

## VALORIZATION OF PERILLALDEHYDE MOLECULE CONTAINED IN THE ESSENTIAL OIL OF *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss. FROM THE SAHARAN ZONES OF MOROCCO

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to valorise the species *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss which is known by its abundance in perillaldehyde. The plant material was collected from two regions in Morocco: Errachidia and Smara region, then was hydrodistilled. The essential oils (EOs) obtained were firstly characterized by gas chromatography coupled to mass spectrometry (GC-MS). Secondly the EO with the major component is the perillaldehyde was used as starting material to semi-synthesize three *p*-menthane monoterpenoids. The semi-synthesized compounds from perillaldehyde were studied for their docking behavior against Lung Cancer with the crystallographic structure of the kinase domain of EGFR protein using surflex-docking.

The GC/MS analysis of essential oils, showed a total of 25 components accounts 99.51% for Errachidia's EO while 28 components account for 99.83% for Smara's EO. GC/MS analysis showed that perillaldehyde is the major components in the EO of Errachidia with a percentage of 74.71%. For this purpose, Errachidia's EO was used to semi-synthesize the perilla alcohol, the perillic acid, and the perillartine. The three compounds were obtained in good yield, their structures were confirmed by GC/MS and Infrared (IR). The molecular docking study showed a good binding affinity between the perilla alcohol (POH) and the lung cancer receptor than perillic acid and perillartine.

The species *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss. could be considered a promising source of *p*-menthan monoterpenoids, known for their anticancerous properties.

**Keywords:** *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss.; Essential oil; molecular docking; perillaldehyde; Semisynthesis

### INTRODUCTION

Lung cancer is the most fatal type of cancer. The percentage of deaths because of this cancer account for about 19 % of all cancer deaths (Torre et al., 2016). Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in men and the second leading cause of cancer death in women worldwide (Torre et al., 2016). Recently, medical research has given notable attention to natural products in the field of cancer treatment (Prakash et al., 2013). More than two-thirds of the drugs currently used in cancer treatments come directly from natural products (Gurnani et al., 2014). Much recent researches have great interest in screening of medicinal plants for new therapeutics (Bhuyar et al. 2021). Because of their efficacy, safety, and availability (Nacz et al., 2006). The secondary metabolites existed in plants are mainly used as active principals of many drags (Bhuyar et al. 2021). *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss belongs to the apiaceae family and Ammodaucus genus. This species is widespread in Saharan and sub-Saharan countries, and it is known to be endemic to North Africa, specifically Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, extending to Egypt and tropical Africa in addition to the Canary Islands (Manssouri et al., 2016). Previous studies on the volatile compounds of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss. esseantial oil, have revealed the existence of perillaldehyde among its chemical composition. (Abu Zarga et al., 2013; El-Haci et al., 2014; Manssouri et al., 2020). perillaldehyde is a monoterpenoid with *p*-menthane structure. Monoterpenoid compounds with *p*-menthane are known for their antioxidant activity and anticancer potential. Moreover, the compounds with this structure are reported to possess in vitro cytotoxic effects on cancer cell lines (Imamura et al., 2014). The monoterpene perilla alcohol is the most promising member of the group *p*-menthanes, this compound has attracted attention recently by being a strong candidate for cancer treatment (Yeruva et al., 2007). Perilla alcohol is known for its bioactivity as an antitumor agent and inhibitor of tumor cell growth in various tissues (Imamura et al., 2014). Clinical trials were conducted on the toxicity and chemotherapy effects of Perilla alcohol (Raphael et al., 2003; Yeruva et al., 2007). Another group found that limonene and perillic acid inhibited DNA synthesis and proliferation in PHA-stimulated peripheral blood mononuclear cells and perillic acid inhibited IL-2 and IL-10 production and secretion in mitogen-

activated human T lymphocytes (Swain et al., 2020). As well, Perillartine is considered a monoterpene with antioxidant and radical scavenging activities (Swain et al., 2020).

The objective of this study was a valorization of the species *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss., to confirm the potential of this species in the pharmaceutical industry as a source of perillaldehyde. For this purpose, plant material was collected in two Saharan regions in Morocco: (Draa-Tafilelet and Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra). The chemical composition of the essential oils was analyzed by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC/MS) analyses with the aim of using the major component in the essential oil which is the perillaldehyde to semi-synthesize bioactive compounds of the *p*-menthane structure which are perilla alcohol (POH), perillic acid and perillartine. As these compounds are known for their anticancer activity, a theoretical study of these compounds against lung cancer, was carried out. The molecular docking behavior of perilla alcohol (POH), perillic acid and perillartine with the crystallographic structure of the kinase domain of the EGFR protein was investigated using surflex-docking.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

#### Molecular Docking

The bioactive compounds Perilla alcohol, Perillic acid and Perillartine are known for their anticancer activity, therefore, the three compounds were used for molecular docking against Lung Cancer. The crystal structure of EGFR kinase domain in complex with Iressa was downloaded from the PDB data bank with PDB entry: 2ITY (Yun et al., 2007) and was used as the initial 3D model to determine the docking-binding models. Surflex-Dock module is performed for molecular docking; the protocol of receptor pocket was established by the ligand based method.

### Protein target preparation

All water molecules in crystal structures were deleted and the polar hydrogen atoms were added. The IRE ligand (native ligand) of the downloaded structure was retrieved and redocked in the same pocket to determine the performance of this molecular docking study. All studied ligands are docked in the same pockets for further analysis applying an automatic docking. Total scores are expressed in  $-\log_{10}(Kd)$  units, in order to present the binding affinities (Yadav et al., 2018). Surfex-Dock scores represent binding energies; therefore, they determine ligand-receptor interactions.

### Ligands preparation

The chemical structure of all ligands was designed using Sybyl-x 2.0 drawing interface. The conformation of every compound is energetically minimized using Tripos force field and Powell conjugated gradient algorithm with a convergence criterion of 0.05 kcal/mol and Gasteiger-Huckel charges (Purcell et al., 1967).

### Lipinski rule of bioactive compounds Perilla alcohol, Perillic acid and Perillartine

The main goal to verify Lipinski rule is to obtain a preliminary prediction of the potential pharmacological capacities of a molecule to become a drug. The tree studied compounds were submitted to the calculation of their physicochemical properties such as molecular weight (MW), octanol/water partition coefficient (LogP), number of rotatable bond ( $N_{rot}$ ) hydrogen bond donor (HBD) and acceptor (HBA) using SwissADME webserve (Daina et al., 2017).

### The plant material

The fruits of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss. Were collected in April 2018 from two different regions of Morocco: Errachidia (ERR) region: Draa-Tafilalet and Smara (SM) region: Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra. The geographical coordinates of Errachidia are: 31°07'10 "N -5°09'58 "W and those of Smara are: 26°45'32.1 "N 11°41'10.6 "W.

The fruits were dried in the dark, the extraction of essential oils was carried out using the method of hydrodistillation by Clevenger device. 100 g of fruits was powdered then extracts. The hydrodistillation was repeated three times and the obtained essential oils were dried with anhydrous sodium sulfate and stored at 4°C in amber glass flasks until analysis.

### Analysis of essential oil by GC/MS

The constituents of the essential oils were analyzed by the GC-MS method. GC-MS analyses were performed using Thermo Scientific ISQ Series Quadrupole GC-MS System. The GC instrument was equipped with a TG-1MS capillary column (30 m × 0.32 mm i.d., 0.25µm film thickness). Here the carrier gas used was Helium with a flow rate of 1.5 ml/min and EI source at 70 eV. The GC oven was held at a temperature of 40°C at the initial time and programmed to 200°C at 4°C/min and up to 300°C at 30°C/min and maintained for 10 min. 1µl of the dilute sample (in cyclohexane 1:100, v/v) was injected with a constant temperature of 250°C through a split injector. The identification of chemical components was carried out by the comparison of the Chemical Abstract Service registry number (Cas) and matching their mass spectra value with the corresponding database NIST library and with mass spectral literature (the Reverse Match Factor  $RSI > 600$ ) (Lal et al., 2019b, 2019a).

### Semi-synthesis of Perilla alcohol, Perillic acid and Perillartine from the perillaldehyde

#### Reduction of perillaldehyde to Perilla alcohol with NaBH<sub>4</sub>

In order to reduce carbonyl compounds to their corresponding alcohols, lithium aluminum hydride (LiAlH<sub>4</sub>) or sodium borohydride (NaBH<sub>4</sub>) are frequently used (Setamdideh et al., 2012). In this case, the NaBH<sub>4</sub> was used because it is more selective to carbonyl group. In a Three-neck round-bottom flask equipped with a dropping funnel and with nitrogen sparging, 4 equimolar of the aldehyde were added drop-wise to a mixture of NaBH<sub>4</sub> solubilized in diethyl ether and ethanol. The reaction was stirred for 24h in ice. After the reaction was complete, 12 mL of distilled water was added and the mixture was extracted with diethyl ether (3 × 20 mL) and dried over anhydrous magnesium sulfate. The diethyl ether was evaporated in a rotary evaporator.

#### Disproportionation of Perillaldehyde into Perilla alcohol and Perillic acid

Perillaldehyde (PA) has no alpha hydrogen therefore, cannot be subjected to aldol condensation, but may be disproportionate to an equimolar mixture of primary alcohol and carboxylic salt. The reaction is managed in a strongly basic solution. A concentrated sodium hydroxide solution was prepared in a 100 mL round-bottom

flask adapted with a refrigerant. After dissolution, PA was added to the hot sodium hydroxide solution and agitated until an emulsion was produced. The solution was maintained under reflux during 24 hours. After the reaction was complete, a mixture of POH and perillic acid sodium salt was obtained. The mixture was transferred into a separating funnel and extracted with diethyl ether (3×15 mL). The ethereal phases were collected, dried and evaporated and the aqueous phase was acidified with concentrated HCl to the pH acid, then stirred with cooling a white precipitate appeared.

#### Preparation of perillaldehyde oxime

The synthesis of the aldoxime was done by using a 100 mL round flask equipped with a refrigerant and dropping funnel. 2.5g of Hydroxylammonium chloride [NH<sub>3</sub>OH]Cl, 4g of sodium acetate C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>3</sub>NaO<sub>2</sub> and 10 mL of water were placed in the round flask, the mixture was stirred until dissolution, then the solution was heated (40 °C) 2.5 mL of PA was wise dropped, after the appearance of the oxime it was filtered then washed with ice water.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Molecular Docking

The compounds Perilla alcohol (POH), Perillic acid, and Perillartine which are known for their lung cancer inhibition (Yeruva et al., 2007) were studied for their docking behavior with the crystallographic structure of the kinase domain of EGFR protein retrieved from the Protein Databank repository (www.rcsb.org/pdb; ID: 2ITY) using surflex-docking. The stable conformation of Perilla alcohol (POH) compound shows better binding affinity than Perillic acid and Perillartine with a scoring of 4.18, 3.80 and 3.56 respectively (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Summary of affinities and type's interactions between studied compounds and lung cancer receptor

Stable conformation of compound	Score	Hydrogen Interactions with residue(s)	Alkyl Interactions with residue(s)
<i>Perilla alcohol</i>	4.18	PRO A:794	LEU A :718; LEU A :844; ALA A : 743; VAL A:726; LEU A:792
<i>Perillic acid</i>	3.80	MET:793; GLN A:791	LEU A: 718; CYS A: 797; ALA A: 743; LEU A: 844
<i>Perillartine</i>	3.56	Lys A: 745	VAL A:726; LEU A:718; LEU A: 792; LEU A : 844; ALA A : 743; MET : 793

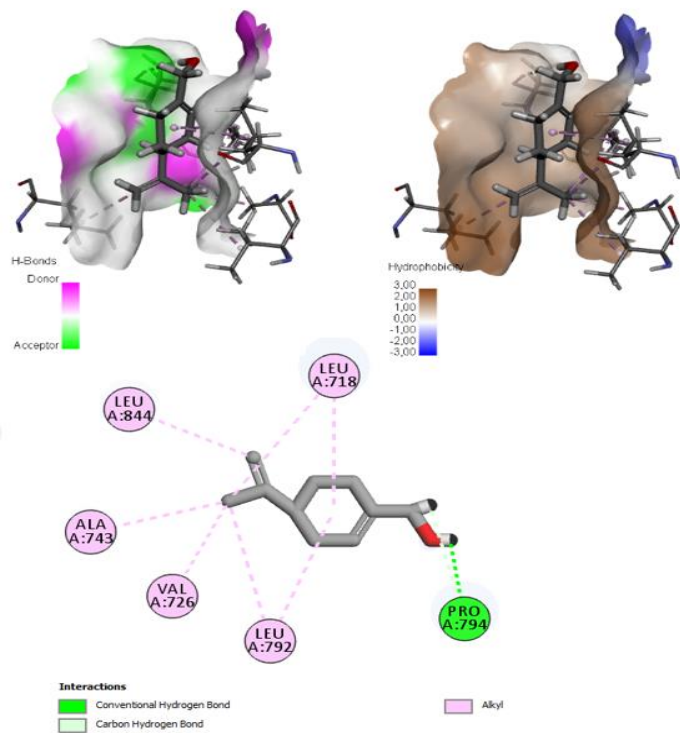
Hydrogen bonding is one of the significant factors to determine the stability of protein-ligand bonding. The compound Perilla alcohol (POH) is stabilized by hydrogen bond interaction between hydroxyl group and PRO A:794 residue, and by alkyl interactions with LEU A:718; LEU A:844; ALA A:743; VAL A:726; LEU A:792 residues. The green and brown contours around hydroxyl group indicate the hydrophobicity and hydrogen bond characters of receptor that stabilize Ligand-receptor complex, therefore the inhibition ability (see Figure 1). The Perillic acid forms two hydrogen bonds with MET :793 and GLN A:791 residues, also alkyl interactions with LEU A: 718; CYS A: 797; ALA A: 743 and LEU A: 844 residues (see Figure 2). The Perillartine forms a hydrogen bond with Lys A: 745 residue and alkyl interactions with VAL A: 726; LEU A:718; LEU A: 792; LEU A: 844; ALA A: 743; MET: 793 residues (see Figure 3). The brown color around the compounds shows the hydrophobic character of amino acids and the green color indicate the important of hydrogen bond interaction to stabilize the affinity of the complex.

### Drug-likeness Lipinski's rule

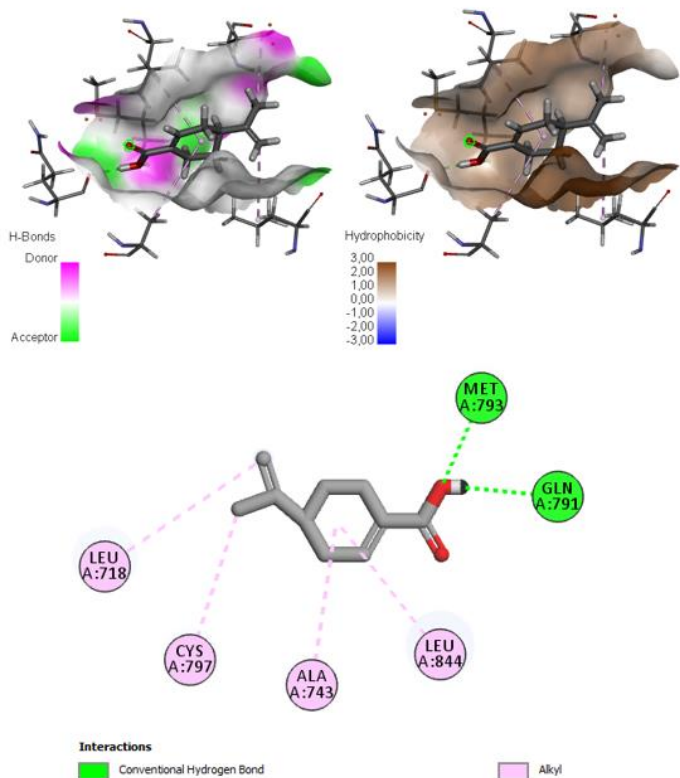
Depending on lipinski's rule compounds with more than 5 hydrogen bond donor, 10 hydrogen bond acceptor, molecular weight (MW) over than 500 Da and LogP more than 5, are poor absorbed drugs (Lipinski et al., 2001). The in silico results of the three bioactive compounds, indicate that all compounds have LogP value under 5, and their molecular weight less than 500 Da with hydrogen bond donor and acceptor less than five with two rotatable bonds (see Table 2), which is in agreement with lipinski's rule therefore indicate a good oral bioavailability.

**Table 2** Physicochemical parameters of the three synthesized compounds

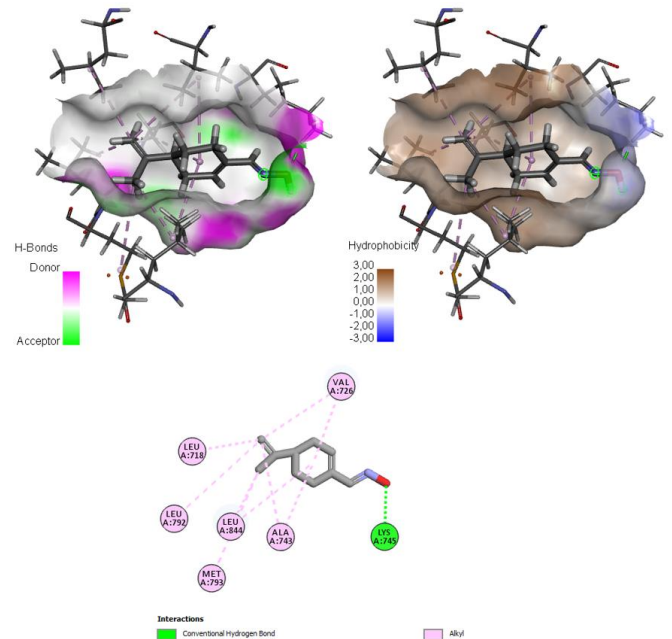
Compound	LogP	MW	HBD	HBA	$N_{rotb}$
<i>Perilla alcohol</i>	2.5	152.23	1	1	2
<i>Perillic acid</i>	2	166.22	1	2	2
<i>Perillartine</i>	2.32	165.23	1	2	2



**Figure 1** The interactions between compound Perilla alcohol (POH) and PDB:2ITY receptor



**Figure 2** The interactions between compound Perillic acid and PDB:2ITY receptor



**Figure 3** The interactions between compound Perillartine and PDB:2ITY receptor

**Analysis of essential oil by GC/MS**

The hydro-distillation of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* fruits from both ERR and SMR regions yielded a liquid blue oil with a characteristic odor. The EO of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* fruits from ERR region recorded the highest yield of 4.26g; on the other hand, the fruits from SMR region recorded a yield of 3.87g. The results of GC-MS analysis of the two essential oils are presented in Table 3. The Retention Indices indicated in the table was determined based on the GC/MS and literature surveys (Babushok et al., 2011). The EO from ERR contains a total of 25 components and accounts for 99.51%, essentially the oxygenated monoterpenoids and the monoterpenoids hydrocarbons, whereas the total identified components of the EO from SMR was 28 components which accounts for 99.83%. Similarly, to the EO from ERR, mainly the monoterpenoids were identified; the percentage of the monoterpenoids hydrocarbons was higher followed by the oxygenated monoterpenoids. In both oils the sesquiterpenoids and the oxygenated monoterpenoids were identified but in lesser amounts. The major components were Perillaldehyde, D-limonene,  $\alpha$ -Pinene,  $\beta$ -Pinene, Methyl perillate, 3-Carene,  $\beta$ -Myrcene and Perilla alcohol. Comparing their percentages, although the percentage of perillaldehyde and Perilla alcohol in the EO of ERR was higher than the EO of SMR, the percentages of  $\alpha$ -Pinene,  $\beta$ -Pinene, Methyl perillate, 3-Carene and  $\beta$ -Myrcene, were higher in the EO of SMR. There are 8 components in the EO of ERR that were not present in the EO of SMR which account for 0.49%. There were 10 components with a percentage of 0.46% missing in the EO of ERR, and 17 components were identified in both EOs. Different factors may be responsible for this quantitative difference including the difference in environmental factors (Gogoi et al., 2018) the climate, the soil nature, and the period of vegetative cycle (Noudjou et al., 2007).

**Semi-synthesis of Perilla alcohol, Perillic acid and Perillartine from the Perillaldehyde**

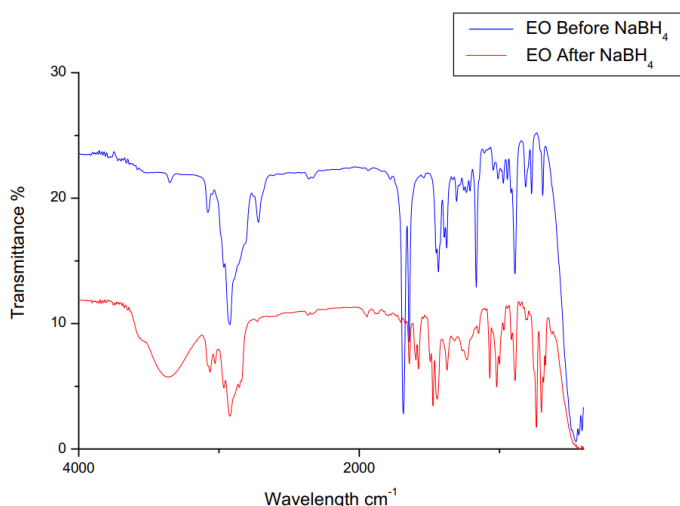
According to the chemical components of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* essential oil from the two regions, the percentage of perillaldehyde in the EO from ERR was 74.71%. This high percentage was exploited to hemi-synthesis another bioactive component. The reduction of perillaldehyde with NaBH<sub>4</sub> gave an oily liquid, with a green color and characteristic odor after the evaporation of the diethyl ether. With a yield of 97.64%, the essential oil was analyzed by IR before and after reduction (see figure 4) according to the spectrum a total disappearance of the CO band of carbonyl was observed around 1678 cm<sup>-1</sup> and the appearance of the OH band of alcohol around 3396 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The obtained EO was also analyzed by GC-MS. The comparison of the mass spectra obtained for the sample and those of the built-in libraries NIST, showed the match of the samples chromatogram with Perilla alcohol chromatogram (a) (see figure 5).



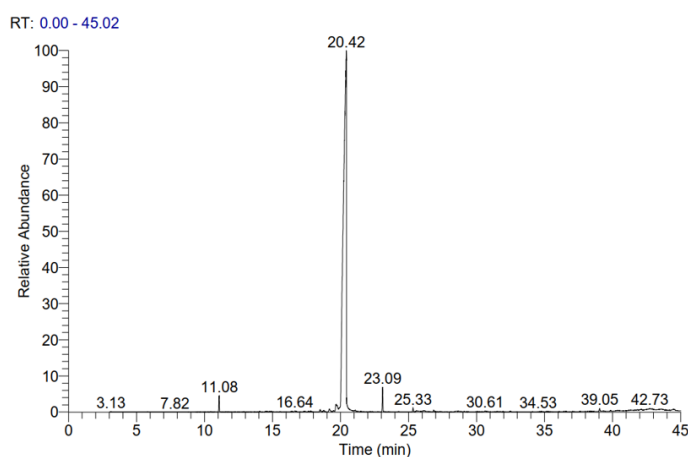
**Table 3** GC–MS analysis of Chemical composition of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss. & Dur. essential oils.

Sr No.	Components	RT	RI(DIMS)	Percentage area of the EO from ERR %	Percentage area EO from SMR %	GC–MS = Gas
1	α-Pinene	7.83	934.5	1.68	2.40	
2	Camphene	8.21	947.4	0.14	0.20	
3	β-Pinene	9.15	973.1	0.78	2.20	
4	β-Myrcene	9.87	983.1	0.30	0.56	
5	α-Phellandrene	10.18	999.1	0.10	0.20	
6	3-Carene	10.46	1007.2	1.01	2.16	
7	o-Cymene	10.76	1032	0.06	0.04	
8	D-Limonene	11.16	1023.7	17.57	29.78	
9	Terpinolene	13.19	1079.3	—	0.05	
10	trans-p-Mentha-2,8-dienol	14.06	1107.0	0.05	—	
11	cis- Limonene oxide	14.48	1117.9	0.02	—	
12	trans- Limonene oxide,	14.64	1122.7	0.04	—	
13	trans-Verbenol	14.93	1133.7	0.03	0.03	
14	Verbenone	16.68	1184.4	—	0.02	
15	Isopiperitenol B	16.76	—	0.03	—	
16	L-Perillaldehyde	17.34	—	0.21	—	
17	Cumic aldehyde	17.79	1212.6	0.22	0.12	
18	3-Caren-10-al	18.56	1170.8	0.07	—	
19	Myrtenal	18.57	1170.8	—	0.04	
20	Perrilla aldehyde	19.14	1252.1	74.71	58.84	
21	Bornyl acetate	19.81	1270.2	0.06	0.09	
22	Perilla alcohol	20.10	1282.1	0.62	0.53	
23	Methyl perillate	23.10	—	1.48	1.56	
24	β-Copaene	23.49	1427.3	—	0.04	
25	Caryophyllene	24.31	1419.3	—	0.02	
26	γ-Decalactone	24.83	1426.9	0.17	0.12	
27	β-Copaene	26.10	1427.3	—	0.06	
28	Curcumene	26.16	1471.4	0.02	—	
29	Bicyclogermacrene	26.57	1489.8	—	0.08	
30	β-Cadinene	27.40	1513.9	—	0.04	
31	D-Germacren-4-ol	28.72	1568.3	—	0.03	
32	R-Turmerone	30.87	—	0.05	—	
33	α-Cadinol	30.79	1640.2	—	0.08	
34	Shyobunol	31.72	1592.8	0.05	0.46	
35	Chamazulene	32.51	1710.0	0.04	0.08	
<b>The total identified components</b>				<b>99.51</b>	<b>99.83</b>	
<b>Monoterpenoids hydrocarbons</b>				<b>21.68</b>	<b>37.67</b>	
<b>Oxygenated monoterpenoids</b>				<b>77.71</b>	<b>61.35</b>	
<b>Sesquiterpenoids hydrocarbons</b>				<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.24</b>	
<b>Sesquiterpenoids monoterpenoids</b>				<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.57</b>	

chromatography–mass spectroscopy. RT = Retention time. RI= retention indices in DIMS—dimethylsilicone as Stationary phase.



**Figure 4** The IR spectra of the hemisynthetic perilla alcohol (a)



**Figure 5** The chromatogram of the hemisynthetic perilla alcohol (a)

**Table 4** GC–MS analysis of EO after reduction with NaBH<sub>4</sub>.

Components	RT	RSI	Percentage area %	Chemical structure
<b>Perilla alcohol</b>	20.42	935	94.65	

GC–MS = Gas chromatography–mass spectroscopy. RT = Retention time. RSI: The Reverse Match Factor (RSI > 600)

The disproportionation of Perillaldehyde reaction was done in a strongly basic solution. A white precipitate was obtained and the solid was washed with Hexane and diethyl ether to remove the impurities. The yield was 42.85%. The m.p was confirmed (60°C) then analyzed by IR: 3400, 2917, 2842, 1692, 1417 et 1229 cm<sup>-1</sup> (see figure 6). according to the spectrum the strong broad band around 3300 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to OH-stretching of carboxylic acid and the strong band around 1692 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to CO stretching of carboxylic acid and the medium band around 1417 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to OH-bending.

The obtained product was analyzed also by GC-MS. The comparison of the mass spectra obtained for the sample and those of the built-in libraries NIST, showed the match of the samples chromatogram with the perillaldehyde chromatogram (b) (see figure 7).

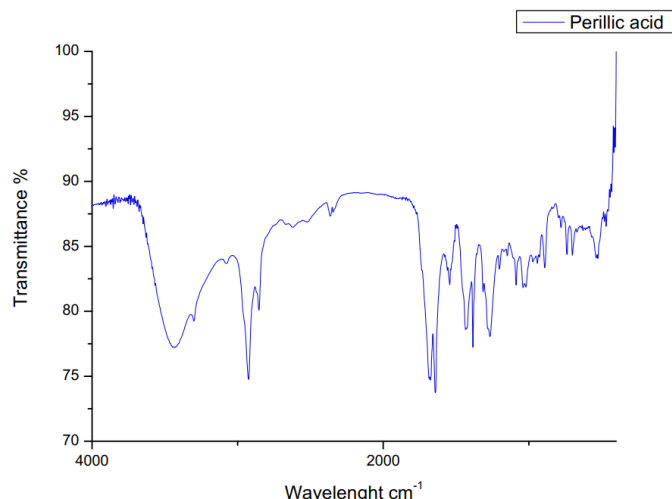


Figure 6 The IR spectra of the hemisynthetic perillaldehyde (b)

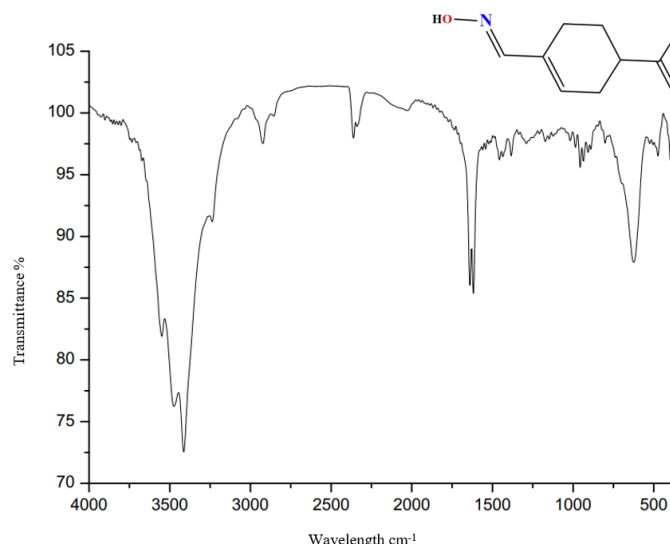


Figure 8 the IR spectra of the hemisynthetic perillartine (c)

### CONCLUSION

The molecular docking study of the three compounds Perilla alcohol, perillaldehyde, and perillartine has shown significant anticancer activity against lung cancer. Considering their good binding affinities with lung cancer receptors and their good oral bioavailability as good absorbed drugs according to Lipinski's rule. Therefore, those compounds could be used in the pharmaceutical industries against lung cancer.

The objective of the comparative study on the chemical composition of *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* Coss, essential oils from two regions in Morocco Errachidia and Smara, was to determine which essential oil could be exploited in the medicinal and pharmaceutical industry as a potent source of perillaldehyde. The results of this study showed that the essential oil from the Errachidia region was obtained with a higher yield of 4.26% and GC-MS analysis of both essential oils reveals that the EO from the Errachidia region is very abundant in perillaldehyde with a percentage of 74.71%. The semisynthetic compounds perilla alcohol, perillaldehyde, and perillartine were obtained with good yields. Therefore, using semi-synthesis instead of bioconversion is more rentable.

At the end of this study, *Ammodaucus leucotrichus* essential oil can be recommended as valuable starting material leading to active molecules with anticancer and properties and exploited in the medicinal industry.

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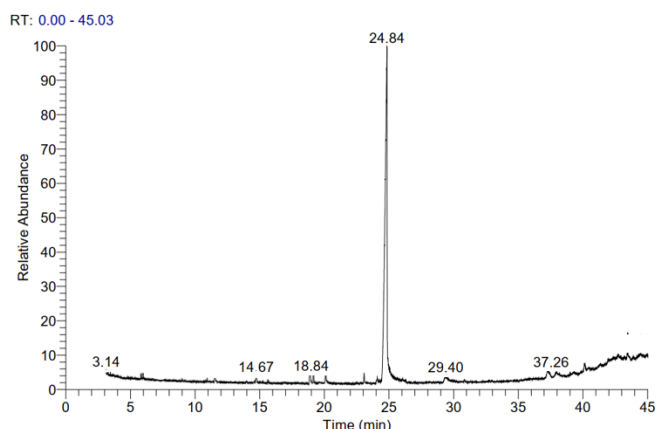


Figure 7 The chromatogram of the hemisynthetic perillaldehyde (b)

Table 5 GC-MS analysis of Perillaldehyde.

Components	RT	RSI	Percentage area %	Chemical structure
Perillaldehyde	24.85	927	71.2	

GC-MS = Gas chromatography–mass spectroscopy. RT = Retention time. RSI: The Reverse Match Factor (RSI > 600).

The reaction of perillaldehyde oxime offered a white solid with a yield of 92.85% that was purified. The purity of recrystallized oxime has been confirmed by the melt point and the IR spectra and the physical data of Perillartine (c): m.p 102°C. IR: 3427, 2917, 2361, 1643, 630 cm<sup>-1</sup> (see figure 8). according to the spectrum the strong broad band around 3400 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to OH-stretching of oxime and the medium band around 1643 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to CN-stretching of oxime.

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