

1.1 Aspirin

Extracts of the bark from the willow tree were used for thousands of years in Europe and North America for pain relief, treatment of inflammation, and fever. The active ingredient of the bark extract was first isolated by the German chemist Johann Andreas Buchner in 1828 and named salicin after the Latin name for the white willow (*Salix alba*). The glycoside can be converted to salicylic acid by hydrolysis and subsequent oxidation (Fig. 1). Felix Hoffman, a chemist at Bayer in Germany,

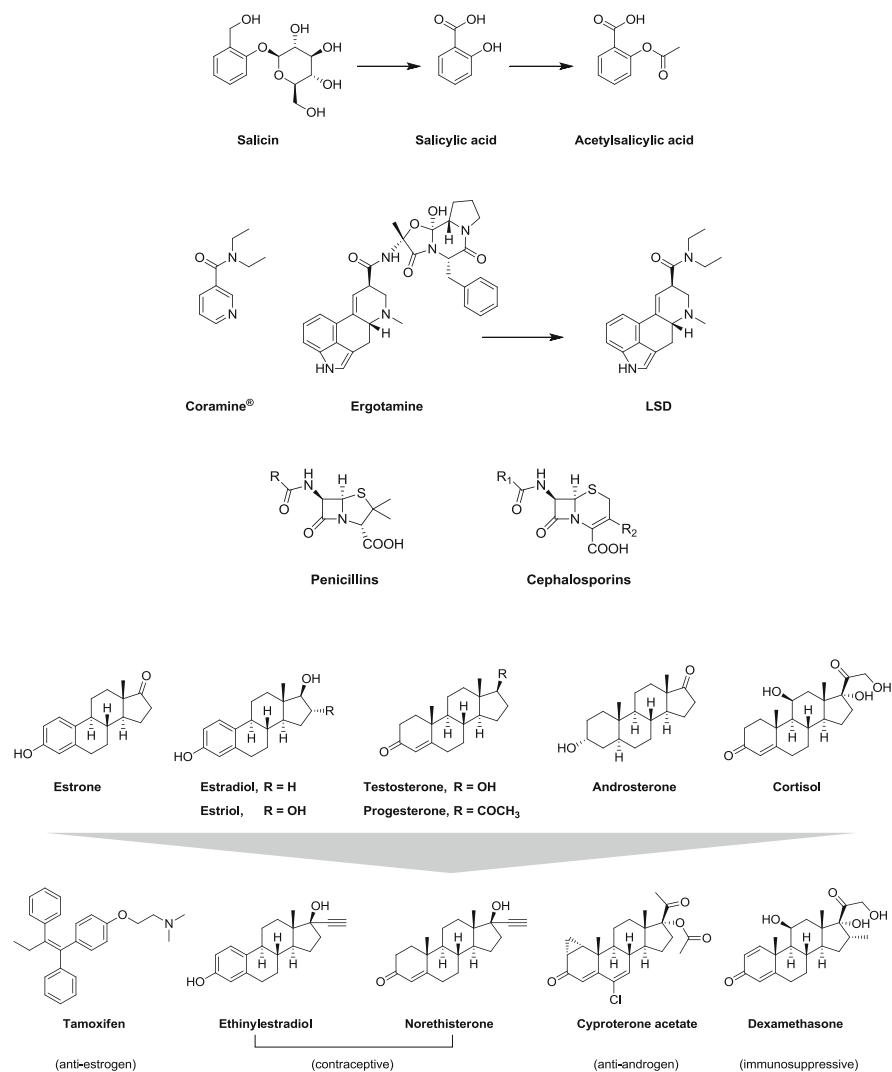


Fig. 1 Drugs discovered during the first 100 years of modern drug discovery were mainly based on ethnobotanical knowledge or derived from natural ligands and substances