Patent Application 82201051 describes furano-chromone derivatives for use as anti-inflammatory agents amongst other suggested uses. An intermediate compound used in the manufacture of the chromone derivatives was 5-(benzoylacetyl)-4,7-dimethoxy-6-hydroxy-benzofuran.

**[0020]** European Patent Application 83302551 describes a process for preparing di-4,7-loweralkoxybenzofurans for use as intermediates in the preparation of khellin and related compounds.

**[0021]** German patent DE 3710469 and European patent publication number EP303920 describe the synthesis of 5-acetyl-4-benzyloxy-7-methoxy-6-hydroxy-benzofuran by alkaline ring cleavage of a pyrone ring of a fused system. This is also described in an article by Musante in *Annali de Chimica* (1959) 46, 768-781 together with the compound where the benzyloxy group is replaced with the residue of 2-hydroxyacetophenone.

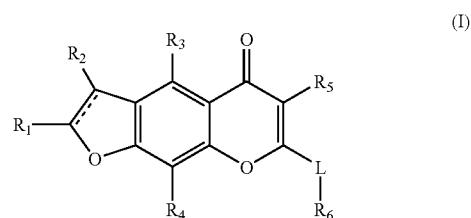
**[0022]** An article by Bougery, G et al in *J. Med. Chem* (1981) 24, 159-167 described 4-alkoxy (ethoxy and iso-propoxy) khellinone derivatives for use as intermediates in the manufacture of other compounds.

**[0023]** An article by Musante, C and Fatutta, S in *Farmaco Eduzione Scientifici* (1961) 16, 343-350 described a 7-glucosyl-khellinone compound for use as a coronary dilator.

**[0024]** Articles by Abdel Hafez, O et al in *Molecules* (online computer file) (2001), 6(4), 396-405, by El-Hafez, O. In *Bulletin of the Faculty of Pharmacy (Cairo University)* (1996), 34(2), 111-117 and by Ragab, F. A. and Tawfeek, H in *Eur. J. Med. Chem.* (1987) 22(3), 265-267 describe assorted khellinone derivatives with assorted alkylamines at the 7 position.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

**[0025]** The invention provides compounds of formula (I) or salts thereof,



wherein

----- is an optional double bond;

$R_1$  and  $R_2$  are independently selected from hydrogen, halo, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, —OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted

aryl),  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}''$  and  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

one of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from a lower alkyl or lower alkyloxy substituted by optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyloxy, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyloxy, or NR'R'' (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl),

and the other R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from hydrogen, cyano, halo, nitro, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl,  $-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}$  (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}''$  and  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

R<sub>5</sub> is selected from hydrogen, halogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl,  $-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}$ , SR, (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}''$  and  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

L is a divalent linking group of 1-6 atoms in length selected from optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, optionally substituted alkynylene,  $-\text{O}-$ ,  $-\text{S}-$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$ ,  $-\text{Se}-$ ,  $-\text{Se}(\text{O})-$ ,  $-\text{Se}(\text{O})_2-$ , and  $-\text{NR}''''-$  (where R'''' is selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted aryl); and

R<sub>6</sub> is selected from (i) optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted heterocyclyl when L is  $-\text{O}-$ ,  $-\text{S}-$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$ ,  $-\text{Se}-$ ,  $-\text{Se}(\text{O})-$ ,  $-\text{Se}(\text{O})_2-$ , or  $-\text{NR}''''-$ ; or (ii) optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl,  $-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{SR}$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}$ , (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}''$  or  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$

(where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl) when L is optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, or optionally substituted alkynylene.

**[0026]** In an aspect of the invention there is provided a method for the treatment or prevention of autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, or the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions, by the administration of a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, or a composition containing a compound of formula I or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

**[0027]** In a further aspect the invention provides the use of a compound of formula I or a salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prevention of autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, or the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions.

**[0028]** In another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of intentionally modulating potassium ion channel activity of T-cells by the application of a compound of Formula I, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, to said T-cells.

**[0029]** In a further aspect of the invention there is provided a pharmaceutical composition for use as an immunosuppressant, the composition comprising an effective amount of compound of Formula I or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and optionally a carrier or diluent.

**[0030]** In another aspect of the invention there is provided a process for the preparation of compounds of formula I or salts thereof.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

**[0031]** The invention is based on the discovery that compounds of the general formula I, as described in the above Summary of the Invention can have useful properties as inhibitors of potassium cell channels, and particularly the Kv1.3 channel. Such compounds have significant potential as immunosuppressants for the treatment of autoimmune disorders such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis. They may also be useful in the treatment or prevention of graft rejection.

**[0032]** The term "alkyl" as used alone or in combination herein refers to a straight or branched chain saturated hydrocarbon group. The term "C<sub>1-12</sub> alkyl" refers to such a group containing from one to twelve carbon atoms and the terms "C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl" and "lower alkyl" refer to such groups containing from one to six carbon atoms, such as methyl ("Me"), ethyl ("Et"), n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, sec-butyl, tert-butyl and the like.

**[0033]** The term "alkylene" refers to divalent alkyl groups preferably having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms and more preferably 1 to 6 carbon atoms. Examples of such alkylene groups include methylene ( $-\text{CH}_2-$ ), ethylene ( $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2-$ ), and the propylene isomers (e.g.,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2-$  and  $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)\text{CH}_2-$ ), and the like.

**[0034]** The term "C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl" refers to non-aromatic, saturated non-aromatic carbocycles having from 3 to 7 carbon atoms. Examples include cyclopentyl and cyclohexyl.

**[0035]** The term "alkenyl" refers to a straight or branched hydrocarbon containing one or more double bonds, preferably one or two double bonds. The term "C<sub>2-12</sub> alkenyl" refers to such a group containing from two to twelve carbon atoms. Examples of alkenyl include allyl, 1-methylvinyl, butenyl,

iso-butenyl, 1,3-butadienyl, 3-methyl-2-butenyl, 1,3-butadienyl, 1,4-pentadienyl, 1-pentenyl, 1-hexenyl, 3-hexenyl, 1,3-hexadienyl, 1,4-hexadienyl and 1,3,5-hexatrienyl.

**[0036]** The term “alkenylene” refers to divalent alkenyl groups preferably having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms and more preferably 2 to 6 carbon atoms. Examples include ethenylene ( $-\text{CH}=\text{CH}-$ ), and the propenylene isomers (e.g.,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}=\text{CH}-$  and  $-\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)=\text{CH}-$ ), and the like.

**[0037]** The term “ $\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl” refers to non aromatic carbocycles having 4 to 7 carbon atoms and having one or more double bonds. Examples include cyclopentenyl, 1-methyl-cyclopentenyl, cyclohexenyl, 1,3-cyclopentadienyl, 1,3-cyclohexadienyl and 1,4-cyclohexadienyl.

**[0038]** The term “alkynyl” refers to a straight or branched hydrocarbon containing one or more triple bonds, preferably one or two triple bonds. The term “ $\text{C}_{2-12}$  alkynyl” refers to such a group containing from two to twelve carbon atoms. Examples include 2-propynyl and 2- or 3-butenyl.

**[0039]** The term “alkynylene” refers to the divalent alkynyl groups preferably having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms and more preferably 2 to 6 carbon atoms. Examples include ethynylene ( $-\text{C}\equiv\text{C}-$ ), propynylene ( $-\text{CH}_2-\text{C}\equiv\text{C}-$ ), and the like. The term “alkoxy” as used alone or in combination refers to a straight or branched chain alkyl group covalently bound via an oxygen linkage ( $-\text{O}-$ ) and the terms “ $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkoxy” and “lower alkoxy” refer to such groups containing from one to six carbon atoms, such as methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, isopropoxy, butoxy, t-butoxy and the like.

**[0040]** The terms “alkenyloxy” and “alkynyloxy” as used alone or in combination respectively refer to an alkenyl and alkynyl group as earlier described linked via an oxygen linkage ( $-\text{O}-$ ).

**[0041]** The term “aromatic” when used alone or in combination refers to monocyclic or bicyclic aryl rings and ring systems (aromatic hydrocarbon rings or ring systems) and also aromatic heterocyclic rings or ring systems, as known as heteroaryl or heteroaromatic rings. Preferred aromatic rings are optionally substituted phenyl (“Ph”) rings.

**[0042]** The term “aryl” refers to carbocyclic (non-heterocyclic) aromatic rings or ring systems. The aromatic rings may be mono- or bi-cyclic ring systems. The aromatic rings or ring systems are generally composed of 5 to 10 carbon atoms. Examples of suitable aryl groups include but are not limited to phenyl, biphenyl, naphthyl, tetrahydronaphthyl, and the like.

**[0043]** Preferred aryl groups include phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, azulenyl, fluorenyl or anthracenyl.

**[0044]** The term “heteroaryl” refers to a monovalent aromatic carbocyclic group, preferably of from 2 to 10 carbon atoms and 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur within the ring. Preferably the heteroatom is nitrogen. Such heteroaryl groups can have a single ring (e.g., pyridyl, pyrrolyl or furyl) or multiple condensed rings (e.g., indolizynyl or benzothieryl).

**[0045]** The term “heterocyclyl” refers to a monovalent saturated or unsaturated group having a single ring or multiple condensed rings, preferably from 1 to 8 carbon atoms and from 1 to 4 hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, sulfur, oxygen, selenium or phosphorous within the ring.

**[0046]** Examples of 5-membered monocyclic heterocyclyl and heteroaryl groups include furyl, thienyl, pyrrolyl, H-pyrrolyl, pyrrolinyl, pyrrolidinyl, oxazolyl, oxadiazolyl, (including 1,2,3 and 1,2,4 oxadiazolyls) thiazolyl, isoxazolyl, furazanyl, isothiazolyl, pyrazolyl, pyrazolinyl, pyrazolidinyl,

imidazolyl, imidazolynyl, triazolyl (including 1,2,3 and 1,3,4 triazolyls), tetrazolyl, thiadiazolyl (including 1,2,3 and 1,3,4 thiadiazolyls).

**[0047]** Examples of 6-membered monocyclic heterocyclyl and heteroaryl groups include pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, pyridazinyl, pyranyl, pyrazinyl, piperidinyl, 1,4-dioxanyl, morpholinyl, 1,4-dithianyl, thiomorpholinyl, piperazinyl, 1,3,5-trithianyl and triazinyl.

**[0048]** The above heterocycles may be optionally substituted with a broad range of substituents, such as  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkoxy,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkynyl, halo, hydroxy, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, phenyl, phenyloxy, phenylalkyl, phenylalkyloxy, amino, cyano or mono or di( $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkyl)amino.

**[0049]** As referred to above heterocycle or heteroaryl may be fused to a carbocyclic ring such as phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, azulenyl, fluorenyl, and anthracenyl.

**[0050]** Examples of 8, 9 and 10-membered bicyclic heterocyclyl and heteroaryl groups include 1H thieno[2,3-c]pyrazolyl, thieno[2,3-b]furyl, indolyl, isoindolyl, benzofuranyl, benzothieryl, benzoxazolyl, benzothiazolyl, benzisoxazolyl, benzisothiazolyl, benzimidazolyl, indazolyl, isoquinolinyl, quinolinyl, quinoxalyl, uridinyl, purinyl, cinnolinyl, phthalazinyl, quinazolynyl, quinoxalyl, benzofuranyl, naphthyridinyl, pteridinyl and the like. These heterocycles may be optionally substituted, for example with  $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkyl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkoxy,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$ alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$ alkynyl, halo, hydroxy, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, cyano, phenyl, phenyloxy, phenylalkyl, phenylalkyloxy, amino and mono or di( $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkyl) amino.

**[0051]** Examples of some preferred heterocyclic and heteroaromatic radicals include (optionally substituted) isoxazoles, isothiazoles, 1,3,4-oxadiazoles, 1,3,4-thiadiazoles, 1,2,4-oxadiazoles, 1,2,4-thiadiazoles, oxazoles, thiazoles, pyridines, pyridazines, pyrimidines, pyrazines, 1,2,4-triazines, 1,3,5-triazines, benzoxazoles, benzothiazoles, benzisoxazoles, benzisothiazoles, quinolines, quinoxalines, furyl, thienyl, pyridyl, pyrrolyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl, imidazolyl, pyrazolyl, isoxazolyl, isothiazolyl, 1,2,3-oxadiazolyl, 1,2,4-oxadiazolyl, 1,2,4-oxadiazol-5-one, 1,2,3-triazolyl, 1,3,4-thiadiazolyl, pyridazinyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl, 1,3,5-triazinyl, 1H thieno[2,3-c]pyrazolyl, thieno[2,3-b]furyl, indolizynyl, indolyl, isoindolyl, 3H-indolyl, indolynyl, benzo[b]furanyl, benzo[b]thiophenyl, 1H-indazolyl, benzimidazolyl, tetrazolyl, uridinyl, and cytosinyl. These radicals can be optionally substituted with, by example,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkyl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkoxy,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$ alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$ alkynyl, halo, hydroxy, mercapto, trifluoromethyl, amino, phenyl, phenyloxy, phenylalkyl, phenylalkyloxy, cyano or mono or di( $\text{C}_{1-6}$ alkyl)amino.

**[0052]** Heteroaryl or heteroaromatic rings may preferably be selected from isoxazolyl, oxazolyl, imidazolyl, thiazolyl, thiadiazolyl, isothiazolyl, furazanyl, triazolyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, furyl, pyrazolyl, pyridazinyl, thienyl and aryl fused heteroaromatic rings such as benzofuranyl, benzothiophenyl and benzoisoxazolyl.

**[0053]** Heterocyclyl or heterocyclic rings may preferably be selected from pyrrolidine, imidazoline, 2-imidazolidine, 2-pyrrolidone, pyrrolin-2-one, tetrahydrofuran, 1,3-dioxolane, piperidine, tetrahydropyran, oxazoline, 1,3-dioxane, 1,4-piperazine, morpholine and thiomorpholine.

**[0054]** The term “arylalkyl” refers to carbocyclic aromatic rings or ring systems as previously described and substituted by an alkyl group, also as previously described. Unless otherwise indicated the aryl substituent is attached by the alkyl part of the substituent. Likewise the terms “aryl  $\text{C}_{1-12}$  alkyl”, “aryl  $\text{C}_{2-12}$  alkenyl” and “aryl  $\text{C}_{2-12}$  alkynyl” refer to carbocyclic aromatic rings or ring systems as previously described and substituted by a  $\text{C}_{1-12}$  alkyl,  $\text{C}_{2-12}$  alkenyl or  $\text{C}_{2-12}$  alkynyl group, as previously described.

**[0055]** The terms “halo” and “halogen” refers to fluoro, chloro, bromo and iodo groups.

**[0056]** The term "halo alkyl" group has one or more of the hydrogen atoms on an alkyl group replaced with halogens. A notable example is  $-\text{CF}_3$ .

**[0057]** The term "aryloxy" refers to an aryl group as earlier described linked to the parent structure via an oxygen linkage ( $-\text{O}-$ ). A notable example is phenoxy. Similarly the term "heteroaryloxy" refers to a heteroaryl group as earlier described linked to the parent structure via an oxygen group. A notable example is a 4, 6 or 7-benzo[b]furanlyoxy group.

**[0058]** "Divalent linker group" is taken to mean a divalent group capable of forming a stable bridge between the core structure of, for instance, formula (I) and the radical  $\text{R}_6$ . Examples of divalent linker groups include alkylene, alkenylene, alkynylene, arylene, heteroarylene, heterocyclylene, alkylenearylene, alkylenearylenealkylene, alkyleneheteroarylenealkylene, alkyleneheterocyclylenealkylene, and the like.

**[0059]** The term "optionally substituted" means that a group may include one or more substituents. One or more hydrogen atoms on the group may be replaced by substituent groups independently selected from halogens,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkynyl,  $-(\text{CH}_2)_p\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl,  $-(\text{CH}_2)_p\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl,  $-(\text{CH}_2)_p$  aryl,  $-(\text{CH}_2)_p$  heterocyclyl,  $-(\text{CH}_2)_p$  heteroaryl,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S}(\text{O})_q\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $-\text{C}(\text{Ph})_3$ ,  $-\text{CN}$ ,  $-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{O}-\text{C}(\text{H})_{1-6}-\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{O}-\text{C}(\text{H})_{1-6}-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NRC}(\text{O})\text{R}'$ ,  $-\text{NRC}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NRC}(\text{S})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NRS}(\text{O})_2\text{R}'$ ,  $-\text{NRC}(\text{O})\text{OR}'$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{NR})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{C}(=\text{NOR}')\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(=\text{NOH})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{C}(=\text{NCN})-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{C}(=\text{NR})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{C}(=\text{NR}')\text{SR}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(=\text{NCN})\text{SR}''$ ,  $-\text{CONRSO}_2\text{R}'$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{S})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{S}(\text{O})_q\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{SO}_2\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{SO}_2\text{NRC}(\text{O})\text{R}'$ ,  $-\text{OS}(\text{O})_2\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{PO}(\text{OR})_2$  and  $-\text{NO}_2$ ;

where  $p$  is 0-6,  $q$  is 0-2 and each  $\text{R}$ ,  $\text{R}'$  and  $\text{R}''$  is independently selected from  $\text{H}$ ,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkynyl,  $\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl,  $\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, aryl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylaryl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylheteroaryl, and  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylheterocyclyl, wherein the alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylaryl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylheteroaryl, or  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylheterocyclyl, may be optionally substituted with one to six of same or different groups selected from halogen, hydroxy, lower alkyl, lower alkoxy,  $-\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ ,  $\text{CF}_3$ ,  $\text{CN}$ , phenyl,  $\text{NH}_2$  and  $-\text{NO}_2$ ; or when  $\text{R}'$  and  $\text{R}''$  are attached to the same nitrogen atom, they may, together with the atom to which they are attached, form a 5 to 7 membered nitrogen containing heterocyclic ring.

**[0060]** In the case of the divalent linker group, the term "optionally substituted" also indicates that one or more saturated carbon atoms may be substituted for a heteroatom or heterogroup, such as  $\text{O}$ ,  $\text{S}$ ,  $\text{NH}$  and the like. For example an optionally substituted alkylene group could be represented by a group such as  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2-$ ,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{NH}-$ ,  $\text{CH}_2-$ ,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{NHCH}_2-$ ,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2-$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2-$  and the like.

**[0061]** Unless otherwise defined and only in respect of the ring atoms of non-aromatic carbocyclic or heterocyclic compounds, the ring atoms of such compounds may also be optionally substituted with one or two  $=\text{O}$  groups, instead of or in addition to the above described optional substituents.

**[0062]** When the optional substituent is or contains an alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, heteroaryl or heterocyclyl group, the group may itself be optionally substituted with one to six of the same or different substituents selected from halogens,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$  alkenyl,  $\text{C}_{2-6}$

alkynyl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  haloalkyl (in particular  $-\text{CF}_3$ ),  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  haloalkoxy (such as  $-\text{OCF}_3$ ),  $-\text{OH}$ , phenyl, benzyl, phenoxy, benzyloxy, benzoyl,  $-\text{NH}_2$ ,  $-\text{NHC}_{1-4}$  alkyl,  $-\text{N}(\text{C}_{1-4}$  alkyl) $_2$ ,  $-\text{CN}$ ,  $-\text{NO}_2$ , mercapto,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylcarbonyl,  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkoxy carbonyl and  $\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ .

**[0063]** The salts of the compound of formula I are preferably pharmaceutically acceptable, but it will be appreciated that non-pharmaceutically acceptable salts also fall within the scope of the present invention, since these are useful as intermediates in the preparation of pharmaceutically acceptable salts.

**[0064]** It will be appreciated that the compounds of formula I, and the salts thereof, can be presented in the form of pharmaceutically acceptable derivatives. The term "pharmaceutically acceptable derivative" includes pharmaceutically acceptable esters, prodrugs, solvates and hydrates of the compounds of formula I or salts thereof. Pharmaceutically acceptable derivatives may include any pharmaceutically acceptable hydrate or any other compound or prodrug which, upon administration to a subject, is capable of providing (directly or indirectly) a compound of formula I or an active metabolite or residue thereof.

**[0065]** The pharmaceutically acceptable salts include acid addition salts, base addition salts, and the salts of quaternary amines and pyridiniums. The acid addition salts are formed from a compound of the invention and a pharmaceutically acceptable inorganic or organic acid including but not limited to hydrochloric, hydrobromic, sulfuric, phosphoric, methanesulfonic, toluenesulphonic, benzenesulphonic, acetic, propionic, ascorbic, citric, malonic, fumaric, maleic, lactic, salicylic, sulfamic, or tartaric acids. The counter ion of quaternary amines and pyridiniums include chloride, bromide, iodide, sulfate, phosphate, methansulfonate, citrate, acetate, malonate, fumarate, sulfamate, and tartrate. The base addition salts include but are not limited to salts such as sodium, potassium, calcium, lithium, magnesium, ammonium and alkylammonium. Also, basic nitrogen-containing groups may be quaternised with such agents as lower alkyl halides, such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, and butyl chlorides, bromides and iodides; dialkyl sulfates like dimethyl and diethyl sulfate; and others. The salts may be made in a known manner, for example by treating the compound with an appropriate acid or base in the presence of a suitable solvent.

**[0066]** The compounds of the invention may be in crystalline form and/or as solvates (e.g. hydrates) and it is intended that both forms be within the scope of the present invention. The term "solvate" is a complex of variable stoichiometry formed by a solute (in this invention, a compound of the invention) and a solvent. Such solvents should not interfere with the biological activity of the solute. Solvents may be, by way of example, water, ethanol or acetic acid. Methods of solvation are generally known within the art.

**[0067]** The term "pro-drug" is used in its broadest sense and encompasses those derivatives that are converted in vivo to the compounds of the invention. Such derivatives would readily occur to those skilled in the art, and include, for example, compounds where a free hydroxy group is converted into an ester derivative or a ring nitrogen atom is converted to an N-oxide. Examples of ester derivatives include alkyl esters, phosphate esters and those formed from amino acids, preferably valine. Any compound that is a pro-drug of a compound of the invention is within the scope and spirit of the invention.

**[0068]** The term "pharmaceutically acceptable ester" includes biologically acceptable esters of compound of the invention such as sulphonic, phosphonic and carboxylic acid derivatives.

**[0069]** Thus, in another aspect of the invention, there is provided a prodrug or pharmaceutically acceptable ester of a compound of formula I of salt thereof.

**[0070]** It will be appreciated that the compounds of formula I and some derivatives thereof may have at least one asymmetric centre, and therefore are capable of existing in more than one stereoisomeric form. The invention extends to each of these forms individually and to mixtures thereof, including racemates. The isomers may be separated conventionally by chromatographic methods or using a resolving agent. Alternatively the individual isomers may be prepared by asymmetric synthesis using chiral intermediates. Where the compound has at least one carbon-carbon double bond, it may occur in Z- and E-forms with all isomeric forms of the compounds being included in the present invention.

**[0071]** In some preferred embodiments of the invention, and with reference to the general formula I, one or more of the following preferred definitions apply:

a)  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  are independently selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl or halo, and are preferably hydrogen.

b)  $R_5$  is hydrogen, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, halo, OR,  $-C(O)R$ ,  $-C(O)OR$ ,  $-OC(O)R$  (where each R is hydrogen or optionally substituted lower alkyl),  $-C(O)NR'R''$ ,  $-NR' C(O)R''$  or  $-NR'R''$  (where  $R'$  and  $R''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

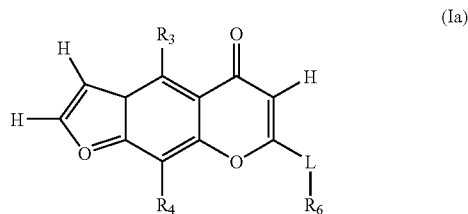
**[0072]** Preferably,  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ , and  $R_5$  are hydrogen.

c) One of  $R_3$  or  $R_4$  is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{2-10}$  alkenyl, optionally substituted  $C_{2-10}$  alkynyl, optionally substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkoxy, optionally substituted  $C_{2-10}$  alkenyloxy and optionally substituted  $C_{2-10}$  alkynyloxy. Preferably it is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl or optionally substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkoxy. More preferably hydrogen,  $C_{1-3}$  alkoxy or  $C_{1-3}$  alkyl. Most preferably hydrogen, methyl or methoxy.

d) The other of  $R_3$  or  $R_4$  is a substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl or substituted  $C_{1-10}$  alkoxy group, preferably a substituted lower alkyl or alkoxy group, more preferably a substituted methyl/methoxy, ethyl/ethoxy, propyl/propyloxy or butyl/butyloxy group. Preferred substituents include optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, and  $NR'R''$  where  $R'$  and  $R''$  each independently represents hydrogen and lower alkyl.

e) ----- is a double bond.

**[0073]** Accordingly, in a preferred embodiment the present invention provides compounds of formula (Ia) or salts thereof,



wherein

one of  $R_3$  or  $R_4$  is selected from hydrogen, methyl or methoxy, and the other  $R_3$  or  $R_4$  is a lower alkyl or lower alkoxy substituted by optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl,

optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, or  $NR'R''$  (where  $R'$  and  $R''$  are each independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl);

$L$  is a bivalent linking group of 1-6 atoms in length selected from optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, optionally substituted alkynylene,  $-O-$ ,  $-S-$ ,  $-S(O)-$ ,  $-S(O)_2-$ ,  $-Se-$ ,  $-Se(O)-$ ,  $-Se(O)_2-$ , and  $-NR'''-$  (where  $R'''$  is selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted aryl); and

$R_6$  is selected from (i) optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted heterocyclyl when  $L$  is  $-O-$ ,  $-S-$ ,  $-S(O)-$ ,  $-S(O)_2-$ ,  $-Se-$ ,  $-Se(O)-$ ,  $-Se(O)_2-$ , or  $-NR'''-$ ; or (ii) optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl,  $-OR$ ,  $-C(O)R$ ,  $-C(O)OR$ ,  $-OC(O)R$ ,  $-SR$ ,  $-S(O)R$ ,  $-S(O)_2R$ , (where  $R$  is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-C(O)NR'R''$ ,  $-NR' C(O)R''$  or  $-NR'R''$  (where  $R'$  and  $R''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl) when  $L$  is optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, or optionally substituted alkynylene.

**[0074]** In other preferred embodiments of the invention, and with reference to the general formulae I and Ia, one or more of the following preferred definitions apply:

f)  $L$  is an optionally substituted alkylene (eg  $-CH_2CH_2OCH_2CH_2-$  and  $-CH_2OCH_2-$ ) and more preferably an unsubstituted alkylene group. Also, preferably  $L$  is a divalent linker group of from 1-4 atoms in length. Thus, most preferably  $L$  is an unsubstituted methylene, ethylene, propylene, or butylene group.

g)  $R_6$  is optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl,  $-OR$ ,  $-C(O)R$ ,  $-C(O)OR$ ,  $-OC(O)R$ ,  $-SR$ ,  $-S(O)R$ ,  $-S(O)_2R$ , (where  $R$  is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-C(O)NR'R''$ ,  $-NR' C(O)R''$  or  $-NR'R''$  (where  $R'$  and  $R''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl) when  $L$  is optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, optionally substituted alkynylene. More preferably  $R_6$  is optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl,  $-OR'''$ ,  $-SR'''$ ,  $-S(O)R'''$ ,  $-S(O)_2R'''$  (where  $R'''$  is selected from optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted aryl) or  $-NR'R''$  (where  $R'$  and  $R''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

**[0075]** In an even more preferred embodiment the present invention provides compounds of formula (Ia) or salts thereof wherein:

one of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from hydrogen, methyl and methoxy,

and the other R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is a lower alkyl or lower alkoxy group substituted by aryl, aryloxy, heteroaryl, heteroaryloxy, heterocyclyl, heterocyclyloxy, or NR'R'' (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl) and wherein the aryl, aryloxy, heteroaryl, heteroaryloxy, heterocyclyl and heterocyclyloxy groups are optionally substituted by fluoro, chloro, or lower haloalkyl.

L is a divalent linker group of 1-4 atoms in length selected from a methylene, ethylene, propylene or butylene; and

R<sub>6</sub> is an optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, —OR''', —SR''', —S(O)R''', —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R''' (where R''' is selected from optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted aryl) or —NR'R'' (where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

**[0076]** In the most preferred embodiment for the compounds of formulae I and Ia described above, L is a methylene (—CH<sub>2</sub>—) group and R<sub>6</sub> is selected from an aryl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, —OR''', —SR''', —S(O)R''', —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R''' (where R''' is selected from lower alkyl, C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl and aryl) or NR'R'' where R' and R'' are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl).

**[0077]** For the preferred groups listed in b), c), d) and g) above the optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl groups may be substituted with from 1 to 4 substituents. Preferably the substituents may be independently selected from fluoro, chloro, bromo, lower alkyl, lower haloalkyl, lower alkoxy, lower haloalkoxy, nitro, hydroxyl, carboxyl, phenyl, naphthyl, benzyl and benzoyl.

**[0078]** The invention also includes where possible a salt or pharmaceutically acceptable derivative such as a pharmaceutically acceptable ester, solvate and/or prodrug of the above mentioned embodiments of the invention.

**[0079]** In another aspect of the invention, there is provided a pharmaceutical composition that comprises a therapeutically effective amount of one or more of the aforementioned compounds of formulae I/Ia or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, including pharmaceutically acceptable derivatives thereof, and optionally a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

**[0080]** In another aspect, the present invention provides pharmaceutical compositions for use as a Kv1.3 ion channel blocker, more particularly as an immunosuppressant, the composition comprising an effective amount of a compound of Formulae I/Ia or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, including a pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof, and optionally a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

**[0081]** The term "composition" is intended to include the formulation of an active ingredient with encapsulating material as carrier, to give a capsule in which the active ingredient (with or without other carriers) is surrounded by carriers.

**[0082]** The pharmaceutical compositions or formulations include those suitable for oral, rectal, nasal, topical (including

buccal and sub-lingual), vaginal or parenteral (including intramuscular, sub-cutaneous and intravenous) administration or in a form suitable for administration by inhalation or insufflation.

**[0083]** The compounds of the invention, together with a conventional adjuvant, carrier, or diluent, may thus be placed into the form of pharmaceutical compositions and unit dosages thereof, and in such form may be employed as solids, such as tablets or filled capsules, or liquids such as solutions, suspensions, emulsions, elixirs, or capsules filled with the same, all for oral use, in the form of suppositories for rectal administration; or in the form of sterile injectable solutions for parenteral (including subcutaneous) use.

**[0084]** Such pharmaceutical compositions and unit dosage forms thereof may comprise conventional ingredients in conventional proportions, with or without additional active components or principles, and such unit dosage forms may contain any suitable effective amount of the active ingredient commensurate with the intended daily dosage range to be employed. Formulations containing ten (10) milligrams of active ingredient or, more broadly, 0.1 to one hundred (100) milligrams, per tablet, are accordingly suitable representative unit dosage forms.

**[0085]** The compounds of the present invention can be administered in a wide variety of oral and parenteral dosage forms. It will be obvious to those skilled in the art that the following dosage forms may comprise, as the active component, either a compound of the invention or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of a compound of the invention.

**[0086]** For preparing pharmaceutical compositions from the compounds of the present invention, pharmaceutically acceptable carriers can be either solid or liquid. Solid form preparations include powders, tablets, pills, capsules, cachets, suppositories, and dispensable granules. A solid carrier can be one or more substances which may also act as diluents, flavouring agents, solubilisers, lubricants, suspending agents, binders, preservatives, tablet disintegrating agents, or an encapsulating material.

**[0087]** In powders, the carrier is a finely divided solid that is in a mixture with the finely divided active component.

**[0088]** In tablets, the active component is mixed with the carrier having the necessary binding capacity in suitable proportions and compacted in the shape and size desired.

**[0089]** The powders and tablets preferably contain from five or ten to about seventy percent of the active compound. Suitable carriers are magnesium carbonate, magnesium stearate, talc, sugar, lactose, pectin, dextrin, starch, gelatin, tragacanth, methylcellulose, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, a low melting wax, cocoa butter, and the like. The term "preparation" is intended to include the formulation of the active compound with encapsulating material as carrier providing a capsule in which the active component, with or without carriers, is surrounded by a carrier, which is thus in association with it. Similarly, cachets and lozenges are included. Tablets, powders, capsules, pills, cachets, and lozenges can be used as solid forms suitable for oral administration.

**[0090]** For preparing suppositories, a low melting wax, such as an admixture of fatty acid glycerides or cocoa butter, is first melted and the active component is dispersed homogeneously therein, as by stirring. The molten homogenous mixture is then poured into convenient sized moulds, allowed to cool, and thereby to solidify.

**[0091]** Formulations suitable for vaginal administration may be presented as pessaries, tampons, creams, gels, pastes,



foams or sprays containing in addition to the active ingredient such carriers as are known in the art to be appropriate.

**[0092]** Liquid form preparations include solutions, suspensions, and emulsions, for example, water or water-propylene glycol solutions. For example, parenteral injection liquid preparations can be formulated as solutions in aqueous polyethylene glycol solution.

**[0093]** Sterile liquid form compositions include sterile solutions, suspensions, emulsions, syrups and elixirs. The active ingredient can be dissolved or suspended in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, such as sterile water, sterile organic solvent or a mixture of both.

**[0094]** The compounds according to the present invention may thus be formulated for parenteral administration (e.g. by injection, for example bolus injection or continuous infusion) and may be presented in unit dose form in ampoules, pre-filled syringes, small volume infusion or in multi-dose containers with an added preservative. The compositions may take such forms as suspensions, solutions, or emulsions in oily or aqueous vehicles, and may contain formulation agents such as suspending, stabilising and/or dispersing agents. Alternatively, the active ingredient may be in powder form, obtained by aseptic isolation of sterile solid or by lyophilisation from solution, for constitution with a suitable vehicle, eg. sterile, pyrogen-free water, before use.

**[0095]** Aqueous solutions suitable for oral use can be prepared by dissolving the active component in water and adding suitable colorants, flavours, stabilising and thickening agents, as desired.

**[0096]** Aqueous suspensions suitable for oral use can be made by dispersing the finely divided active component in water with viscous material, such as natural or synthetic gums, resins, methylcellulose, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, or other well known suspending agents.

**[0097]** Also included are solid form preparations that are intended to be converted, shortly before use, to liquid form preparations for oral administration. Such liquid forms include solutions, suspensions, and emulsions. These preparations may contain, in addition to the active component, colorants, flavours, stabilisers, buffers, artificial and natural sweeteners, dispersants, thickeners, solubilising agents, and the like.

**[0098]** For topical administration to the epidermis the compounds according to the invention may be formulated as ointments, creams or lotions, or as a transdermal patch. Ointments and creams may, for example, be formulated with an aqueous or oily base with the addition of suitable thickening and/or gelling agents. Lotions may be formulated with an aqueous or oily base and will in general also contain one or more emulsifying agents, stabilising agents, dispersing agents, suspending agents, thickening agents, or colouring agents.

**[0099]** Formulations suitable for topical administration in the mouth include lozenges comprising active agent in a flavoured base, usually sucrose and acacia or tragacanth; pastilles comprising the active ingredient in an inert base such as gelatin and glycerin or sucrose and acacia; and mouth-washes comprising the active ingredient in a suitable liquid carrier.

**[0100]** Solutions or suspensions are applied directly to the nasal cavity by conventional means, for example with a dropper, pipette or spray. The formulations may be provided in single or multidose form. In the latter case of a dropper or pipette, this may be achieved by the patient administering an

appropriate, predetermined volume of the solution or suspension. In the case of a spray, this may be achieved for example by means of a metering atomising spray pump. To improve nasal delivery and retention the compounds according to the invention may be encapsulated with cyclodextrins, or formulated with other agents expected to enhance delivery and retention in the nasal mucosa.

**[0101]** Administration to the respiratory tract may also be achieved by means of an aerosol formulation in which the active ingredient is provided in a pressurised pack with a suitable propellant such as a chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) for example dichlorodifluoromethane, trichlorofluoromethane, or dichlorotetrafluoroethane, carbon dioxide, or other suitable gas. The aerosol may conveniently also contain a surfactant such as lecithin. The dose of drug may be controlled by provision of a metered valve.

**[0102]** Alternatively the active ingredients may be provided in the form of a dry powder, for example a powder mix of the compound in a suitable powder base such as lactose, starch, starch derivatives such as hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose and polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP). Conveniently the powder carrier will form a gel in the nasal cavity. The powder composition may be presented in unit dose form for example in capsules or cartridges of, e.g., gelatin, or blister packs from which the powder may be administered by means of an inhaler.

**[0103]** In formulations intended for administration to the respiratory tract, including intranasal formulations, the compound will generally have a small particle size for example of the order of 5 to 10 microns or less. Such a particle size may be obtained by means known in the art, for example by micronisation.

**[0104]** When desired, formulations adapted to give sustained release of the active ingredient may be employed.

**[0105]** The pharmaceutical preparations are preferably in unit dosage forms. In such form, the preparation is subdivided into unit doses containing appropriate quantities of the active component. The unit dosage form can be a packaged preparation, the package containing discrete quantities of preparation, such as packeted tablets, capsules, and powders in vials or ampoules. Also, the unit dosage form can be a capsule, tablet, cachet, or lozenge itself, or it can be the appropriate number of any of these in packaged form.

**[0106]** The invention also includes the compounds in the absence of carrier where the compounds are in unit dosage form.

**[0107]** The amount of compound of Formulae I/II administered may be in the range from about 10 mg to 2000 mg per day, depending on the activity of the compound and the disease to be treated.

**[0108]** Liquids or powders for intranasal administration, tablets or capsules for oral administration and liquids for intravenous administration are the preferred compositions.

**[0109]** The compositions may further contain one or more other immunosuppressive compounds. For example the compositions may contain a second immunosuppressive agent such as azathioprine, brequinar sodium, deoxyspergualin, mizoribine, mycophenolic acid morpholino ester, cyclosporin, FK-506 and rapamycin.

**[0110]** The compounds of the present invention may be useful in the therapeutic or prophylactic treatment of the resistance to transplantation of organs or tissue (such as heart, kidney, liver, lung, bone marrow, cornea, pancreas, intestine, limb, muscle, nervous, medulla ossium, duode-

num, small-bowel, medulla ossium, skin, pancreatic islet-cell, etc. including xeno transplantation), graft-versus-host diseases; rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, nephrotic syndrome lupus, Palmo-planter pustulosis, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre syndrome, myasthenia gravis, type I diabetes uveitis, juvenile-onset or recent-onset diabetes mellitus, diabetic neuropathy, posterior uveitis, allergic encephalomyelitis, glomerulonephritis, infectious diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, inflammatory and hyperproliferative skin diseases, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, eczematous dermatitises, seborrhoeic dermatitis, Lichen planus, Pemphigus, bullous pemphigoid, Epidermolysis bullosa, urticaria, angioedemas, vasculitides, erythemas, cutaneous eosinophilias, Lupus erythematosus, acne, Alopecia areata, keratoconjunctivitis, vernal conjunctivitis, uveitis associated with Behcet's disease, keratitis, herpetic keratitis, conical cornea, dystrophia epithelialis corneae, corneal leukoma, ocular pemphigus, Mooren's ulcer, Scleritis, Graves' ophthalmopathy, Vogt-Koyanagi-Harada syndrome, sarcoidosis, etc.; pollen allergies, reversible obstructive airway disease, bronchial asthma, allergic asthma, intrinsic asthma, extrinsic asthma and dust asthma, chronic or inveterate asthma, late asthma and airway hyper-responsiveness, bronchitis, gastric ulcers, vascular damage caused by ischemic diseases and thrombosis, ischemic bowel diseases, inflammatory bowel diseases, necrotizing enterocolitis, intestinal lesions associated with thermal burns and leukotriene B<sub>4</sub>-mediated diseases, Coeliac diseases, proctitis, eosinophilic gastroenteritis, mastocytosis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, migraine, rhinitis, eczema, interstitial nephritis, Good-pasture's syndrome, hemolytic-uremic syndrome, diabetic nephropathy, multiple myositis, Meniere's disease, polyneuritis, multiple neuritis, mononeuritis, radiculopathy, hyperthyroidism, Basedow's disease, pure red cell aplasia, aplastic anaemia, hypoplastic anemia, idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, agranulocytosis, pernicious anemia, megaloblastic anemia, anerythroplasia, osteoporosis, sarcoidosis, fibroid lung, idiopathic interstitial pneumonia, dermatomyositis, leukoderma vulgaris, ichthyosis vulgaris, photoallergic sensitivity, cutaneous T-cell lymphoma, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, aortitis syndrome, polyarteritis nodosa, myocardosis, scleroderma, Wegener's granuloma, adiposis, eosinophilic fasciitis, lesions of gingiva, periodontium, alveolar bone, substantia ossea dentis, glomerulonephritis, male pattern alopecia or alopecia senilis by preventing epilation or providing hair germination and/or promoting hair generation and hair growth; muscular dystrophy; Pyoderma and Sezary's syndrome, Sjogren's syndrome, Addison's disease, ischemia-reperfusion injury of organs which occurs upon preservation, transplantation or ischemic disease, for example, thrombosis and cardiac infarction, endotoxin-shock, pseudomembranous colitis, colitis caused by drug or radiation, ischemic acute renal insufficiency, chronic renal insufficiency, toxinosis caused by lung-oxygen or drug, for example, paracort and bleomycins, lung cancer, pulmonary emphysema, cataracta, siderosis, retinitis, pigmentosa, senile macular degeneration, vitreal scarring, corneal alkali burn; dermatitis erythema multiforme, linear IgA ballous dermatitis and cement dermatitis, gingivitis, periodontitis, sepsis, pancreatitis, diseases caused by environmental pollution, aging, carcinogenesis, metastasis of carcinoma and hypobaropathy; disease caused by histamine or leukotriene-C<sub>4</sub> release; Berger's disease, Behcet's disease,

autoimmune hepatitis, primary biliary cirrhosis sclerosing cholangitis, partial liver resection, acute liver necrosis, necrosis caused by toxin, viral hepatitis, shock, or anoxia, B-virus hepatitis, non-A/non-B hepatitis, cirrhosis, alcoholic cirrhosis, hepatic failure, fulminant hepatic failure, late-onset hepatic failure, "acute-on-chronic" liver failure, augmentation of chemotherapeutic effect, preventing or treating activity of cytomegalovirus infection, HCMV infection, and anti-inflammatory activity.

**[0111]** For certain of the abovementioned conditions it is clear that the compounds may be used prophylactically as well as for the alleviation of acute symptoms.

**[0112]** References herein to "treatment" or the like are to be understood to include such prophylactic treatment, as well as therapeutic treatments.

**[0113]** It is envisaged that the compounds may be particularly useful in the treatment of multiple sclerosis. This chronic neurological disorder affects the nerves of the central nervous system. As discussed earlier most nerves in the body are normally insulated by a protective sheath of fatty substance called myelin. Multiple sclerosis causes demyelination, in which this protective sheath becomes inflamed and ultimately destroyed.

**[0114]** By modulating or changing the immune system response that is thought to be responsible for the attack on the central nervous system it should be possible to attack the cause of the disease itself, rather than the more traditional method of controlling the symptoms.

**[0115]** The nature of the disease is such that it may be possible to control multiple sclerosis without unduly suppressing the patient's immune system. Based on the earlier discussed chronically activated human T-lymphocytes study, it is speculated that multiple sclerosis may be a product of chronically activated T-cells having a channel phenotype characterised by high expression of Kv1.3 channels and low numbers of IKCa1 channels. As this channel phenotype is distinct from that seen in quiescent and acutely activated cells it may provide a useful means for controlling multiple sclerosis without the significant side effects of less specific drugs.

**[0116]** Furthermore, in demyelinating diseases such as multiple sclerosis or diabetic neuropathy, the destruction of the myelin sheath evokes an internodal potassium current in myelinated nerve fibers by uncovering normally silent potassium channels. These abnormal potassium currents contribute to the conduction failure observed in demyelinated neurons. Blockers of axonal potassium channels such as the unselective compound 4-aminopyridine (4-AP) have been demonstrated to overcome conduction failure in vitro and to improve disability in certain multiple sclerosis patients. 4-AP (Fampridine) is currently in clinical trials for multiple sclerosis. Compounds that block both the Kv1.3 channel in autoreactive T-cells and the Kv1.1-Kv1.2 heteromultimeric channels present in the Ranvier Nodes of myelinated nerves might be ideally suited for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Such compounds could simultaneously enhance impulse propagation in demyelinated neurons and modify the immune response.

**[0117]** Thus in another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of preventing or treating autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions, said method including the step of administering a compound of formula I or Ia, or salt thereof, or a composition comprising the compound or salt thereof.

[0118] Accordingly in a preferred form of the invention, there is provided a means for controlling multiple sclerosis by the application of a blocker of the Kv1.3 channel, preferably a selective channel blocker of the Kv1.3 channel, and optionally also a blocker of Kv1.1 and/or Kv1.2 channels, by the application of a compound of formulae I/1a or salt thereof, including a pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof, or a composition comprising the compound of formula I or salt thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof.

[0119] In another preferred form of the invention there is provided a method for preventing or treating diabetes including the step of administering a compound of formulae II/1a or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, including a pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof, or a composition comprising the compound or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, or pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof.

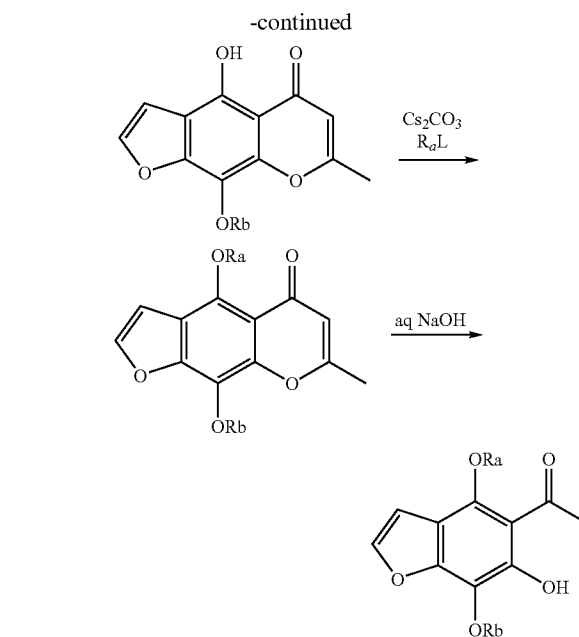
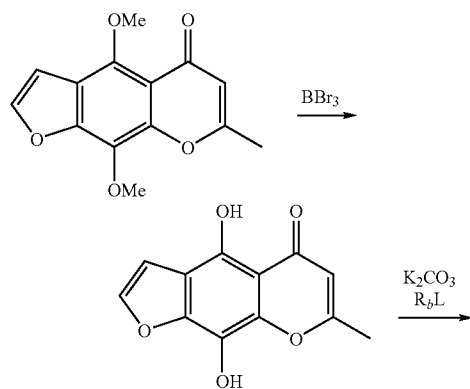
[0120] In a further aspect, the invention provides a method of modulating potassium ion channel activity of T-cells by the application of a compound of Formulae I/1a or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, including a pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof, or a composition comprising the same, to said T cells. Preferably the compounds of the invention inhibit the potassium ion channel activity of T-cells.

[0121] Preferably the potassium channel activity inhibited by the compound of Formulae I/1a is a voltage-gated potassium channel, for example, Kv1.1-Kv1.7. More preferably the potassium ion channel activity is the voltage-gated potassium channel, Kv1.3 of a T-cell. Preferably the compound selectively inhibits the Kv1.3 channel, and optionally also the Kv1.1 and/or Kv1.2 channels.

[0122] In a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided the use of a compound of formulae I/1a or salt thereof, in the preparation of a medicament for the treatment (therapeutic or prophylactic) of disease states mediated by potassium channels, and in particular by blocking the Kv1.3 channel.

[0123] In a further aspect of the invention there is provided a process for the production of the compounds of Formulae I/1a or salts thereof, including pharmaceutically acceptable derivatives thereof.

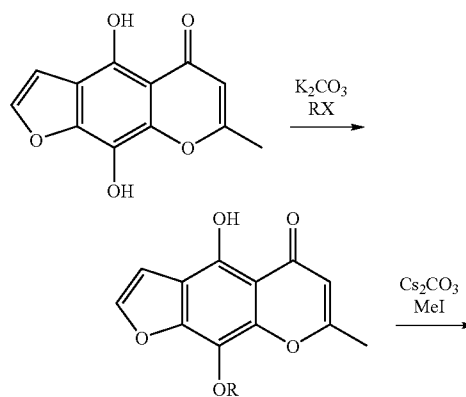
[0124] The compounds of the invention can be made from khellin, a natural product from plants which is cheap and commercially available. A general synthetic scheme is set out below for those compounds where  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$  and  $R_5$  are hydrogen, and  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  includes an oxygen atom linking it to the parent structure:—

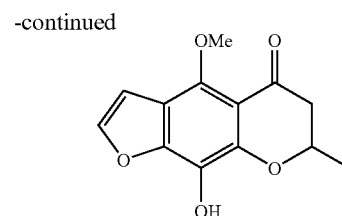
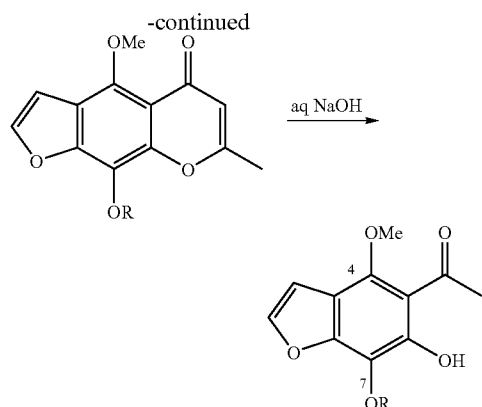


[0125] Where L is a halide leaving group and  $R_a$  and  $R_b$  are independently selected from optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, ie., where  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  are optionally substituted alkoxy, optionally substituted alkenyloxy, optionally substituted alkynyloxy,  $C_{3-7}$  cycloalkyloxy, and  $C_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyloxy.

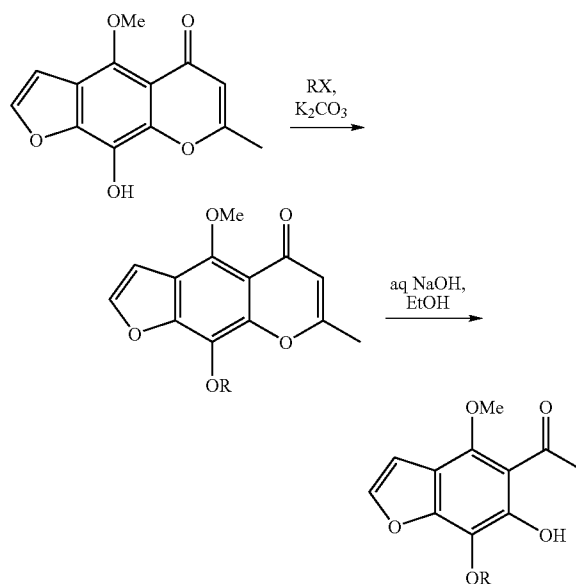
[0126] The vinylogous ester containing six-membered ring of khellin acts as a protecting group for the ultimate phenol and acetyl functionalities during the manipulations of the ethers. An alternate synthesis from khellinone can be envisaged where the phenol at the 6-position is capped with a suitable protecting group.

[0127] Compounds of the invention where  $R_b$  is other than Me may be synthesised in accordance with the following scheme. This scheme is preferred when the reaction with the alkyl halide is facile.



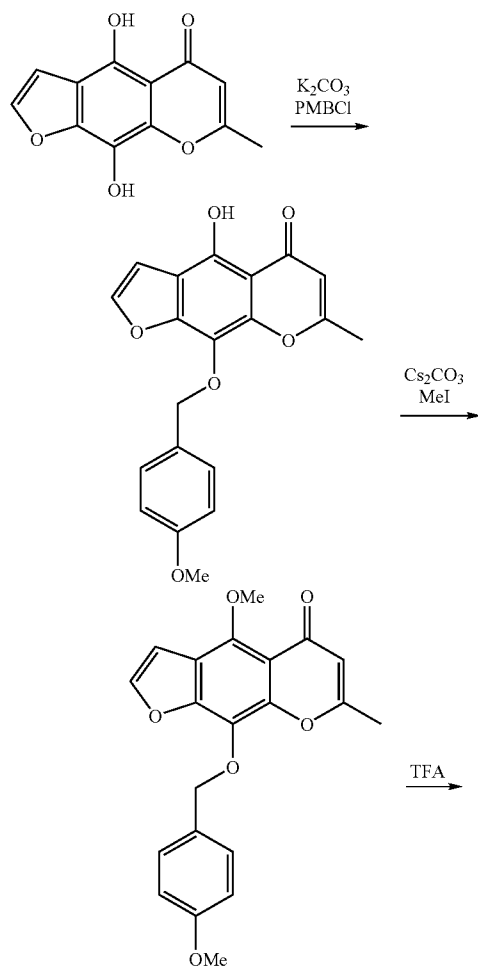


Synthesis of Compounds of Formula I or Ia when  $R_6$  is Other than Me.

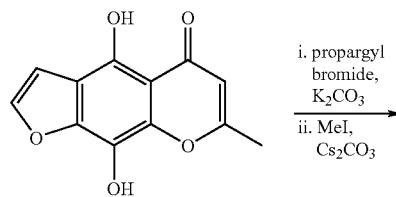


**[0128]** The alternative reaction scheme is preferred when the reaction with an alkyl halide is slow, due to, for instance, the low reactivity of alkyl halides such as alkyl chlorides. The scheme begins with the preparation of 7-desmethylkhellin, which can then be used to prepare the compounds of the invention.

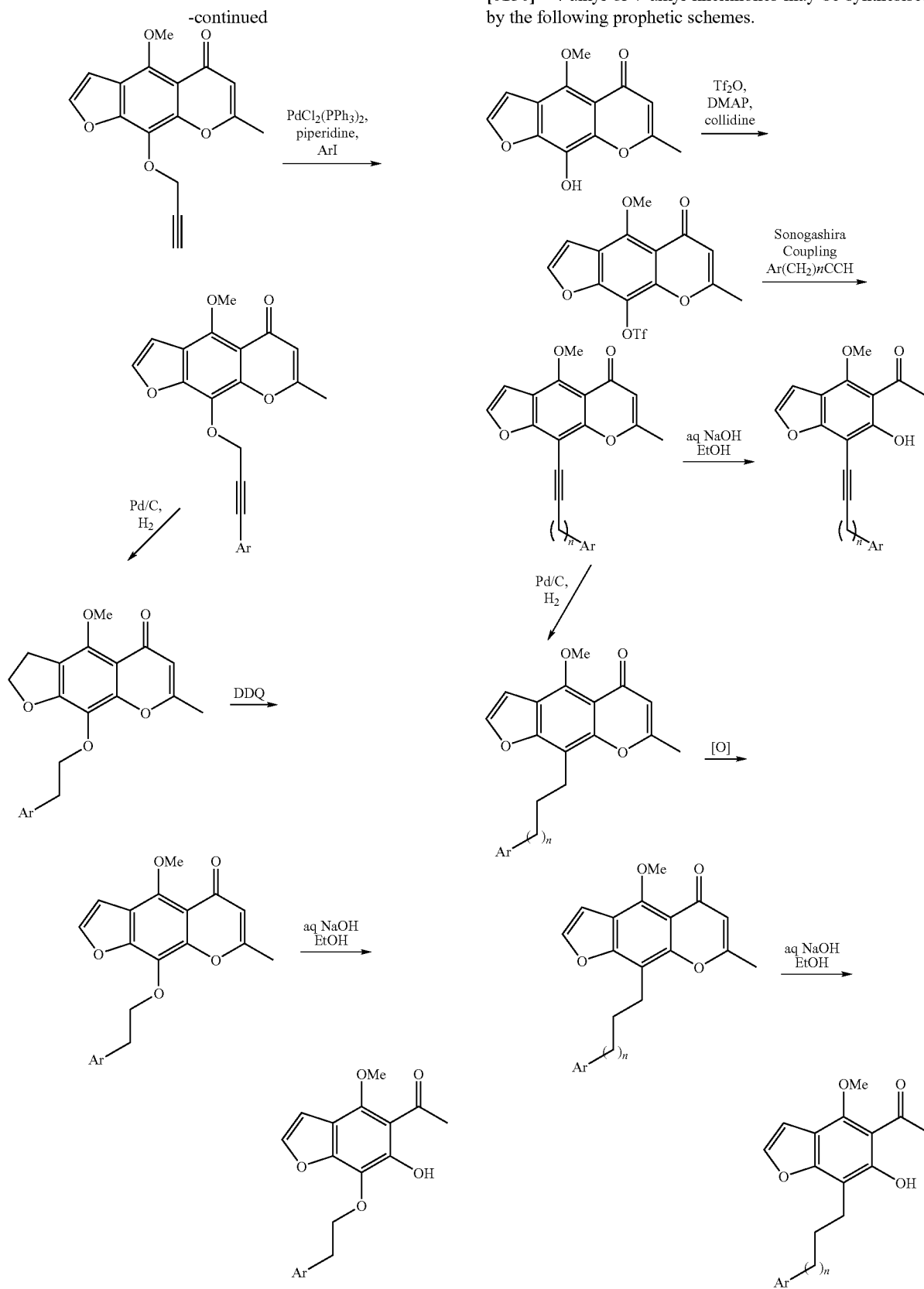
Synthesis of Intermediate 7-desmethylkhellin



**[0129]** A preferred embodiment of the compounds of the present invention are compounds where  $R_4$  is an aryl-( $CH_2$ ) $_n$ -O- substituted example (ie., where  $R_6$  is Ar-( $CH_2$ ) $_n$ -, where n is 1 to 6). An alternative synthesis for this subset of compounds is shown below. Sonogashira coupling of 7-alkynyl khellin with an aryl iodide may furnish an aryl alkyne, which upon hydrogenation, reoxidation of the benzofuran, and hydrolysis may afford the desired aryl-( $CH_2$ ) $_n$ -O-khellin. Heck coupling of 7-allyl khellin offers an alternate pathway to this class of compounds. Suitable coupling agents are known in the art and include  $Pd(PPh_3)_2Cl_2$ ,  $Pd(PPh_3)_4$ ,  $Pd$ (dibenzylideneacetone), and  $PdCl_2(CH_3CN)_2$ . Preferably the palladium catalysed coupling reactions include a co-catalyst, for instance, CuI, in the presence of a suitable base such as a trialkylamine base.

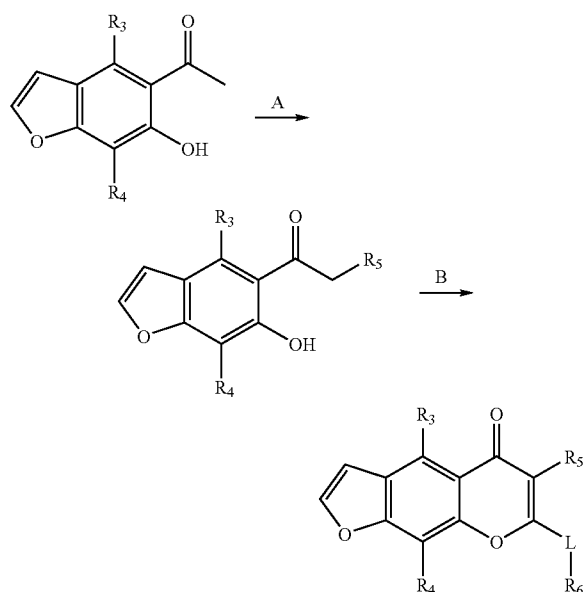


[0130] 4-alkyl or 7-alkyl khellinones may be synthesised by the following prophetic schemes.



[0131] Starting with 7-triflyl khellin (or the 7-bromo visnagin (not shown)) Sonogashira coupling with an alkyne may provide the disubstituted alkyne. Reduction of the alkyne, followed by selective oxidation and alkaline hydrolysis, may give the 7-alkyl khellinone. Note that an analogous preparation could be envisaged for the generation of 4-alkyl khellinones starting from 4-triflyl khellin.

[0132] From the substituted khellinones, the compounds of the present invention may be prepared according to the following scheme:



[0133] In step A above the compounds of the present invention can be prepared by initial transformation of the C-5

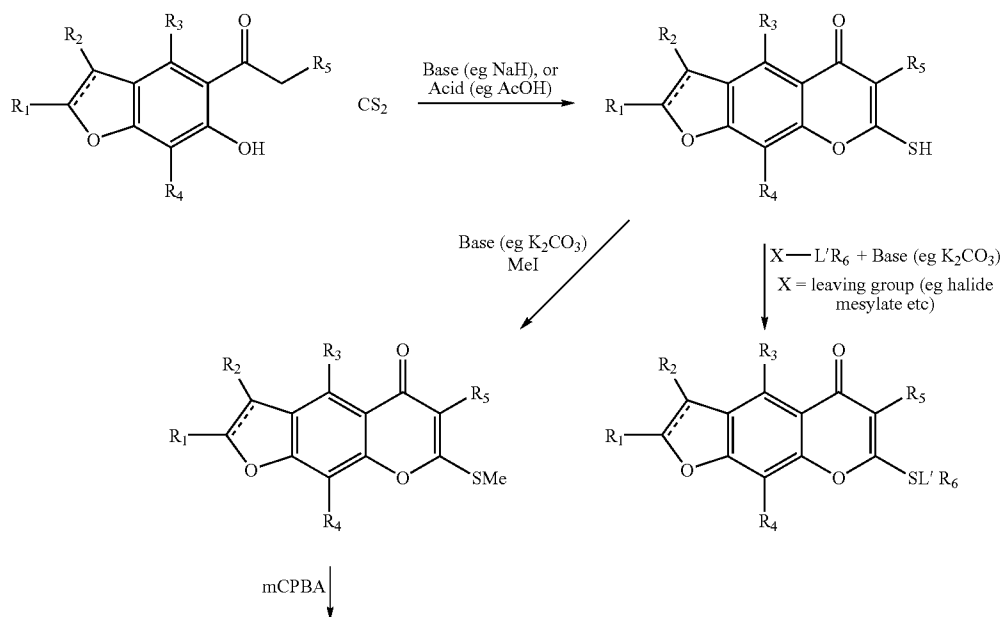
acetyl group. For instance the reaction of this group with an  $\alpha$ -haloester in the presence of zinc (ie under Reformatsky conditions) may afford a  $\beta$ -hydroxyester which may then be suitably oxidized to form a  $\beta$ -carbonyl ester (ie where  $-\text{C}(\text{O})-\text{CH}_3$  is transformed to  $-\text{C}(\text{O})-\text{CH}_2-\text{CO}_2\text{R}$  (ie where  $\text{R}_5$  is  $\text{CO}_2\text{R}$  where R is lower alkyl, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl or optionally substituted arylalkyl).

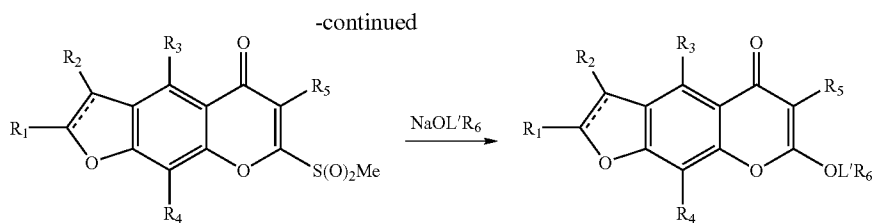
[0134] Also, further substituents for  $\text{R}_5$  can be prepared by initially halogenating the C-5 acetyl group with, for instance,  $\text{Br}_2$  to form  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{CH}_2\text{Br}$ . Substitution of the halogen with a suitable nucleophilic group may afford  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{CH}_2\text{R}_5$  where  $\text{R}_5$  is, for instance,  $-\text{OR}$ , and  $-\text{SR}$ , (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl), or  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where  $\text{R}'$  and  $\text{R}''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

[0135] In addition reacting the C-5 acetyl with an appropriate base and reacting the formed enolate with suitable acyl halides or dialkylcarbonates may afford compounds where  $\text{R}_5$  is  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$  and  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$  respectively, where R is preferably lower alkyl.

[0136] In step B the substituted khellinones may be ring closed to form the compounds of the present invention by reaction with a compound of formula  $\text{R}_6\text{LC}(\text{O})\text{O}$ -loweralkyl (where  $\text{R}_6$  is as referred to above and L is an optionally substituted alkylene or  $\text{NR}'''$ , and more preferably an unsubstituted lower alkylene). The reaction is carried out in the presence of a suitable base (for example,  $\text{NaH}$ ) or suitable acid (for example,  $\text{HCl}$ ), preferably in an ether solvent such as diethyl ether or tetrahydrofuran.

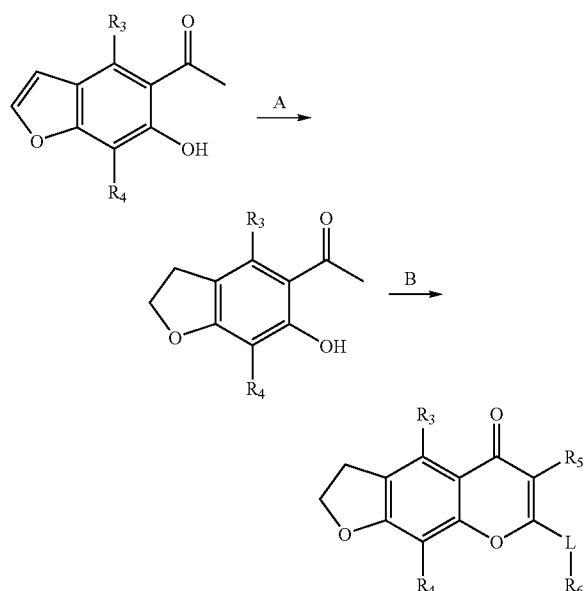
[0137] The scheme depicted below illustrates a further proposed process for preparing compounds of the present invention where L is other than alkylene. In the scheme L' may be a bond or linker group comprising of alkylene and heteroatomic units (eg  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2-$ ).





**[0138]** Substituted chromenones of the present invention can be prepared by electrophilic aromatic substitution of the furan ring, including halogenation followed by palladium mediated coupling. Alternatively, the ring can be deprotonated using a base and an electrophile added or a palladium mediated coupling performed. Other approaches include ring opening the furan to give an ortho-formylphenols or salicylates that can be ring closed again introducing substituents.

**[0139]** From the substituted khellinones, reduced compounds may be prepared according to the following scheme:



**[0140]** In step A above the reduced compounds can be prepared by the reduction of the unsubstituted benzofuran using hydrogenation with 5% palladium on charcoal. In step B the chromenone can be prepared by treatment with sodium hydride, followed by reaction of the enolate with esters of *N,N*-dialkyl amino acids as described in General Procedure C below. An example of the transformation described for step A is given below in Example 7b).

**[0141]** In the above schemes the following abbreviations were used:—

TFA trifluoroacetic acid  
 PMBCl para methoxybenzyl chloride  
 DMAP dimethylaminopyridine  
 Aq aqueous  
 Tf<sub>2</sub>O triflic anhydride

**[0142]** Another variation is to add, remove or modify the substituents of the product to form new derivatives. This could be achieved by using standard techniques for functional group inter-conversion, well known in the industry such as those described in Comprehensive organic transformations: a guide to functional group preparations by Larock R C, New York, VCH Publishers, Inc. 1989.

**[0143]** Examples of possible functional group inter-conversions are: —C(O)NRR' from —CO<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub> by heating with or without catalytic metal cyanide, e.g. NaCN, and HNRR' in CH<sub>3</sub>OH; —OC(O)R from —OH with e.g., ClC(O)R' in pyridine; —NR—C(S)NR'R'' from —NHR with an alkylisothiocyanate or thiocyanic acid; —NRC(O)OR from —NHR with alkyl chloroformate; —NRC(O)NR'R'' from —NHR by treatment with an isocyanate, e.g. HN=C=O or RN=C=O; —NRC(O)R' from —NHR by treatment with ClC(O)R' in pyridine; —C(=NR)NR'R'' from —C(NR'R'')SR''' with H<sub>3</sub>NR<sup>+</sup>OAc<sup>-</sup> by heating in alcohol; —C(NR'R'')SR''' from —C(S)NR'R'' with R—I in an inert solvent, e.g. acetone; —C(S)NR'R'' (where R' or R'' is not hydrogen) from —C(S)NH<sub>2</sub> with HNR'R''; —C(=NCN)—NR'R'' from —C(=NR'R'')—SR with NH<sub>2</sub>CN by heating in anhydrous alcohol, alternatively from —C(=NH)—NR'R'' by treatment with BrCN and NaOEt in EtOH; —NR—C(=NCN)SR from —NHR' by treatment with (RS)<sub>2</sub>C=NCN; —NR''SO<sub>2</sub>R from —NHR' by treatment with ClSO<sub>2</sub>R by heating in pyridine; —NR' C(S)R from —NR' C(O)R by treatment with Lawesson's reagent [2,4-bis(4-methoxyphenyl)-1,3,2,4-dithiadiphosphetane-2,4-disulfide]; —NRSO<sub>2</sub>CF<sub>3</sub> from —NHR with triflic anhydride and base, —CH(NH<sub>2</sub>)CHO from —CH(NH<sub>2</sub>)C(O)OR' with Na(Hg) and HCl/EtOH; —CH<sub>2</sub>C(O)OH from —C(O)OH by treatment with SOCl<sub>2</sub> then CH<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub> then H<sub>2</sub>O/Ag<sub>2</sub>O; —C(O)OH from —CH<sub>2</sub>C(O)OCH<sub>3</sub> by treatment with PhMgX/HX then acetic anhydride then CrO<sub>3</sub>; R—OC(O)R' from RC(O)R' by R''CO<sub>3</sub>H; —CCH<sub>2</sub>OH from —C(O)OR' with Na/R'OH; —CHCH<sub>2</sub> from —CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>OH by the Chugaev reaction; —NH<sub>2</sub> from —C(O)OH by the Curtius reaction; —NH<sub>2</sub> from —C(O)NHOH with TsCl/base then H<sub>2</sub>O; —CHC(O)CHR from —CHCHOHCHR by using the Dess-Martin Periodinane reagent or CrO<sub>3</sub>/aqH<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>/acetone; —C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>CHO from —C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>CH<sub>3</sub> with CrO<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>; —CHO from —CN with SnCl<sub>2</sub>/HCl; —CN from —C(O)NHR with PCl<sub>5</sub>; —CH<sub>2</sub>R from —C(O)R with N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>/KOH; —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R from —SR with mCPBA.

**[0144]** In order that the present invention may be more readily understood, we provide the following non-limiting examples.

## EXAMPLES

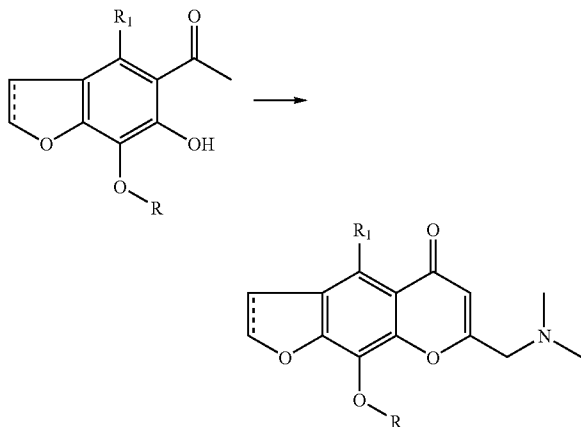
### Synthetic Experimental

**[0145]** General Procedure A: Alkylation of Phenols and thiophenols: A suspension of the phenol (1.0 eq., 0.2 M), Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> or K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (1.5-3 eq.) and alkyl or benzyl halide (1.2-5.0 eq.) in anhydrous dimethylformamide was stirred under N<sub>2</sub> at 60° C. until completion as determined by TLC. The reaction mixture was then diluted with ethyl acetate and washed twice with either 10% citric acid or 2M HCl and then brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and concentrated in vacuo. The crude product was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography.

## General Procedure B: Hydrolysis of Chromenones

**[0146]** To a solution of the chromenone (0.1-0.2 M) in ethanol (2 parts) at reflux was added slowly 3M NaOH (1 part) and the resulting solution was stirred at 90° C. for 3 h. The reaction mixture was acidified with 2M HCl and then extracted twice with ethyl acetate. The pooled organics were washed with brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. If necessary the crude product was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography.

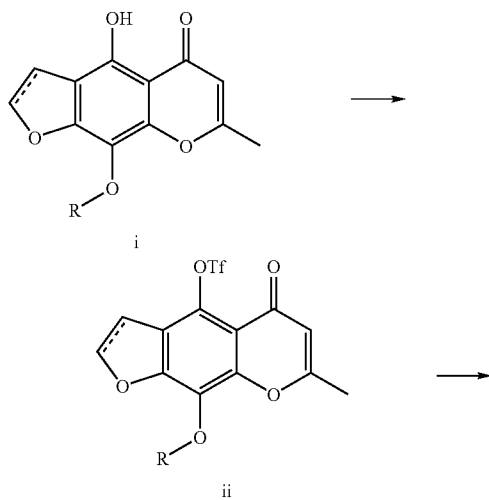
General Procedure C: Formation of 7-(N,N-dimethylaminoethyl) chromenones



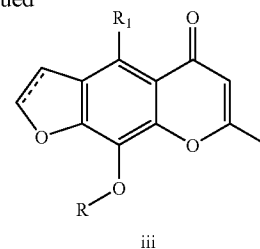
**[0147]** To a solution of phenol (1.0 eq, 0.5M) and N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester (2.0 eq.) in dry tetrahydrofuran at 0° C. was added sodium hydride (4.0 eq., 60% dispersion in mineral oil) portionwise. After the initial gas evolution subsided, the reaction was either heated by conventional heating at reflux for 1 h or by microwave heating in a sealed tube at 100° C. for 2 h. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool and was then quenched with water (5 mL), treated with methanol (5 mL), acidified with concentrated HCl to pH<1 and heated to reflux for 4 h. After this time the reaction was cooled and treated with saturated NaHCO<sub>3</sub> until pH=7-8. The aqueous solution was extracted with dichloromethane (2x20 mL) and the combined organic layers were washed with brine (20 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The crude residue was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography.

## General Procedure D: 4-Alkylation of Khellin Derivatives

**[0148]** The 4-alkylated khellin derivatives were synthesised in accordance with the following general reaction scheme.



-continued

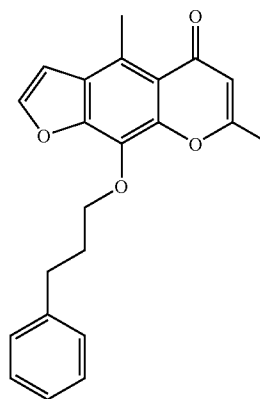


**[0149]** Step 1: Phenol derivative i (1.0 eq., 0.2 M) was dissolved in dry dichloromethane and cooled to 0° C. under N<sub>2</sub>. Anhydrous pyridine (4.0 eq.) was added, followed by triflic anhydride (1.5 eq.) slowly under N<sub>2</sub>. The temperature was slowly raised to rt and the reaction stirred overnight under N<sub>2</sub>. The reaction was cooled in an ice bath and quenched by addition of aqueous NH<sub>4</sub>Cl (saturated) solution and extracted with dichloromethane. The organic layer was separated, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, filtered and concentrated under vacuum. The dark brownish residue was subjected to silica-gel flash column chromatography to give crude triflate ii as a solid, which was used without further purification.

**[0150]** Step 2: ZnBr<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O (4.0 eq.) was dried at 115-120° C. for 2.0 h in a RB flask with occasional mixing under high vacuum. After drying, the flask was cooled to rt under N<sub>2</sub> and then charged with dry tetrahydrofuran (6 mL for 800 mg of ZnBr<sub>2</sub>). The clear solution was cooled to -78° C. under N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere and then 4.0 eq. of RLi (usually MeLi was 1.6 M in diethylether) was added slowly by syringe. The reaction temperature was allowed to warm slowly to rt and stirred for 15 min and then again cooled to -78° C. CuI (0.15 eq.) and PdCl<sub>2</sub>(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (0.12 eq.) were added to the reaction mixture and the reaction vessel was evacuated and back-filled with N<sub>2</sub>. The triflate derivative ii (R<sub>1</sub>=Me or 3-phenylpropyl) (1.0 eq.), dissolved in the minimum amount of dry tetrahydrofuran, was added and again the flask was flushed with N<sub>2</sub>. The reaction mixture was stirred at rt until complete by TLC. After this the reaction was cooled to 0° C., quenched by addition of aqueous NH<sub>4</sub>Cl solution and extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic layer was dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, evaporated and the crude residue was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography using dichloromethane as eluent to afford iii.

## Example 1

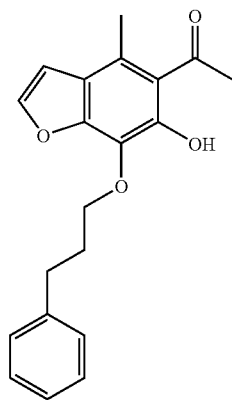
**[0151]**





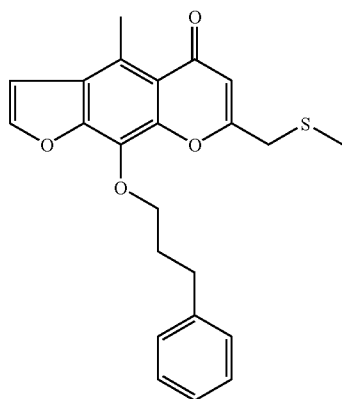
## a) 4,7-Dimethyl-9-(3-(phenyl)propoxy)-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

**[0152]** 7-methyl-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)-4-hydroxyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (8.0 g, 22.9 mmol) was reacted according to General Procedure D (Step 1) to provide the corresponding triflate derivative (10.2 g, 92%). The triflate (10.2 g, 21.1 mmol), ZnBr<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O (18.65 g, 71.4 mmol), CuI (200 mg, 1.05 mmol), PdCl<sub>2</sub>(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (400 mg, 0.56 mmol) and MeLi (44.6 mL of 1.6 M in diethylether, 71.4 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure D (Step 2) and the crude material was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography, eluting with dichloromethane to afford the title compound as a white solid (7.1 g, 97%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.08-2.18 (m, 2H), 2.36 (s, 3H, Me), 2.92 (t, J=7.6 Hz, 2H Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.96 (s, 3H), 4.39 (t, J=6.3 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>), 6.05 (s, 1H), 6.92 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.34 (m, 5H), 7.64 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z: 348.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).



## b) 5-Acetyl-6-hydroxy-4-methyl-7-(3-(phenyl)propoxy)benzofuran

**[0153]** Example 1a) (7.1 g, 20.4 mmol) was reacted according to General Procedure B and the crude product was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography, eluting with ethyl acetate:petroleum ether (1:9 then 1:4) to afford the title compound as a yellow oil (6.4 g, 97%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.07-2.16 (m, 2H), 2.53 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.65 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.84 (t, J=7.5 Hz, 2H), 4.40 (t, J=6.3 Hz, 2H), 6.73 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.31 (m, 5H), 7.50 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H), 9.20 (s, 1H, OH). MS (ES) m/z: 324.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).

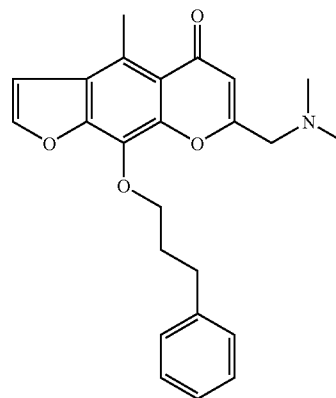


## c) 4-Methyl-7-methylsulfanylmethyl-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

**[0154]** To a solution of Example 1b) (500 mg, 1.54 mmol) and ethyl methylthioacetate (0.40 mL, 3.08 mmol), in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added sodium hydride

**[0155]** (60% dispersion in mineral oil, 240 mg, 6.00 mmol) and the resulting suspension was allowed to warm to rt for 10 minutes. The reaction was then heated at reflux for 1 h, cooled and quenched with 10% citric acid (20 mL). The crude mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (20 mL). The organic layer was washed with water (20 mL) and brine (10 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The crude residue was treated with a 1:1 mixture of methanol and 6M HCl (15 mL) and refluxed for 3 h. After cooling, the reaction was diluted with water (20 mL) and extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic layer was washed with brine (15 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The crude residue was purified by flash chromatography, eluting with ethyl acetate:petroleum ether (1:3) to afford the title compound as a resin that crystallised slowly on standing at 4° C. (227 mg, 37%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.10-2.19 (m, 2H), 2.18 (s, 3H), 2.91 (t, J=7.4 Hz, 2H), 2.96 (s, 3H), 3.53 (s, 2H), 4.41 (t, J=6.3 Hz, 2H), 6.16 (s, 1H), 6.93 (d, J=2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.15-7.30 (m, 5H), 7.65 (d, J=2.2 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z 394.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).

## Example 2

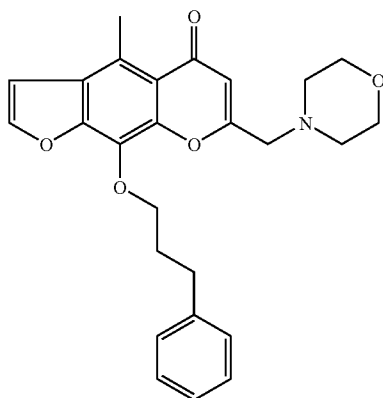
**[0156]**

## 7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-methyl-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

**[0157]** To a solution of Example 1b) (500 mg, 1.54 mmol) and N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester (0.44 mL, 3.12 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure C. The crude residue was subjected to flash chromatography, eluting with dichloromethane:ethyl acetate (1:1 then 1:3) and the material thus obtained was dissolved in ethyl acetate and washed with water (4×) and brine to remove traces of excess N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester. The organic layer was dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo to afford the title compound as a clear resin that crystallised on standing overnight (215 mg, 36%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.09-2.18 (m, 2H), 2.36 (s, 6H), 2.91 (t, J=7.4 Hz, 2H), 2.96 (s, 3H), 3.43 (s, 2H), 4.40 (t, J=6.3 Hz, 2H), 6.26 (s, 1H), 6.92 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.30 (m, 5H), 7.64 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z 391.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).

## Example 3

[0158]

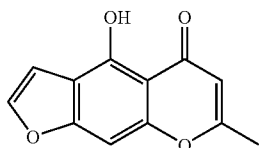


4-Methyl-7-(morpholin-4-ylmethyl)-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0159] A solution of Example 1c) (200 mg, 0.50 mmol) in dichloromethane (1 mL) was treated with iodomethane (2 mL, excess) and heated at reflux for 3 days. During this time a white precipitate formed. The reaction was cooled, filtered and the filtrate concentrated in vacuo to yield the crude iodide product as a tan solid contaminated with ~30% starting material (230 mg total mass). This crude material was used in subsequent reactions without further purification. To a solution of the crude iodide (40 mg) in dry dichloromethane (1.5 mL) was added morpholine (2 drops from a pasteur pipette) and the mixture was stirred at rt for 1 h. After this time the reaction was diluted with dichloromethane (20 mL) and washed with water (20 mL) then brine (10 mL), dried over  $MgSO_4$  and concentrated in vacuo. The crude residue was purified by flash chromatography, eluting with dichloromethane:ethyl acetate (2:1, 1:1 then 1:2) to afford the title compound as a clear resin (23 mg, 61% from Example 1c) over 2 steps).  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.09-2.18 (m, 2H), 2.57-2.60 (m, 4H), 2.91 (t,  $J=7.4$  Hz, 2H), 2.96 (s, 3H), 3.47 (s, 2H), 3.67-3.70 (m, 4H), 4.40 (t,  $J=6.2$  Hz, 2H), 6.30 (s, 1H), 6.92 (d,  $J=2.1$  Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.30 (m, 5H), 7.65 (d,  $J=2.1$  Hz, 1H). MS ( $ES^+$ )  $m/z$  433.9 ( $M+H^+$ ).

## Example 4

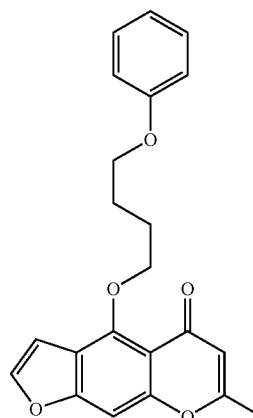
[0160]



a) 4-Hydroxy-7-methyl-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

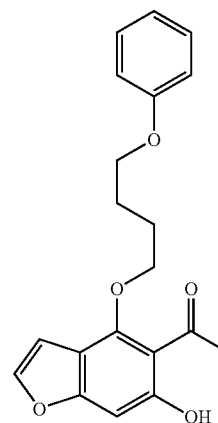
[0161] To a suspension of visnagin (920 mg, 4.0 mmol) in dichloromethane (20 mL) at  $-78^\circ C$ . was added a solution of boron trichloride (1.0 M, 4.0 mL, 4.0 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at  $-78^\circ C$ . for 15 min then rt for 16 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to  $0^\circ C$ . and water (25 mL) was added slowly at first. The organics were concentrated in vacuo

and the resulting suspension was diluted with 5% citric acid (150 mL) and heated at  $60^\circ C$ . for 1 h. The suspension was filtered, washing with water (3x50 mL) and the resulting solid was dried in a vacuum oven to afford the title compound as a yellow solid (710 mg, 83%):  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.38 (s, 3H), 6.06 (s, 1H), 6.97 (d,  $J=2.2$  Hz, 1H), 6.99 (s, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J=2.2$  Hz, 1H), 13.52 (s, 1H). MS ( $ES^+$ )  $m/z$  217.2 ( $M+H^+$ ).



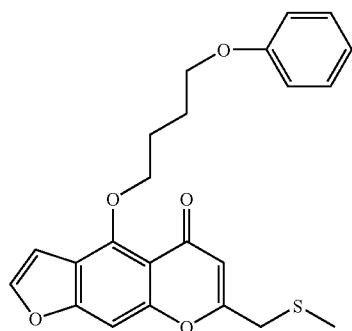
b) 4-(4-(phenoxy)butoxy)-7-methyl-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0162] Example 4a) (43 mg, 0.20 mmol) and 4-(phenoxy)butylbromide (55 mg, 0.24 mmol) were treated as described under General Procedure A. The crude product was purified by flash chromatography eluting with ethyl acetate/petroleum ether (1:4) to afford the title compound (51 mg, 70%) as a colourless solid:  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.06 (m, 4H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 4.06 (t,  $J=5.7$  Hz, 2H), 4.33 (t,  $J=5.7$  Hz, 2H), 6.04 (s, 1H), 6.86-6.96 (m, 4H), 7.22-7.27 (m, 3H), 7.57 (d,  $J=2.3$  Hz, 1H). MS ( $ES^+$ )  $m/z$  365.2 ( $M+H^+$ ).



c) 5-Acetyl-4-(4-(phenoxy)butoxy)-6-hydroxybenzofuran

[0163] Example 4b) (36 mg, 0.10 mmol) was treated as described under General Procedure B to afford the title compound (30 mg, 88%) as a brown solid:  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  1.96-2.15 (m, 4H), 2.73 (s, 3H), 4.05 (t,  $J=5.7$  Hz, 2H), 4.51 (t,  $J=6.3$  Hz, 2H), 6.69 (s, 1H), 6.84-6.97 (m, 4H), 7.24-7.30 (m, 2H), 7.40 (d,  $J=2.4$  Hz, 1H). MS ( $ES^+$ )  $m/z$  341.0 ( $M+H^+$ ).

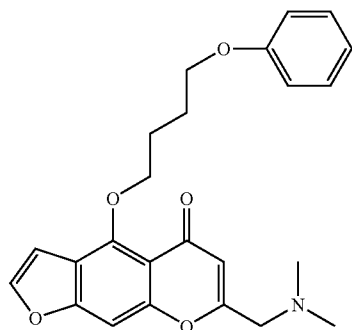


d) 7-Methylsulfanylmethyl-4-(4-phenoxybutoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0164] To a suspension of sodium hydride (40 mg, 1.0 mmol, 60% dispersion in mineral oil) in dry tetrahydrofuran (0.5 mL) at 0° C. was added a solution of Example 4c) (85 mg, 0.25 mmol) and ethyl methylthioacetate (65  $\mu$ L, 0.50 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) dropwise. After the initial gas evolution had subsided the reaction was refluxed for 25 min, cooled and quenched with water (4.5 mL). The mixture was diluted with methanol (4.5 mL), acidified with concentrated HCl (3 mL) and refluxed for 2 h. After this time the reaction was cooled and extracted with chloroform (3 $\times$ 8 mL). The combined organic layers were dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo to afford the title compound as a brown solid (73 mg, 72%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  2.06-2.10 (m, 4H), 2.16 (s, 3H), 3.50 (s, 2H), 4.06 (t, J=5.8 Hz, 2H), 4.35 (t, J=5.8 Hz, 2H), 6.11 (s, 1H), 6.86-6.96 (m, 5H), 7.22-7.27 (m, 2H), 7.57 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z: 412 (M+H).

#### Example 5

[0165]

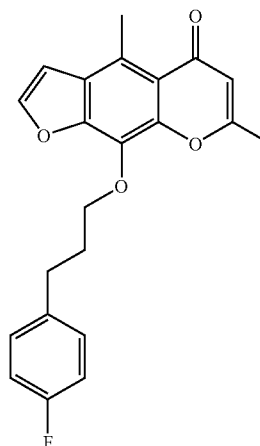


7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-(4-phenoxybutoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0166] Example 4c) (68 mg, 0.20 mmol) and N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester (56  $\mu$ L, 0.40 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure C to afford the title compound (50 mg, 62%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  2.06-2.10 (m, 4H), 2.35 (s, 6H), 3.37 (s, 2H), 4.06 (t, J=5.7 Hz, 2H), 4.34 (t, J=5.7 Hz, 2H), 6.17 (s, 1H), 6.86-6.93 (m, 3H), 6.95 (dd, J=2.3, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.22-7.27 (m, 2H), 7.31 (d, J=1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z: 408 (M+H).

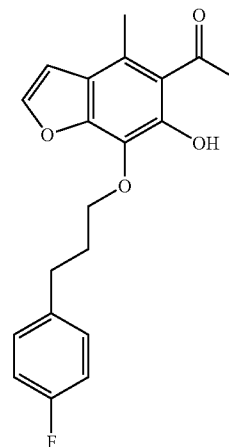
#### Example 6

[0167]



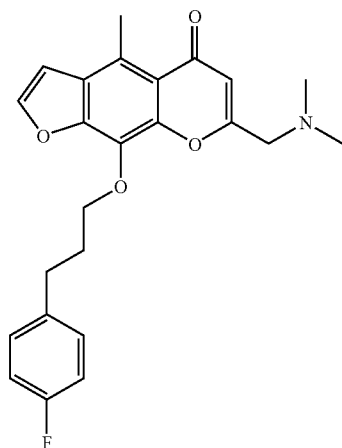
a) 4,7-Dimethyl-9-(3-(4-fluorophenyl)propoxy)-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0168] 4,9-Dihydroxy-7-methyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (2.32 g, 10 mmol) was reacted with 1-bromo-3-(4-fluorophenyl)propane (1.0 eq) according to General Procedure A to give 9-(3-[4-fluorophenyl]propoxy)-4-hydroxy-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (2.4 g, 66%), that was further reacted according to General Procedure D (Step 1) to provide the corresponding triflate derivative in 80% (2.6 g) yield. The triflate (2.5 g, 5.0 mmol), ZnBr<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O (3.92 g, 15.0 mmol), CuI (47.5 mg, 0.25 mmol), PdCl<sub>2</sub>(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (105 mg, 0.15 mmol) and MeLi (9.4 mL of 1.6 M in diethylether, 15.0 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure D (Step 2) and the crude material was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography, eluting with dichloromethane to afford the title compound as a off-white solid (1.2 g, 65%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  2.06-2.15 (m, 2H), 2.36 (s, 3H, Me), 2.89 (t, J=7.6 Hz, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.96 (s, 3H), 4.37 (t, J=6.3 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>), 6.05 (s, 1H), 6.92-6.99 (m, 3H), 7.15-7.20 (m, 2H), 7.64 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H).



b) 5-Acetyl-6-hydroxy-4-methyl-7-(3-(4-fluorophenyl)propoxy)benzofuran

[0169] The title compound was prepared from Example 6a) as described under General Procedure B in 65% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.04-2.14 (m, 2H), 2.53 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.63 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.83 (t, J=7.8 Hz, 2H), 4.34 (t, J=6.3 Hz, 2H), 6.73 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H), 6.94 (t, J=8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.13-7.18 (m, 2H), 7.50 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H), 8.98 (s, 1H, OH). MS (ES) m/z: 342.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).

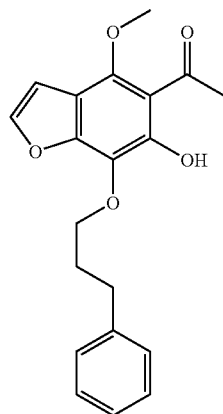


c) 7-Dimethylaminomethyl-9-(3-[4-fluorophenyl]propoxy)-4-methyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0170] Example 6b) (232 mg, 0.68 mmol) and N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester (176 mg, 1.34 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure C. The crude residue was purified with flash chromatography using methanol:ethylacetate:dichloromethane (4:48:48) to offer the title compound (60 mg, 22%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.07-2.15 (m, 2H), 2.35 (s, 6H), 2.88 (t, J=7.8 Hz, 2H), 2.96 (s, 3H), 3.42 (s, 2H), 4.38 (t, J=6.1 Hz, 2H), 6.25 (s, 1H), 6.92-6.98 (m, 3H), 7.15-7.20 (m, 2H), 7.64 (d, J=2.1 Hz, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z 409.9 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).

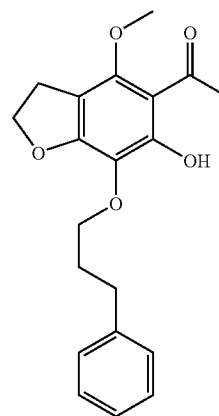
Example 7

[0171]



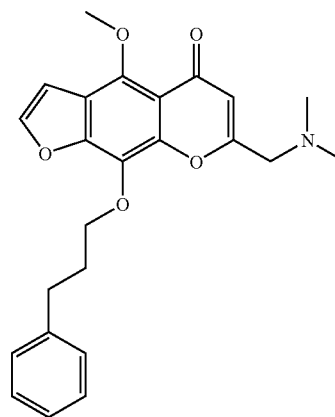
a) 5-Acetyl-6-hydroxy-4-methoxy-7-(3-(phenyl)propoxy)benzofuran

[0172] The title compound was prepared as described in PCT/AU2006/000333. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.14 (m, 2H), 2.36 (s, 3H), 2.91 (t, 2H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 4.35 (t, 2H), 6.11 (s, 1H), 6.99 (d, 1H), 7.00-7.31 (m, 5H), 7.60 (d, 1H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z 365.3 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).



b) 5-Acetyl-6-hydroxy-4-methoxy-7-(3-(phenyl)propoxy)-2,3-dihydrobenzo furan

[0173] Example 7a) (45 mg, 0.13 mmol) and 10% palladium on carbon (9 mg) in methanol (2 mL) was treated with hydrogen from a balloon for 16 h. The reaction mixture was filtered through a Celite pad and washed with methanol and dichloromethane to afford the title compound (39 mg, 87%) as a brown oil. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 1.97-2.07 (m, 2H), 2.61 (s, 3H), 2.81 (t, J=7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.28 (t, J=8.4 Hz, 2H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 4.04 (t, J=6.3 Hz, 2H), 4.64 (t, J=8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.13-7.28 (m, 5H). MS (ES<sup>+</sup>) m/z 343.2 (M+H<sup>+</sup>).



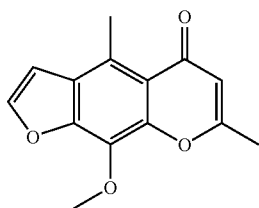
c) 7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-methoxy-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0174] Example 7a) (247 mg, 0.68 mmol) and N,N-dimethylglycine ethyl ester (176 mg, 1.34 mmol) were reacted according to General Procedure C. The crude residue was purified with flash chromatography using methanol:ethylacetate:dichloromethane (4:48:48) to offer the title compound

(212 mg, 77%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.59 (d,  $J=2.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.31-7.16 (m, 5H), 7.00 (d,  $J=2.2$  Hz, 1H), 6.25 (s, 1H), 4.36 (t,  $J=6.2$  Hz, 2H), 4.06 (s, 3H), 3.41 (s, 2H), 2.93-2.88 (m, 2H), 2.35 (s, 6H), 2.18-2.09 (m, 2H). MS ( $\text{ES}^+$ )  $m/z$  407.9 ( $\text{M}+\text{H}^+$ ).

## Example 8

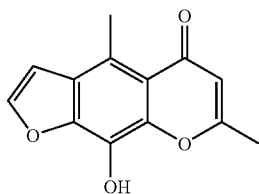
[0175]



a)

9-methoxy-4,7-dimethyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

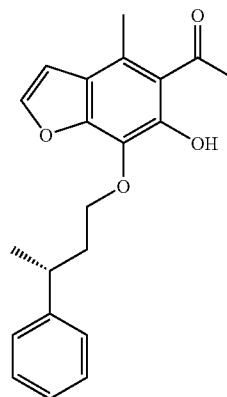
[0176] 9-Methoxy-7-methyl-4-trifluoromethanesulfonyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (324 mg, 1.0 mmol),  $\text{ZnBr}_2$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (1.04 g, 4.0 mmol),  $\text{CuI}$  (28 mg, 0.15 mmol),  $\text{PdCl}_2(\text{PPh}_3)_2$  (84 mg, 0.12 mmol) and  $\text{MeLi}$  (2.5 mL of 1.6 M in diethylether, 4.0 mmol) were treated as described under General Procedure D (Step 2) to afford the title compound (Yield 70%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.38 (s, 3H, Me), 2.94 (s, 3H, Me), 4.21 (s, 3H, OMe), 6.05 (s, 1H), 6.91 (d,  $J=2.4$ , 1H), 7.65 (d,  $J=2.4$ , 1H). MS (ES)  $m/z$ : 244.9 ( $\text{M}+\text{H}^+$ ).



b)

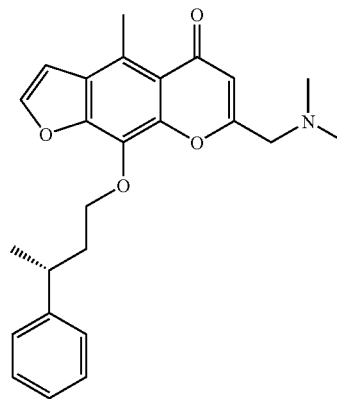
9-Hydroxy-4,7-dimethyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0177] A solution of Example 8a) (1.10 g, 4.5 mmol) in dichloromethane (15 mL) was cooled to  $-78^\circ\text{C}$ . and a solution of  $\text{BBr}_3$  in dichloromethane (1M, 6.8 mL) was added over 2 min. The reaction mixture was stirred at  $-78^\circ\text{C}$ . for 10 min then at rt overnight. The reaction vessel was placed into an ice-bath and water was added to quench the reaction. The dichloromethane was removed in vacuo and the resulting suspension was acidified with dilute citric acid to give a final concentration of 2% citric acid. The suspension was heated at  $70^\circ\text{C}$ . for 1 h then filtered, washing with water. The resulting solid was dried under high vacuum to give the product (0.85 g, 78%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ ):  $\delta$  2.33 (s, 3H,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), 2.79 (s, 3H,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), 6.02 (s, 1H), 7.13 (d,  $J=2.1$  Hz, 1H), 8.02 (d,  $J=2.1$  Hz, 1H), 10.29 (s, 1H, OH).



c) 5-Acetyl-6-hydroxy-4-methyl-7-[3-R-(3-(phenyl)butoxy)]benzofuran

[0178] To a suspension of Example 8b) (115 mg, 0.50 mmol) in dichloromethane/tetrahydrofuran (1:1, 4 mL) was added polymer-bound triphenylphosphine (1.0 mmol loading, 750 mg, 0.75 mmol), 3-R-3-phenyl-butan-1-ol (115  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.75 mmol) and diethylazodicarboxylate (118  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.75 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred at rt for 16 then filtered through a Celite pad, washing with dichloromethane and tetrahydrofuran. The solvent was concentrated in vacuo and the crude product was purified by flash chromatography eluting with ethyl acetate:petroleum ether (1:4) to offer a mixture of the title compound and 3-R-3-phenyl-butan-1-ol. This mixture was treated as described under General Procedure B to afford the title compound (69 mg, 41% yield over 2 steps).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  1.32 (d,  $J=7.0$  Hz, 3H), 2.06-2.13 (m, 2H), 2.53 (s, 3H), 2.65 (s, 3H), 3.01-3.09 (m, 1H), 4.22-4.30 (m, 2H), 6.73 (d,  $J=2.3$  Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.32 (m, 5H), 7.49 (d,  $J=2.3$  Hz, 1H), 8.79 (s, 1H).



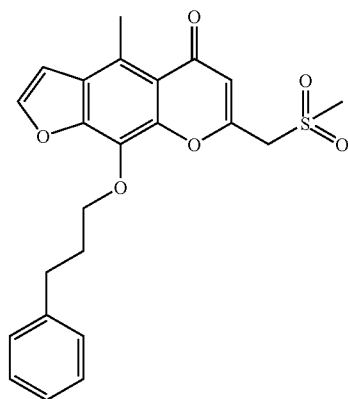
d) 7-Dimethylaminomethyl-9-[3-R-(3-(phenyl)butoxy)]-4-methyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0179] The title compound was prepared from Example 6c) as described under General Procedure C using a microwave reactor in 24% yield.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  1.33 (d,  $J=6.2$  Hz, 3H), 2.07-2.15 (m, 2H), 2.37 (s, 6H), 2.97 (s, 3H),

3.11-3.19 (m, 1H), 3.43 (s, 2H), 4.20-4.40 (m, 2H), 6.26 (s, 1H), 6.83 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.27 (m, 5H), 7.64 (d, J=2.3 Hz, 1H).

## Example 9

[0180]



7-Methanesulfonylmethyl-4-methyl-9-(phenyl-propoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one

[0181] To a solution of Example 1c) (90 mg, 0.228 mmol) in dichloromethane (2 mL) was added 70% m-CPBA (140 mg, 0.57 mmol) and the reaction was stirred at rt for 1 h during which time a precipitate formed. The suspension was diluted with DCM (20 mL) and the organic phase was washed with saturated  $\text{NaHCO}_3(aq)$  (2x20 mL) then brine, dried over  $\text{MgSO}_4$  and concentrated under vacuum. The crude residue was purified by silica-gel flash chromatography (eluent=10% EtOAc in DCM) to afford the product as a white solid (85 mg, 88%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.69 (d, J=2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.34-7.22 (m, 5H), 6.97 (d, J=2.2 Hz, 1H), 6.33 (s, 1H), 4.48 (t, J=6.5 Hz, 2H), 4.23 (s, 2H), 3.14 (s, 3H), 2.97 (s, 3H), 2.89 (t, J=7.5 Hz, 2H), 2.21-2.12 (m, 2H). MS ( $\text{ES}^+$ )  $m/z$  426.8 ( $\text{M}+\text{H}^+$ ).

## Biological Data

[0182] Potency of compounds to inhibit the human Kv1.3 ion channel were determined as follows:

[0183]  $\text{EC}_{50}$  values for inhibition of Kv1.3 currents were determined by the method according to Schmitz et al (2005) Molecular Pharmacology 68, 1254-1270 with the following differences:

1. Human Jurkat cells (which endogenously express hKv1.3) were used in place of rat L929 cells.
2. All electrophysiology was performed using planar patch clamp (Port-A-Patch, Nanion Technologies GmbH, Munich) in contrast to conventional patch clamp.
3.  $\text{EC}_{50}$  values shown were determined from averaged dose response data obtained from 3 or more cells.

TABLE 1

Example No.	$\text{EC}_{50}$ Kv1.3 microM
8 d)	0.014
6 c)	0.028

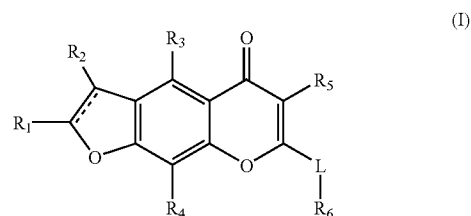
TABLE 1-continued

Example No.	$\text{EC}_{50}$ Kv1.3 microM
1 c)	0.030
2	0.029
3	0.19
9	0.20
4 d)	0.26
7 c)	0.27
5	1.42

[0184] Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

[0185] The reference in this specification to any prior publication (or information derived from it), or to any matter which is known, is not, and should not be taken as an acknowledgment or admission or any form of suggestion that that prior publication (or information derived from it) or known matter forms part of the common general knowledge in the field of endeavour to which this specification relates.

1. A compound of formula (I) or a salt thereof:



wherein

----- is an optional double bond;

$\text{R}_1$  and  $\text{R}_2$  are independently selected from hydrogen, halo, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted aryl,  $-\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$ ,  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}$ ,  $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}$  (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl),  $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}'\text{R}''$ ,  $-\text{NR}'\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}''$  and  $-\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where  $\text{R}'$  and  $\text{R}''$  are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

one of  $\text{R}_3$  or  $\text{R}_4$  is selected from a lower alkyl or lower alkyloxy substituted by optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyl, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{3-7}$  cycloalkyloxy, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted  $\text{C}_{4-7}$  cycloalkenyloxy, or  $\text{NR}'\text{R}''$  (where  $\text{R}'$  and  $\text{R}''$  are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl), and the other  $\text{R}_3$  or  $\text{R}_4$  is selected from hydrogen, cyano, halo, nitro, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally

substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, —OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl), —C(O)NR'R", —NR'C(O)R" and —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

R<sub>5</sub> is selected from hydrogen, halogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, —OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R, SR, (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl), —C(O)NR'R", —NR'C(O)R" and —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl);

L is a bivalent linking group of 1-6 atoms in length selected from optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, optionally substituted alkynylene, —O—, —S—, —S(O)—, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>—, —Se—, —Se(O)—, —Se(O)<sub>2</sub>—, and —NR'"— (where R'" is selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted aryl); and

R<sub>6</sub> is selected from (i) optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted heterocyclyl when L is —O—, —S—, —S(O)—, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>—, —Se—, —Se(O)—, —Se(O)<sub>2</sub>—, or —NR'"—; or (ii) optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, —OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R, —SR, —S(O)R, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R, (where R is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl), —C(O)NR'R", —NR'C(O)R" or —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl) when L is optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, or optionally substituted alkynylene.

2. A compound of formula (I) according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein ----- is a double bond.

3. A compound of formula (I) according to claim 1 or 2, or a salt thereof, wherein R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are independently selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl or halo.

4. A compound of formula (I) according to any one of claims 1 to 3 or a salt thereof, wherein R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are both hydrogen.

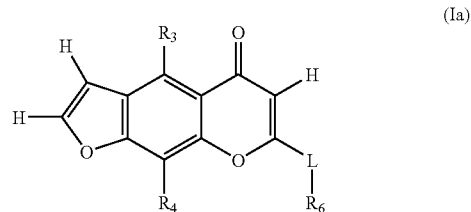
5. A compound of formula (I) according to any one of claims 1 to 4 or a salt thereof, wherein R<sub>5</sub> is hydrogen, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, or halo, OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R (where R is optionally substituted lower alkyl), —C(O)NR'R", —NR'C(O)R" or —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

6. A compound of formula (I) according to any one of claims 1 to 5 or a salt thereof, wherein R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>5</sub> are hydrogen.

7. A compound of formula (I) according to any one of claims 1 to 6 or a salt thereof, wherein one of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted C<sub>1-10</sub> alkyl or optionally substituted C<sub>1-10</sub> alkoxy and the other of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is a substituted methyl/methoxy, ethyl/ethoxy, propyl/propyloxy or butyl/butyloxy group.

8. A compound of formula (I) according to claim 7 or a salt thereof, wherein the substituents are selected from optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, and NR'R" where R' and R" each independently represents hydrogen and lower alkyl.

9. A compound of formula (Ia) or a salt thereof:



wherein

one of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from hydrogen, methyl or methoxy,

and the other R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is a lower alkyl or lower alkoxy substituted by optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted aryloxy, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroaryloxy, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyloxy, or NR'R" (where R' and R" are each independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl);

L is a bivalent linking group of 1-6 atoms in length selected from optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, optionally substituted alkynylene, —O—, —S—, —S(O)—, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>—, —Se—, —Se(O)—, —Se(O)<sub>2</sub>—, and —NR'"— (where R'" is selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted aryl); and

R<sub>6</sub> is selected from (i) optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted heterocyclyl when L is —O—, —S—, —S(O)—, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>—, —Se—, —Se(O)—, —Se(O)<sub>2</sub>—, or —NR'"—; or (ii) optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, —OR, —C(O)R, —C(O)OR, —OC(O)R, —SR, —S(O)R, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R, (where R

is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>4-7</sub> cycloalkenyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted aryl), —C(O)NR'R", —NR'C(O)R" or —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl) when L is optionally substituted alkylene, optionally substituted alkenylene, or optionally substituted alkynylene.

**10.** A compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **9** or a salt thereof, wherein L is an optionally substituted alkylene.

**11.** A compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to claim **10** or a salt thereof, wherein L is an unsubstituted alkylene group.

**12.** A compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to claim **11** or a salt thereof, wherein L is an unsubstituted methylene, ethylene, propylene, or butylene group.

**13.** A compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **12** or a salt thereof, wherein R<sub>6</sub> is optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, —OR<sup>'''</sup>, —SR<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)R<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R<sup>'''</sup> (where R<sup>'''</sup> is selected from optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted aryl) or —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

**14.** A compound of formula (Ia) according to claim **9** or a salt thereof, wherein

one of R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is selected from hydrogen, methyl and methoxy,

and the other R<sub>3</sub> or R<sub>4</sub> is a lower alkyl or lower alkoxy group substituted by aryl, aryloxy, heteroaryl, heteroaryloxy, heterocyclyl, heterocyclyloxy, or NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl), and wherein the aryl, aryloxy, heteroaryl, heteroaryloxy, heterocyclyl and heterocyclyloxy groups are optionally substituted by fluoro, chloro, or lower haloalkyl;

L is a divalent linker group of 1-4 atoms in length selected from a methylene, ethylene, propylene or butylene; and R<sub>6</sub> is an optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, —OR<sup>'''</sup>, —SR<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)R<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R<sup>'''</sup> (where R<sup>'''</sup> is selected from optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, optionally substituted heterocyclyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted aryl) or —NR'R" (where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen or lower alkyl).

**15.** A compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **14** or a salt thereof, wherein L is a methylene (—CH<sub>2</sub>—) group and R<sub>6</sub> is selected from an aryl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, —OR<sup>'''</sup>, —SR<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)R<sup>'''</sup>, —S(O)<sub>2</sub>R<sup>'''</sup> (where R<sup>'''</sup> is selected from lower alkyl, C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl and aryl) or NR'R" where R' and R" are independently selected from hydrogen and lower alkyl).

**16.** A compound selected from:

7-Dimethylaminomethyl-9-[3-R-(3-(phenyl)butoxy)]-4-methyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 8d);

7-Dimethylaminomethyl-9-(3-[4-fluorophenyl]propoxy)-4-methyl-5H-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 6c);

4-Methyl-7-methylsulfanylmethyl-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 1c);

7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-methyl-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 2);

4-Methyl-7-(morpholin-4-ylmethyl)-9-(3-phenylpropoxy)furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 3);

7-Methanesulfonylmethyl-4-methyl-9-(phenyl-propoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 9);

7-Methylsulfanylmethyl-4-(4-phenoxybutoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 4d);

7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-methoxy-9-(3-phenyl-propoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 7c); and

7-Dimethylaminomethyl-4-(4-phenoxybutoxy)-furo[3,2-g]chromen-5-one (Example 5), or a salt thereof.

**17.** A pharmaceutical composition comprising one or more compounds of formulae (I) and (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16** or a salt thereof and optionally a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

**18.** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim **17** further comprising an additional immunosuppressive compound.

**19.** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim **18** wherein the additional immunosuppressive compound is selected from azathioprine, brequinar sodium, deoxyspergualin, mizaribine, mycophenolic acid morpholino ester, cyclosporin, FK-506 and rapamycin.

**20.** Use of a compound of formula (I) or formula (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16** or a salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prevention of autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, or the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions.

**21.** A use according to claim **20** wherein the autoimmune disease is multiple sclerosis.

**22.** A use according to claim **20** wherein the disease is diabetes.

**23.** Use of a compound of formula (I) or formula (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16** for the treatment or prevention of autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, or the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions.

**24.** Use according to claim **23** wherein the autoimmune disease is multiple sclerosis.

**25.** Use according to claim **24** wherein the disease is diabetes.

**26.** A method of intentionally modulating potassium ion channel activity of T-cells by the application of a compound of formula (I) or formula (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16**, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, to said T-cells.

**27.** A method for the treatment or prevention of autoimmune or chronic inflammatory diseases, or the prevention of rejection of foreign organ transplants and/or related afflictions, by the administration of a compound of formula (I) or formula (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16**, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

**28.** A method according to claim **27** wherein the autoimmune disease is multiple sclerosis.

**29.** A method for preventing or treating diabetes including the step of administering a compound of formula (I) or (Ia) according to any one of claims **1** to **16** or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

\* \* \* \* \*