

Preliminary study of a neocaledonian sponge : *Axinella carteri* Dendy.

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Axinella carteri Dendy sample R 1257 was collected in the lagoon of Noumea on the "Dôme de l'Ilot Canard" at a depth of 6-10m. The water temperature is 25+/-2°C.

This preliminary report concerns the first study of this sponge which had been shown previously by ORSTOM searchers at Noumea to have a cytostatic activity.

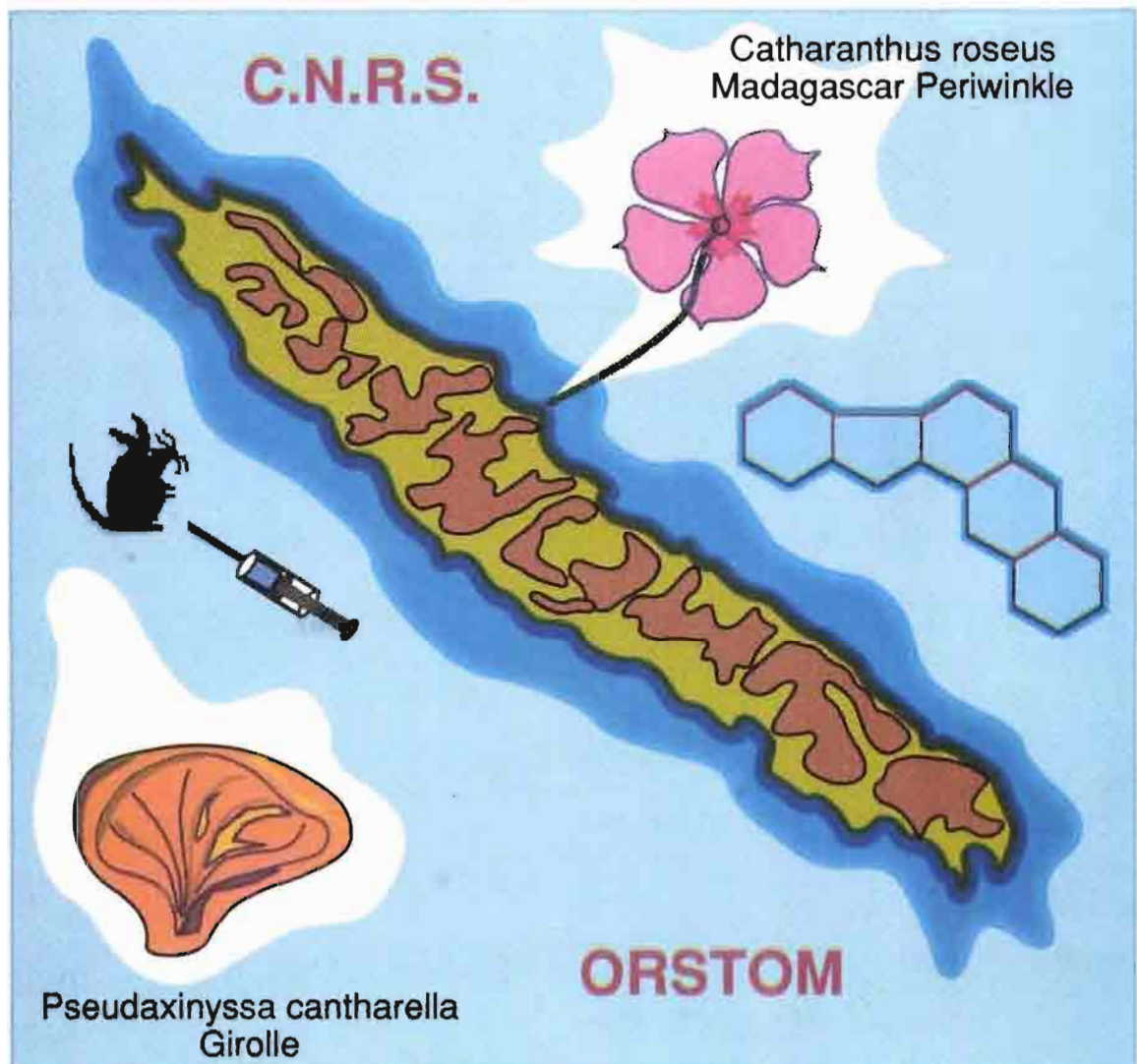
After multiple chromatography on both columns and preparative t.l.c. of the acetone extract, it was possible to isolate two groups of compounds which are extremely difficult to separate due to their close chemical nature.

The first group contains as the major constituent 3- β -hydroxymethyl-A-nor stigmastane. **1** along with its unsaturated homologues Δ -22, **2** and Δ -15, **3**. Similar mixtures have already been reported as present in other sponges (*A. verrucosa*, *Homaxinella*, *Acanthella*, *Phakellia*).

The stereochemistry 3- β has been confirmed by the NOESY spectra.

The second group contains the eicosenoic esters of **1** and **2**.

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