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Metal- Catalyzed Cycloaddition of Oxonium Ylides: Synthesis of Spiro [Furo [2, 3-*A*] Xanthene-2, 3'-Indolin]-2'-One Scaffolds and Evaluation of Anticancer Activity



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ABSTRACT

An intramolecular cycloaddition of 3-diazooxindole and a bifunctional substrate i.e. 2-methyl-2-(4-methylpent-3-en-1-yl)-2*H*-chromene-3-carbaldehyde has been achieved using from 2-(trimethylsilyl) phenyl trifluoro methanesulfonate in the presence of 2.5 mol% cesium fluoride to produce a highly substituted 3,3,5a-trimethyl-3a,5,5a,11b-tetrahydro-3*H*,4*H*-spiro[furo[2,3-*a*]xanthene-2,3'-indolin]-2'-ones in good yields with high diastereo selectivity. This is the novel methodology on the synthesis of biologically relevant polycyclic frameworks from readily accessible precursors and also found some of the synthesized compounds exhibits anticancer activity against human alveolar epithelial cell line (A549) and mouse macrophage cell (B-16).

INTRODUCTION:

Spirooxindoles are frequently found in several natural products and medicinally important molecules.¹ In particular, 4,5-dihydro-3*H*-spiro[furan-2,3'-indolin]-2'-one core is an vital part of many natural products and biologically active molecules (Figure 1).² Among them, *N*-methylwelwitindolinone D isonitrile inhibits the growth of lung adenocarcinoma (A549) cells and hepatocellular carcinoma (HepG2) cells.³ Gelsedine-type indole alkaloids are known to exhibit strong cytotoxic effects against the A431 human epidermoid carcinoma cells.⁴ Therefore, the development of efficient methods for the synthesis of novel spiro-oxindoles and the evaluation of their bioactivities are of great importance in drug discovery.⁵ On the other hand, α -diazo carbonyl compounds are versatile intermediates and susceptible to undergo various transformations such as cyclopropanation, C–H or heteroatom-H insertion, cycloaddition and ylide formation.^{6,7}

In particular, the cycloaddition of carbonyl ylides with dipolarophiles provides a synthetically powerful way to make a variety of 5-membered oxacycles.⁸ Furthermore, an intramolecular generation of carbonyl ylides and their subsequent cycloadditions are important for the construction of bridged oxacycles.⁹

However, the development of an operationally simple and efficient strategy in generating a novel series of polycyclic spirooxindoles is highly desirable. Because it provides rapid access to highly substituted polycyclic compounds with high structural diversity and complexity in a single step process.

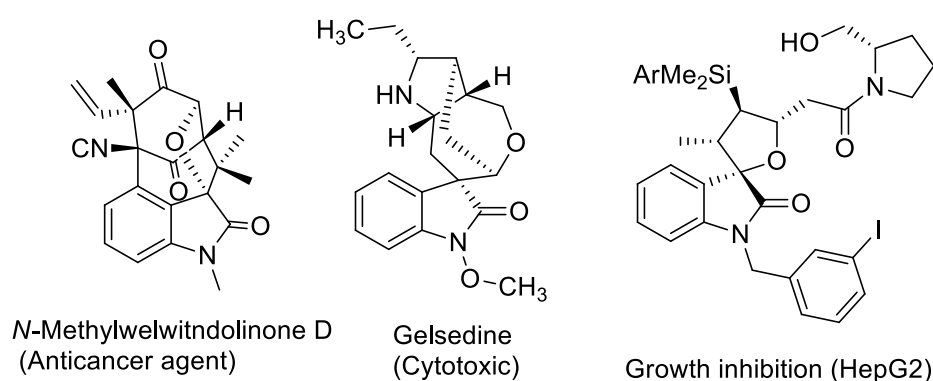
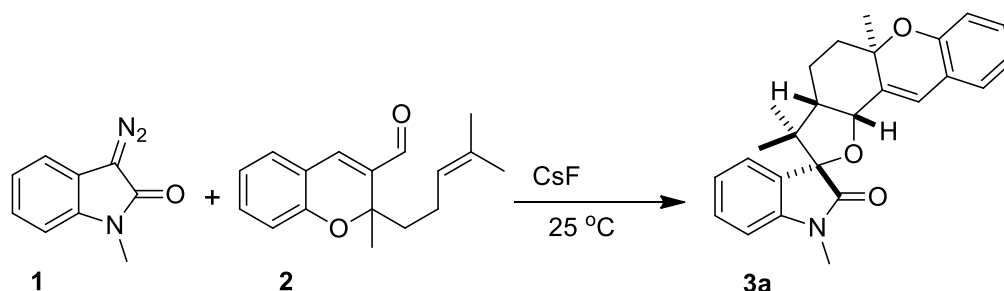


Figure No. 1: Examples of spirofurooxindole frameworks

Following our research interest on α -diazo carbonyl compounds,¹⁰ we herein report a novel and efficient approach for the synthesis of biologically active polycyclic spiro compounds

through a CsF-catalyzed cycloaddition of carbonyl ylides generated from diazoamide and chromene-3-carboxaldehyde (Scheme 1).



Scheme No. 1: Cycloaddition of 3-diazooxindole with chromene-3-carbaldehyde

In this reaction, oxonium ylides undergo an intramolecular cycloaddition with an olefin to generate the spirocyclic frameworks. The intramolecular version is completely regio- and stereoselective affording the products in good yields. The reaction is highly chemoselective as there is no cyclopropanation between α -diazoketone and olefin. The method is operationally simple, exquisitely selective, and works with diverse substrates. As a model reaction, we investigated the cycloaddition of carbonyl ylide generated from 1 equiv of *N*-methyl 3-diazooxindole (1) and 1.1 equiv of alkene tethered chromene-3-carboxaldehyde (2) using 2-(trimethylsilyl)phenyl trifluoro methanesulfonate (2) in the presence of 2.5 mol% of CsF as a model reaction. The reaction proceeded smoothly at room temperature affording the expected spirofurooxindole 3a in 80% yield as a single diastereomer. The structure of 3a was confirmed by NMR, IR and HRMS analysis. To optimize the reaction conditions, we screened the reaction with different amounts of the catalyst. After several experiments, we found that 2.5 mol% of CsF is optimum (entry b, Table 1). No further improvement in conversion was observed either by increasing the amount of catalyst to 10 mol% or by decreasing it to 3 mol% (entries e and f, Table 1). The best conversion was achieved using 2.5 mol % of the catalyst. Next we examined the effect of solvents such as dichloromethane, dichloromethane, dry acetonitrile, benzene and toluene at various temperatures. Among them, dry acetonitrile appeared to give the best results in terms of yield and reaction time at room temperature (entries b,e and f, Table 1).

Table No. 1: Optimization of reaction conditions for 3a

Entry	Substrate (1) (equiv)	Substrate (2) (equiv)	Catalyst (mol%) ^a	Solvent	Time (min)	Yield of 3a (%) ^b
a	1.0	1.1	2.5	DCM	30	73
b	1.0	1.1	2.5	dry CH ₃ CN	30	80
c	1.5	1.0	5	Benzene	50	65
d	1.5	1.0	5	Toluene	60	68
e	1.0	1.1	10	DCE	20	75
f	1.0	1.1	3	DCE	50	70

^aReaction was performed in 1 mmol scale

^bYield refers to pure products after chromatography

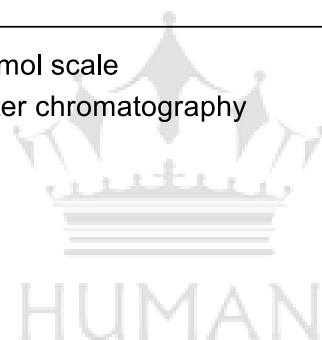
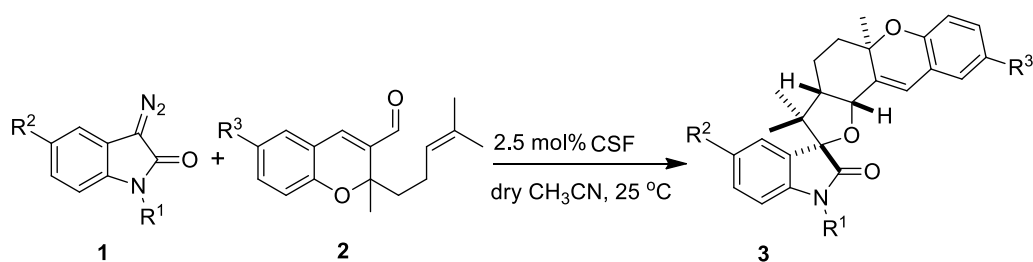


Table 2. [3+2] cycloaddition of carbonyl ylides^a

Entry	R ¹ /R ²	R ³	Product (3)	Yield (%) ^{a,b}
a	CH ₃ /H	H	3a	81
b	CH ₃ /H	Cl	3b	80
c	CH ₃ /H	Br	3c	78
d	CH ₃ /Cl	H	3d	83
e	CH ₃ /Cl	Cl	3e	79
f	CH ₃ /Cl	Br	3f	81
g	Bn/H	H	3g	85
h	Bn/H	Cl	3h	84
i	Bn/H	Br	3i	84
j	Bn/Br	H	3j	85
k	Bn/Br	Cl	3k	82
l	Bn/Br	Br	3l	83
m	Propargyl/H	H	3m	88
n	Boc/H	H	3n	70
o	Boc/H	Cl	3o	60
p	Boc/H	Br	3p	65

^aAll the reactions were performed using CsF(2.5 mol%), diazoamide (1 equiv), chromene-3-carboxaldehyde (1.1 equiv) in dry CH₃CN at 25 °C over 30 min.

^bYield refers to pure product after column chromatography.

These initial findings encouraged us to study its scope with other substrates. The reaction was performed with different 3-diazooxindoles possessing substituents on the aromatic ring and *N*-protecting groups. The halo substituents such as chloro- and bromo- at 5-position of 3-diazooxindole gave the desired products in good yields (entries d-f j-l, Table 2). The protective group of nitrogen had shown some effect on conversion. The 3-diazooxindole bearing electron-releasing *N*-protective groups such as *N*-methyl, *N*-benzyl, and *N*-propargyl furnished the products in high yields (entries a-m, Table 2). Conversely, *N*-Boc protected 3-diazooxindoles gave the products in lower yields than *N*-methyl-, *N*-benzyl- and *N*-propargyl derivatives (entries n-p, Table 2). The scope of this method was further extended to substituted chromene-3-carboxaldehyde such as 5-chloro-, and 5-bromo- derivatives (entries b,c,e,f,h,i,k,l, Table 2). The results indicate that no significant electronic effect of the substituents was observed.

Finally, the structure of **3j** was confirmed unambiguously by a single crystal X-ray analysis as shown in Figure 2 (Table 2, entry j).¹¹

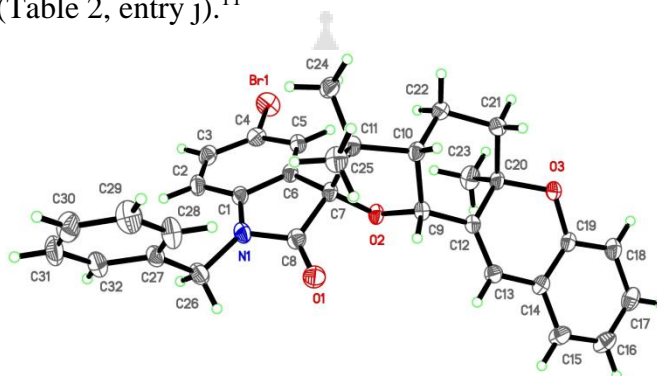
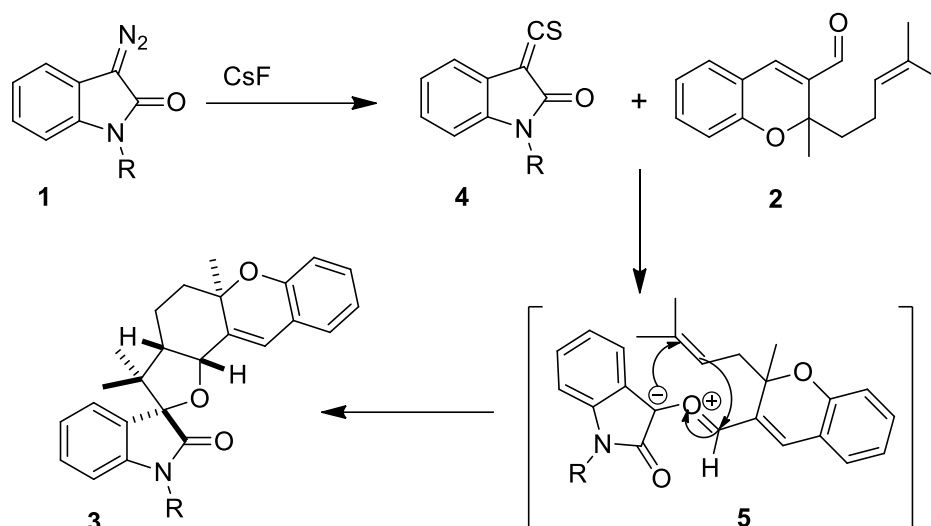


Figure 2. ORTEP diagram of **3j**

Mechanistically, the reaction is assumed to proceed through a [3+2] cycloaddition between **1** and **2**. The caesium carbenoid **4**, formed *in situ* from 3-diazooxindole (**1**) and CsF and reacts with chromene-3-carboxaldehyde (**2**) to generate the carbonyl ylide **5**. A subsequent cycloaddition of carbonyl ylide (**5**) with an internal olefin would give the desired product **3** (Scheme 2).



Scheme No. 2. [3+2]cycloaddition of carbonyl ylides^a

Cytotoxicity:

In order to study the possible pharmacological activity, some of the selected spiro [furo [2, 3-*a*] xanthene-2, 3'-indolin]-2'-one homologues were subjected to *insemination* cytotoxicity to human alveolar epithelial cell line (A549) and mouse macrophage cell (B-16). Cytotoxicity of test compounds in cells was determined by MTT [3-(4, 5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2, 5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide] assay.

In general, the majority of the tested compounds showed moderate to strong cytotoxicity to the above two cell lines. Among the tested compounds, **3g** showed the most potent cytotoxicity to A549 with IC₅₀ value of 0.35 µg/mL (Table 1) and compound **3h** exhibited strongest cytotoxicity to B-16 cell line with IC₅₀ value of 1.21 µg/mL (Table 1). It is noteworthy that 2H-chromene analog **3h** also showed remarkable cytotoxicity to A549 cell line with IC₅₀ value 4.31 µg/mL. It is fascinating that both the compounds **3h** and **3g** (Table 2) may be helpful to increase their cytotoxicity. Therefore, these isoxazole derivatives may become promising antitumor drug candidates for further pharmacological studies to discover efficient chemotherapeutics for the healing of human cancer diseases.

Table 3 Cytotoxicity of spiro [furo [2, 3-a] xanthene-2, 3'-indolin]-2'-one 3

Entry	Compound 3	Cytotoxicity to carcinoma cells 1C ₅₀ ^a (μM)	
		A549	B-16
1	3a	18.76	11.45
2	3b	22.42	12.43
3	3c	21.45	8.47
4	3d	9.58	35.7
5	3e	14.02	12.0
6	3f	23.20	21.9
7	3g	0.35	7.69
8	3h	4.31	0.21
9	3i	20.36	12.42
10	3j	11.26	7.32
10	Doxorubicin(control)	<0.1	<0.1

NA = no activity.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we have developed an efficient strategy for the stereoselective synthesis of polycyclic frameworks through a 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition. This method is operationally simple and works under mild conditions. Due to a broad range of biological activity of spiro oxindole derivatives. Some of the compounds (3g, 3h) exhibit cytotoxicity.

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11. CCDC893601 contains supplementary crystallographic data of **3j**.

