

NATURAL PRODUCTS FROM MARINE HETEROBRANCHS: AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESULTS

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Abstract. Heterobranchs are a fascinating group of marine mollusks that are recognized as an important source of bioactive natural products. Often, these molecules, which are either selected from the diet or *de novo* biosynthesized by the mollusks, play a fundamental role for their survival being utilized as defensive chemicals against predators. A summary of the studies carried out by our group, in the last decade, on heterobranchs is presented here. A number of new compounds exhibiting different molecular architectures have been chemically characterized. Some of them have also shown an interesting pharmacological potential. Some ecological studies that we conducted on selected species of heterobranchs are also reviewed.

Keywords: marine mollusk, natural product, chemical ecology, bioprospecting.

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