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Synthesis of Aliphatic Azides by Photoinduced C(sp³)–H Azidation

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Abstract A photoinduced synthesis of aliphatic azides was achieved in a single step starting from the parent cyclic alkanes, as well as from tetrahydrofuran and pyrrolidine derivatives. The reaction proceeds via direct azidation of $C(sp^3)$ –H bonds in the presence of 4-benzoylpyridine under photoirradiation conditions utilizing tosyl azide as the azide source. The chemoselective C–H mono-azidation at room temperature and the formation of azide compounds in spite of their potential photolability are the key features of the present transformation.

Key words C–H functionalization, azidation, photoreaction, aliphatic azides, sulfonyl azide, aryl ketone

Organic azides constitute an important class of compounds¹ in the field of synthetic organic chemistry as convenient precursors for a variety of nitrogen-containing molecules, including aza-heteroaromatics such as indoles and pyrroles, aliphatic azacycles like pyrrolidine and piperidine analogues, and naturally occurring alkaloids.² Among the reactions involving the azide functionality, [3+2] cycloaddition between organic azides and terminal alkynes has been recently re-investigated and copper catalysis was found to facilitate the triazole formation (CuAAC, click reaction).³ Under the copper catalysis, the triazole-forming reaction proceeds even in the presence of water and air at ambient temperature. The mildness of the reaction conditions as well as the high reliability and robustness of the covalent-bond formation has made the click reaction an indispensable tool in a wide range of scientific fields, especially in chemical biology and material science.^{1,4} Accordingly, the above mentioned new synthetic methodology has greatly expanded the utility of azide compounds. In spite of this marked increase in the demand of organic azide species, advancements in their preparative methods continue to be rather sluggish. The classical and most frequently applied method to obtain alkyl azides is a substitution reaction starting from alkyl halides and their analogues using sodium azide as a nucleophile (Scheme 1, eq. 1).^{1.5} Substitutions of the hydroxy functionality in alcohols, a poor leaving group, were achieved by treatment with an elaborated azide transfer agent, such as 2-azido-1,3-dimethylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate (ADMP)⁶ and diphenylphosphoryl azide,⁷ or by conducting the reaction under finely tuned biphasic conditions⁸ (Scheme 1, eq. 2).⁹ Recent investigations allowed direct substitution of nonacidic $C(sp^3)$ –H bonds, generally unreactive moieties in organic substances, by applying reactive iodine-based agents, such as iodonium azide (IN₃)¹⁰ and azidoiodinane¹¹ (Scheme 1,



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 Table 1
 Optimization of Reaction Conditions for Photoinduced C–H
 Azidation of Cyclooctane (1a)^a

Entry	1a (equiv)	4-BzPy (equiv)	Time (h)	NMR yield (%) ^b
1 ^c	8	1	6	26
2	8	1	6	49
3 ^d	8	1	6	24 ^e
4 ^f	8	1	24	44
5 ^g	8	1	24	24
6	8	2	24	39
7	8	0.5	24	27
8	5	1	24	29
9 ^h	8	1	6	50 (51) ⁱ

^a Benzene solution (0.04 M) of cyclooctane (1a), TsN₃ (1 equiv), and 4-BzPy was photoirradiated using a LED lamp (365 nm) at r.t.

^b Yield was calculated based on ¹H NMR analysis of the crude mixture, unless otherwise noted.

^c Ph₂CO was applied instead of 4-BzPy.

^d Photoirradiation using a medium-pressure Hg lamp instead of a LED lamp.

^e A significant amount of TsN₃ was recovered.

^f The reaction was conducted in CH₂Cl₂.

⁹ The reaction was conducted in acetone.

^h The reaction was conducted in benzene (0.1 M).

ⁱ Isolated yield is shown in parentheses.

eq. 3a), or by utilizing transition-metal catalysts^{12,13} (Scheme 1, eq. 3b). Considering the increasing importance of organic azide species, the development of synthetic variants enabling the preparation of alkyl azides should have great value. We therefore launched a study on a new preparative method of aliphatic azides via direct C-H azidation utilizing a photoexcited aryl ketone^{14,15} (Scheme 1, eq. 3c).

At the outset of the investigation, we assumed that one of the key challenges to establish photoinduced azide synthesis should be control of the inherent photolabile nature of both the azide source and azide products.¹⁶ A literature search revealed that: (1) benzyl azide remains intact with exposure to UV light of 365 nm, 302 nm, and 254 nm,¹⁷ and (2) p-toluenesulfonyl azide (TsN₃) generates nitrene with exposure to UV light of 300 nm (2 h) or 350 nm (24 h).¹⁸ With this information in hand, the screening of reaction conditions for photoinduced azidation of cyclooctane (1a) using TsN₃ as the azide source¹⁹ was conducted in the presence of an aryl ketone irradiating with LED light of 365 nm as shown in Table 1.²⁰ As expected, benzophenone (Ph₂CO) promoted the C-H azidation to furnish azidocyclooctane (2a) in 26% yield (Table 1, entry 1). When 4-benzoylpyridine (4-BzPy)¹⁴ⁱ was applied instead of Ph₂CO, the yield of 2a was increased to 49% (entry 2). The reaction using a Hg lamp afforded 24% yield of 2a after 6 hours irradiation with a significant amount of recovered TsN₃, indicating the advantage of monochromatic LED light irradiation (entry 3). Use of other solvents, such as MeCN and t-BuOH, and varying the amount of 4-BzPy both diminished the yield of the desired azide 2a (entries 4-7). The reaction with a reduced amount of the starting alkane 1a was also detrimental to the yield of 2a (entry 8). The reaction between cyclooctane (1a) (8 equiv) and TsN_3 (1 equiv) in the presence of 4-BzPv (1 equiv) with the irradiating LED light (365 nm) proceeded efficiently in 0.1 M benzene solution and the desired azidocyclooctane (2a) was produced in 51% yield (entry 9).

With the optimized reaction conditions in hand, the applicability of various cyclic compounds for photoinduced C-H azidation was examined (Table 2). The azidation of cyclododecane (**1b**) proceeded smoothly with TsN_2 as a limiting agent and cyclododecyl azide (2b) was formed in 48% yield (Table 2, entry 1). The azidation of adamantane (1c) proceeded chemoselectively at the methine C-H bond to afford 1-azidoadamantane (2c) in 40% yield (entry 2). In the case of methine C-H azidation, practically the same yield of 2c was obtained (37% yield) when adamantane (1 equiv) was treated with a slight excess of TsN₃ (1.2 equiv) and 4-BzPy (1 equiv) in benzene solution (0.1 M), although longer reaction times were required (entry 3). We confirmed the formation of diazidoadamantane starting from 1-azidoadamantane (2c) to be very sluggish, indicating mono-azidation took place selectively under the present conditions. The reactivity of the oxygen-containing cycle, ambroxide (1d), appeared to be high, and the chemoselective azidation took place at the ethereal C-H bond to provide 2d in 84% yield in 3 hours (entry 4). Although a decrease in the product yield was observed (33% yield), the reaction could be conducted using ambroxide (1d) as a limiting agent (entry 5).²¹ The reactivity of the aliphatic azacycle, N-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)pyrrolidine (1e), was even higher to afford the azide 2e in 90% NMR yield in 40 minutes (entry 6). The azidation occurred chemoselectively at the C-H bond adjacent to the nitrogen atom, although serious decomposition of 2e was observed during purification by column chromatography. The reaction with **1e** as a limiting agent furnished **2e** in 49% NMR yield in one hour (entry 7).

The derived azides are excellent precursors for a variety of nitrogen-containing molecules and therefore several transformations were conducted to accentuate the utility of the present photoinduced C-H azidation strategy (Scheme 2). Nearly quantitative formation of the N-Boc protected cyclododecylamine (3b) was obtained by subjecting the purified azide 2b to Kotsuki conditions (Scheme 2, a).²² The preparation of cyclododecylamine (4b) was achieved by treating azide **2b** with NaBH₄ in the presence of a copper catalyst (Scheme 2, b).12 This reduction could be carried out using the crude adduct **2b** as a starting material without in-



tensive purification after azidation. The conversion to the triazole **5b** was attained by the [3+2] cycloaddition of azide **2b** with phenylacetylene in the presence of the cationic copper complex (Scheme 2, c).²³ The triazole formation proceeded in high yield even when the crude azide **2b** was applied as a starting material, although a longer reaction time was required.

We further examined the azidation of *cis*-decalin (**1f**) to obtain some information on the reaction mechanism (Scheme 3).²⁴ Monitoring the azidation by gas chromatography indicated the generation of both *cis*- and *trans*-fused azide adducts, **2f** and **2f'** (ca. 26:74). The mixture of crude azides was subjected to the reduction conditions and the derived amines were benzoylated before isolation. The formation of both *cis*- and *trans*-fused amides, **6f** (6.2% in 3 steps) and **6f'** (19% in 3 steps), respectively, was confirmed. This configurational change explains an intermediacy of radical species caused by hydrogen abstraction effected by the photoexcited ketone as we have proposed in our series of investigations on photoinduced C–H functionalizations.¹⁴

In conclusion, we have developed a new preparative method of aliphatic azides via a photoinduced azidation of $C(sp^3)$ –H bonds. The chemoselective cleavage of C–H bonds was effected by photoexcited 4-benzoylpyridine with tosyl azide as an azide source. The present transformation was optimized to proceed under the irradiation of a monochromatic LED lamp (365 nm) to avoid the degradation of potentially photolabile azide compounds, including the azide source (TsN₃) and generated azide products. The newly de-

veloped protocol allows direct conversion of cyclic alkanes as well as tetrahydrofuran and pyrrolidine derivatives into the corresponding azides in a single step under mild reaction conditions.



All reactions sensitive to air or moisture were carried out under an argon atmosphere under anhydrous conditions, unless otherwise noted. Analytical TLC was performed on E. Merck silica gel 60 F254 precoated plates. Column chromatography was performed using 40–50 µm Silica Gel 60N (Kanto) or with a Biotage Isolera using a prepacked column. Recycling HPLC was carried out using a LC-9210II

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^a Conditions A: cyclic compound 1 (8 equiv), TsN₃ (1 equiv), 4-BzPy (1 equiv), benzene (0.1 M), photoirradiation using a LED lamp (365 nm) at r.t. Conditions B: cyclic compound **1** (1 equiv), TSN₃ (1.2 equiv), 4-BzPy (1 equiv), benzene (0.1 M), photoirradiation using a LED lamp (365 nm) at r.t. ^b Isolated yield unless otherwise noted.

c Ratio of diastereomers is shown in parentheses.

^d NMR yield is shown in parentheses.

NEXT instrument equipped with a GPC column (20 mm × 600 mm, JAI) with CHCl₃ as an eluent. The ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance III-400 (400 MHz) or Bruker DRX500 (500 MHz) spectrometer. Chemical shifts are reported in δ (ppm) relative to residual solvent signals [¹H NMR: CHCl₃ (7.26); ¹³C NMR: CDCl₃ (77.0)]. Standard abbreviations were used to denote signal patterns. IR spectra were recorded on a Jasco FT/IR-4100 spectrometer. HRMS were recorded on a Bruker Daltonics micrOTOF II (APCI) instrument. Melting points were measured on a Cornes MPA100 micro melting point apparatus. The reactions were conducted in a Pyrex test tube (18 × 130 mm), and the photoirradiation was carried out by using a Keyence UV-400 with UV-50A LED lamp and a Riko 100 W mediumpressure mercury lamp.

Photoinduced C(sp³)-H Azidation; Azidocyclooctane (2a); Typical Procedure

[CAS Reg. No. 33794-96-6]

Cyclooctane (1a; 0.54 mL, 4 mmol, 8 equiv), TsN₃ (98.6 mg, 0.5 mmol), and 4-benzoylpyridine (91.6 mg, 0.5 mmol, 1 equiv) in benzene (5 mL, 0.1 M) were added to a Pyrex test tube under an argon atmosphere. The test tube was placed at ca. 1 cm distance from a Keyence LED lamp and was irradiated at 365 nm for 6 h. After consumption of TsN₃, the solution was passed through a short silica gel column using pentane. The eluent was evaporated and the residue was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, pentane) to afford azidocyclooctane (2a); yield: 38.7 mg (51%); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 1.43 - 1.63$ (m, 8 H), 1.64–1.79 (m, 4 H), 1.81–1.94 (m, 2 H), 3.56 (tt, J = 8.4, 4.2 Hz, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 23.1, 25.1, 27.2, 30.8, 62.2.

Azidocyclododecane (2b)

[CAS Reg. No. 153757-18-7]

Yield: 47% (48.9 mg); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.23–1.61 (m, 20 H), 1.62–1.76 (m, 2 H), 3.48 (m, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.3, 23.2, 23.3, 23.7, 23.9, 29.0, 59.2.

1-Azidoadamantane (2c)

[CAS Reg. No. 24886-73-5]

Yield: 37% (33.0 mg); colorless solid; mp 77.6-79.1 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.55–1.75 (m, 6 H), 1.78–1.82 (m, 6 H), 2.14 (m, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 29.8, 35.9, 41.5, 58.9.

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Azidoambroxide 2d

This azide was obtained as an inseparable mixture of two diastereomers (51:49); yield: 77% (47.5 mg); colorless oil.

IR (ATR, neat): 2995, 2928, 2868, 2115, 1457, 1380, 1240 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.83 (s, 447/100 H), 0.85 (s, 153/100 H), 0.87 (s, 147/100 H), 0.88 (s, 153/100 H), 0.92-1.12 (m, 2 H), 1.15-1.25 (m, 1 H), 1.13 (s, 147/100 H), 1.27 (s, 153/100 H), 1.29-1.73 (m, 8 H), 1.74–1.85 (m, 1 H), 1.94–2.09 (m, 2 H), 5.32 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 49/100 H), 5.45 (dd, J = 6.4 Hz, 51/100 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (detectable signals) = 15.1, 15.3, 18.2, 18.3, 20.5, 20.7, 21.0, 22.6, 22.9, 30.5, 30.8, 33.0, 33.4, 36.1, 36.2, 39.6, 39.7, 39.86, 39.89, 42.35, 42.48, 57.0, 57.4, 60.5, 82.6, 84.1, 89.5, 91.5.

HRMS (APCI): *m*/*z* [M – N₂ + H]⁺ calcd for C₁₆H₂₈NO: 250.2165; found: 250.2176.

tert-Butyl 2-Azidopyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (2e)^{19e}

[CAS Reg. No. 156268-09-6]

The product was intensively purified by silica gel column chromatography to collect compound data. The compound was obtained as a mixture of rotamers (64:36). The isolated yield was not determined due to the serious decomposition of 2e during the purification process: colorless oil.

IR (ATR, neat): 2982, 2892, 2114, 1711, 1394, 1168 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₂): $\delta = 1.47$ (br s, 576/100 H), 1.50 (br s, 324/100 H), 1.77-2.10 (m, 4 H), 3.29 (m, 1 H), 3.50 (m, 1 H), 5.44 (br d, *J* = 3.6 Hz, 64/100 H), 5.52 (br d, *J* = 3.3 Hz, 36/100 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 22.0, 22.9, 28.0, 28.2, 28.4, 32.3, 33.3, 45.8, 46.2, 74.4, 80.4, 81.1, 153.6, 154.6.

HRMS (APCI): *m*/*z* [M – N₂ + H]⁺ calcd for C₉H₁₇N₂O₂: 185.1285; found: 185.1278.

Reductive Transformation of Azidocyclododecane (2b) under Kotsuki Conditions; tert-Butyl Cyclododecylcarbamate (3b)

[CAS Reg. No. 308288-44-0]

A mixture of purified azidocyclododecane (2b; 20.9 mg, 0.1 mmol), Boc₂O (34.4 μL, 0.15 mmol), Et₃SiH (48 μL, 0.3 mmol), and Pd(OH)₂/C (1 mg; 20 wt%, Aldrich) in EtOH (1 mL, 0.1 M) was stirred at r.t. for 0.5 h. After the consumption of the starting azide 2b, the mixture was filtered through a Celite pad and concentrated. The residue was purified by using a recycling HPLC (GPC column, CHCl₃) to afford **3b**; yield: 27.8 mg (98%); colorless solid; mp 115.1-116.3 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.22–1.65 (m, 31 H), 3.69 (br m, 1 H), 4.33 (br m, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.4, 23.4, 23.5, 23.7, 24.0, 28.4, 30.5, 47.3, 78.8, 155.4.

Reduction of Azidocyclododecane (2b) with NaBH₄ in the Presence of a Copper Catalyst; Cyclododecylamine (4b)

[CAS Reg. No. 1502-03-0]

Crude azidocyclododecane (2b) was prepared by following the typical procedure starting from cyclododecane (1b; 672 mg, 4 mmol) and TsN₃ (98.6 mg, 0.5 mmol). To the MeOH-THF solution (1:1, 10 mL) of the crude azide 2b, mainly contaminated with 1b, were added CuSO₄·5H₂O (5.2 mg, 10 mol%) and NaBH₄ (31.8 mg, 4 equiv) at 0 °C and the mixture was stirred at r.t .for 18 h. Next, additional CuSO₄·5H₂O (5.2 mg, 10 mol%) and NaBH₄ (31.8 mg, 4 equiv) were introduced and the mixture was further stirred at r.t. for 21 h. The reaction was guenched with H₂O and the mixture was extracted with CHCl₃. The residue was purified by column chromatography [YMC-Dispo-PackAT NH2-25 12 g, hexane–EtOAc (100:0 \rightarrow 0:100)] to afford **4b**; yield over two steps: 34.1 mg (37%) colorless oil.

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.23–1.45 (m, 22 H), 1.51–1.60 (m, 2 H), 2.89 (br tt, J = 5.7, 5.7 Hz, 1 H).

Copper-Promoted [3+2] Cycloaddition of Azidocyclododecane (2b) with Phenylacetylene; 1-Cyclododecyl-4-phenyltriazole (5b)

Triazole Formation Using the Pure Azide 2b: [(MeCN)₄Cu]PF₆ (74.5 mg, 1 equiv) and phenylacetylene (44 µL, 2 equiv) were added to the 1,2dichloroethane solution (2 mL) of the purified azide 2b (41.9 mg, 0.2 mmol) under an argon atmosphere, and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 1 h and 60 °C for 1 h. The mixture was cooled to r.t. and the residue was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, CHCl₃) to afford cyclododecyl triazole **5b**; yield: 62.6 mg (quant.).

Triazole Formation Using the Crude Azide 2b: Crude azidocyclododecane (**2b**) was prepared by following the typical procedure starting from cyclododecane (1b; 672 mg, 4 mmol) and TsN₃ (98.6 mg, 0.5 mmol). [(MeCN)₄Cu]PF₆ (89.5 mg, 1 equiv) and phenylacetylene (52.7 µL, 2 equiv) were added to the 1,2-dichloroethane solution (4.8 mL) of the crude azide **2b**, mainly contaminated with **1b**, under an argon atmosphere, and the mixture was stirred at 60 °C for 24 h. The mixture was cooled to r.t. and extracted with CHCl₃. The residue was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, CHCl₃) to afford **5b**; yield over two steps: 54.8 mg (35%); colorless solid; mp 166.0-167.5 °C.

IR (ATR, neat): 3122, 3056, 2924, 2859, 2847, 1612, 1469, 1223, 765, 694 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.29–1.60 (m, 18 H), 1.76–1.90 (m, 2 H), 2.05–2.18 (m, 2 H), 4.79 (tt, J = 6.4, 6.4 Hz, 1 H), 7.32 (br t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1 H), 7.42 (br t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2 H), 7.74 (s, 1 H), 7.84 (br d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (detectable signals) = 21.7, 23.2 (2 ×), 23.5, 23.6, 30.9, 57.9, 117.6, 125.6, 127.9, 128.7, 130.9, 147.4.

HRMS (APCI): m/z [M + H]⁺ calcd for C₂₀H₃₀N₃: 312.2434; found: 312.2435.

Photoinduced Azidation of cis-Decalin (1f) and Derivatization of the Derived Azides 2f, 2f'; 4-Nitro-N-[(4aR,8aR)-octahydronaphthalen-4a(2H)-yl]benzamide (6f) and 4-Nitro-N-[(4aS,8aS)-octahydronaphthalen-4a(2H)-yl]benzamide (6f')

A mixture of crude azidodecalins 2f and 2f' was prepared by following the typical procedure, starting from cis-decalin (1f; 69 mg, 0.5 mmol) and TsN₃ (118 mg, 0.6 mmol). The combined yield of azides 2f and **2f'** was estimated to be <64% based on the total weight of the crude mixture. CuSO₄·5H₂O (8.1 mg, >10 mol%) and NaBH₄ (49.0 mg, >4 equiv) were added at 0 °C to the MeOH solution (3 mL) of the crude azides 2f and 2f' (58.0 mg, <0.32 mmol), mainly contaminated with cis-decalin (1f), and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 18 h. Next, additional CuSO₄·5H₂O (8.1 mg, >10 mol%) and NaBH₄ (49.0 mg, >4 equiv) were introduced and the mixture was further stirred at r.t. for 27 h. The reaction was quenched with H₂O and the mixture was extracted with Et₂O. The residue was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (5 mL) and treated with 4-nitrobenzoyl chloride (120.1 mg, >2 equiv) at r.t. for 18 h. The mixture was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ and the residue was purified by preparative TLC (silica gel, hexane-EtOAc, 5:1) to afford 6f in 6% yield (9.3 mg) and 6f' in 19% yield (28.4 mg) for three steps.

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Colorless solid; mp 160.8–161.6 °C.

IR (ATR, neat): 3420, 3102, 3069, 2950, 2919, 2866, 1664, 1515, 1348, 851, 714 $\rm cm^{-1}.$

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.41 (m, 2 H), 1.48–1.75 (m, 11 H), 1.96 (m, 2 H), 2.02–2.20 (m, 2 H), 5.88 (br s, 1 H), 7.87 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 8.27 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2 H).

 ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (detectable signals) = 22.3, 27.5, 38.8, 57.8, 123.7, 127.7, 141.9, 149.2, 164.5; two signals in the cyclohexane ring are probably missing due to the rapid ring-flip of the *cis*-decalin core.

HRMS (APCI): m/z [M + H]⁺ calcd for C₁₇H₂₃N₂O₃: 303.1703; found: 303.1716.

6f'¹²

[CAS Reg. No. 1654756-89-4]

Colorless solid; mp 191.1-192.6 °C.

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.10–1.28 (m, 4 H), 1.31–1.48 (m, 4 H), 1.49–1.62 (m, 5 H), 1.72–1.78 (m, 2 H), 2.76–2.83 (m, 2 H), 5.74 (br s, 1 H), 7.90 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2 H), 8.30 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2 H).

 ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.6, 25.9, 28.8, 34.3, 45.3, 56.9, 123.9, 127.7, 141.9, 149.3, 164.4.

HRMS (APCI): m/z [M + H]⁺ calcd for C₁₇H₂₃N₂O₃: 303.1703; found: 303.1701.

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Supporting Information

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