

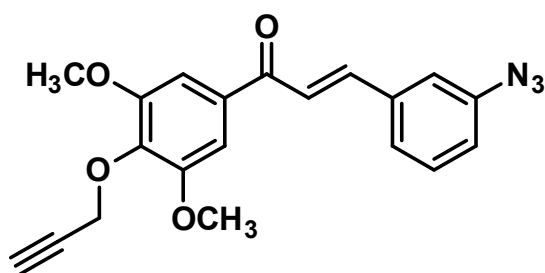
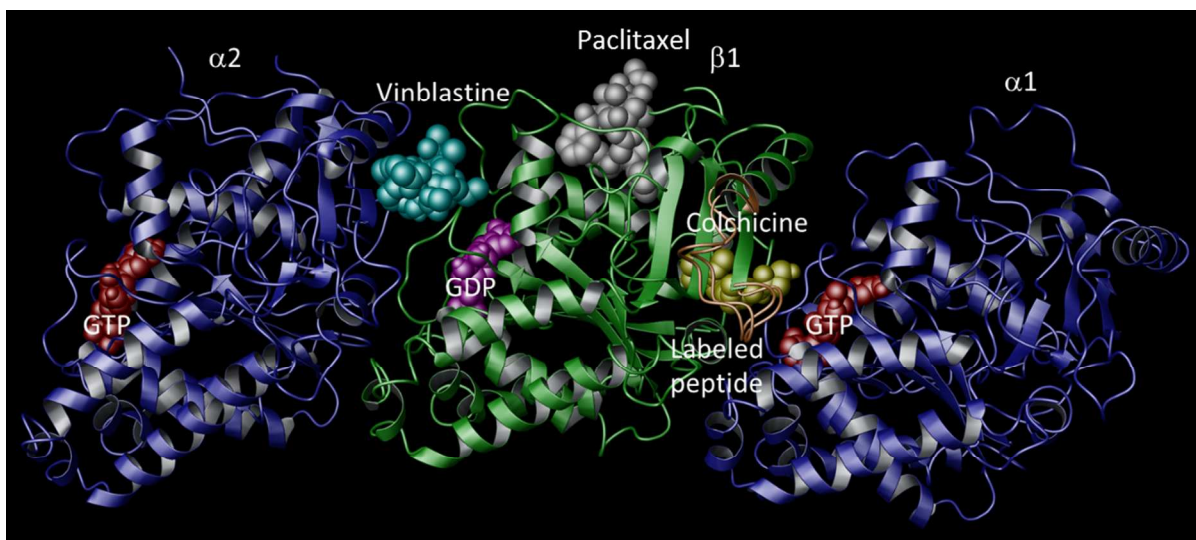
Supporting Information for

**An indole-chalcone inhibits multidrug-resistant cancer
cell growth by targeting microtubules**

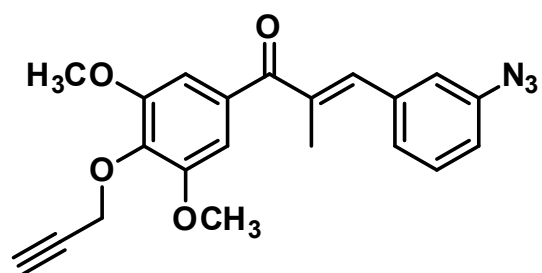
Materials

All purchased reagents and solvents were used without further purification. Silica gel chromatography was performed on Whatman silica gel 60 Å (230–400 mesh). Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra (^1H and ^{13}C) were recorded on a spectrometer (Bruker Ascend 400) and calibrated using the deuterated solvent residual as an internal reference. High-resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS) was performed using a Q-TOF micro mass spectrometer. Purities of the compounds were analyzed by HPLC (Agilent 1100) using an ODS-A column (YMC Pack; 10 × 250 mm, 5 μm) with methanol:H₂O (100:0 to 80:20 over 20 min and 80:20 thereafter) as the mobile phase with a flow rate of 2 mL/min. The separation was monitored at wavelengths of 254 and 365 nm. The purities of all final compounds were higher than 95%.

Human A549, A549/T, A549/DDP, HCT-116, HCT-116/L, HL60, HL60/DOX, K562, K562/HHT300, CCRF-CEM, and CCRF-CEM/VLB100 cells were authenticated via DNA analysis by Genetica DNA Laboratories (Cincinnati, OH, USA) or by the University of Arizona Genomics Core. Cells were cultured following our standard protocols and tested monthly for *Mycoplasma* contamination. De-identified mobilized peripheral blood (MPB) was obtained after informed consent according to protocols approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board.



Negative Probe (1)
 $GI_{50} = 28600 \pm 2200$ nM



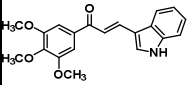
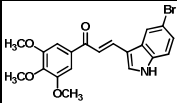
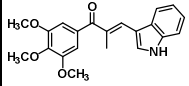
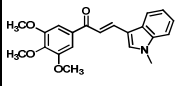
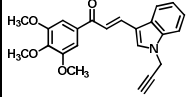
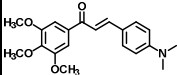
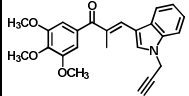
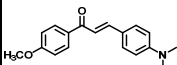
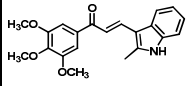
Positive Probe (2)
 $GI_{50} = 380 \pm 10$ nM

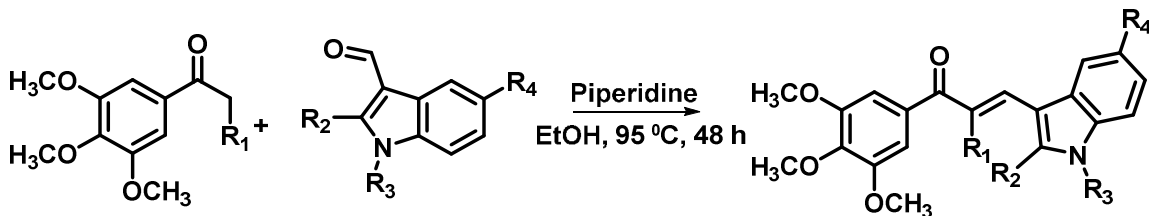
Figure S1. Structural assembly of α - and β -tubulin and its known binding sites for paclitaxel (white), vinblastine (cyan), colchicine (yellow), GDP (red) and GTP (purple) and positive chalcone probe labeled peptide (orange). The structures of probes and their cytotoxicity (GI_{50}) towards A549 human non-small lung adenocarcinoma cell line were provided.

Indole-chalcones and the structure-activity relationship

Based on our previous SAR results ¹ that an α -methyl substitution significantly increased chalcone's cytotoxicity and compound **3** was previously reported as a highly cytotoxic agent ², **FC77** and a few analogs were synthesized with their cytotoxicity determined against A549 human non-small lung adenocarcinoma cancer cell line ^{1, 3-6}. A clear SAR was observed (Table S1). The introduction of an α -methyl substituent significantly increased the cytotoxic potency (two probe with a 75-fold difference ^{1, 6}, **3** and **FC77** with a 14-fold difference, and **5** and **6** with a 30-fold difference). The chalcones with an indole moiety (**3** – **9**) had potent cytotoxicity against A549 cancer cells with the GI₅₀ values in the low nanomolar to low micromolar range. The free 1-amino group of indole is critical to the cytotoxicity as the compounds with 1-amino substitutions showed 40-, 2- and 19-fold loss in potency comparing **3** and **5**, **3** and **9**, and **FC77** and **6**, respectively. A 5-bromo substitution was highly unfavorable to the cytotoxicity (**3** and **8** with a 178-fold difference). A 2-methyl substitution also led to significant loss of cytotoxicity (**5** and **9** with a 15-fold difference). These chalcones with the addition of **10** and **11** were docked into the colchicine-binding site (**10** and **11** were selected in order to cover a wider range of cytotoxicity because they are much less cytotoxic, particularly **11**).

Table S1. The structures and the 48-hour cytotoxicity of the indole chalcones towards A549 human non-small lung adenocarcinoma cell line.

Entry	Structure	A549 GI ₅₀ (nM)	Entry	Structure	A549 GI ₅₀ (nM)
3		38±3	8		6630±570
4 (FC77)		2.7± 0.4	9		77±8
5		1510±210	10 ¹		920± 180
6		50±5	11 ¹		>60000
7		560±32			



Scheme S1. Synthesis of indole-chalcones.

(*E*)-3-(1*H*-indol-3-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**3**)⁷

Recrystallization yield: 10%. ¹H NMR (400MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.71 (1H, br, NH), 8.13 (1H, d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, =CH), 8.00 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.63 (1H, s, Ar-H), 7.55 (1H, d, *J* = 15.2 Hz, =CH), 7.46 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.31 (4H, m, Ar-H), 3.96 (9H, s, 3OCH₃). ¹³C NMR (100MHz, CDCl₃): δ 189.86, 153.10, 138.78, 137.23, 134.44, 130.08, 123.57, 120.54, 117.82, 114.52, 111.99, 105.96, 60.97, 56.40. HRMS (ESI⁺) *m/z* Calculated for C₂₀H₁₉NO₄ 338.1387; Observed 338.1385 (M+H⁺). HPLC Purity: 97.8%, R_t = 35.70 min, UV 254 nm.

Intermediate 1: 1-(prop-2-yn-1-yl)-1*H*-indole-3-carbaldehyde⁸

Recrystallization yield: 38.2%. ¹H NMR (400MHz, CDCl₃): δ 10.03 (1H, s, CHO), 8.34 (1H, dd, *J*₁ = 1.6 Hz, *J*₂ = 8.3 Hz, Ar-H), 7.90 (1H, s, Ar-H), 7.32-7.44 (3H, m, Ar-H), 4.94 (2H, s, CH₂), 2.55 (1H, s, alkynyl-H). ¹³C NMR (100MHz, CDCl₃): δ 184.58, 137.46, 136.80, 125.54, 124.28, 123.30, 123.30, 122.34, 118.70, 109.81, 75.81, 75.57, 36.65.

(*E*)-3-(1-(prop-2-yn-1-yl)-1*H*-indol-3-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**5**)

Recrystallization yield: 28.4%. ^1H NMR (400MHz, CDCl_3): δ 8.09 (1H, d, $J = 15.6$ Hz, =CH), 8.01 (1H, d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, Ar-H), 7.67 (1H, s, Ar-H), 7.52 (2H, m, =CH), 7.30-7.39 (4H, m, Ar-H), 4.93 (2H, s, CH_2), 3.97 (6H, s, 2OCH_3), 3.94 (3H, s, OCH_3), 2.51 (1H, s, alkynyl-H). ^{13}C NMR (100MHz, CDCl_3): δ 189.66, 153.10, 142.00, 138.22, 137.18, 134.43, 132.38, 123.48, 121.98, 121.68, 120.82, 117.75, 113.77, 110.23, 105.95, 74.85, 60.97, 56.41, 36.30. HRMS (ESI^+) m/z Calculated for $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_4$ 376.1543; Observed 376.1542 ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$). HPLC Purity: 97.7%, $R_t = 14.33$ min, UV 254 nm.

(*E*)-3-(1*H*-indol-3-yl)-2-methyl-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**6**)

Recrystallization yield: 4.3%. ^1H NMR (400MHz, CDCl_3): δ 7.66 (2H, s, =CH, Ar-H), 7.58 (1H, d, $J = 7.3$ Hz, Ar-H), 7.45 (1H, d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, Ar-H), 7.36 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.16-7.23 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.03 (2H, s, Ar-H), 4.98 (2H, s, CH_2), 3.95 (6H, s, 2OCH_3), 3.90 (3H, s, OCH_3), 2.51 (1H, s, alkynyl-H), 2.34 (3H, s, CH_3). ^{13}C NMR (100MHz, CDCl_3): δ 197.84, 152.78, 140.75, 135.54, 134.51, 134.02, 131.65, 128.77, 128.73, 123.32, 121.25, 118.77, 112.72, 109.80, 106.93, 74.59, 60.98, 56.26, 36.39, 15.46. HRMS (ESI^+) m/z Calculated for $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{23}\text{NO}_4$ 390.1700; Observed 390.1697 ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$). HPLC Purity: 95.50%, $R_t = 9.35$ min, UV 365 nm.

(*E*)-3-(2-methyl-1*H*-indol-3-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**7**)

Recrystallization yield: 7.2%. ^1H NMR (400MHz, CDCl_3): δ 8.37 (1H, br, NH), 8.17 (1H, d, $J = 15.4$ Hz, =CH), 7.95 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz, Ar-H), 7.54 (1H, d, $J = 15.4$ Hz, =CH), 7.37 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.33 (2H, s, Ar-H), 7.29 (1H, m, Ar-H), 3.97 (6H, s, 2OCH_3), 3.95 (3H, s, OCH_3), 2.64 (3H, s, CH_3). ^{13}C NMR (100MHz, $\text{DMSO}-d_6$): δ 188.31, 153.23, 144.42, 141.56, 138.12, 136.53, 134.76, 126.29, 122.50, 121.64, 120.55, 114.75, 111.92,

109.60, 105.97, 60.59, 56.51, 12.41. HRMS (ESI⁺) m/z Calculated for C₂₁H₂₁NO₄ 352.1543; Observed 352.1543 (M+H⁺). HPLC Purity: 98.5%, R_t = 17.91 min, UV 254 nm.

(E)-3-(5-bromo-1*H*-indol-3-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**8**)

Recrystallization yield: 15.6%. ¹H NMR (400MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.69 (1H, br, NH), 8.13 (1H, s, Ar-H), 8.04 (1H, d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, =CH), 7.62-7.63 (1H, s, Ar-H), 7.51 (1H, d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, =CH), 7.41 (1H, d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, Ar-H), 7.33 (3H, m, Ar-H), 3.97 (6H, s, 2OCH₃), 3.95 (3H, s, OCH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 189.73, 153.32, 142.33, 137.83, 135.93, 134.31, 130.51, 126.64, 123.55, 118.72, 115.30, 114.27, 113.46, 103.10, 61.15, 56.53. HRMS (ESI⁺) m/z Calculated for C₂₀H₁₈BrNO₄ 416.0492; Observed 416.0492 (M+H⁺). HPLC Purity: 96.4%, R_t = 37.92 min, UV 254 nm.

(E)-3-(1-methyl-1*H*-indol-3-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**9**)⁷

Recrystallization yield: 54.1%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.06 (1H, d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, =CH), 7.96 (1H, d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, Ar-H), 7.29 – 7.55 (5H, m, =CH, Ar-H), 7.22 (2H, s, Ar-H), 3.93 (6H, s, 2OCH₃), 3.91 (3H, s, OCH₃), 3.83 (3H, s, CH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 189.81, 153.19, 141.99, 138.75, 138.39, 134.72, 134.62, 126.28, 123.32, 121.72, 120.76, 116.95, 113.09, 110.32, 105.99, 77.58, 77.16, 76.74, 61.10, 56.51, 33.44. HRMS (ESI⁺) m/z Calculated for C₂₁H₂₁NO₄ 352.1543; Observed 352.1543 (M+H⁺). HPLC Purity: 95.1%, R_t = 9.23 min, UV 254 nm.

Docking and molecular modeling

The positive probe was docked into the colchicine binding site of tubulin (PDB entry: 1SA0) using Schrodinger Glide package with no constraint (Coordinate, X: 40.9, Y: 52.51, Z: -9.03). As shown in Fig. S1, the azide group of the positive probe is within 2.2Å and 2.5Å to the backbone oxygen and the amide sidechain atoms of N349 of the labeled peptide. Using the same method, eleven chalcone compounds (compounds **1-11**) with a wide range of cytotoxicity were docked into the colchicine binding site of tubulin (PDB entry: 1SA0). Their best binding modes were obtained and imported into the atom-based QSAR panel ⁹. The model was generated by Schrodinger Phase package using default parameters. The GI₅₀ and predicted activity values were presented in units of $-\log$ [concentration, μM]. As shown in Fig. S3, the predicted activity and the GI₅₀ showed a nice correlation with a R² value of 0.70.

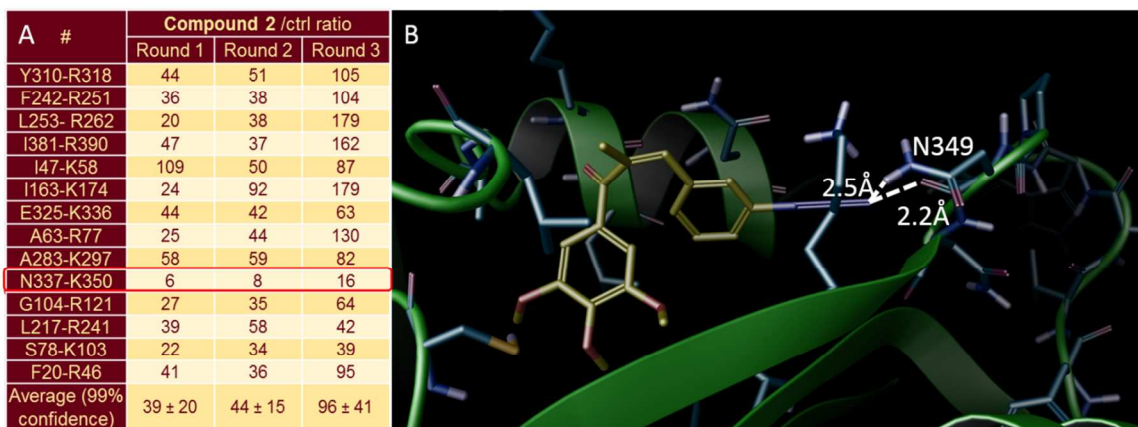


Figure S2. (A) Proteomic study suggested the colchicine binding site as the target for the positive chalcone probe ^{1,6}. (B) Molecular modelling study of this probe showed that the azide group is within 2.2Å and 2.5Å to the backbone oxygen and the amide sidechain atoms of N349 of the labeled peptide.

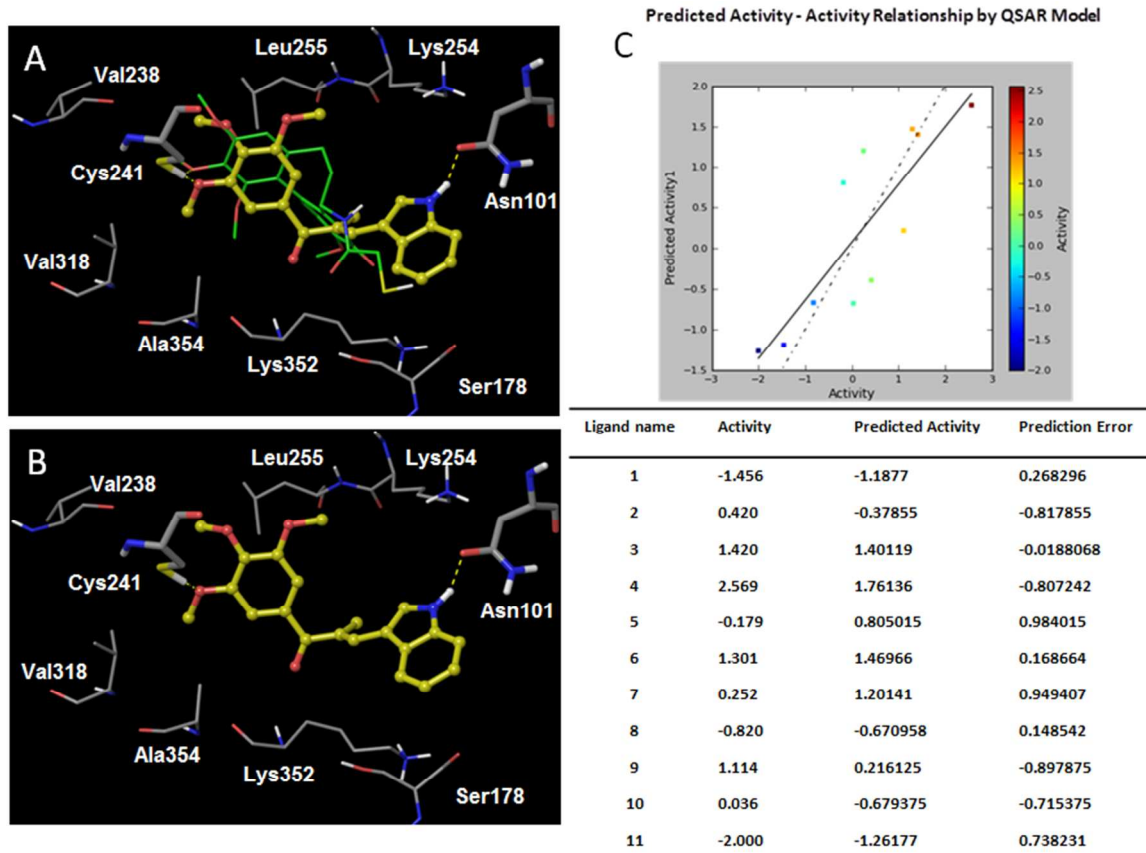


Figure S3. Docking studies of **FC77** with tubulin: (A) Superposition of the docked conformation of **FC77** and the original ligand of 1SA0 (colchicine); (B) Predicted binding mode of **FC77** and tubulin. **FC77** was presented in yellow carbons, the original ligand of 1SA0 was in green carbons, the tubulin was in gray carbons with representative amino acids labeled. The nitrogen and oxygen were presented in blue and red, respectively. The hydrogen bonds were labeled in yellow dash line. (C) An atom-based QSAR model was generated by Schrodinger Phase package. The GI_{50} (activity in the table) and predicted activity values were presented in units of $-\log$ [concentration, μM]. The activity value of compound **11** with a $GI_{50} > 60 \mu\text{M}$ was presented as -2.0.

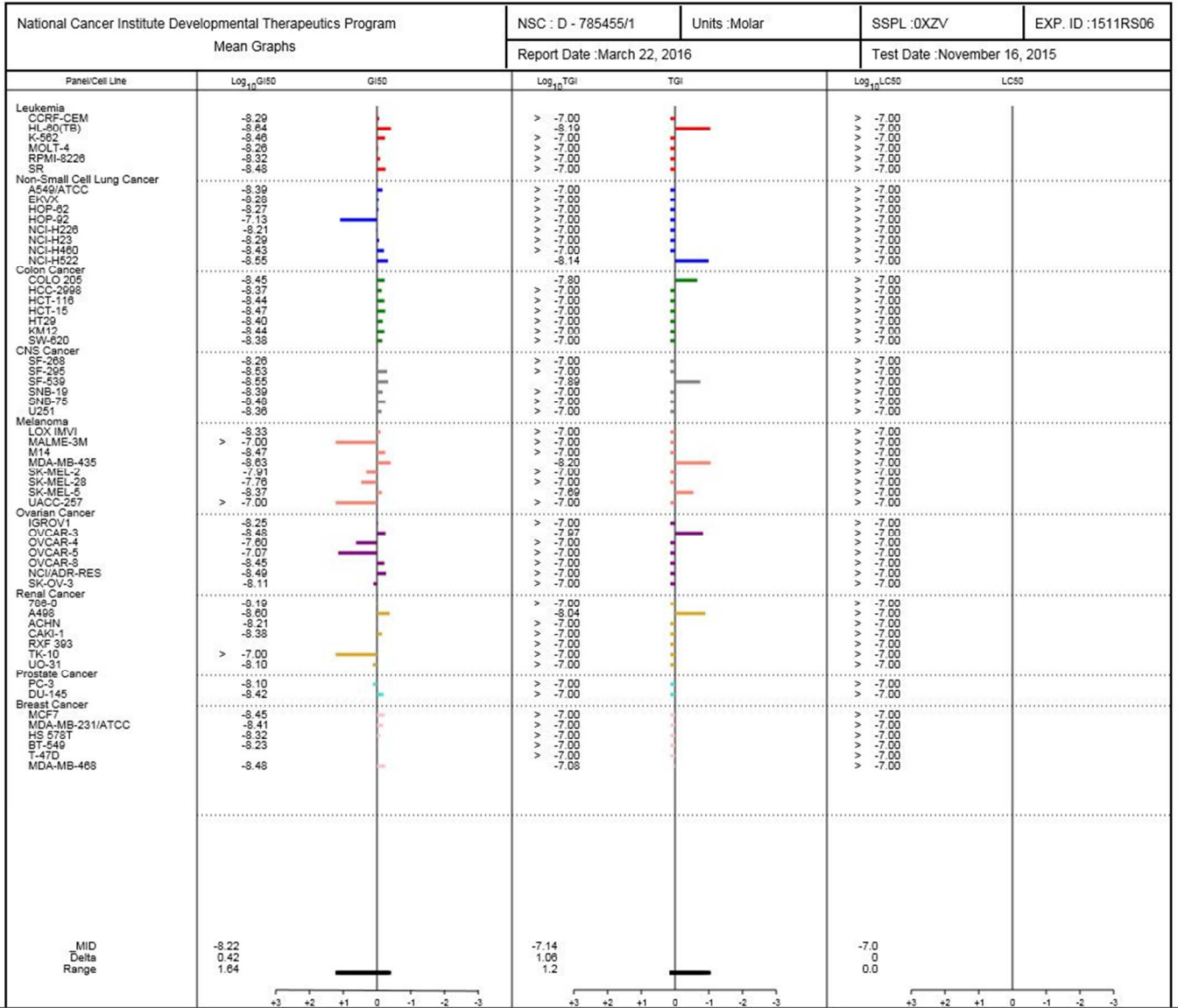


Figure S4. Original NCI-60 data. The Seed NSC of FC77 is D-785455/1.

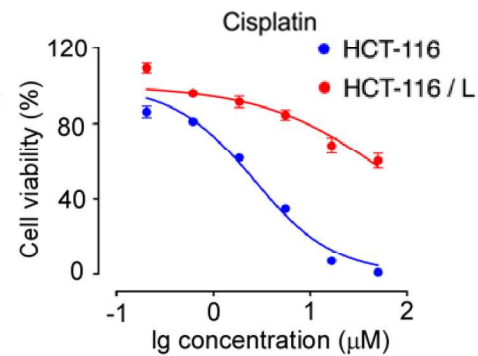
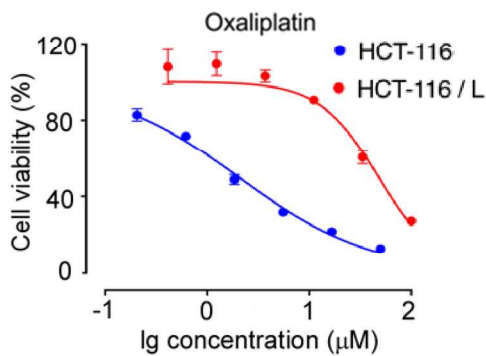
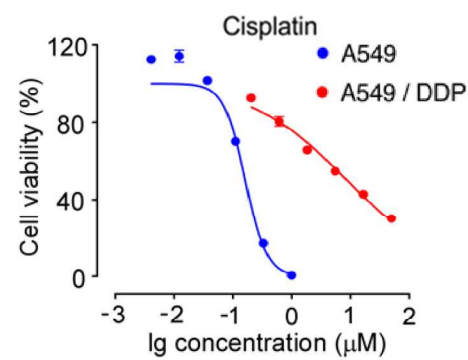
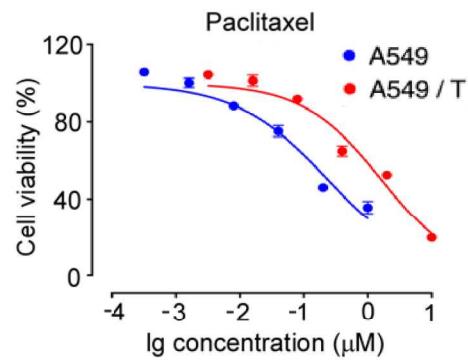
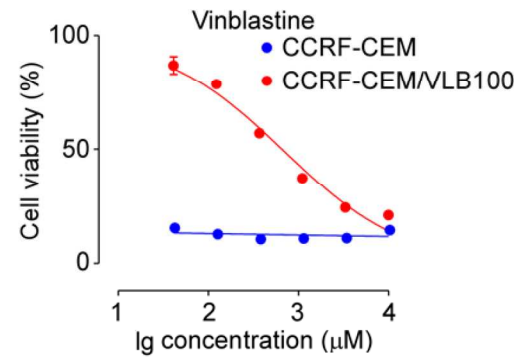
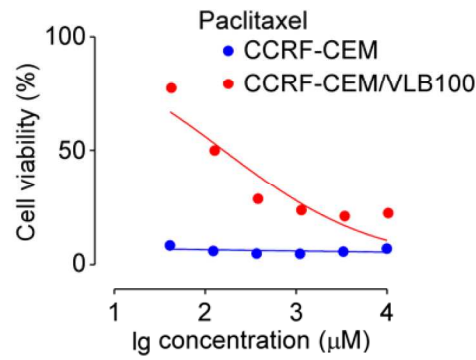
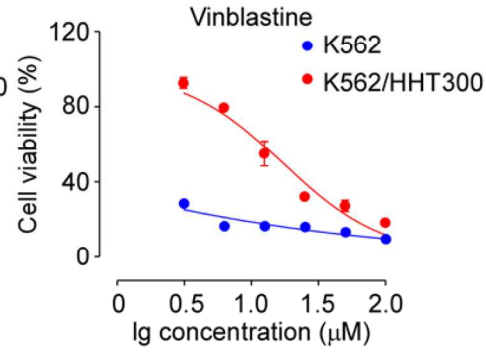
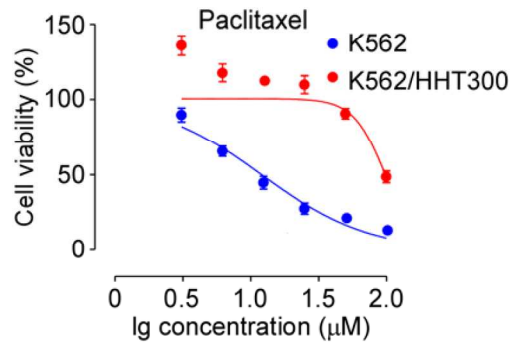
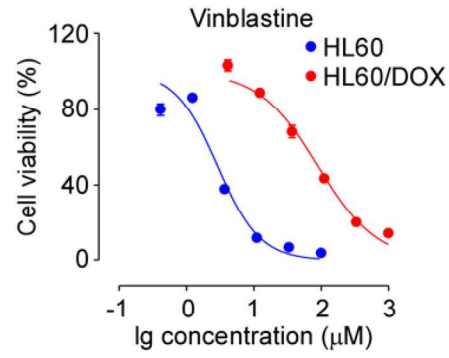
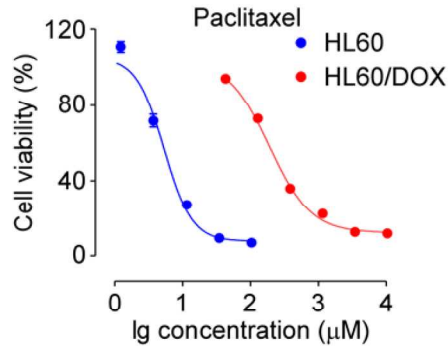


Figure S5. Characterization of the multi-drug resistant phenotype of parental and drug-resistant cancer cells.

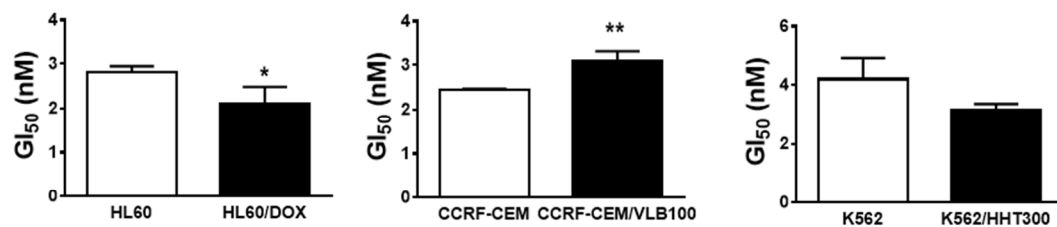


Figure S6. Characterization of the cytotoxicity of combretastatin A-4 towards the three multi-drug resistant leukemia cell lines in comparison to their parental cancer cell lines.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

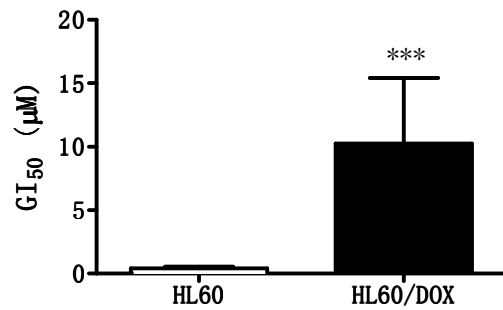
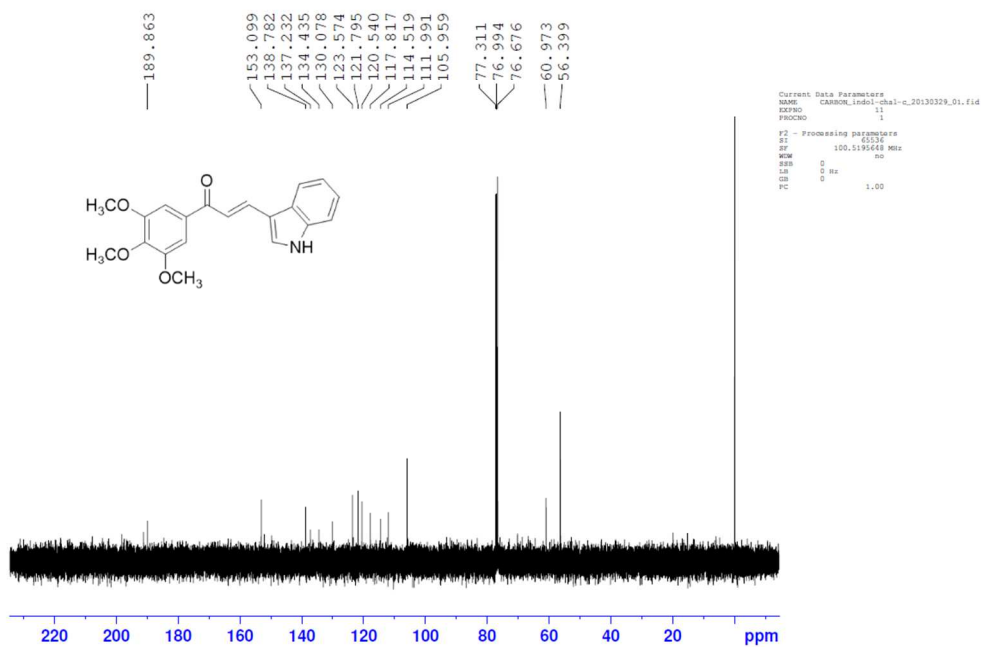
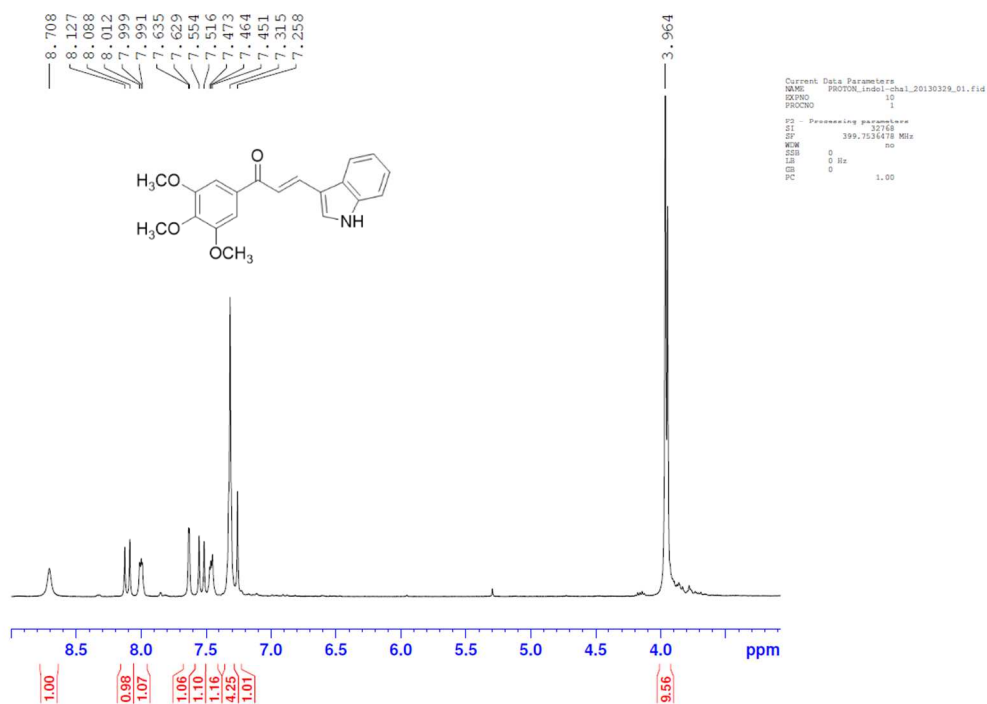
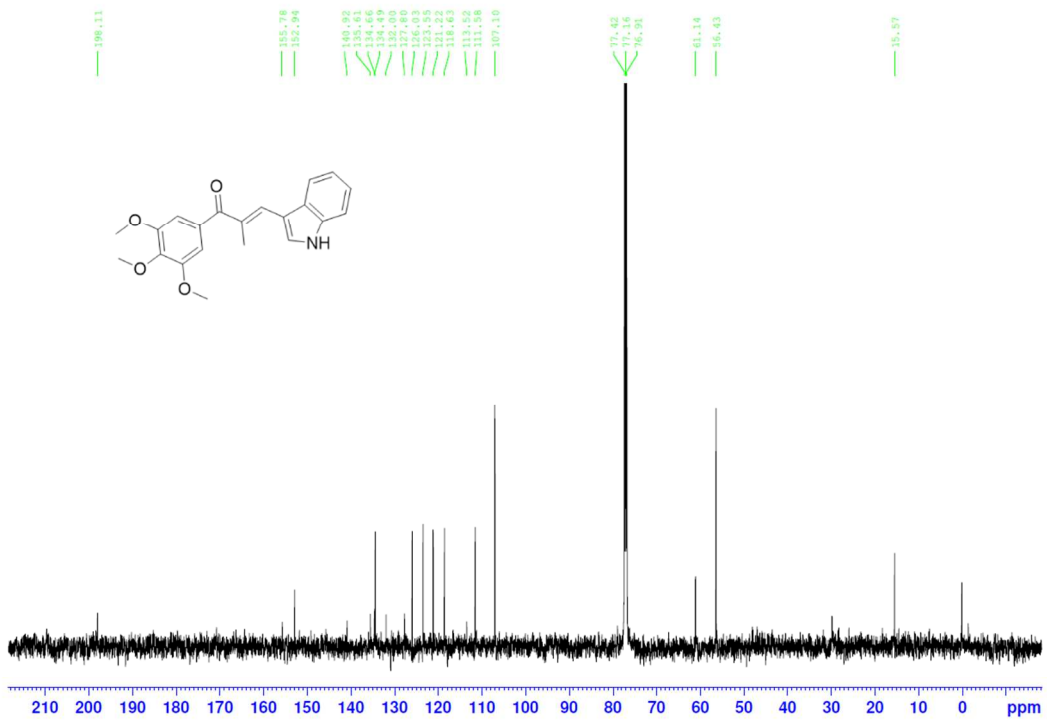
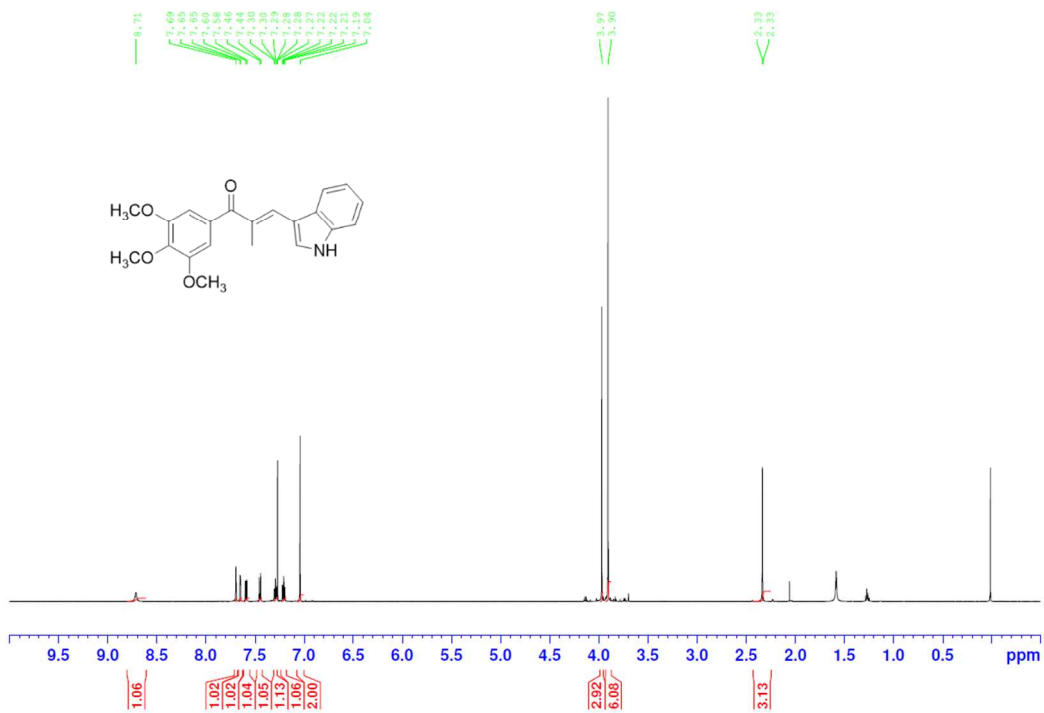
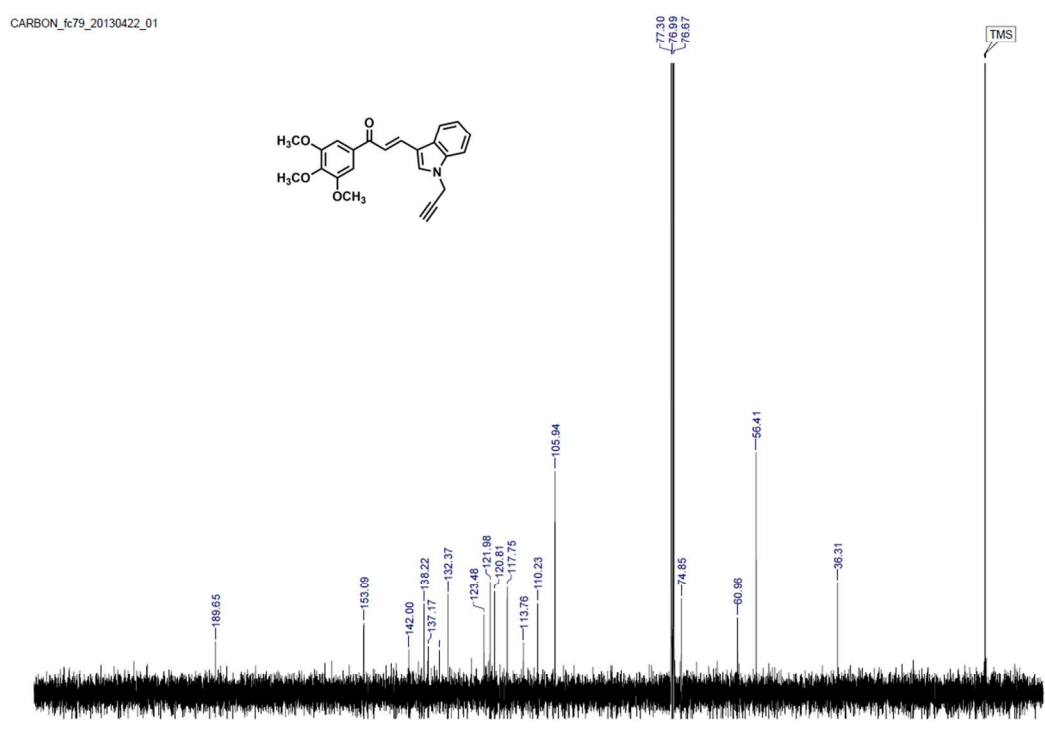
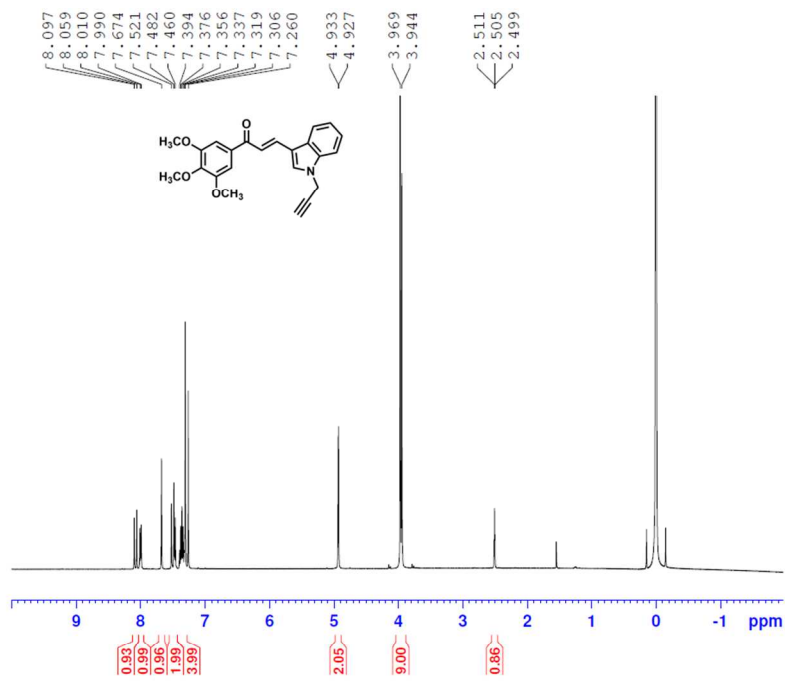


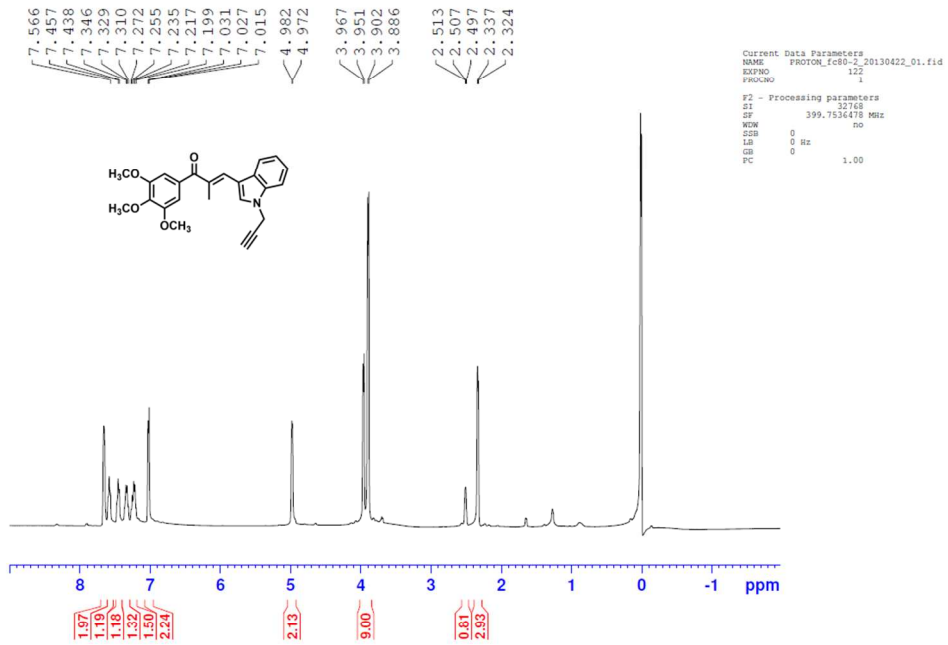
Figure S7. Characterization of the cytotoxicity of colchicine towards the HL60 and HL60/DOX. *** $p < 0.001$.

¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR

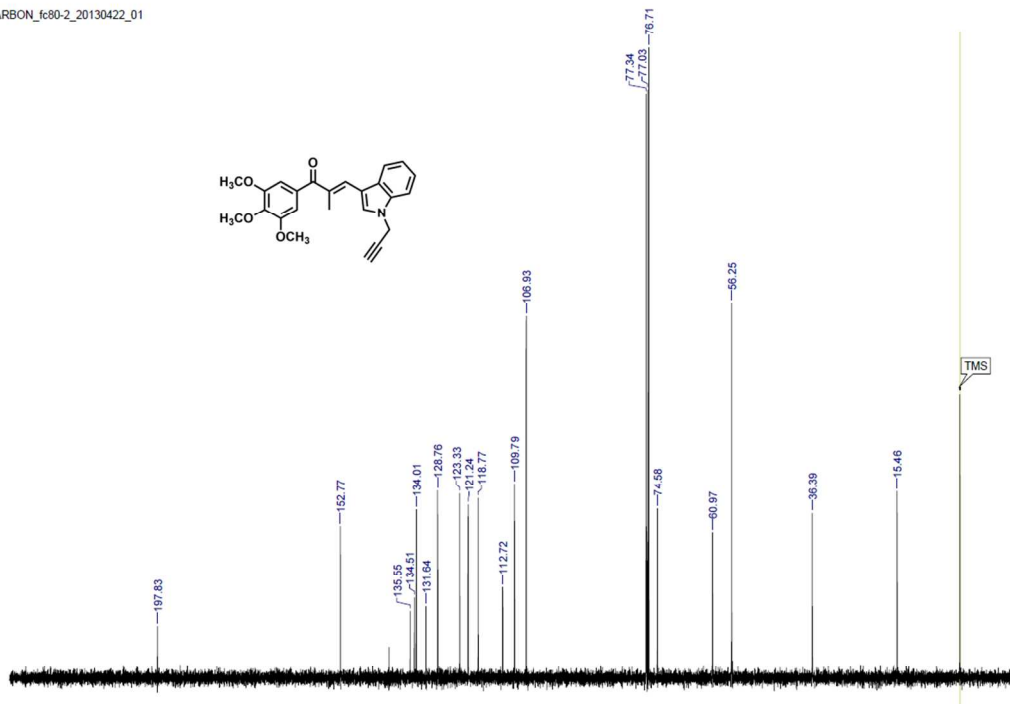


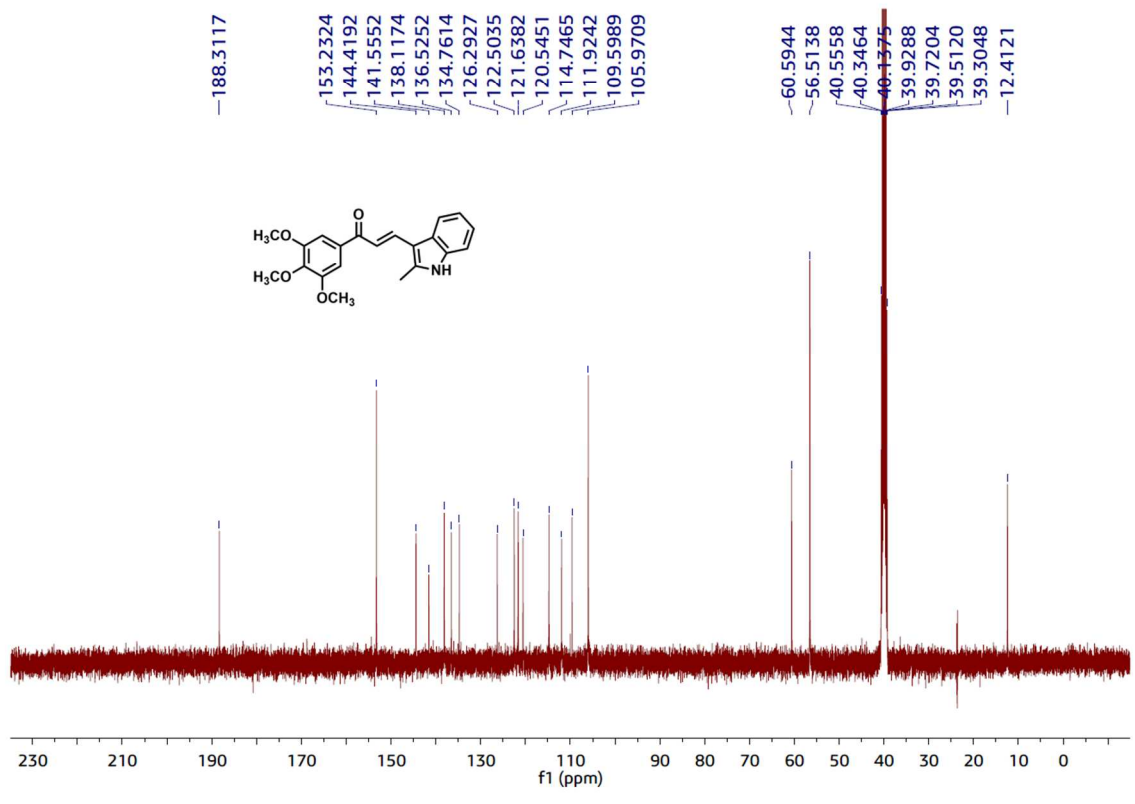
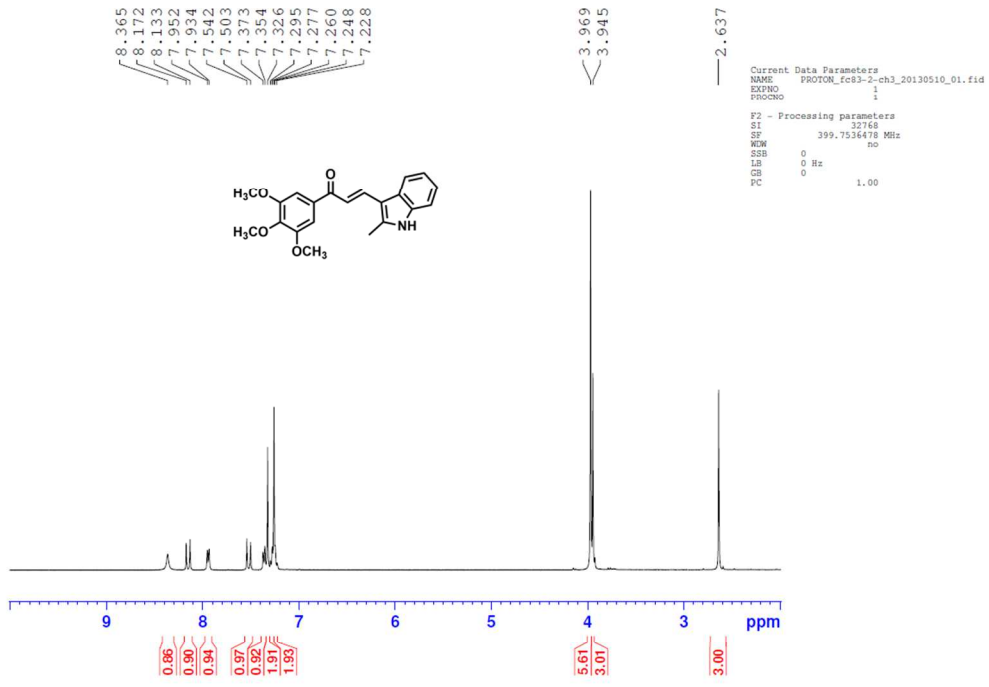


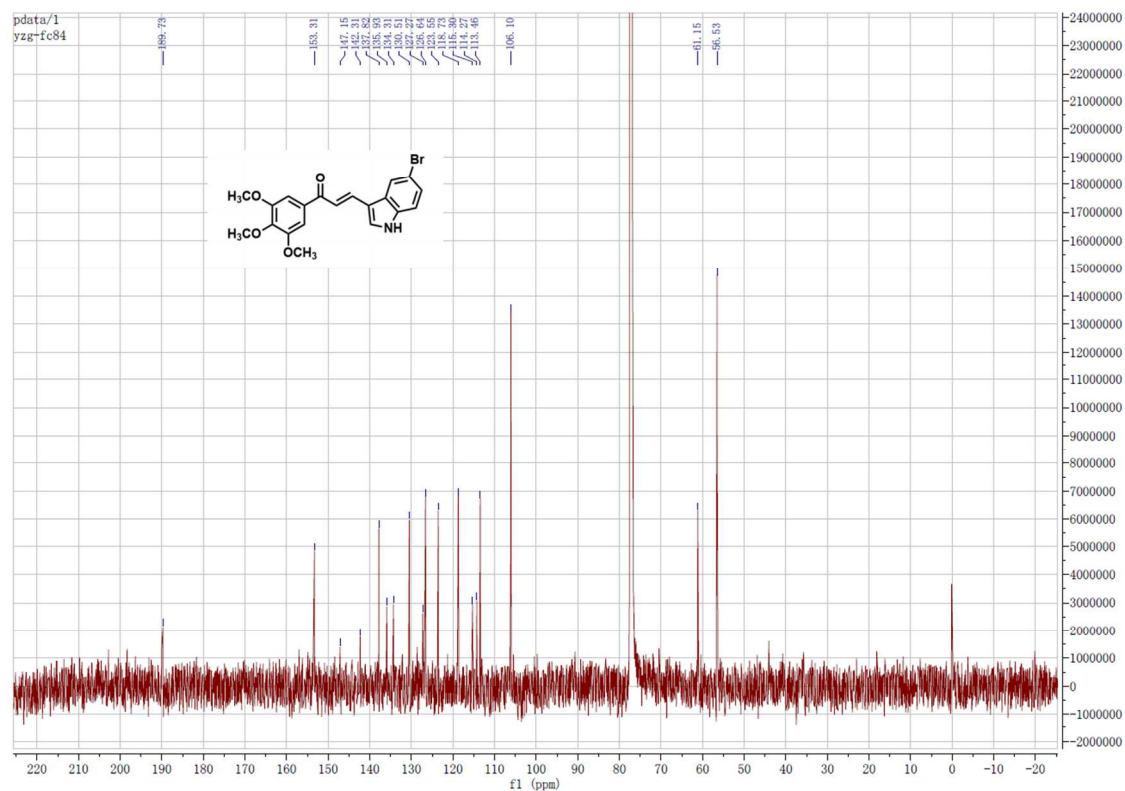
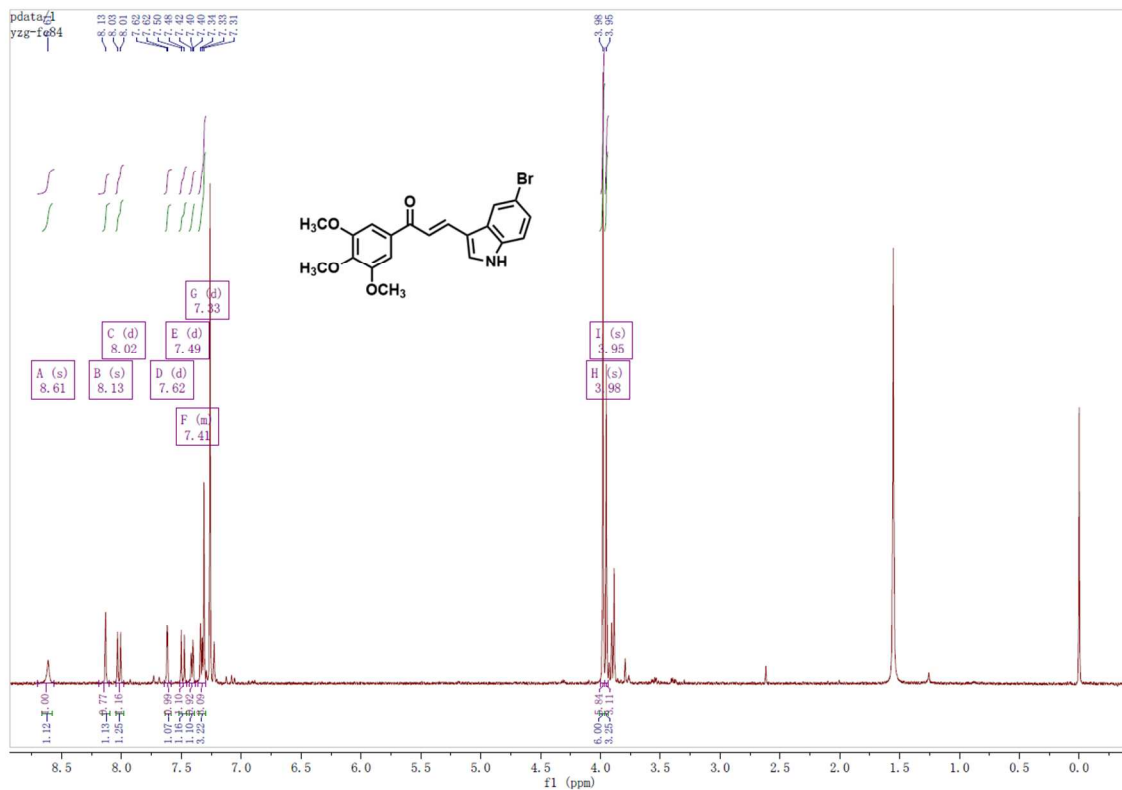


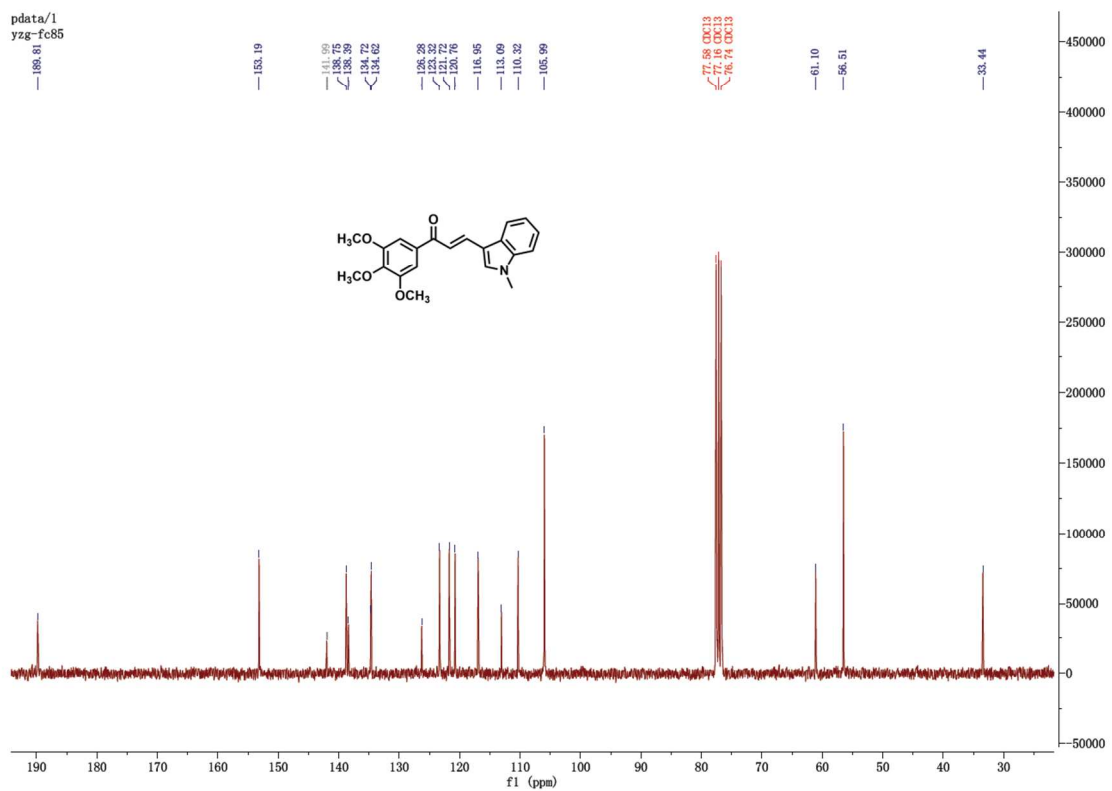
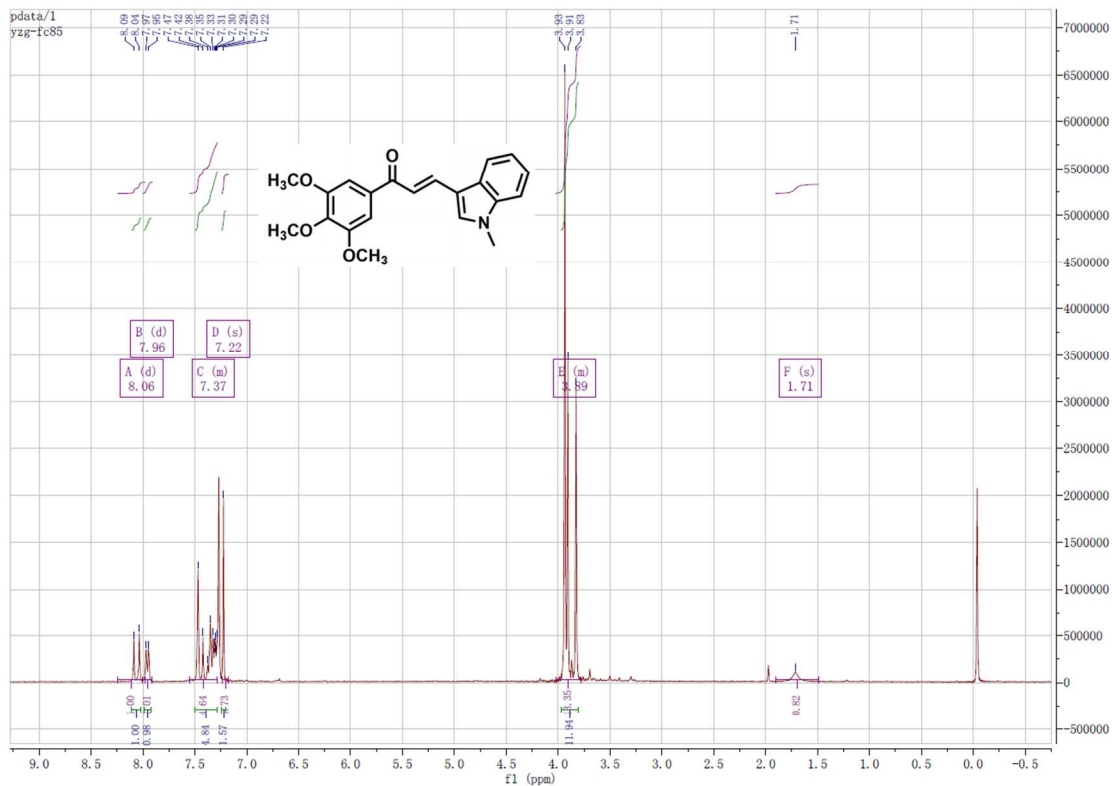


CARBON_fc80-2_20130422_01









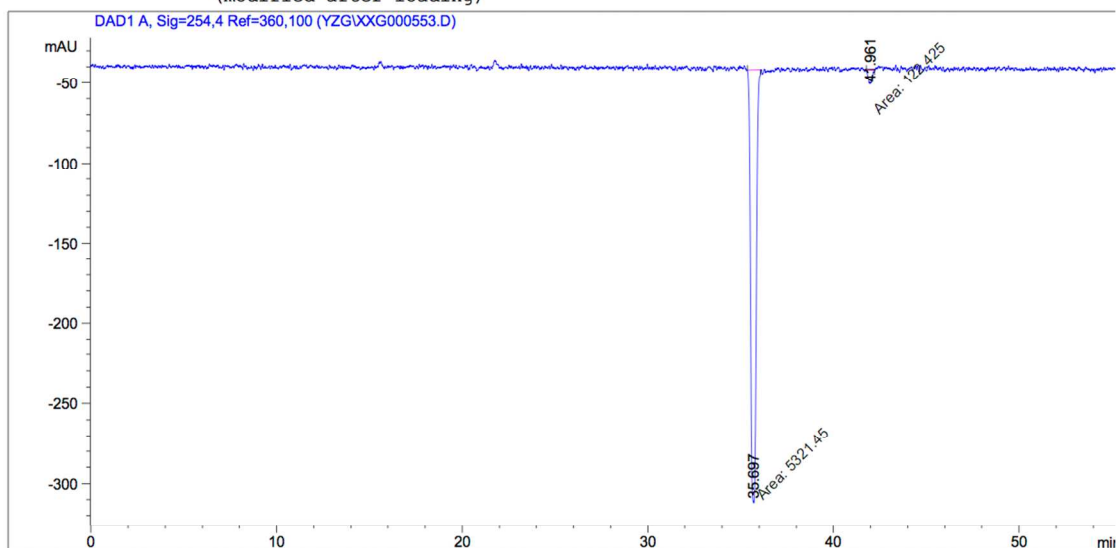
HPLC purity

Compound 3

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Sample Name: Fc58

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Analysis Method: D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M
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Area Percent Report

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Sorted By      : Signal
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Dilution       : 1.0000
Sample Amount  : 1.00000 [ng/ul] (not used in calc.)
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs
```

Signal 1: DAD1 A, Sig=254,4 Ref=360,100

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	35.697	PP N	0.3284	5321.45215	270.08963	97.7512
2	41.961	MP N	0.2300	122.42458	8.87006	2.2488

Totals : 5443.87673 278.95969

*** End of Report ***

Compound 4

Data File D:\JACK\YZG\XXG000553.D

Sample Name: Fc77

=====
Acq. Operator : Yzg

Location : Vial 1

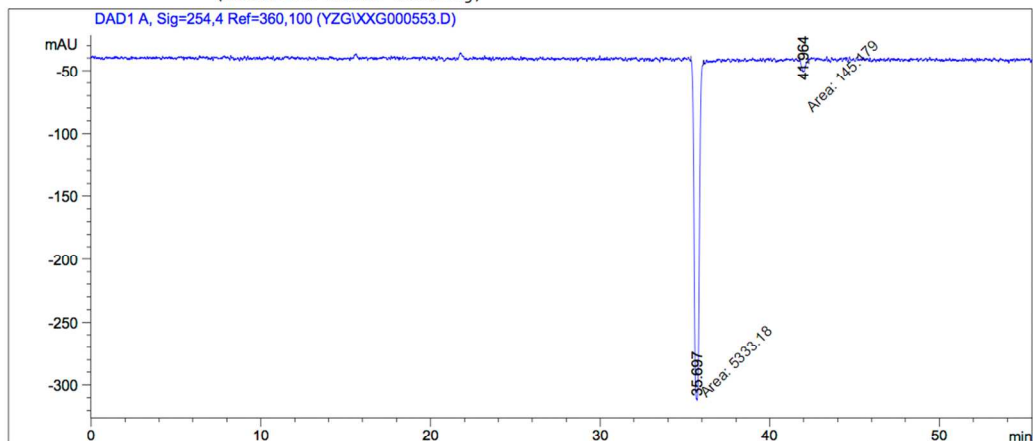
Injection Date : 11-Mar-17, 14:28:35

Acq. Method : YIZHE SUN.M

Analysis Method : D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M

Last changed : 3/15/2017 8:27:57 PM by wzl

(modified after loading)



=====
Area Percent Report
=====

Sorted By : Signal
Multiplier : 1.0000
Dilution : 1.0000
Sample Amount : 1.00000 [ng/ul] (not used in calc.)
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs

Signal 1: DAD1 A, Sig=254,4 Ref=360,100

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	35.697	MP N	0.3288	5333.17773	270.36365	97.3500
2	41.964	PM N	0.2561	145.17870	9.44740	2.6500

Totals : 5478.35643 279.81105

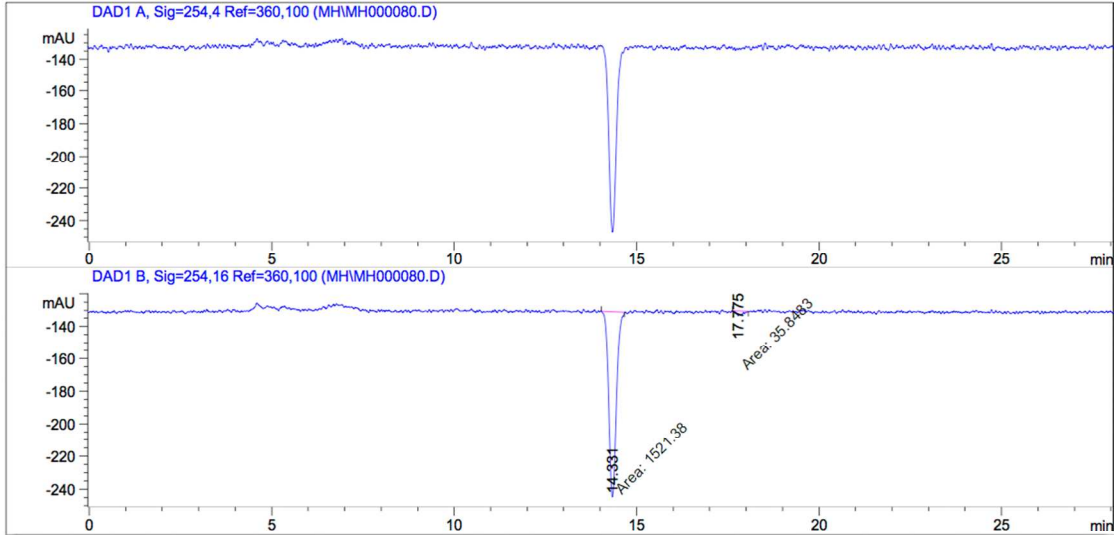
=====
*** End of Report ***

Compound 5

Data File D:\JACK\MH\MH000080.D

Sample Name: Fc 79

=====
Acq. Operator : MH
Location : Vial 1
Injection Date : 25-May-17, 16:43:42
Method : D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M
Sample Info : 28ACN



=====
Area Percent Report
=====

Sorted By : Signal
Multiplier : 1.0000
Dilution : 1.0000
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs

Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	14.331	PP N	0.2231	1521.38330	113.63955	97.6979
2	17.775	MM N	0.2116	35.84830	2.82298	2.3021

Totals : 1557.23161 116.46253

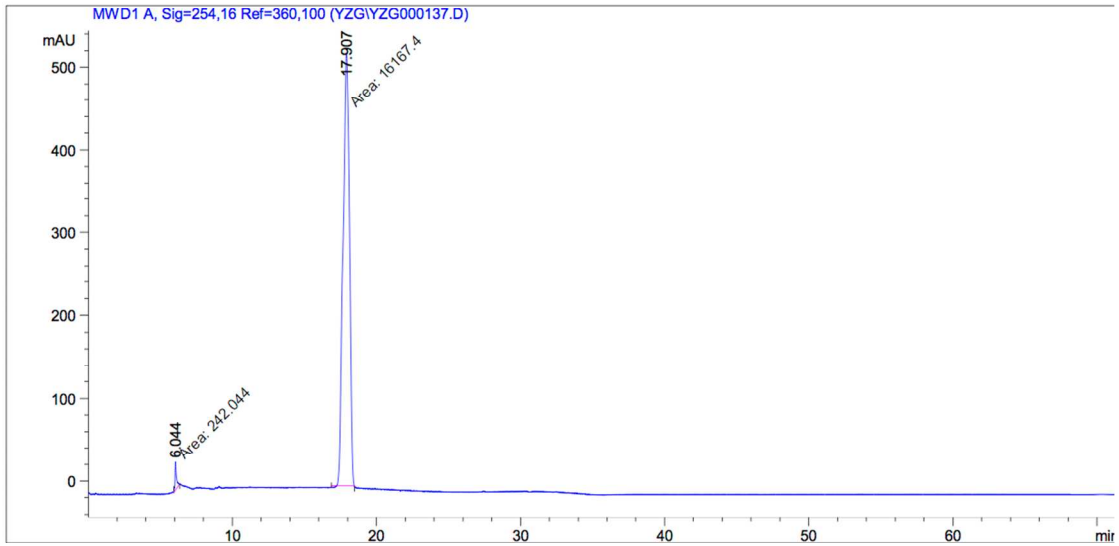
=====
*** End of Report ***

Compound 7

Data File D:\JACK\YZG\YZG000137.D

Sample Name: Fc83

```
=====
Acq. Operator   : YZG
Acq. Instrument : LC 1200                      Location : Vial 1
Injection Date  : 3/30/2017 10:40:12 AM
Acq. Method     : D:\JACK\YIZHESUN.M
Last changed    : 3/30/2017 10:39:23 AM by YZG
                  (modified after loading)
Analysis Method : D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M
Sample Info     : 25%
```



Fraction Information

Fraction collection off

No Fractions found.

Area Percent Report

```
Sorted By      : Signal
Multiplier     : 1.0000
Dilution       : 1.0000
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs
Signal 1: MWD1 A, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100
```

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	6.044	MM	0.1161	242.04439	34.73186	1.4750
2	17.907	MM	0.5147	1.61674e4	523.52673	98.5250

Totals : 1.64094e4 558.25859

*** End of Report ***

Compound 8

Data File D:\JACK\YZG\GSH_1000030.D

Sample Name: FC84

=====
Acq. Operator : YZG

Location : Vial 1

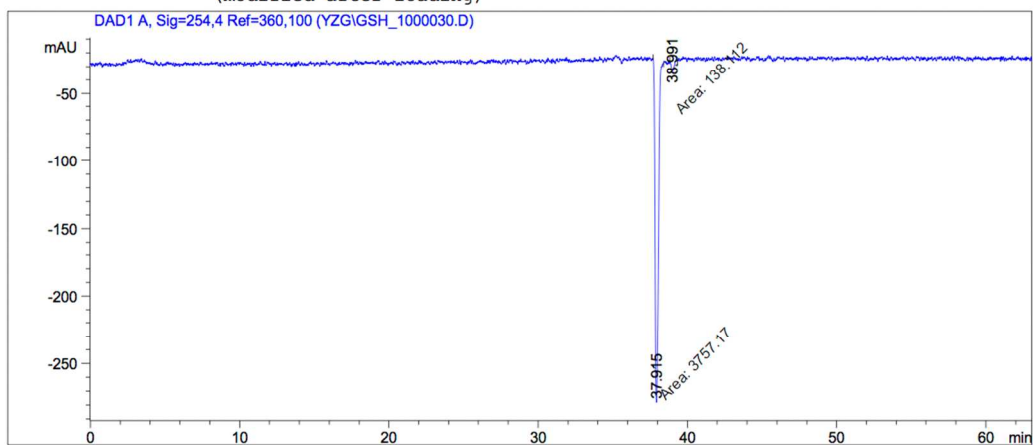
Injection Date : 11-Mar-17, 14:28:35

Acq. Method : YIZHE SUN.M

Analysis Method : D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M

Last changed : 3/15/2017 8:27:57 PM by wzl

(modified after loading)



=====
Area Percent Report
=====

Sorted By : Signal
Multiplier : 1.0000
Dilution : 1.0000
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs

Signal 1: DAD1 A, Sig=254,4 Ref=360,100

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	37.915	PP N	0.2475	3757.17114	252.97966	96.4544
2	38.991	PM N	0.2627	138.11179	8.76226	3.5456

Totals : 3895.28293 261.74192

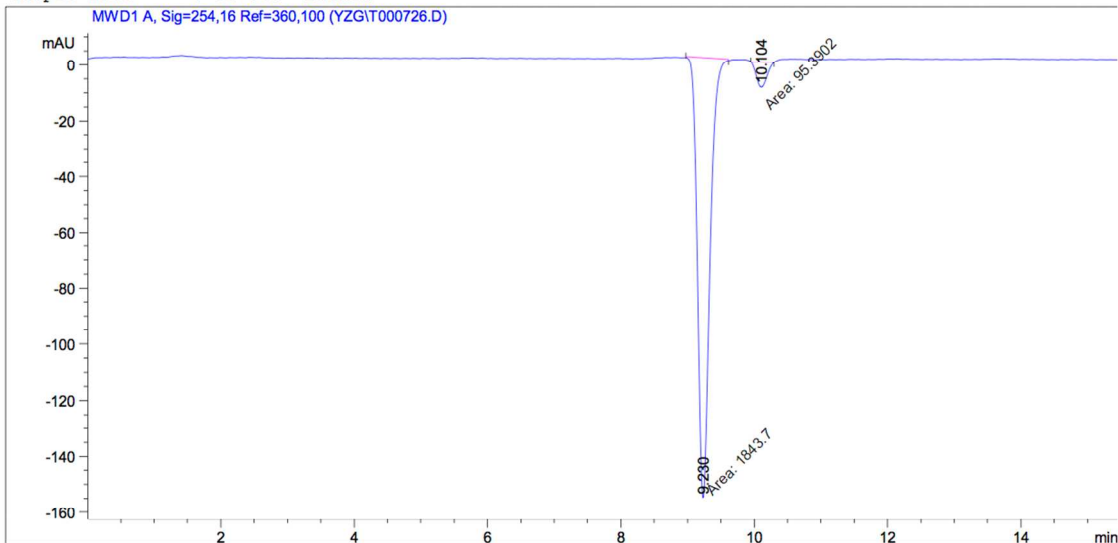
=====
*** End of Report ***
=====

Compound 9

Data File D:\JACK\YZG\T000726.D

Sample Name: FC85-100%

```
=====
Acq. Operator   : YZG
Acq. Instrument : LC 1200                      Location : Vial 1
Injection Date  : 5/16/2017 7:46:20 AM
Acq. Method     : D:\JACK\YIZHESUN.M
Last changed    : 5/16/2017 7:35:12 AM by YZG
                  (modified after loading)
Analysis Method : D:\JACK\YIZHE SUN\YIZHE SUN.M
Sample Info     : 5%-85% 100MIN
=====
```



Fraction Information

Fraction collection off

No Fractions found.

Area Percent Report

```
Sorted By      : Signal
Multiplier     : 1.0000
Dilution       : 1.0000
Use Multiplier & Dilution Factor with ISTDs
Signal 1: MWD1 A, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100
```

Peak #	RetTime [min]	Type	Width [min]	Area [mAU*s]	Height [mAU]	Area %
1	9.230	MM N	0.1953	1843.70142	157.36546	95.0807
2	10.104	PM N	0.1774	95.39015	8.96282	4.9193

Totals : 1939.09157 166.32829

*** End of Report ***

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