

Design, Synthesis, and Evaluation of Novel p-(methylthio)styryl Substituted Quindoline Derivatives as Neuroblastoma RAS (NRAS) Repressors via Specific Stabilizing the RNA G-Quadruplex

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ABSTRACT

The human proto-oncogene neuroblastoma *RAS* (*NRAS*) contains a guanine-rich sequence in the 5'-untranslated regions (5'-UTR) of the mRNA that could form an RNA G-quadruplex structure. This structure acts as a repressor for *NRAS* translation and could be a potential target for anti-cancer drugs. Our previous studies found an effective scaffold, the quindoline scaffold, for binding and stabilizing the DNA G-quadruplex structures. Here, basing on the previous studies and reported RNA-specific probes, a series of novel *p*-(methylthio)styryl substituted quindoline (**MSQ**) derivatives were designed, synthesized and evaluated as *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex ligands. Panels of experiments turned out that the introduction of *p*-(methylthio)styryl side chain could enhance the specific binding to the *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex. One of the hits, **4a-10**, showed strong stabilizing activity on the G-quadruplex, and subsequently repressed *NRAS*'s translation and inhibited tumor cells proliferation. Our finding provided a novel strategy to discover novel *NRAS* repressors by specifically binding to the RNA G-quadruplex in the 5'-UTR of mRNA.

KEYWORDS

NRAS RNA G-quadruplex; *p*-(methylthio)styryl substituted quindoline derivatives; translational repressor; anti-tumor

■ INTRODUCTION

The neuroblastoma RAS (*NRAS*) viral oncogene homolog belongs to the *RAS* gene family, which is a well-studied human oncogene family encoding a RAS superfamily. Proteins in the RAS superfamily are mainly monomeric small (20-25 kDa) guanosine triphosphate (GTP)-binding proteins.¹⁻² The RAS proteins play a crucial role in diverse cellular processes (such as proliferation, survival, and differentiation) by regulating the alternation between an active GTP-bound and an inactive guanosine diphosphate (GDP)-bound state in the GTPases.³ The switch between the states is related to the activation of cell surface receptors within a wide variety of cellular processes thereby leading to the control of proliferation, apoptosis and differentiation.^{2, 4-5} Furthermore, RAS proteins interfere with the metabolism of tumor cells, microenvironment's remodeling, evasion of the immune response, and finally contributes to the metastatic process.⁶ One third of all human cancers harbors oncogenic mutations in codons 12, 13, or 61 of RAS gene approximately.^{1, 7-8} The mutations can produce a protein that binds to GTP more tightly and then disrupts the GTP-to-GDP hydrolysis regulated by a GTP activating protein (GAP), which means the 'on' state of the protein is locked and an over-activation in the downstream pathways.⁹⁻¹⁰ Several strategies on developing RAS inhibitors are raised, however, there still no drugs targeting *NRAS* gene due to its multiple mutations.⁶

According to recent reports, there exists a G-rich sequence (5'-GGGAGGGGCGGGUCUGGG-3') in the 5'-untranslated region (5'-UTR) of

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3 human *NRAS* proto-oncogene mRNA, which could form a parallel RNA
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5 G-quadruplex structure.¹¹ The location of this G-rich sequence is 14-nt downstream of
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7 the 5'-cap and 222-nt upstream of the translation start site (TSS). Several reports
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9 reveal that the RNA G-quadruplex modulates *NRAS*'s translation.¹²⁻¹³ What's more,
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11 the translation of *NRAS* gene can be inhibited by some G-quadruplex ligands.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ This
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13 indicates targeting *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex may be an alternative strategy for
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15 discovering of novel *NRAS* repressors as anti-cancer agents.
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21 Stabilizing the G-quadruplex structures in the key regulation regions of
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23 oncogenes seems to be an attractive novel anti-tumor strategy and several kinds of
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25 G-quadruplex ligands are reported.¹⁷⁻²² In the previous studies, the quindoline
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27 derivatives (**Figure 1**) have been developed as good DNA G-quadruplex binders.²³⁻²⁹
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29 *In vitro* and *in vivo* studies showed that these quindoline derivatives specifically
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31 stabilize the DNA G-quadruplexes in different oncogenes^{24, 26, 29-31} or the telomere^{23, 25,}
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33 ²⁸, and exhibit certain antitumor activities.³⁰⁻³¹ The modification strategies are mainly
34
35 focusing on improving the planarity and aromaticity of the quindoline scaffold to
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37 enhance the π - π stacking interactions with the G-quartet, introduction of one or two
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39 amino side chains to enhance the hydrogen-bonding interaction and electrostatic
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41 binding^{28, 30-31}, or introduction of a positive charge by methylation at the 5-N position
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43 to displace the cation in the central ion channel thereby eliciting stabilizing
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45 properties.²⁵ However, none of these ligands are found to interact with the RNA
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47 G-quadruplexes. Besides, few information could be found on structural modification
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49 for specific RNA G-quadruplex ligands. Herein, we attempted to modify the
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quindoline derivatives to find novel RNA G-quadruplexes ligands.

The styryl group have attracted extensive interest in chemical probe design, and compounds containing the group exhibiting selective binding abilities to RNAs.³²⁻³⁸ Among these styryl-containing probes, we found the *p*-(methylthio)styryl group can discriminate dsDNAs and RNAs.^{34, 39} In order to improve the binding affinity and selectivity to RNA G-quadruplex, we tried to introduce the *p*-(methylthio)styryl group as a side chain to the quindoline scaffold and obtain the novel *p*-(methylthio)styryl substituted quindoline (**MSQ**) derivatives. On the other hand, side chains containing amino, heterocyclic ring, and benzene ring were also introduced at the 11-position; the 5-N position was methylated to enhance the binding affinity according to our previous modification experience (**Figure 1**).

44 **MSQ** compounds were synthesized and their binding affinities with the *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex and inhibitory activities on tumor cells proliferation were evaluated. We found the introduction of *p*-(methylthio)styryl at 2-position could significantly improve the binding affinity and selectivity to *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex. We picked out compound **4a-10** from these compounds to further evaluate its inhibitory activity on *NRAS* expression and related events in tumor cells. All the data indicated that **4a-10** can inhibit *NRAS*'s translation via its interaction with *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex, and interrupting the binding of a helicase, DEAH (Asp-Glu-Ala-His) box polypeptide 36 (DHX36), to this region.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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4 **Chemistry.** The synthetic route for the compounds was shown in **Scheme 1**. The
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6 intermediates, **1a-1**, **1a-2**, **1b-1**, and **1b-2**, and *p*-(methylthio) styrene were prepared
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8 following the procedures previously reported.⁴⁰⁻⁴² Intermediates **2a-1**, **2a-2**, **2b-1**, and
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10 **2b-2** were obtained by a Heck reaction between **1a-1**, **1a-2**, **1b-1**, **1b-2** and
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12 *p*-(methylthio)styryl. The 5-N position was methylated by iodomethane to obtain **3a-1**,
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14 **3a-2**, **3b-1** and **3b-2**. Then 11-position chlorine was substituted by different amino
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16 side chains to get the final **series I** and **series II** products.
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23 **Binding Affinities and Selectivity of MSQ Derivatives on NRAS RNA**

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25 **G-Quadruplex.** Surface plasmon resonance (SPR) experiments were firstly
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27 performed for investigating the binding affinities of the derivatives with the *NRAS*
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29 RNA G-quadruplex nucleotide (NRQ, **Supplementary Table S1**), as well as their
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31 binding affinity for mutant *NRAS* RNA (NRQ-mutant, **Supplementary Table S1**) and
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33 the hairpin DNA. A previous synthesized quindoline derivative, compound **16**, was
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35 used as a control (**Supplementary Figure S1**). The dissociation constants (K_D) were
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37 determined by the equilibrium fitting mode (**Supplementary Figure S2**) and listed in
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39 **Table 1**. The data showed that several **MSQ** derivatives bound to the NRQ with high
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41 affinities, which were similar to that of the reference compound **16**. We collected all
42
43 the compounds showing binding abilities to the NRQ and made a histogram in **Figure**
44
45 **2**. Compound **4a-10** and **4a-16** showed strongest binding affinities with the NRQ
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47 (**Figure 5a** and **5b**), with K_D values of $0.7 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol/L}$ (**4a-10**), and $0.5 \pm 0.2 \mu\text{mol/L}$
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49 (**4a-16**), respectively. On the other hand, we noticed that the methylation at the
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5-position made these compounds strongly bind to all the tested oligomers, just like the reference compound **16**.

Table 1. K_D values ($\mu\text{mol/L}$) of MSQ compounds with NRQ, NRQ-mutant, and hairpin oligomers in SPR experiments using an equilibrate fitting model.

	NRQ	NRQ-mutant	hairpin		NRQ	NRQ-mutant	hairpin
4a-1	14.9±2.3	N.A. ^a	N.A.	4a-24	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
4a-2	17.2±5.4	N.A.	N.A.	4a-25	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
4a-3	6.4±0.7	N.A.	N.A.	4a-26	3.4±0.3	N.A.	N.A.
4a-4	14.4±3.5	N.A.	N.A.	4b-1	1.3±0.3	N.A.	N.A.
4a-5	5.7±0.5	N.A.	N.A.	4b-2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
4a-6	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4c-1	15.8±2.8	N.A.	N.A.
4a-7	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4c-2	3.1±0.2	37.2±24.9	14.1±3.2
4a-8	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4c-3	21.2±13.0	N.A.	N.A.
4a-9	4.8±1.5	N.A.	N.A.	4c-4	4.1±1.2	N.A.	N.A.
4a-10	0.7±0.1	N.A.	N.A.	4c-5	1.7±0.8	N.A.	N.A.
4a-11	4.5±0.2	N.A.	N.A.	4c-6	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
4a-12	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4d-1	10.4±2.0	2.74E-05	9.13E-06
4a-13	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4d-2	5.9±2.5	N.A.	N.A.
4a-14	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5a-10	3.4±1.7	4.8±2.4	2.2±1.1
4a-15	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5a-16	1.4±0.6	3.1±1.6	10.4±6.5
4a-16	0.5±0.2	N.A.	N.A.	5b-1	1.2±0.2	1.9±1.0	2.7±0.9
4a-17	2.3±0.4	N.A.	N.A.	5b-2	0.8±0.1	2.2±1.4	2.7±0.9
4a-18	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5c-5	2.9±1.5	3.2±2.0	2.0±1.0
4a-19	2.6±0.2	N.A.	N.A.	5c-6	1.2±0.5	1.3±1.2	1.0±0.8
4a-20	1.0±0.3	N.A.	N.A.	5d-1	1.3±0.4	2.0±0.1	5.3±2.4
4a-21	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5d-2	2.6±0.6	1.3±0.2	6.9±3.3
4a-22	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	16	1.0±0.1	9.5±1.6	3.1±0.3
4a-23	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.				

^aN.A. indicates not available between compounds and the oligomers.

These results suggested that the introduction of the *p*-(methylthio)styryl could

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3 benefit the binding affinity and selectivity with the NRQ. We analyzed the
4 relationship between structures and activities. A common finding was that the side
5 chains containing heterocyclic nitrogen facilitated the binding of these MSQ
6 derivatives with the NRQ. While introduction of side chains containing amino ends
7 didn't contribute to the binding with RNA G-quadruplex, which was inconsistent with
8 the previous findings in DNA G-quadruplex.²⁴ Besides, comparing the data in
9 compounds **4a-4** and **4a-10**, we could find that longer side chains seemed to facilitate
10 the binding.
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23 The side chain of **4a-10** was N-methyl-2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethan-1-amine, we
24 further analyzed other derivatives containing the same side chain (**4a-10**, **5a-10**, **4b-2**,
25 **4c-6**, **4d-2**, **5b-2**, **5c-6**, and **5d-2**). **5a-10** and **4a-10** possess similar structure, the only
26 difference is the 5-position of **5a-10** was methylated. **5a-10** has similar binding
27 affinity with **4a-10** but poor selectivity, which was also observed in other
28 5-methylated derivatives (**5c-6**, **5b-2** and **5d-2**). The *p*-(methylthio)styryl of **4b-2** and
29 **4d-2** were at the 3-position, which caused an obvious decrease in the binding affinity.
30 As for **4c-6**, which is a 10H-indolo[3,2-*b*]quinoline derivative instead of a
31 benzofuro[3,2-*b*]quinoline derivative, could not bind to RNA G-quadruplex anymore.
32 This is also inconsistent with the findings in DNA G-quadruplex's ligands.²⁴
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50 **Effects of MSQ Derivatives on Proliferation of Tumor Cells.** In order to
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52 cancer cell lines, a methyl thiazolyl tetrazolium (MTT) colorimetric assay was
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3 performed. Here we used a human normal colon mucosal epithelial cell line NCM460
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6 and six human tumor cell lines, including human melanoma cell line A375, human
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8 lung adenocarcinoma cell line A549, human cervical cancer cell line Hela, human
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10 hepatoma cell lines Huh7, human colon cancer cell line HCT116, and human breast
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12 cancer cell line MCF-7. Comparing to another cell line (such as human bone
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14 osteosarcoma epithelial cells U2OS), NRAS overexpresses in the selected six cancer
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16 cell lines (**Supplementary Figure S3**). The concentration for 50% inhibition (IC_{50})
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18 values of all the derivatives were listed in **Supplementary Table S2** and **Figure 3**. As
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20 the results showed, most of the compounds had strong inhibitory activities on these
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22 tumor cells proliferation, with the IC_{50} varying from 0.5 μ M to 10 μ M. Compounds
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24 **4a-4**, **4a-6~4a-8**, **4a-12**, **4a-13**, **4a-18**, **4a-22**, and **4a-25** could not show any effects on
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26 cells proliferation at the highest tested concentration 50 μ M. Comparing the data
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28 obtained in the SPR experiment, these compounds could not bind to the NRQ except
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30 **4a-4** had weak binding affinity. This indicated a consistent structure-activity
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32 relationship (SAR) with that in the SPR experiment.
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40 We also compare the activities of **MSQ** compounds on the proliferation of
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42 normal cell line NCM460. **MSQ** compounds exhibited relatively weaker growth
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44 inhibition on NCM460 cells but the differences were not significant.
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47 We further plotted the IC_{50} on A375 cells after exposure to each compound as a
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49 function of the binding between **MSQ** derivatives to the NRQ (**Figure 4a**) since A375
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51 cells possesses high *NRAS* mutation rate.⁴³⁻⁴⁵ Compounds falling into the lower left
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53 quadrant were those significantly bind to the NRQ; while compounds in the lower
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3 right quadrant weakly bound to the NRQ, but still had effect on cell proliferation.
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6 Ligands of interest (shaded pink) appeared in the lower left quadrant, as these
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8 molecules possessing K_D values lower than 1 μM and IC_{50} less than 5 μM , including
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10 **4a-10**, **4a-16**, and **5b-2**. Considering the poor selectivity of **5b-2** on the NRQ vs.
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12 NRQ-mutant and hairpin, we selected **4a-10** and **4a-16** for further analysis and their
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14 structures were also shown in **Figure 4a**. We assessed the physiochemical properties
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16 of these two compounds using the ‘Lipinski rule of five’ criteria⁴⁶ (**Figure 4b**). The
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18 physiochemical properties of these two compounds actually were similar. Specifically,
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20 their molecular weight, polar surface area, number of hydrogen bond, and number of
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22 acceptors/donors fitted the ‘Lipinski rule of five’, but the hydrophobicity was too high
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24 (cLogP was more than 5). For obtaining a better description of the real lipophilicity of
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26 a compound which is not neutral in the biological environment, we further calculated
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28 the logD at physiological pH condition. The cLogD values were 4.51 (**4a-10**) and
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30 4.57 (**4a-10**), which were less than 5. Basing on the above data, we used both **4a-10**
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32 and **4a-16** in the further *in vitro* and cellular assays.
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43 **Interactions of MSQ Derivatives with the NRAS RNA G-quadruplex.**

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45 Circular dichroism (CD), ultraviolet visible (UV-vis), and fluorescence spectroscopy
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47 were used here to identify the interactions of **4a-10** and **4a-16** with the NRAS RNA
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49 G-quadruplex. Firstly, we incubated the compounds with the NRQ sequence and
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51 made them anneal to form the G-quadruplex structure in the absence or presence of
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53 potassium. CD spectroscopy was applied to identify the signal of these complex. As
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3 the results showed in **Supplementary Figure S4a** and **S4b**, the NRQ exhibited a
4 positive peak at around 262 nm and a negative peak at around 240 nm, which could
5 be significantly increased by 100 mM potassium. This indicated the formation of the
6 G-quadruplex structure in this oligomer. After the addition of compound **4a-10** and
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8 **4a-16**, the peak at 262 nm was more obvious in the potassium-lack complex and an
9 induced CD (ICD) signal could be observed at around 350 nm.⁴⁷ Both the increased
10 peak and the appearance of induced CD signal in the absence of potassium indicated
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12 **4a-10** and **4a-16** had interactions with the *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex structure.
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14 However, the intensity of the ellipticity in the presence of potassium changed little
15 after the addition of these compounds. This might due to a very stable G-quadruplex
16 structure under this situation, and no conformational change by the compounds.
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18 Besides, the reduction of the ICD signal under this situation might come from the
19 change of binding sites between compounds and the G-quadruplex structures in
20 different conditions.⁴⁷
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24 Then, titration experiments were performed by using both UV-vis and
25 fluorescence spectroscopy. In the UV-vis titration experiments, the concentrations of
26 **4a-10** and **4a-16** were kept at 5 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, and the NRQ oligomer was titrated into the
27 solution. As shown in **Figure 5c** and **5d**, there exhibited a distinct hypochromic effect
28 at both two peaks (340 nm and 428 nm) and a weak blue shift along with the titration
29 of the NRQ oligomer, which indicated a strong π - π interaction between the aromatic
30 planar of compounds and the terminal G-quartets of the *NRAS* RNA quadruplex. In
31 addition, by using a sigmoidal (Hill model) fitting (the insets in **Figure 5c** and **5d**),
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4 K_D values were calculated as $1.47 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol/L}$ (**4a-10**) and $1.98 \pm 0.4 \mu\text{mol/L}$
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6 (**4a-16**).
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11 Furthermore, the fluorescent titration and Job's plot measurements were also
12 applied to obtain more binding information. As showed in **Supplementary Figure**
13 **S5a** and **S5b**, both the compounds exhibited a maximum emission at 542 nm upon an
14 excitation at 430 nm. Contrary to the results in the UV titration, the fluorescent
15 intensity increased upon the increasing of NRQ. By using the sigmoidal fitting
16 (**Supplementary Figure S5c** and **S5d**), the K_D values were calculated as 2.50 ± 0.95
17 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ (**4a-10**) and $0.75 \pm 0.16 \mu\text{mol/L}$ (**4a-16**). These K_D values were similar with
18 those in the UV titration assays. On the other hand, Job's plot analysis was also
19 applied to determine the stoichiometry between the RNA and the compounds. The
20 fitting curve suggested the formation of a 2:1 complex with two **4a-10** for one
21 G-quadruplex, while a 1:1 complex with one **4a-16** for one G-quadruplex
22 (**Supplementary Figure S5e** and **S5f**). The different stoichiometry of **4a-10** and
23 **4a-16** might be due to their different binding sites, which still needs more supportive
24 evidence (study is undergoing and data is not shown in this manuscript).
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45 On the other hand, an important index for G-quadruplex ligands is the changes in
46 melting temperature (ΔT_m) of quadruplex-forming oligomers, which indicates the
47 effects on the thermostability of the nucleic acids. We investigated the melting
48 temperatures (T_m) of the NRQ oligomer in the absence or presence of the compounds
49 by using the CD spectroscopy. The spectrogram at each tested temperatures and the
50 fitted melting curves were shown in **Figure 6**. In the absence of compounds, the T_m
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3 value of the NRQ oligomer was 49.2 ± 0.5 °C, and both **4a-10** and **4a-16** increased
4 the T_m value to 66.7 ± 0.3 °C and 57.1 ± 0.2 °C, respectively. Since we aimed to find a
5 novel RNA G-quadruplex ligand, we further identified the effect of **4a-10** on the
6 thermostabilities of DNA G-quadruplexes, including TBA, RET, and HTG21
7 (**Supplementary Table S1**). As shown in **Supplementary Figure S6**, after the
8 addition of **4a-10**, T_m values of all three oligomers could not show a significant
9 change.

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11 Together with the data from CD spectroscopy, UV and fluorescence titration,
12 **4a-10** and **4a-16** could bind to the NRQ oligomer and stabilize this oligomer. The
13 binding stoichiometry of the two compounds might be a slightly different and **4a-10**
14 showed a stronger ability on stabilization than **4a-16**.

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33 **Repression of NRAS's Translation by the Compounds.** Before all the
34 further cellular experiments, we noticed that the differences of **MSQ** compounds'
35 inhibitory activities on normal cells and cancer cells actually were not obvious in the
36 MTT assay (**Figure 3**). Thus, we evaluated the effect of the strongest compound
37 **4a-10** on cells proliferation by using the real-time cellular analysis (RTCA). As shown
38 in **Supplementary Figure S7**, **4a-10** could inhibit A375 cells' proliferation at low
39 concentrations in 72-hour treatment. However, the situation in primary cultured
40 mouse mesangial cells was complicated. After the addition of **4a-10**, these primary
41 cells quickly showed an inhibition on proliferation but then an increase on
42 proliferation after 36-hour of treatment. At the end of experiment (72 h), the cell
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3 index in **4a-10**-treated groups were even higher than that in the control group, which
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5 indicated that this compound might not inhibit the normal cells' proliferation.
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8 The RNA G-quadruplex plays as a translational repressor for the *NRAS* gene.¹²
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10 Therefore, we investigated the regulation of **4a-10** and **4a-16** on the translation of the
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12 *NRAS* gene in A375 cells by using Western blot assays. As shown in **Figure 7**, **4a-10**
13
14 could repress the translation of *NRAS* while **4a-16** somehow could increase the
15
16 translation. In fact, this was unexpected thus we further verified it in MCF-7, HeLa,
17
18 and A549 cells. As shown in **Supplementary Figure S8**, **4a-10** could also repress the
19
20 expression of *NRAS* in all these cells while **4a-16** could not show effect or even a
21
22 little stimulative effect on *NRAS*'s expression. From the above data in Job's plot
23
24 (**Supplementary Figure S5**), we found the different stoichiometry of **4a-10** and
25
26 **4a-16** thereby different binding sites. The diverse effects of these two compounds on
27
28 *NRAS*'s translation might also imply of this hypothesis because different binding
29
30 sites might cause different interfering effects on proteins' recognition and binding to
31
32 the RNA. Anyway, since we aimed to find out a novel *NRAS* translational repressor
33
34 here, we decided to use only **4a-10** in our further cellular assays. The study on
35
36 detailed effect and mechanism of **4a-16** on *NRAS*'s translation is still in progress
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38 which is not shown in this manuscript anymore.
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47 Moreover, the effect of **4a-10** on *NRAS*'s transcription and translation was
48
49 further identified by using quantitative real time polymerase chain reaction (qRT-PCR)
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51 (**Figure 8a** and **8b**, **Supplementary Figure S9**), Western blot (**Figure 7** and **8c**),
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53 dual-luciferase (**Figure 8d** and **8e**), and RNA immunoprecipitation (RIP) assays
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4 (Figure 8f). The results in qRT-PCR and Western blot indicated that **4a-10** could
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6 inhibit the expression of *NRAS* at a concentration of 0.02 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, but had no effect on
7
8 the transcription of *NRAS* from 0.02 to 0.5 $\mu\text{mol/L}$. To be noted, dual-luciferase assay
9
10 could not be done in A375 cells due to extremely low response values in these cells
11
12 and we used MCF-7 here. In order to be consistent with the dual luciferase
13
14 experiment, the repression effects on *NRAS*'s expression was also confirmed in
15
16 MCF-7 cells (Figure 8c). Dual-luciferase reporter assay was then performed using a
17
18 psicheck2 plasmid carrying the *NRAS* 5'-UTR wild-type or mutant clones
19
20 (Supplementary Table S1) in front of the Renilla luciferase. The same plasmid
21
22 carrying Firefly luciferase was used as an internal control. After transfection these
23
24 plasmids into MCF-7 cells for 6 h, **4a-10** at increasing concentrations was added into
25
26 cells and incubated for another 48 h. The ratio of *Renilla/Firefly* luciferase within the
27
28 plasmid containing the wild-type *NRAS* 5'-UTR decreased to 63.6% at the
29
30 concentration of 0.5 μM (Figure 8d). In contrast, in the mutant group (Figure 8e), the
31
32 results did not change significantly with the increase in concentration. These results
33
34 indicated **4a-10** might repress the translation of the *NRAS* gene by binding to the RNA
35
36 G-quadruplex in the 5'-UTR of *NRAS*.
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45 In general, the switch of G-quadruplex structures and other secondary structures
46
47 in the regulation region will influence on the recognition and binding of
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49 transcriptional factors or translational factors.⁴⁸ For example, nucleic acids unwinding
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51 proteins such as Werner syndrome protein (WRN)¹⁶, Bloom protein (BLM)⁴⁹, Fanconi
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53 anemia-associated DNA helicase (FANCI)⁵⁰, DEAH (Asp-Glu-Ala-His) box RNA
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3 helicase 36 (DHX36)⁵¹, or PIF1⁵², can unfold G-quadruplex structures. Among them,
4
5 the DHX36 RNA helicase binds specifically to the parallel-stranded G-quadruplexes
6
7 in RNAs and resolves them thereby regulating several mRNA-related processes.⁵³⁻⁵⁸
8
9
10 Therefore, we further estimated whether the binding of DHX36 protein to the *NRAS*
11
12 mRNA could be interfered by **4a-10** by using a RIP assay. After incubating the A375
13
14 cells with 2 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ **4a-10**, complexes of the DHX36 antibody with its RNA targets
15
16 were obtained using protein A/G plus agarose beads. The complexes were detected
17
18 via RT-PCR (**Figure 8f**). The amount of DHX36-bound *NRAS* sequences reduced by
19
20 **4a-10**, which indicated that the stabilization of the *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex by
21
22 **4a-10** could interfere with the binding and resolving of the DHX36 protein. This
23
24 might be the major reason for **4a-10** to cause translational repression.
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33 **Cell Cycle Arrest at G₀/G₁ Phase by 4a-10.** Since NRAS protein could
34
35 participate in the process of cell cycle, we then carried out the flow cytometric assay
36
37 to evaluate whether **4a-10** could regulate the cell cycle of A375 cells. After treated
38
39 A375 cells with different concentration of **4a-10** for 24 h, the proportion of cells in
40
41 each phase (G₀/G₁, S and G₂/M) was calculated by flow cytometric. As the results in
42
43 **Figure 9a** and **9b**, the proportion of cells in the G₀/G₁ phase increased while the
44
45 proportion of the G₂/M phase decreased after the treatment of **4a-10**. In other word,
46
47 **4a-10** could arrest A375 cells in the G₀/G₁ phase in a dose-dependent manner, with a
48
49 maximum increase of 13% at the highest concentration of 0.5 μM .
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55 In addition, we concerned whether **4a-10** could effectively be absorbed into the
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4 cells. Therefore, we performed cellular uptake experiment, and found about 65% of
5
6 **4a-10** could be uptaken into A375 cells after 6-hour treatment (**Supplementary**
7
8 **Figure S10**). Besides, as the strong fluorescent character of **4a-10**, we used confocal
9
10 microscopy to determine the cellular internalization of **4a-10**. A375 cells were treated
11
12 with 1.0 μM **4a-10** for 6 h, then cells were fixed and dyed with the nucleus dye
13
14 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI). As shown in **Figure 9c**, **4a-10** mainly
15
16 localized in the cytoplasm. This further supported the credibility of the above cellular
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18 experiments.
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25 ■ CONCLUSIONS

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28 In the present study, we designed and synthesized novel **MSQ** derivatives
29
30 combined the 4-(methylthio) styryl moiety from the RNA-specific chemical probes,
31
32 with the quindoline scaffold for specifically targeting to the *NRAS* RNA G-quadruplex.
33
34 44 novel compounds were synthesized and the binding activities to the RNA
35
36 G-quadruplex and inhibitory activities on tumor cells proliferation were evaluated.
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38 Structure-activity relationships (SAR) analysis suggested that the *p*-(methylthio)styryl
39
40 side chains, especially those introduced at the 2-position, could greatly enhanced the
41
42 binding affinities and selectivity to the RNA G-quadruplex. On the other hand, the
43
44 5-N-positon methylation could improve the G-quadruplex binding affinity with poor
45
46 binding selectivity. According to these data together with other *in vitro* data, we chose
47
48 **4a-10** as the hit to further evaluate its effect on human melanoma cells A375. All the
49
50 *in vitro* and cellular results indicated that **4a-10** could bind and stabilize the RNA
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4 G-quadruplex in *NRAS*'s 5'-UTR region, and thus repressed *NRAS*'s translation and
5
6 arrested the cells at G₀/G₁ phase. We noticed that **4a-10** and **4a-16**, who possessed
7
8 similar binding constants with the NRQ oligomer and similar stabilizing activities,
9
10 showed diverse effects on *NRAS*'s translation. This behavior was unexpected and
11
12 seemed to go against our hypothesis. Actually, the different stoichiometry of **4a-10**
13
14 and **4a-16** might be due to their different binding sites. The diverse effects of these
15
16 two compounds on *NRAS*'s translation might also come from the different binding
17
18 sites since different binding sites might cause different interfering effects on proteins'
19
20 recognition and binding to the RNA. We are trying to figure out the reason and
21
22 thorough studies are still undergoing (data not shown).
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28 From the present study, we found that the experience in DNA G-quadruplex
29
30 ligands design might not be 100% suitable for that in RNA. This is interesting but still
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32 needs more data from structural modification and SAR analysis to confirm. And of
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34 course, accurate and thorough mechanic studies will benefit to concluding the real
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36 modification rule.
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40 Taken together, we herein provided a novel strategy for developing RNA
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42 G-quadruplex ligands from the typical DNA G-quadruplex ligands, which is helpful
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44 for discovery novel RNA G-quadruplex ligands as anti-cancer drugs.
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50 ■ EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

51
52 **General Methods in Synthesis.** All chemicals were purchased from
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54 commercial sources unless otherwise specified. All chemical structures were
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3 confirmed by ^1H and ^{13}C nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra and
4
5 high-resolution mass spectrometer (HRMS). ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra were recorded
6
7 using tetramethylsilane (TMS) as the internal standard in DMSO- d_6 , CD $_3$ OD or
8
9 CDCl $_3$ with a Bruker BioSpin GmbH spectrometer at 400 MHz and 100 MHz,
10
11 respectively. HRMS were obtained with a MAT95XP (Thermo) mass spectrometer.
12
13 Melting points (mp) were determined using an SRS-OptiMelt automated melting
14
15 point instrument without correction. The purity of the synthesized compound was
16
17 confirmed to be higher than 95% by using analytical high-performance liquid
18
19 chromatography (HPLC) performed with a dual pump Shimadzu LC-20 AB system
20
21 equipped with an Ultimate XB-C18 column (4.6 \times 250 mm, 5 μm) and eluted with
22
23 methanol-water (35:65-80:20) containing 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) at a flow
24
25 rate of 0.5 mL/min or 0.2 mL/min.
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32
33 **Synthesis of Intermediates 2a-1, 2a-2, 2b-1, and 2b-2.** The intermediate
34
35 **1a-1, 1a-2, 1b-1, and 1b-2** were prepared following the procedures previously
36
37 reported.⁴⁰ Then, 750 mg of compounds **1a-1, 1a-2, 1b-1, or 1b-2**, 55 mg of
38
39 palladium(II) acetate (0.24 mmol), 230 mg of tri-ortho-tolylphosphine (0.76 mmol),
40
41 1.25 mL *p*-(methylthio)styryl (8.3 mmol), and 7 mL anhydrous triethylamine were
42
43 added to 21-mL anhydrous tetrahydrofuran under argon atmosphere at 0 $^\circ\text{C}$. The
44
45 solution was stirred at 110 $^\circ\text{C}$ for 40 h. The mixture was then cooled to room
46
47 temperature, poured into ice water (200 mL) and extracted with dichloromethane (100
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49 mL \times 3). Then organic layer was collected and washed with water, brine and dried
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51 over anhydrous sodium sulfate. After removing dichloromethane at a reduced pressure,
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3 crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica gel with
4
5 $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}$ (500:1) as eluent to obtain yellow solid in 59% ~ 70% yield.
6
7

8 **General Method for the Synthesis of Intermediates 3a-1, 3a-2, 3b-1**
9
10 **and 3b-2.** 200 mg of compounds **2a-1, 2a-2, 2b-1** or **2b-2**, and 2 g of iodomethane
11
12 (14.09 mmol) were added to 1-mL tetramethylene sulfone. The mixture was stirred at
13
14 68 °C for 48 h. Then cooled to room temperature. 20 mL ether was added to
15
16 precipitate the dark red solid. Solid was filtrated and washed with ether for three times
17
18 and dried by vacuum to obtain red to dark red solid. Yield 75%~80%; Crude products
19
20 used in next step directly.
21
22
23
24

25 **General Method for the Synthesis of Compounds in Series I.** 100 mg
26
27 of compounds **2a-1, 2a-2, 2b-1**, or **2b-2**, 95 mg of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid
28
29 monohydrate (0.5 mmol) were put in a dry sealed tube, then 1 mL amino side chain
30
31 was added. The mixture was stirred at 120 °C for 16~24 h and the reaction was
32
33 monitored intermittently by thin-layer chromatography (TLC). Then the mixture was
34
35 cooled to room temperature. Ice water (20 mL) was poured into the mixture and
36
37 extracted by trichloromethane (30 mL × 3). Then organic layer was collected and
38
39 washed with water, brined and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. After removing
40
41 trichloromethane at a reduced pressure, crude product was purified by column
42
43 chromatography on silica gel with $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}/\text{Et}_3\text{N}$ (250:1:0.1-50:1:0.1) as eluent
44
45 to obtain yellow solid, yield 50% ~ 70%.
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52 **General Method for the Synthesis of Final products series II.** 100 mg
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54 of compounds **3a-1, 3a-2, 3b-1**, or **3b-2**, and 0.25 mL amino side chain were added to
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4 1-mL 2-ethoxyethanol. The mixture was stirred at 120 °C for 24 h. Then the solution
5
6 was cooled to room temperature. 20 mL ether was added to precipitate, and then
7
8 filtered, washed with ether for three times. Purified by recrystallization from MeOH/
9
10 hexane to get orange red to dark red solid, yield 75% ~ 80%.

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12
13 **(E)-11-chloro-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinoline (2a-1).**

14
15 Yield 62%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.34 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 8.29 – 8.21 (m,
16
17 2H), 7.99 (dd, *J* = 9.0, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 3.0 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 3H),
18
19 7.29 (d, *J* = 1.7 Hz, 2H), 7.26 (d, *J* = 3.1 Hz, 2H), 2.54 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz,
20
21 CDCl₃) δ 159.25, 146.64, 146.35, 144.72, 138.67, 136.02, 133.78, 131.13, 130.08,
22
23 129.89, 127.10, 126.61, 126.19, 125.62, 124.12, 123.07, 122.34, 121.52, 120.70,
24
25 112.40, 15.69. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₂₄H₁₆NOSCl, [M+H]⁺, 402.0714, found
26
27 402.0741.

28
29
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31
32
33 **(E)-11-chloro-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinoline (2a-2).**

34
35 Yield 59%. ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.83 (s, 1H), 8.36 – 8.30 (m, 2H), 8.24
36
37 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 8.14 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.71 – 7.57 (m, 5H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 16.4
38
39 Hz, 1H), 7.37 – 7.27 (m, 3H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, DMSO) δ 145.99,
40
41 144.52, 144.06, 138.53, 135.73, 134.13, 130.92, 130.73, 130.21, 130.00, 127.86,
42
43 127.72, 126.51, 124.77, 124.52, 122.06, 121.82, 121.14, 120.79, 118.35, 112.53,
44
45 15.05. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₂₄H₁₆N₂SCl, [M+H]⁺, 401.0874, found 401.0860.

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49
50 **(E)-11-chloro-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinoline (2b-1).**

51
52 Yield 70%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.30 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 8.23 (dd, *J* = 5.1,
53
54 3.6 Hz, 2H), 7.83 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 7.44 (d, *J* = 8.2
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3 Hz, 3H), 7.22 (d, $J = 2.5$ Hz, 2H), 7.19 (d, $J = 3.8$ Hz, 2H), 2.46 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR
4 (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.36, 146.60, 146.17, 137.69, 136.88, 134.22, 132.81, 130.31,
5
6 129.30, 126.16, 126.01, 125.67, 123.98, 123.70, 123.15, 122.77, 122.02, 121.49,
7
8 120.14, 111.48, 14.72. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{16}\text{NOSCl}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 402.0721,
9
10 found 402.0714.
11
12
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14

15
16 **(E)-11-chloro-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinoline(2b-2).**

17
18 Yield 70%. ^1H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.85 (s, 1H), 8.36 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2H),
19
20 8.25 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 1H), 8.07 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.72 – 7.60 (m, 4H), 7.50 (s, 2H),
21
22 7.35 (t, $J = 7.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.31 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (126 MHz,
23
24 DMSO) δ 146.84, 144.80, 144.54, 138.43, 136.35, 134.13, 130.82, 130.45, 129.66,
25
26 127.73, 127.64, 126.51, 124.61, 123.57, 122.98, 122.17, 121.70, 120.76, 118.63,
27
28 112.58, 15.07. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{16}\text{N}_2\text{SCl}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 401.0874, found
29
30 401.0865.
31
32
33
34

35 **(E)- N^1, N^1 -dimethyl- N^2 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,-2b]quinolin-1**

36 **1-yl) ethane-1,2-diamine (4a-1).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with
37
38 2-dimethylaminoethylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-1** as a yellow
39
40 solid. Yield 67%. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.32 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.11 (d, J
41
42 = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (dd, $J = 8.9, 1.3$ Hz, 1H), 7.79 (s, 1H), 7.53 (dt, $J = 12.2, 7.5$ Hz,
43
44 2H), 7.46 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.39 (dd, $J = 10.6, 3.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.27 – 7.20 (m, 3H),
45
46 7.14 (d, $J = 16.3$ Hz, 1H), 5.90 (s, 1H), 4.11 (dd, $J = 11.0, 5.3$ Hz, 2H), 2.75 (t, $J =$
47
48 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.50 (s, 3H), 2.37 (d, $J = 18.0$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ
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50 158.15, 146.91, 146.84, 137.96, 134.57, 134.37, 134.30, 132.73, 130.05, 129.73,
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3 128.22, 127.95, 126.92, 126.72, 125.00, 123.68, 123.01, 121.95, 119.53, 118.32,
4
5 111.83, 58.61, 45.32, 42.53, 15.82. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $C_{28}H_{27}N_3OS$,
6
7 $[M+H]^+$. 454.1948, found 454.1958. HPLC purity: 98.7%.
8
9

10
11 **(E)- N^1,N^1 -diethyl- N^2 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-**
12
13 **yl) ethane-1,2-diamine (4a-2).** Compound **2a-1** was reacted with
14
15 N,N -diethylethylenediamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-2** as a
16
17 yellow solid. Yield 70 %. 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 7.79 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H),
18
19 7.56 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.29 (dd, $J = 13.4, 9.6$ Hz, 3H), 7.04 – 6.95 (m, 2H), 6.92 –
20
21 6.83 (m, 3H), 6.72 (d, $J = 1.5$ Hz, 1H), 6.63 (d, $J = 2.5$ Hz, 2H), 3.68 (dd, $J = 10.0,$
22
23 5.1 Hz, 2H), 2.17 – 2.05 (m, 2H), 1.97 (s, 3H), 1.91 (s, 6H), 1.48 – 1.42 (m, 2H).; ^{13}C
24
25 NMR (101 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 158.16, 146.91, 146.82, 137.98, 134.69, 134.36, 134.30,
26
27 132.70, 129.97, 129.72, 128.19, 127.94, 126.90, 126.74, 125.49, 123.71, 123.00,
28
29 121.98, 119.13, 118.47, 111.83, 52.30, 46.81, 42.37, 15.83, 12.27. HRMS (ESI) m/z :
30
31 calcd for $C_{29}H_{29}N_3OS$, $[M+H]^+$, 468.2104, found 468.2106. HPLC purity: 99.5%.
32
33
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36
37

38
39 **(E)- N^1,N^1 -dimethyl- N^3 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-1**
40
41 **1-yl) propane-1,3-diamine (4a-3).** Compound **2a-1** was reacted with
42
43 3-dimethylaminopropylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-3** as a
44
45 yellow solid. Yield 70%. 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 8.20 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.99
46
47 (d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.80 – 7.72 (m, 2H), 7.43 (dt, $J = 10.0, 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.36 (d, $J =$
48
49 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.15 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.11 – 7.06 (m, 2H),
50
51 6.07 (s, 1H), 3.98 (dd, $J = 10.8, 5.2$ Hz, 2H), 2.80 (t, $J = 5.8$ Hz, 2H), 2.59 (dd, $J =$
52
53 14.1, 7.1 Hz, 4H), 2.39 (s, 3H), 1.04 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, $CDCl_3$)
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4 δ 158.16, 146.91, 146.82, 137.98, 134.69, 134.36, 134.30, 132.70, 129.97, 129.72,
5
6 128.19, 127.94, 126.90, 126.74, 125.49, 123.71, 123.00, 121.98, 119.13, 118.47,
7
8 111.83, 52.30, 46.81, 42.37, 15.83, 12.27. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₃₀H₃₁N₃OS,
9
10 [M+H]⁺, 482.2261, found 482.2266. HPLC purity: 97.7%.

11
12
13 **(E)-11-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]**

14
15 **quinoline (4a-4).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 1-methylpiperazine according to
16
17 general procedure to afford **4a-4** as a yellow-green solid. Yield 68 %. ¹H NMR (400
18
19 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.33 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 8.18 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.93 (d, J = 9.1 Hz,
20
21 1H), 7.58 (dd, J = 20.0, 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.42 (t, J = 7.2 Hz,
22
23 1H), 7.33 – 7.25 (m, 3H), 7.19 (d, J = 16.3 Hz, 1H), 3.80 – 3.64 (m, 4H), 2.79 (s, 4H),
24
25 2.51 (s, 3H), 2.48 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 160.79, 158.65, 147.68,
26
27 147.44, 141.56, 138.17, 137.59, 134.17, 133.85, 130.44, 129.89, 128.78, 128.07,
28
29 127.01, 126.68, 125.19, 124.08, 123.42, 123.13, 122.86, 122.10, 112.08, 55.73, 52.02,
30
31 46.45, 15.78. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₃₀H₃₁N₃OS, [M+H]⁺, 466.1948, found
32
33 466.1935. HPLC purity: 96.9%.

34
35
36 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(piperidin-1-yl)ethyl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quin**

37
38 **olin-11-amine (4a-5).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 2-piperidin-1-ylethanamine
39
40 according to general procedure to afford **4a-5** as a yellow solid. Yield 72 %. ¹H NMR
41
42 (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.36 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 8.15 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.97 (s, 1H),
43
44 7.91 (dd, J = 8.9, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.58 (dt, J = 11.2, 4.5 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, J = 8.4 Hz,
45
46 2H), 7.46 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.30 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.24 (t, J = 10.7 Hz, 2H), 6.35 (s,
47
48 1H), 4.16 (dd, J = 11.1, 5.3 Hz, 2H), 2.85 (t, J = 5.9 Hz, 2H), 2.61 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 4H),
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2.55 (s, 3H), 1.75 (dt, $J = 10.9, 5.6$ Hz, 4H), 1.59 (d, $J = 5.2$ Hz, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.16, 146.83, 146.77, 137.98, 134.74, 134.42, 134.28, 132.68, 129.88, 129.71, 128.11, 127.89, 126.86, 126.71, 125.68, 123.65, 122.99, 121.98, 118.91, 118.48, 111.84, 57.54, 54.18, 41.59, 26.49, 24.49, 15.80. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{31}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 494.2265, found 494.2261. HPLC purity: 98.9%.

(E)-N-(4-fluorophenethyl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine (4a-6). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 4-fluorophenethylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-6** as a yellow solid. Yield 60%. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.48 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.77 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.69 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.54 – 7.44 (m, 2H), 7.43 – 7.29 (m, 5H), 7.14 (t, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 2H), 4.13 (dd, $J = 13.3, 6.6$ Hz, 2H), 3.13 – 3.00 (m, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.84, 147.00, 146.28, 138.15, 135.88, 135.84, 135.27, 134.30, 133.30, 132.68, 131.17, 131.09, 130.60, 129.82, 128.49, 128.07, 127.32, 126.66, 126.60, 123.80, 123.66, 121.91, 120.85, 118.65, 115.70, 115.49, 112.61, 46.89, 36.94, 15.09. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{32}\text{H}_{25}\text{N}_2\text{OFS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 505.1744, found 505.1750. HPLC purity: 96.1%.

(E)-2-((2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-yl)amino)-ethanol (4a-7). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with ethanolamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-7** as a yellow solid. Yield 65 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.65 (s, 1H), 8.26 (s, 1H), 7.99 (s, 2H), 7.77 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.48 (dd, $J = 16.8, 11.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.33 (t, $J = 12.7$ Hz, 3H), 4.98 (s, 1H), 4.08 (d, $J = 5.1$ Hz, 2H), 3.81 (d, $J = 4.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ^{13}C

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2
3 NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.67, 138.23, 134.19, 133.06, 131.09, 128.83, 127.71,
4
5 127.50, 127.38, 126.60, 124.00, 122.24, 121.12, 118.23, 112.81, 99.99, 61.31, 47.84,
6
7 15.05. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₂₆H₂₂N₂O₂S, [M+H]⁺, 427.1475, found 427.1479.
8
9
10 HPLC purity: 95.9%.
11

12
13 **(E)-N-isobutyl-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11a-mine**

14
15 **(4a-8)**. Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 2-methylpropanamine according to general
16
17 procedure to afford **4a-8** as a yellow solid. Yield 68 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO)
18
19 δ 8.56 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.74 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.70 –
20
21 7.63 (m, 1H), 7.59 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 7.49 – 7.41 (m, 2H), 7.37 (d, J = 10.5 Hz, 2H),
22
23 7.31 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 3.76 (s, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 2.16 – 1.99 (m, 1H), 1.04 (d, J =
24
25 6.1 Hz, 6H); ¹³C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 157.72, 147.06, 146.24, 138.08, 135.74,
26
27 134.33, 133.26, 132.60, 130.48, 129.82, 128.36, 128.14, 127.30, 126.64, 126.38,
28
29 123.73, 123.67, 121.86, 121.09, 118.60, 112.58, 52.49, 30.09, 20.52, 15.08. HRMS
30
31 (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₂₈H₂₆N₂OS, [M+H]⁺, 439.1833, found 439.1839. HPLC purity:
32
33 98.4%.
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40
41 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-morpholinoethyl)benzofuro[3,2-b]-quinoli**

42
43 **n-11-amine (4a-9)**. Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 2-morpholin-4-ylethanamine
44
45 according to general procedure to afford **4a-9** as a yellow solid. Yield 72 %. ¹H NMR
46
47 (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.11 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, J =
48
49 8.6 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (s, 1H), 7.39 – 7.26 (m, 2H), 7.24 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.17 (t, J =
50
51 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.03 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.96 (t, J = 11.2 Hz, 2H), 5.79 (s, 1H), 3.91 (dd,
52
53 J = 10.2, 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.59 (s, 4H), 2.62 (d, J = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 2.39 (s, 4H), 2.28 (s,
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3H). ^{13}C NMR (101MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.19, 146.77, 138.18, 134.45, 134.40, 134.12, 132.91, 130.04, 129.86, 128.43, 127.73, 126.90, 126.73, 125.51, 123.56, 123.11, 122.02, 118.79, 118.38, 111.84, 67.35, 57.48, 53.25, 41.28, 15.79. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{29}\text{N}_3\text{O}_2\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 496.2053, found 496.2059. HPLC purity: 99.4%.

(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)benzofuro-[3,2-b]

quinolin-11-amine (4a-10). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **4a-10** as a yellow solid. Yield 75 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.48 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.95 (s, 2H), 7.75 – 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.58 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.45 (dd, $J = 15.9, 8.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.39 – 7.33 (m, 2H), 7.31 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 2H), 4.07 (dd, $J = 13.2, 6.5$ Hz, 2H), 2.83 (t, $J = 6.9$ Hz, 2H), 2.58 (d, $J = 20.0$ Hz, 4H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 1.71 (s, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.09, 146.71, 146.67, 137.90, 134.74, 134.26, 134.24, 132.68, 129.72, 128.10, 127.84, 126.89, 126.66, 125.28, 123.53, 123.01, 122.00, 119.39, 118.34, 111.82, 55.56, 53.95, 43.87, 23.68, 15.79. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{29}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 480.2104, found 480.2104. HPLC purity: 99.1%.

(E)-N-(3-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)propyl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-benzofuro

[3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine (4a-11). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 1-(3-aminopropyl)-4-methylpiperazine according to general procedure to afford **4a-11** as a yellow solid. Yield 78 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.45 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.73 – 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.58 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.45 (dd, $J = 14.6, 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.40 – 7.26 (m, 5H), 4.00 (dd, $J = 13.0, 6.6$ Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 2.48 (d, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 2H), 2.34 (d, $J = 43.3$ Hz, 8H), 2.11 (s, 3H), 1.98 – 1.87 (m, 2H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 158.02, 146.96, 146.82, 138.01, 135.26, 134.26, 134.18, 132.53, 130.02, 129.65, 128.34, 127.93, 126.90, 126.62, 124.84, 123.61, 122.94, 121.91, 120.35, 118.36, 111.81, 58.80, 55.28, 53.83, 46.80, 46.06, 25.69, 15.78. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₃₂H₃₄N₄OS, [M+H]⁺, 523.2526, found 523.2518. HPLC purity: 99.9%.

(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-phenethylbenzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine

(4a-12). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 2-phenylethylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-12** as a yellow solid. Yield 60 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.49 (s, 1H), 8.20 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.02 – 7.92 (m, 2H), 7.77 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.56 – 7.42 (m, 3H), 7.35 (dt, *J* = 15.2, 7.0 Hz, 7H), 7.23 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 4.15 (dd, *J* = 13.9, 6.5 Hz, 2H), 3.16 – 3.02 (m, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.86, 147.03, 146.30, 139.72, 138.14, 135.29, 134.31, 133.31, 132.66, 130.60, 129.83, 129.36, 128.95, 128.47, 128.07, 127.32, 126.67, 126.61, 123.79, 123.70, 121.92, 120.85, 118.67, 112.58, 46.96, 37.89, 15.09. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₃₂H₂₆N₂OS, [M+H]⁺, 487.1839, found 487.1839. HPLC purity: 98.8%.

(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(thiophen-2-yl)ethyl)benzofuro-[3,2-b]

quinolin-11-amine (4a-13). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with thiophene-2-ethylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-13** as a yellow solid. Yield 58 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.18 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.98 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.74 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (s, 1H), 7.44 (d, *J* = 3.5 Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.12 (s, 1H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (t, *J* = 12.1 Hz, 2H),

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4 6.90 – 6.82 (m, 1H), 6.78 (s, 1H), 5.03 (s, 1H), 4.16 (dd, $J = 13.0, 6.5$ Hz, 2H), 3.20 (t,
5
6 $J = 6.6$ Hz, 2H), 2.36 (s, 3H), 1.09 (s, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.23,
7
8 146.96, 146.78, 141.01, 138.11, 134.17, 134.09, 133.57, 133.02, 130.10, 129.95,
9
10 128.42, 127.68, 127.23, 126.90, 126.69, 125.84, 125.47, 124.34, 123.50, 123.20,
11
12 121.98, 118.68, 118.28, 111.96, 46.98, 31.66, 15.78. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C_{30}
13
14 $\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{OS}_2$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 493.1403, found 493.1408. HPLC purity: 93.3%.

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18 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-((tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)methyl)benzofuro[3,**
19
20 **2-b] quinolin-11-amine (4a-14).** Compound **2a-1** was reacted with
21
22 tetrahydrofurfurylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-14** as a yellow
23
24 solid. Yield 60 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.31 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.09 (d, J
25
26 = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.86 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.78 (s, 1H), 7.60 – 7.47 (m, 2H), 7.40 (dd, J
27
28 = 17.7, 7.6 Hz, 3H), 7.23 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2H), 7.12 (t, $J = 15.2$ Hz, 2H), 5.52 (s, 1H),
29
30 4.35 (dd, $J = 12.0, 6.6$ Hz, 2H), 4.07 – 3.97 (m, 1H), 3.89 (dd, $J = 14.0, 6.7$ Hz, 2H),
31
32 2.51 (s, 3H), 2.24 – 2.09 (m, 2H), 2.05 – 1.94 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ
33
34 158.03, 146.73, 137.93, 134.29, 134.21, 134.12, 132.89, 129.92, 129.77, 128.24,
35
36 127.76, 126.88, 126.67, 125.17, 123.53, 123.09, 121.97, 119.17, 118.20, 111.81,
37
38 78.50, 68.30, 49.41, 28.84, 25.99, 15.79. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{26}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}$,
39
40 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 467.1788, found 467.1785. HPLC purity: 95.0%.

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47 **(E)- N^1, N^1 -diethyl- N^3 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-**
48
49 **yl) propane-1,3-diamine (4a-15).** Compound **2a-1** was reacted with
50
51 3-diethylaminopropylamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-15** as a
52
53 yellow solid. Yield 68 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.41 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, $J = 7.6$
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3 Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.73 – 7.64 (m, 2H), 7.57 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 3H), 7.46 (t, $J = 7.2$
4
5 Hz, 1H), 7.42 – 7.26 (m, 4H), 4.00 (dd, $J = 12.2, 6.1$ Hz, 2H), 2.62 (t, $J = 6.2$ Hz, 2H),
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7
8 2.57 – 2.51 (m, 7H), 2.01 – 1.82 (m, 2H), 0.98 (t, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101
9
10 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.05, 147.06, 146.82, 137.87, 135.69, 134.42, 134.23, 132.28,
11
12 129.85, 129.51, 128.00, 127.79, 126.79, 126.72, 125.05, 123.74, 122.83, 121.91,
13
14 120.47, 118.40, 111.79, 53.68, 47.45, 47.30, 25.64, 15.82, 11.67. HRMS (ESI) m/z :
15
16 calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{33}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 496.2417, found 496.2425. HPLC purity: 99.7%.
17
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20
21 **(E)-N-(2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[**
22
23 **3,2-b] quinolin-11-amine (4a-16).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with
24
25 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl) ethanamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-16**
26
27 as a yellow solid. Yield 72 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.41 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, J
28
29 = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.73 – 7.64 (m, 2H), 7.57 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 3H), 7.46 (t, $J =$
30
31 = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.42 – 7.26 (m, 4H), 4.00 (dd, $J = 12.2, 6.1$ Hz, 2H), 2.62 (t, $J = 6.2$ Hz,
32
33 2H), 2.57 – 2.51 (m, 7H), 2.01 – 1.82 (m, 2H), 0.98 (t, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR
34
35 (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.20, 146.86, 138.09, 134.54, 134.22, 132.76, 130.04, 129.80,
36
37 128.20, 127.89, 126.88, 126.70, 125.60, 123.64, 123.05, 121.97, 118.86, 118.47,
38
39 111.86, 56.74, 55.65, 52.65, 46.23, 41.51, 15.78. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for
40
41 $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{32}\text{N}_4\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 509.2370, found 509.2372. HPLC purity: 99.7%.
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48 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(3-morpholinopropyl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinol**
49
50 **in-11-amine (4a-17).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 3-morpholinopropylamine
51
52 according to general procedure to afford **4a-17** as a yellow solid. Yield 72 %. ^1H
53
54 NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.24 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.03 (d, $J = 9.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.84 (d,
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4 $J = 7.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.43 (s, 2H), 7.37 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.30 (t, $J = 7.3$ Hz, 1H), 7.17
5
6 (d, $J = 5.7$ Hz, 3H), 7.07 (d, $J = 16.2$ Hz, 1H), 6.75 (s, 1H), 4.14 (dd, $J = 10.9, 5.4$ Hz,
7
8 2H), 3.89 – 3.74 (m, 4H), 2.62 – 2.56 (m, 2H), 2.51 (s, 4H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 1.98 – 1.88
9
10 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.06, 146.89, 146.84, 138.07, 135.13,
11
12 134.21, 134.17, 132.64, 130.09, 129.69, 128.35, 127.45, 126.82, 126.75, 124.76,
13
14 123.61, 122.98, 121.93, 120.18, 118.26, 111.80, 66.86, 59.08, 54.21, 46.66, 25.25,
15
16 15.76. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{31}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 510.2210, found 510.2210.
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HPLC purity: 99.3%.

(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-morpholinobenzofuro[3,2-b]quino-line

(4a-18). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with morpholine according to general procedure to afford **4a-18** as a yellow solid. Yield 66 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.37 (s, 1H), 8.19 (s, 2H), 7.99 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.70 – 7.58 (m, 2H), 7.53 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.47 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.29 (dd, $J = 12.2, 7.9$ Hz, 3H), 7.25 (s, 1H), 4.13 – 4.04 (m, 4H), 3.70 (s, 4H), 2.53 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.69, 147.83, 147.50, 141.58, 138.30, 137.00, 134.10, 134.08, 130.53, 130.05, 128.96, 127.93, 127.02, 126.67, 125.26, 124.04, 123.52, 123.13, 122.58, 122.10, 112.07, 67.59, 52.49, 15.77. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{28}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 453.1631, found 453.1634. HPLC purity: 99.8%.

(E)-N1-(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-yl)ethan-e-1,2-diamine (4a-19)

(4a-19). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with ethylenediamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-19** as a yellow solid. Yield 78 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.52 (s, 1H), 8.18 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.95 (s, 2H), 7.75 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz,

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4 1H), 7.66 (t, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.45 (dd, $J = 12.9, 5.5$ Hz,
5
6 1H), 7.38 (d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.31 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.25 (s, 1H), 4.02 – 3.93 (m,
7
8 2H), 2.96 (t, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.12,
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10 146.86, 138.00, 134.40, 134.25, 132.90, 130.09, 129.79, 128.29, 127.84, 126.91,
11
12 126.71, 125.18, 123.61, 123.07, 121.94, 119.21, 118.36, 111.86, 47.46, 42.05, 15.81.
13
14 HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 426.1635, found 426.1632. HPLC
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purity: 99.8%.

(E)- N^1 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-yl)propane-1,3-diamine (4a-20). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with trimethylenediamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-20** as a yellow solid. Yield 80%. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.49 (s, 1H), 8.18 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.95 (s, 2H), 7.74 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.66 (t, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.45 (dd, $J = 14.4, 6.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.41 – 7.24 (m, 4H), 4.03 (t, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 2H), 2.81 (t, $J = 6.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.50 (s, 5H), 1.94 – 1.83 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (101MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.09, 146.96, 146.87, 137.89, 135.18, 134.35, 134.09, 132.51, 129.91, 129.63, 128.08, 127.98, 126.87, 126.72, 125.20, 123.67, 122.93, 121.91, 119.89, 118.36, 111.83, 45.93, 41.40, 32.12, 15.83. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{25}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 440.1791, found 440.1781. HPLC purity: 99.6%.

(E)- $\text{N}^1, \text{N}^1, \text{N}^3$ -trimethyl- N^3 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]-quinolin-11-yl)propane-1,3-diamine (4a-21). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with *N,N,N*-Trimethyl-1,3-propanediamine according to general procedure to afford **4a-21** as a yellow solid. Yield 60 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.35 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H),

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3 8.25 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.95 (dd, $J = 8.9, 1.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.61 (q, $J = 8.2$
4 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.44 (dd, $J = 10.9, 4.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.30 (dd, $J = 15.9,$
5 12.4 Hz, 3H), 7.22 (d, $J = 16.3$ Hz, 1H), 3.65 (t, $J = 7.3$ Hz, 2H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 2.53 (s,
6 3H), 2.37 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 2H), 2.19 (s, 6H), 1.89 (dt, $J = 14.5, 7.4$ Hz, 2H). ^{13}C NMR
7 (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.58, 147.65, 147.50, 142.19, 138.62, 138.09, 134.27, 133.79,
8 130.31, 129.88, 128.63, 128.16, 126.97, 126.72, 125.24, 124.94, 123.39, 123.35,
9 123.22, 122.07, 112.03, 57.39, 54.28, 45.57, 42.22, 26.36, 15.80. HRMS (ESI) m/z :
10 calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{31}\text{N}_3\text{OS}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 482.2261, found 482.2255. HPLC purity: 96.7%.

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23 **(E)-2-(4-(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-yl)pi-perazin-**
24 **1-yl) ethan-1-ol (4a-22).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with
25
26 N -(2-hydroxyethyl)piperazine according to general procedure to afford **4a-22** as a
27 yellow solid. Yield 65 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.25 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H),
28 8.19 (s, 1H), 8.11 (s, 2H), 7.80 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 1H), 7.72 (t, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, J
29 = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (dd, $J = 21.2, 12.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.39 (d, $J = 16.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.30 (d, J
30 = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 4.52 (s, 1H), 3.63 (t, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 6H), 2.84 (s, 4H), 2.61 (s, 2H), 2.52
31 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 158.48, 147.43, 147.17, 141.10, 138.29,
32 137.81, 134.32, 134.20, 131.38, 130.18, 129.23, 128.27, 127.69, 126.46, 125.54,
33 124.27, 123.92, 123.56, 123.08, 122.12, 112.86, 60.87, 59.09, 54.12, 52.32, 15.07.
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HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{29}\text{N}_3\text{O}_2\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 496.2053, found 496.2046.
HPLC purity: 98.8%.

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(E)-2-(2-((2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-yl)am-ino)ethoxy) ethan-1-ol (4a-23). Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with

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4 2-(2-aminoethoxy)ethanol according to general procedure to afford **4a-23** as a yellow
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6 green solid. Yield 66 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.53 (s, 1H), 8.20 (d, *J* = 7.6
7
8 Hz, 1H), 7.97 (s, 2H), 7.75 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.71 – 7.65 (m, 1H), 7.59 (d, *J* = 8.4
9
10 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (dd, *J* = 13.6, 6.2 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (s, 1H), 7.36 (s, 1H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.3
11
12 Hz, 2H), 4.64 (t, *J* = 4.6 Hz, 1H), 4.14 (dd, *J* = 11.7, 5.9 Hz, 2H), 3.82 (t, *J* = 5.9 Hz,
13
14 2H), 3.53 (s, 4H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 157.81, 146.90, 146.21,
15
16 138.34, 138.14, 135.50, 134.29, 133.37, 130.61, 129.75, 128.50, 128.02, 127.33,
17
18 126.63, 123.83, 123.59, 121.91, 120.90, 118.64, 112.67, 72.78, 70.68, 60.71, 44.92,
19
20 15.07. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₂₈H₂₂N₂O₃S, [M+H]⁺, 471.1737, found 471.1722.
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HPLC purity: 95.0%.

(E)-2-((2-((2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11yl)amino)eth
yl) amino)ethan-1-ol (**4a-24**). Compound **2a-1** was reacted with
2-(2-aminoethylamino)ethanol according to general procedure to afford **4a-24** as a
yellow green solid. Yield 67 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.50 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d, *J*
= 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.74 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d,
J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (dd, *J* = 13.9, 6.6 Hz, 1H), 7.38 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (d, *J*
= 8.3 Hz, 3H), 4.54 (s, 1H), 4.04 (dd, *J* = 12.0, 6.1 Hz, 2H), 3.50 (t, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H),
2.99 (t, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 2H), 2.72 (t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz,
DMSO) δ 157.80, 147.02, 146.24, 145.26, 138.10, 135.65, 134.33, 133.38, 132.60,
129.81, 128.41, 128.10, 127.31, 126.66, 126.45, 123.75, 123.68, 121.87, 121.02,
118.65, 112.63, 60.98, 51.99, 50.29, 45.34, 15.09. HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₂₈
H₂₇N₃O₂S, [M+H]⁺, 470.1897, found 470.1899. HPLC purity: 96.6%.

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4 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-(4-(pyridin-2-yl)piperazin-1-yl)benz-ofuro[3,**
5
6 **2-b]quinoline (4a-25).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with 1-pyridin-2-ylpiperazine
7
8 according to general procedure to afford **4a-25** as a yellow green solid. Yield 68 %.
9
10 ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.28 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 8.23 – 8.08 (m, 3H), 7.90 (d,
11
12 *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.58 – 7.46 (m, 3H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.37 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz,
13
14 1H), 7.22 (d, *J* = 18.4 Hz, 3H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 16.3 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 1H),
15
16 6.67 – 6.60 (m, 1H), 3.85 (s, 4H), 3.72 (t, *J* = 4.6 Hz, 4H), 2.44 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR
17
18 (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 159.71, 158.71, 148.10, 147.80, 147.51, 141.58, 141.56, 138.24,
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20 137.66, 137.29, 134.10, 130.51, 130.03, 128.93, 127.97, 127.03, 126.69, 125.35,
21
22 124.11, 123.50, 123.17, 122.68, 122.12, 113.82, 112.08, 107.49, 52.02, 46.18, 15.79.
23
24 HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calcd for C₃₃ H₂₈ N₄ OS, [M+H]⁺, 529.2057, found 529.2047. HPLC
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26 purity: 99.9%.
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33 **(E)-N-(3-(1H-imidazol-1-yl)propyl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]**
34 **quinolin-11-amine (4a-26).** Compounds **2a-1** was reacted with
35
36 N-(3-aminopropyl)-imidazole according to general procedure to afford **4a-26** as a
37
38 yellow green solid. Yield 70 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.14 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz,
39
40 1H), 7.94 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (s, 1H), 7.47 – 7.17 (m,
41
42 7H), 7.06 – 6.98 (m, 3H), 6.96 (s, 1H), 6.81 (s, 1H), 4.95 (s, 1H), 4.03 (t, *J* = 6.7 Hz,
43
44 2H), 3.90 (dd, *J* = 13.5, 6.7 Hz, 2H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 2.22 – 2.13 (m, 2H). ¹³C NMR
45
46 (101MHz, CDCl₃) δ 158.06, 146.84, 146.58, 138.15, 137.21, 134.06, 133.75, 133.73,
47
48 133.19, 130.08, 129.93, 129.85, 128.53, 127.49, 126.88, 126.60, 125.50, 123.29,
49
50 121.96, 119.01, 118.89, 118.14, 111.94, 99.99, 44.72, 42.80, 32.59, 15.72. HRMS
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(ESI) m/z: calcd for C₃₀ H₂₆N₄OS, [M+H]⁺, 491.1900, found 491.1904. HPLC purity: 99.8%.

(E)-N-(2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)-3-(4-(methylthio)styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine (4b-1). Compound **2b-1** was reacted with 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl)ethanamine according to general procedure to afford **4b-1** as a yellow solid. Yield 72 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.30 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 8.20 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 8.09 (s, 1H), 7.81 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.76 – 7.55 (m, 4H), 7.45 (dt, *J* = 24.3, 12.0 Hz, 3H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.20 (t, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 1H), 4.02 (dd, *J* = 11.9, 5.6 Hz, 2H), 2.72 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H), 2.54 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 2.39 (s, 4H), 2.19 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 157.80, 147.77, 146.78, 138.33, 137.22, 135.59, 134.19, 133.17, 130.59, 129.54, 127.78, 127.60, 126.52, 123.75, 123.63, 122.99, 121.95, 121.22, 117.70, 112.59, 100.01, 58.79, 55.15, 53.14, 46.01, 42.38, 15.07. HRMS (ESI) m/z: calcd for C₃₁ H₃₂N₄OS, [M+H]⁺, 509.2370, found 509.2390. HPLC purity: 95.3%.

(E)-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-benzofuro-[3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine. (4b-2). Compound **2b-1** was reacted with 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **4b-2** as a yellow solid. Yield 74 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.33 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 8.20 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.08 (s, 1H), 7.81 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.76 – 7.58 (m, 4H), 7.45 (dt, *J* = 24.3, 12.0 Hz, 3H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 3H), 4.05 (dd, *J* = 13.0, 6.5 Hz, 2H), 2.87 (s, 2H), 2.65 (s, 4H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 1.73 (s, 4H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.80, 147.79, 146.81, 138.32, 137.22, 135.48, 134.19, 133.06, 130.58, 129.53, 127.79,

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4 127.75, 127.60, 126.52, 123.75, 123.63, 123.11, 121.95, 121.20, 117.69, 112.60,
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6 56.74, 54.28, 43.94, 23.64, 15.07. HRMS (ESI) m/z: calcd for C₃₀H₂₉N₃OS, [M+H]⁺,
7
8 480.2104, found 480.2104. HPLC purity: 99.9%.
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11 **(E)-N¹,N¹-dimethyl-N²-(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]-quinolin-**
12
13 **11-yl)ethane-1,2-diamine (4c-1).** Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
14
15 2-dimethylaminoethylamine according to general procedure to afford **4c-1** as a yellow
16
17 solid. Yield 74 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.40 (s, 1H), 8.40 (s, 1H), 8.23 (d,
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19 *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.63 – 7.50 (m,
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21 *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.63 – 7.50 (m,
22
23 4H), 7.37 (d, *J* = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.22 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.57
24
25 (t, *J* = 28.0 Hz, 1H), 3.91 (dd, *J* = 11.4, 5.5 Hz, 2H), 2.67 (s, 2H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 2.31
26
27 (s, 6H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 145.92, 145.28, 143.56, 137.80, 136.04,
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29 134.56, 131.68, 129.88, 128.90, 128.69, 127.62, 127.25, 126.72, 124.38, 122.42,
30
31 121.33, 120.97, 120.18, 119.31, 118.01, 112.33, 60.24, 45.90, 44.02, 15.19. HRMS
32
33 (ESI) m/z: calcd for C₂₈H₂₈N₄S, [M+H]⁺, 453.2107, found 453.2107. HPLC purity:
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35 99.9%.
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41 **(E)-N¹,N¹-dimethyl-N³-(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]-quinolin-**
42
43 **11-yl)propane-1,3-diamine (4c-2).** Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
44
45 3-dimethylaminopropylamine according to general procedure to afford **4c-2** as a
46
47 yellow solid. Yield 73 %. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.97 (s, 1H), 8.47 (s, 1H),
48
49 8.24 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.88 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.51-7.58
50
51 (m, 4H), 7.36 (s, 2H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.21 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 6.76 (t, *J* =
52
53 6.4 Hz, 1H), 3.87 (dd, *J* = 12.0, 6.4 Hz, 2H), 2.57 (t, *J* = 5.9 Hz, 2H), 2.51 (s, 3H),
54
55 6.4 Hz, 1H), 3.87 (dd, *J* = 12.0, 6.4 Hz, 2H), 2.57 (t, *J* = 5.9 Hz, 2H), 2.51 (s, 3H),
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3 2.32 (s, 6H), 1.99 – 1.86 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 146.01, 145.28,
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5 143.53, 137.80, 136.70, 134.56, 131.60, 129.81, 128.90, 128.68, 127.55, 127.19,
6
7 126.73, 124.54, 122.51, 121.34, 120.92, 120.14, 119.21, 118.01, 112.25, 55.68, 44.97,
8
9 42.95, 28.03, 15.18. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{30}\text{N}_4\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 467.2264,
10
11 found 467.2274. HPLC purity: 95.0%.

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15 **(E)- N^1,N^1 -diethyl- N^2 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-11**
16 **-yl)ethane-1,2-diamine (4c-3).** Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
17
18 N,N-diethylethylenediamine according to general procedure to afford **4c-3** as a yellow
19
20 solid. Yield 73 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.77 (s, 1H), 8.40 (s, 1H), 8.23 (d,
21
22 $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.88 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.61 – 7.51 (m,
23
24 4H), 7.36 (s, 2H), 7.31 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.24 – 7.19 (m, 1H), 6.68 (t, $J = 6.0$ Hz,
25
26 1H), 3.89 (dd, $J = 11.5, 5.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.81 (t, $J = 5.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.65 (q, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 4H),
27
28 2.52 (s, 3H), 1.00 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 145.91, 145.25,
29
30 143.47, 137.83, 136.21, 134.54, 131.61, 129.83, 128.91, 128.62, 127.61, 127.21,
31
32 126.73, 124.59, 122.57, 121.39, 120.61, 120.16, 119.28, 117.89, 112.16, 54.35, 47.58,
33
34 44.48, 15.18, 11.98. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{32}\text{N}_4\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 481.2420,
35
36 found 481.2428. HPLC purity: 97.1%.

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45 **(E)- N^1,N^1 -diethyl- N^3 -(2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-11**
46 **-yl)propane-1,3-diamine (4c-4).** Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
47
48 3-diethylaminopropylamine according to general procedure to afford **4c-4** as a yellow
49
50 solid. Yield 73 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.34 (s, 1H), 8.42 (s, 1H), 8.23 (d,
51
52 $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.97 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.88 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.55 (t, $J = 8.7$ Hz,
53
54 1H), 3.89 (dd, $J = 11.5, 5.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.81 (t, $J = 5.7$ Hz, 2H), 2.65 (q, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 4H),
55
56 2.52 (s, 3H), 1.00 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 145.91, 145.25,
57
58 143.47, 137.83, 136.21, 134.54, 131.61, 129.83, 128.91, 128.62, 127.61, 127.21,
59
60 126.73, 124.59, 122.57, 121.39, 120.61, 120.16, 119.28, 117.89, 112.16, 54.35, 47.58,
44.48, 15.18, 11.98. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{32}\text{N}_4\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 481.2420,
found 481.2428. HPLC purity: 97.1%.

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4 4H), 7.38 – 7.27 (m, 4H), 7.21 (t, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 6.85 (s, 1H), 3.90 (dd, $J = 12.3, 6.4$
5
6 Hz, 2H), 2.62 (dt, $J = 14.0, 6.4$ Hz, 6H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 2.00 – 1.84 (m, 2H), 0.98 (t, J
7
8 = 7.0 Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 146.06, 145.38, 143.40, 137.83,
9
10 136.56, 134.56, 131.56, 129.86, 128.90, 128.62, 127.56, 127.17, 126.75, 124.49,
11
12 122.59, 121.35, 121.06, 119.76, 119.31, 117.89, 112.18, 49.53, 46.82, 43.65, 27.90,
13
14 15.18, 11.46. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{34}\text{N}_4\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 495.2577, found
15
16 495.2566. HPLC purity: 95.1%.
17
18
19

20
21 **(E)-N-(2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10-H-indol**
22
23 **o [3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine (4c-5)**. Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
24
25 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl)ethanamine according to general procedure to afford **4c-5**
26
27 as a yellow solid. Yield 73 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.17 (s, 1H), 8.40 (s,
28
29 1H), 8.23 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.98 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.64
30
31 – 7.51 (m, 4H), 7.38 (s, 2H), 7.31 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.22 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 1H), 6.56 (s,
32
33 1H), 3.91 (dd, $J = 11.6, 5.8$ Hz, 2H), 2.70 (t, $J = 5.9$ Hz, 2H), 2.52 (s, 7H), 2.35 (s,
34
35 4H), 2.13 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 145.74, 145.08, 143.48, 137.89,
36
37 136.23, 134.48, 131.74, 129.69, 129.00, 128.57, 127.71, 127.23, 126.67, 124.71,
38
39 122.38, 121.40, 120.78, 120.32, 119.44, 118.18, 112.36, 58.30, 55.18, 53.34, 46.16,
40
41 43.42, 15.13. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{33}\text{N}_5\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 508.2529, found
42
43 508.2528. HPLC purity: 98.6%.
44
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49

50 **(E)-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-10H-indolo-[3,2-b]**
51
52 **quinolin-11-amine (4c-6)**. Compounds **2a-2** was reacted with
53
54 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **4c-5** as a yellow
55
56
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58
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60

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4 solid. Yield 75 %. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.48 (s, 1H), 8.43 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d,
5
6 $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.98 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.89 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.56 (dd, $J = 16.0$,
7
8 6.8 Hz, 4H), 7.36 (s, 2H), 7.30 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.21 (dt, $J = 13.2$, 4.1 Hz, 1H),
9
10 6.64 (t, $J = 6.1$ Hz, 1H), 3.93 (dd, $J = 12.1$, 6.0 Hz, 2H), 2.84 (t, $J = 6.1$ Hz, 2H), 2.61
11
12 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 1.73 (s, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 145.94, 145.29,
13
14 143.52, 137.83, 136.11, 134.53, 131.66, 129.85, 128.96, 128.64, 127.60, 127.22,
15
16 126.69, 124.54, 122.47, 121.37, 120.89, 120.24, 119.32, 118.07, 112.20, 56.79, 54.43,
17
18 45.02, 23.73, 15.14. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{30}\text{N}_4\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 479.2264,
19
20 found 479.2279. HPLC purity: 95.7%.

21
22
23
24
25 **(E)-N-(2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-10-H-indol**

26
27
28 **o [3,2-b]quinolin-11-amine (4d-1).** Compounds **2b-2** was reacted with
29
30 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl)ethanamine according to general procedure to afford **4d-1**
31
32 as a yellow solid. Yield 75%. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.30 (s, 1H), 8.30 (dd, J
33
34 = 11.9, 8.5 Hz, 2H), 8.11 (d, $J = 1.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.81 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.64 (d, $J =$
35
36 = 11.9, 8.5 Hz, 2H), 8.11 (d, $J = 1.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.81 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 7.64 (d, $J =$
37
38 8.5 Hz, 3H), 7.58 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.44 (s, 2H), 7.31 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.25 (t, J
39
40 = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (s, 1H), 3.94 (dd, $J = 11.4$, 5.5 Hz, 2H), 2.72 (t, $J = 5.9$ Hz, 2H),
41
42 2.56 (s, 3H), 2.52 (s, 4H), 2.41 (s, 4H), 2.20 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ
43
44 144.74, 144.57, 143.35, 138.19, 137.27, 136.27, 134.27, 129.26, 129.12, 128.02,
45
46 127.55, 126.55, 122.73, 121.65, 121.34, 120.58, 119.70, 119.58, 116.92, 112.55,
47
48 99.99, 58.19, 54.89, 53.03, 45.81, 43.41, 15.13. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C_{31}
49
50 $\text{H}_{33}\text{N}_5\text{S}$, $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, 508.2529, found 508.2523. HPLC purity: 97.3%.

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54
55 **(E)-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-N-(2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]**

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3
4 **quinolin-11-amine (4d-2)**. Compounds **2b-2** was reacted with
5
6 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **4d-2** as a yellow
7
8 solid. Yield 78%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.49 (s, 1H), 8.27 (dd, $J = 19.2, 8.4$
9
10 Hz, 2H), 8.11 (d, $J = 1.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.80 – 7.72 (m, 1H), 7.62 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.58
11
12 – 7.50 (m, 2H), 7.42 (s, 2H), 7.29 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.22 (ddd, $J = 7.9, 6.7, 4.0$ Hz,
13
14 1H), 6.60 (t, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.90 (dd, $J = 12.1, 6.0$ Hz, 2H), 2.82 (t, $J = 6.1$ Hz, 2H),
15
16 2.60 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 1.72 (s, 4H). ¹³C NMR (101MHz, DMSO) δ 146.46, 145.85,
17
18 143.48, 138.01, 136.09, 135.50, 134.41, 128.99, 128.56, 128.29, 128.01, 127.49,
19
20 126.56, 122.52, 122.36, 121.44, 120.29, 120.06, 119.30, 117.31, 112.23, 56.73, 54.40,
21
22 44.92, 23.71, 15.11. . HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₃₀H₃₀N₄S, [M+H]⁺, 479.2264,
23
24 found 479.2279. HPLC purity: 96.6%.

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30 **(E)-5-methyl-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-((2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)am-ino)**
31
32 **benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5a-10)**. Compounds **3a-1** was reacted with
33
34 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **5a-10** as an
35
36 orange solid. Yield 79%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.89 (s, 1H), 8.67 (d, $J = 8.1$
37
38 Hz, 1H), 8.43 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 8.33 (d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, 1H), 8.01 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H),
39
40 7.95 (t, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.74 – 7.56 (m, 4H), 7.37 (d, $J = 16.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, $J =$
41
42 8.2 Hz, 2H), 4.62 (s, 3H), 4.43 (s, 2H), 2.51 (d, $J = 4.1$ Hz, 9H), 1.91 (s, 4H). ¹³C
43
44 NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 159.02, 157.25, 142.41, 139.17, 138.64, 137.80, 135.04,
45
46 133.49, 133.30, 132.24, 131.90, 131.17, 127.64, 126.47, 125.92, 125.48, 125.20,
47
48 121.35, 119.04, 117.59, 117.46, 113.66, 54.35, 38.22, 23.67, 14.90. HRMS (ESI) m/z :
49
50 calcd for C₃₁H₃₁N₃OS, [M-I]⁺, 494.2261, found 494.2272. HPLC purity: 95.4%.

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4 **(E)-5-methyl-11-((2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)amino)-2-(4-(methylthio)st**
5
6 **ryl) benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5a-16)**. Compounds **3a-1** was reacted
7
8 with 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl)ethanamine according to general procedure to afford
9
10 **5a-16** as an orange solid. Yield 80%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 9.88 (s, 1H),
11
12 8.95 (s, 1H), 8.58 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 8.27 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.17 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz,
13
14 1H), 7.88 (dd, $J = 20.5, 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.69 – 7.45 (m, 4H), 7.35 – 7.17 (m, 3H), 4.51 (s,
15
16 3H), 4.24 (d, $J = 5.2$ Hz, 2H), 2.84 – 2.76 (m, 2H), 2.60 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 2.29 (s,
17
18 4H), 2.12 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 156.96, 142.62, 138.90, 137.90,
19
20 137.72, 134.69, 133.55, 132.88, 132.30, 131.76, 130.82, 130.80, 127.50, 126.35,
21
22 125.73, 125.17, 125.03, 121.70, 118.59, 117.47, 113.47, 58.56, 55.26, 53.35, 46.19,
23
24 43.66, 37.96, 14.94. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for C₃₂ H₃₄ N₄ OS, [M-I]⁺, 523.2526,
25
26 found 523.2506. HPLC purity: 98.6%.

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31
32 **(E)-5-methyl-11-((2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)amino)-3-(p-(methylthio)**
33
34 **styryl)benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5b-1)**. Compounds **3b-1** was reacted
35
36 with 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl) ethanamine according to general procedure to afford
37
38 **5b-1** as an orange solid. Yield 80%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 9.17 (s, 1H), 8.64
39
40 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.55 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.26 (s, 1H), 7.98 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H),
41
42 7.91 (s, 2H), 7.64 (s, 1H), 7.52 (dd, $J = 21.1, 12.0$ Hz, 3H), 7.37 (d, $J = 16.1$ Hz, 1H),
43
44 7.19 (d, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 2H), 4.55 (s, 3H), 4.15 (s, 2H), 3.13 (s, 4H), 2.87 (s, 4H), 2.75 (s,
45
46 5H), 2.47 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.06, 142.67, 142.23, 139.56,
47
48 139.01, 138.81, 133.12, 132.91, 131.91, 127.73, 126.08, 125.88, 125.40, 125.14,
49
50 124.73, 123.21, 117.26, 115.82, 115.54, 113.62, 57.32, 53.42, 50.48, 43.09, 43.01,
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38.31, 14.84. calcd for $C_{32}H_{34}N_4OS$, $[M-I]^+$, 523.2526, found 523.2514. HPLC purity: 98.6%.

(E)-5-methyl-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-((2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-amino) benzofuro[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5b-2). Compounds **3b-1** was reacted with 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **5b-2** as an orange solid. Yield 80%. 1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 9.31 (s, 1H), 8.67 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1H), 8.61 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 1H), 8.36 (s, 1H), 8.08 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.00 – 7.87 (m, 2H), 7.76 – 7.58 (m, 4H), 7.50 (d, $J = 16.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 4.57 (s, 3H), 4.21 (t, $J = 5.9$ Hz, 2H), 2.92 (s, 2H), 2.64 (s, 4H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 1.72 (s, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 157.04, 142.60, 142.33, 139.65, 139.09, 138.73, 133.17, 133.11, 133.02, 131.97, 127.77, 126.21, 126.01, 125.35, 125.09, 124.71, 123.13, 117.32, 115.72, 113.55, 56.18, 54.26, 44.98, 38.08, 23.71, 14.84. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $C_{31}H_{31}N_3OS$, $[M-I]^+$, 494.2261 found 494.2268. HPLC purity: 96.8%.

(E)-5-methyl-11-((2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)amino)-2-(4-(methylthio)styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5c-5). Compounds **3a-2** was reacted with 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl) ethanamine according to general procedure to afford **5c-5** as a red solid. Yield 82%. 1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 12.66 (s, 1H), 8.80 (s, 1H), 8.70 (s, 1H), 8.56 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H), 8.35 (d, $J = 9.3$ Hz, 1H), 8.24 (d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.85 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.80 – 7.71 (m, 1H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, $J = 16.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.43 – 7.27 (m, 4H), 4.62 (s, 3H), 4.22 (t, $J = 5.1$ Hz, 2H), 2.89 (t, $J = 5.5$ Hz, 2H), 2.62 (s, 3H), 2.51 (s, 4H), 2.34 (s, 4H), 2.14 (s, 3H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 144.01, 143.05, 138.87, 136.89, 135.61, 133.65, 130.85,

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2
3 130.31, 127.51, 126.51, 126.27, 124.86, 121.27, 121.10, 118.44, 117.73, 116.10,
4
5 115.52, 114.05, 100.00, 57.58, 54.80, 53.30, 45.90, 43.99, 38.57, 14.97. HRMS (ESI)
6
7 m/z: calcd for C₃₂H₃₅N₅S, [M-I]⁺, 522.2686 found 522.2690. HPLC purity: 95.3%.

8
9
10 **(E)-5-methyl-2-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-((2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-amino)-**
11
12 **10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5c-6)**. Compounds **3a-2** was reacted with
13
14 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **5c-6** as a red
15
16 solid. Yield 80%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 11.84 (s, 1H), 8.91 (s, 1H), 8.72 (s,
17
18 1H), 8.55 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 8.34 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.73
19
20 (s, 2H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 16.5 Hz, 1H), 7.41 – 7.21 (m, 4H), 4.62
21
22 (s, 3H), 4.25 (s, 2H), 3.17 (s, 2H), 2.81 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 3H), 1.78 (s, 4H). ¹³C NMR
23
24 (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 143.94, 143.54, 138.89, 138.84, 136.80, 133.70, 133.58, 131.03,
25
26 130.73, 130.26, 130.18, 127.50, 126.51, 126.26, 124.81, 121.07, 118.39, 115.99,
27
28 115.54, 113.91, 54.49, 38.55, 23.71, 14.99. HRMS (ESI) m/z: calcd for C₃₁H₃₂N₄S,
29
30 [M-I]⁺, 493.2420, found 493.2404. HPLC purity: 97.5%.

31
32
33 **(E)-5-methyl-11-((2-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)ethyl)amino)-3-(4-(methylthio)**
34
35 **styryl)-10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5d-1)**. Compounds **3b-2** was
36
37 reacted with 2-(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl) ethanamine according to general procedure to
38
39 afford **5d-1** as a red solid. Yield 82%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 12.51 (s, 1H),
40
41 8.74 (s, 1H), 8.59 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 8.36 (s, 1H), 8.02 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.86 (d,
42
43 *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.79 – 7.49 (m, 5H), 7.39 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz,
44
45 2H), 4.64 (s, 3H), 4.19 (s, 2H), 2.87 (t, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 2.62 (s, 4H), 2.53 (s, 3H),
46
47 2.37 (d, *J* = 39.5 Hz, 4H), 2.21 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 144.05,
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3 142.85, 141.64, 139.48, 138.29, 135.81, 133.49, 132.64, 130.84, 127.85, 126.64,
4
5 126.40, 124.83, 124.49, 121.91, 121.20, 117.54, 115.57, 115.41, 114.59, 114.05, 57.45,
6
7 54.62, 52.93, 45.62, 43.86, 38.47, 14.91. HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $C_{32}H_{35}N_5S$,
8
9 $[M-I]^+$, 522.2686, found 522.2675. HPLC purity: 94.7%.
10
11

12
13 **(E)-5-methyl-3-(p-(methylthio)styryl)-11-((2-(pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-amino)-**
14
15 **10H-indolo[3,2-b]quinolin-5-ium iodide (5d-2)**. Compounds **3b-2** was reacted with
16
17 1-(2-aminoethyl)pyrrolidine according to general procedure to afford **5d-2** as a red
18
19 solid. Yield 81%. 1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 8.88 (s, 1H), 8.60 (d, $J = 5.4$ Hz,
20
21 2H), 8.39 (s, 1H), 8.06 (d, $J = 4.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.83 – 7.49 (m, 6H), 7.46 – 7.23 (m, 3H),
22
23 4.66 (s, 3H), 4.18 (s, 2H), 3.08 (s, 2H), 2.73 (s, 4H), 2.53 (s, 3H), 1.75 (s, 4H). ^{13}C
24
25 NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 144.00, 143.27, 141.48, 139.43, 138.15, 135.73, 133.46,
26
27 132.53, 130.83, 127.81, 126.62, 126.35, 124.78, 124.33, 121.74, 120.94, 118.08,
28
29 118.00, 115.54, 115.49, 114.42, 113.88, 56.02, 54.43, 44.90, 38.39, 23.76, 14.89.
30
31 HRMS (ESI) m/z : calcd for $C_{31}H_{32}N_4S$, $[M-I]^+$, 493.2420, found 493.2425. HPLC
32
33 purity: 96.8%.
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40 **Materials in Biological Assay.** All oligomers/primers used in this study were
41
42 purchased from Life Technologies (Beijing, China). Stock solutions of all the
43
44 compounds (10 mM) were made using DMSO and stored at -20 °C. Further dilutions
45
46 to working concentrations were made with relevant buffer before use.
47
48
49

50 **Surface Plasmon Resonance (SPR) Biosensor Measurements.** SPR
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52 measurements were performed on a ProteOnTM XPR36 Protein Interaction Array
53
54 system (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Hercules, CA) using a neutravidin-coated NLC sensor
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3
4 chip. In a typical experiment, biotin NRQ, biotin-NRQ_mutant, and biotin-hairpin
5
6 oligomers (**Supplementary Table S1**) were folded in a running buffer (Tris-HCl 50
7
8 mM pH7.4, 150 mM KCl, 0.005% Tween-20). The samples were then immobilized
9
10 (1,000 RU) in flow cells, and a blank cell was set as a control. Compound solutions
11
12 (with the concentrations of 0.3125, 0.625, 1.25, 2.5, 5, 10, and 20 μ M) were prepared
13
14 within the running buffer by serial dilutions from stock solutions. The NLC sensor
15
16 chip was regenerated with a short injection of NaOH solution between consecutive
17
18 measurements. The final graphs were obtained by subtracting blank sensorgrams from
19
20 the NRQ, NRQ-mutant, or hairpin sensorgrams. The data were analyzed with
21
22 ProteOnTM manager software, using an equilibrium model to fit the kinetic data: $K_D =$
23
24 $\frac{[A] \times [B]}{[AB]}$. Here, [AB] is the concentration of the complex, [A] and [B] are the
25
26 concentrations of analyte and the substance, respectively. All of the experiments were
27
28 repeated for two times.
29
30
31
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33
34

35 **MTT assay.** Human melanoma cells A375, human lung adenocarcinoma cells
36
37 A549, human cervical cancer cells Hela, human hepatoma cells Huh7, human colon
38
39 cancer cells HCT116, human breast cancer cells MCF-7, and human normal colon
40
41 mucosal epithelial cells NCM460 were seeded on 96-well plates (5 000 cells/well)
42
43 and treated with test compounds at various concentrations. After 48-h treatment at 37
44
45 $^{\circ}$ C in a humidified atmosphere of 5% CO₂, 20 μ L of 2.5 mg/mL
46
47 3-(4,5-dimethyl-2-thiazolyl)-2,5-diphenyl-2-H-tetrazolium bromide (MTT) solution
48
49 was added to each well and further incubated for 4 h. The cells in each well were then
50
51 treated with DMSO (200 μ L for each well) and the optical density (OD) was recorded
52
53
54
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56
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60

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2
3 at 570 nm. The cytotoxicity was evaluated based on the percentage of cell survival in
4
5 a dose-dependent manner regard to the blank. The final IC₅₀ values were calculated by
6
7 using the GraphPad Prism 6.0. All of the experiments were repeated for three times.
8
9

10 **Circular dichroism spectroscopy (CD).** CD studies were performed on a
11
12 Chirascan circular dichroism spectrophotometer (Applied Photophysics, UK). A
13
14 quartz cuvette with a 4-mm path length was used for the recording of spectra over a
15
16 wavelength range of 230-450 nm with a 1 nm bandwidth, 1 nm step size and time of
17
18 0.5 s per point. The RNA oligomers (**Supplementary Table S1**) were set at the
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20 concentration of 5 μM and pre-annealed with the compounds in a 10 mM Tris-HCl
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22 buffer (pH 7.4, in the absence or presence of 100 mM KCl). A buffer baseline was
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24 collected in the same cuvette and subtracted from the sample spectra. In a melting
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26 experiment, the spectrum was recorded at increasing temperature from 25 to 95 °C
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28 and DNA or RNA oligomers were pre-annealed with compounds in a 10 mM
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30 Tris-HCl buffer (pH 7.4, 0.2, 0.5, or 10 mM KCl). Temperature increasing at the rate
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32 of 2 °C/min and curves collected with an interval of 5 °C. All final analysis of the data
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34 was conducted using GraphPad Prism 6.0. All of the experiments were repeated for
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36 two times.
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45 **Ultraviolet (UV) titration.** Absorption spectra were performed on a Shimadzu
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47 UV-2450 spectrophotometer using a quartz cuvette with 1-cm path length at room
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49 temperature. Compound solutions were prepared in a Tris-HCl buffer (10 mM
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51 Tris-HCl, 100 mM KCl, pH 7.4) to a final concentration of 5 μM and the spectra was
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53 recorded after each addition of concentrated pre-annealed NRQ oligomer
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3 (Supplementary Table S1) into the solution over a wavelength range of 220-700 nm.
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6 Final analysis of the data was conducted using GraphPad Prism 6.0.
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8 **Fluorescent Titration and Job's plot assay.** Fluorescence spectra was
9 performed on a Horiba FluoroMax-4 spectrophotometer at room temperature using a
10 quartz cuvette of 1-cm path length. For a titration assay, compound solutions were
11 prepared using a Tris-KCl buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, 100 mM KCl, pH 7.4) to a final
12 concentration of 1 μ M and the spectra was recorded after each addition of
13 concentrated pre-annealed NRQ oligomer (Supplementary Table S1) into the
14 solution. For the Job's plot assay, the total compound/quadruplex system was kept at
15 1 μ M in a Tris-KCl buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, 100 mM KCl, pH 7.4), and different
16 scales of compound/NRQ were prepared from 0.05/0.95 to 0.9/0.1. The spectra were
17 recorded over a wavelength range of 450-700 nm, 1 nm step size, and emission at 430
18 nm. Final analysis of the data was conducted using GraphPad Prism 6.0. All of the
19 experiments were repeated for two times.
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37 **Dual-luciferase reporter assay.** For this assay, 100 ng of constructed
38 psiCHECK2 plasmid (Clontech, USA) containing WT *NRAS* 5'-UTR or mutant *NRAS*
39 5'-UTR (Supplementary Table S1) and 200 ng of controlled plasmid (Promega,
40 USA) was co-transfected into MCF-7 cells using Lipofectamine 3000 (Invitrogen,
41 USA). After 4 h, **4a-10** were added to the cells at concentrations ranging from 0.125
42 to 0.5 μ M. The cells were incubated at 37 °C with CO₂ for another 48 h, and the
43 transfected cells were first washed with ice-cold PBS to reduce the background
44 signals from the medium. Luciferase assays were subsequently performed according
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3 to the manufacturer's instructions using the Ready-To-Glow Secreted Luciferase
4 Reporter System (Clontech, USA). After a 3-s delay, secreted luciferase signals were
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6 collected for 10 s using a microplate reader (Molecular Devices, Flex Station 3, USA),
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8 and *Firefly* signals were collected for 10 s as an internal control. The quantification
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10 was performed using a multimode reader (Molecular Devices). The secreted *Renilla*
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12 activity was normalized to the *Firefly* luciferase activity. Final analysis of the data
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14 was conducted using GraphPad Prism 6.0. All of the experiments were repeated for
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16 three times.
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23 **RNA extraction, RT-PCR and Quantitative Real-time PCR (qPCR).** For
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25 this assay, different concentration of **4a-10** (0, 0.5, 1.0, and 2.0 μM) were added to
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27 A375 cells for 6 h. Then total RNA was isolated by using HiPure Total RNA Mini Kit
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29 (Mangen, China). After that, 2 μg of total RNA was reverse transcribed to cDNA by
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31 using reverse transcriptase (GenStar, China). The reactions were incubated at 37 $^{\circ}\text{C}$
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33 for 60 min and heated at 99 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 5 min to inactivate the transcriptase.⁵⁹ The cDNA
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35 was further used as a template for PCR amplification using the following condition:
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37 melting at 95 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 1 min, annealing at 50 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 1 min, and extension at 72 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 1
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39 min for 30 cycles.
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45 Quantitative PCR was performed with SYBR Premix Ex TaqTM (Takara) and
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47 carried out on an ABI PRISM 7900HT Sequence Detection System as the followed
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49 cycle conditions: 95 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ denaturing (5 s, first cycle of 30 s), 60 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ annealing and
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51 extension (30 s), total 50 cycles. Relative quantification for *NRAS* gene was
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53 performed against a house keeping gene *β -actin* according to $2^{-\Delta\Delta\text{Ct}}$ method
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(Supplementary Figure S8).

The primers used in RT-PCR and qRT-PCR, including *NRAS-A*, *NRAS-S*, *β -actin-A*, and *β -actin-S* were shown in **Supplementary Table S1**.

Western Blot Analysis. For this assay, cells treated with different concentration of **4a-10** or **4a-16** for 6 h. Then the cells were collected from 6-well plates and lysed using a RIPA lysis buffer. The whole-cell lysates were separated on a sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) and transferred to nitrocellulose membranes. After blocking in 5% bull serum albumin (BSA), the membranes were incubated by the primary antibodies, mouse anti-human NRAS (#ab55391, abcam, USA) and rabbit anti-human GAPDH (#2118, CST, USA), and the secondary antibodies. Finally, the membranes were detected by ECL Plus kit. The protein bands were visualized using chemiluminescence substrate.

RNA Immunoprecipitation (RIP). A375 cells were treated with 2- μ M **4A-10** or normal Dulbecco's modified eagle medium (DMEM) for 24 h at 37 °C with CO₂. At the end of incubation, 18.5% formaldehyde was added to each dish to obtain a final concentration of 1% formaldehyde, and the treated cells were incubated at 25 °C for 10 min followed by the addition of glycine solution. The cells were detached by scraping after adding 1 mL of ice-cold phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) containing 10 μ L of the halt cocktail (Thermo Scientific, USA). Then, 100 μ L of RIP Lysis buffer (25-mM Tris-HCl, 150-mM KCl, 2-mM EDTA, 1-mM NaF, 1-mM dithiothreitol [DTT], 0.5% NP-40, pH 7.5) containing the halt cocktail and 100-U/mL RNasin Ribonuclease Inhibitor (Takara, China) were added to the cell pellet and incubated on

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3 ice for 10 min. Next, 100 μL of the supernatant was transferred to 400 μL of
4 immunoprecipitation (IP) dilution buffer (Thermo Scientific, USA) containing
5 protease inhibitors and the RNasin ribonuclease inhibitor. For each IP, 500 μL of
6 diluted lysate was added to protein A/G plus agarose beads with 5 μg of antibody
7 against the DHX36 epitope (#ab70269, abcam) and incubated at 4 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 12 h. After
8 centrifugation at 2,000 g for 30 s, the beads were washed with low-salt washing
9 buffer (50-mM Tris-HCl, 150-mM NaCl, 1-mM MgCl_2 , 2-mM ethylene diamine
10 tetraacetic acid (EDTA), 1-mM dithiothreitol (DTT), 100-U/mL RNase inhibitor, pH
11 7.4) twice and high-salt washing buffer (50-mM Tris-HCl, 300-mM NaCl, 1-mM
12 MgCl_2 , 2-mM EDTA, 1-mM DTT, 100-U/mL RNase inhibitor, pH 7.4) twice. Then,
13 150 μL of IP elution buffer (Thermo, USA) with 6 μL of 5-M NaCl and 2 μL of
14 20-mg/mL proteinase K were added and incubated at 65 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 30 min. The obtained
15 total RNA samples were used for the RT-PCR detection.
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35 **Cell cycle arrest assay.** The A375 cells were treated with varies
36 concentration of **4a-10** in 10% FBS-supplemented DMEM culture medium at 37 $^{\circ}\text{C}$
37 and 5% CO_2 for 24 h. Subsequently, cells were collected and washed with ice-cold
38 PBS and fixed with ice-cold 70% ethanol at -20 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ overnight. Fixed cells were then
39 washed with PBS again, re-suspended in 0.5 mL of PBS containing 50 mg/mL
40 propidium iodide, and incubated for 30 min in dark. The cell cycle distribution was
41 analyzed by using the EPICS[®] XL[™] flow cytometer within 1 h and calculated by
42 using EXPO 32 software.
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54 **Confocal microscopy.** A375 cells were treated with 0.25 μM **4a-10** for 6 h at
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3 37 °C and 5% CO₂. After incubation, medium was discarded, cells were washed with
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6 PBS for three times to remove the excess compound and then fixed with 4%
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8 polyoxymethylene for 15 min. Then, cells were dyed with
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10 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI, Invitrogen) for 15 min in dark. After that, cells
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12 were washed with PBS for three times gently and re-submerged by PBS buffer.
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16 Localization of **4a-10** was imaged under a FV3000 laser scanning confocal
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18 microscope (Olympus Corporation).
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31 Notes

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56 ■ ABBREVIATIONS

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3 NRAS, neuroblastoma RAS; UTR, untranslated region; nt, nucleotide; SPR, surface
4 plasmon resonance; K_D , dissociation constant; MTT, methyl thiazolyl tetrazolium; CD,
5 circular dichroism; T_m , melting temperature; UV-vis, ultraviolet-visible; PAGE,
6 polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis; RT-PCR, reverse transcription-polymerase chain
7 reaction; qRT-PCR, quantitative real-time polymerase chain reaction; RIP, RNA
8 immunoprecipitation assay; MS, mass spectra; HRMS, high resolution mass spectra;
9 m.p., melting points.
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23 ■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

24 Supporting Information

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26 Additional experimental results, ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra, HRMS, HPLC assay
27 data for final compounds, and the Molecular Formula Strings are available free of
28 charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.
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■ SCHEME AND FIGURES LEGENDS

Scheme 1. Synthesis of the **MSQ** derivatives. Reagents and conditions: (i) 4-(methylthio) styryl, palladium acetate, P(o-tol)₃, anhydrous THF, anhydrous Et₃N, 110 °C, 40 h; (ii) PTSA, different amino side chains, 120 °C, 16-24 h; (iii) CH₃I, tetramethylene sulfone, 68 °C, 48 h; (v) 2-ethoxyethanol, different amino side chains, 120 °C, 24 h.

Figure 1. Modification strategies of the **MSQ** derivatives and structures of these derivatives.

Figure 2. Results from the SPR screening assay. The biotin-NRQ, biotin-NRQ_mutant, and biotin-hairpin were immobilized in flow cells. All the **MSQ** compounds were diluted with a running buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, 150 mM KCl, 0.005% Tween-20) from stock solutions to final concentrations. The compounds flowed for 180 s during the association phase followed by a 300-s disassociation phase. The dissociating constants (K_D) between the oligomers and the compounds were analyzed by the ProteOn[®] manager software, using an equilibrium model to fit the kinetic data: $K_D = ([A] \times [B]) / [AB]$. Here, [AB] is the concentration of the complex, [A] and [B] are the concentrations of analyte and the substance, respectively. Insets below the histogram showed the scaffolds of each series. Compounds with no specific binding to the NRQ oligomer were excluded from the histogram.

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4 **Figure 3.** The IC_{50} of the **MSQ** derivatives on proliferation of human melanoma cells
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6 A375, human lung adenocarcinoma cells A549, human cervical cancer cells Hela,
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8 human hepatoma cells Huh7, human colon cancer cells HCT116, human breast cancer
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10 cells MCF-7, and human normal colon mucosal epithelial cells NCM460. The active
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12 strength of these compounds is marked by gradient color, in which deep red
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14 represents the lowest IC_{50} value while deep blue represents the highest IC_{50} value. The
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16 experiments were repeated separately for three times.
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23 **Figure 4. (a)** Plots of IC_{50} values of each compounds for A375 cells plotted as an
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25 effect of the binding of compounds to the *NRAS* G-quadruplex. **(b)** Radar chart for the
26
27 physiochemical properties of **4a-10** (violet) and **4a-16** (yellow). The green shaded
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29 area indicates the optimum range for each feature. $nOHNH$, number of hydrogen
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31 bond donors (≤ 5); nON , number of hydrogen bond acceptors (≤ 5); Mw, molecular
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33 mass (≤ 500 Da); PSA, polar surface area ($\leq 50 \text{ \AA}^2$); clogD, partition coefficient (≤ 5).
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40 **Figure 5. (a) and (b),** SPR sensorgrams of the NRQ oligomer in the addition with
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42 compound **4a-10** **(a)** and **4a-16** **(b)** at increasing concentrations. **(c) and (d),** UV-vis
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44 spectrum of **4a-10** **(c)** and **4a-16** **(d)** when titrated with the NRQ oligomer in a 10 mM
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46 Tris-HCl buffer (pH 7.4) containing 100 mM KCl. Arrows indicated the increasing
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48 concentration of the NRQ oligomer. The insets showed the Sigmoidal fitting curve
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50 using the absorption at 435 nm and the calculated K_D values.
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54 **Figure 6.** Results of the CD-melting experiments. 5 μ M of the NRQ oligomer was
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4 incubated with 5 μM **4a-10** (b), 5 μM **4a-16** (c), or 10 μM **4a-10** (d) in a 10 mM
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6 Tris-HCl buffer (pH 7.4, 200 μM KCl) followed by an annealing process. The
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8 spectrum was recorded with an interval of 5 $^{\circ}\text{C}$. The insets showed melting curves and
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10 T_m values using the CD signals at 264 nm.
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16 **Figure 7.** Western blot results of the NRAS protein from A375 cells treated with
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18 **4a-10** (a) or **4a-16** (b) at increasing concentrations for 6 h or treated with 1 μM **4a-10**
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20 (c) or **4a-16** (d) and collected cells from different time points. GAPDH was used as
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22 an internal control.
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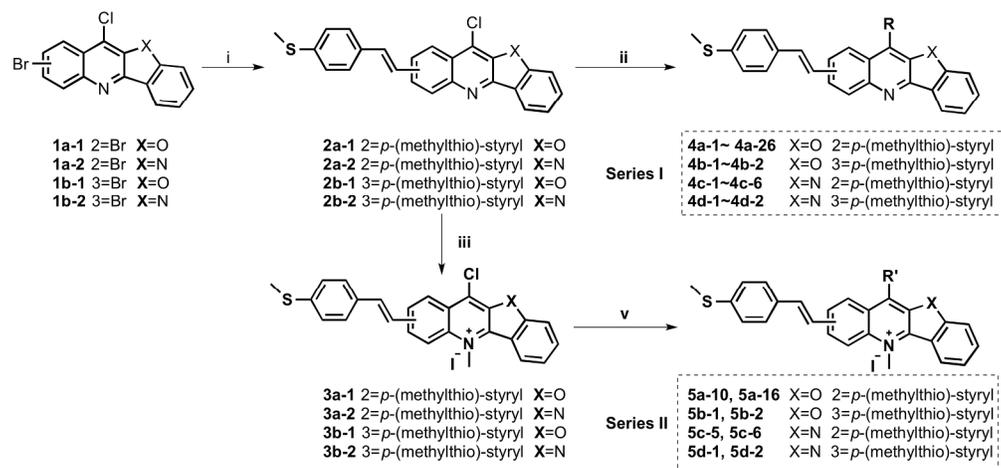
28 **Figure 8.** (a) and (b), The transcription of *NRAS* gene in A375 cells treated with
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30 **4a-10** for 6 h by using the qRT-PCR. *β -actin* gene was used as the internal control.
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32 The amounts of *NRAS* transcripts were calculated by the standard $2^{-\Delta\Delta\text{Ct}}$ method and
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34 were made as a histogram (b). # $P > 0.05$. (c) Western blot results of the NRAS
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36 protein from MCF-7 cells treated with **4a-10** at increasing concentrations for 6 h.
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38 GAPDH was used as an internal control. (d) and (e) The effects of **4a-10** on *NRAS*
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40 5'-UTR activity by using the dual luciferase reporter assay. Column graph shows the
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42 relative expression level of the *Renilla* luciferase (activity of *Renilla*
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44 luciferase/activity of *Firefly* luciferase) in plasmids containing wild-type (d) or
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46 mutant *NRAS* 5'-UTR (e) after the addition of **4a-10** at 0.125 μM , 0.25 μM , and 0.5
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48 μM . *** $P < 0.0005$, * $P < 0.05$, # $P > 0.05$. (f) RT-PCR results of *NRAS* 5'-UTR from a
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50 RIP assay with DHX36 antibody treated without or with 2- μM **4a-10**. IgG was used
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as a negative control.

Figure 9. (a) Cell cycle analysis of A375 cells treated with **4a-10** (0.125, 0.25, and 0.5 μ M) after propidium iodide (PI) staining. **(b)** The percentage of cells in different phases of the cell cycle. **(c)** A375 cells were treated with 0.25 μ M **4a-10** for 6 h and fixed with 4% polyoxymethylene. Then, cells were incubated with DAPI for 15 min in dark. Fluorescent images of **4a-10** (red) and DAPI (blue) were obtained using a FV3000 laser scanning confocal microscope with a 600 magnification times.

■ TABLE OF CONTENTS GRAPHIC





Scheme 1. Synthesis of the MSQ derivatives. Reagents and conditions: (i) 4-(methylthio) styryl, palladium acetate, P(*o*-tol)₃, anhydrous THF, anhydrous Et₃N, 110 °C, 40 h; (ii) PTSA, different amino side chains, 120 °C, 16-24 h; (iii) CH₃I, tetramethylene sulfone, 68 °C, 48 h; (v) 2-ethoxyethanol, different amino side chains, 120 °C, 24 h.

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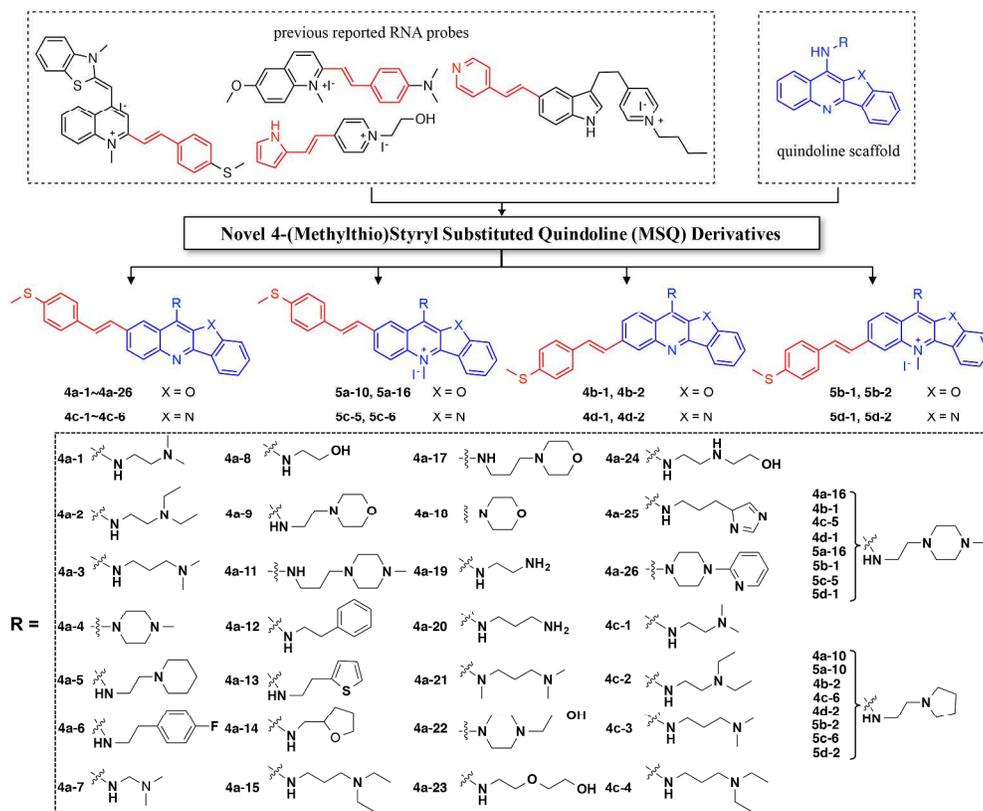


Figure 1. Modification strategies of the MSQ derivatives and structures of these derivatives.

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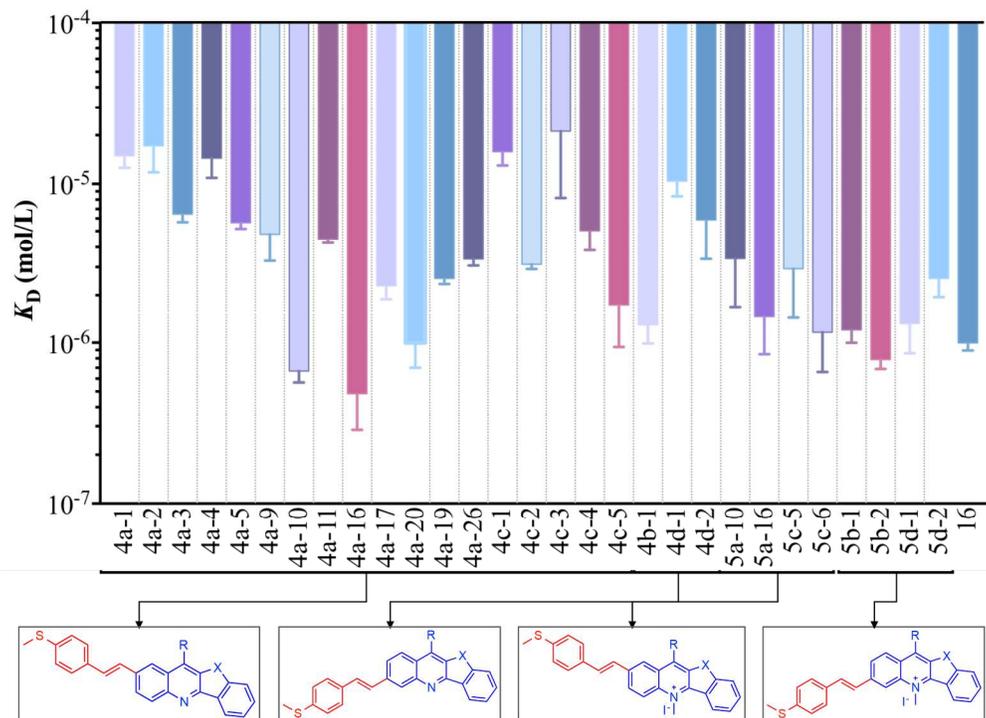


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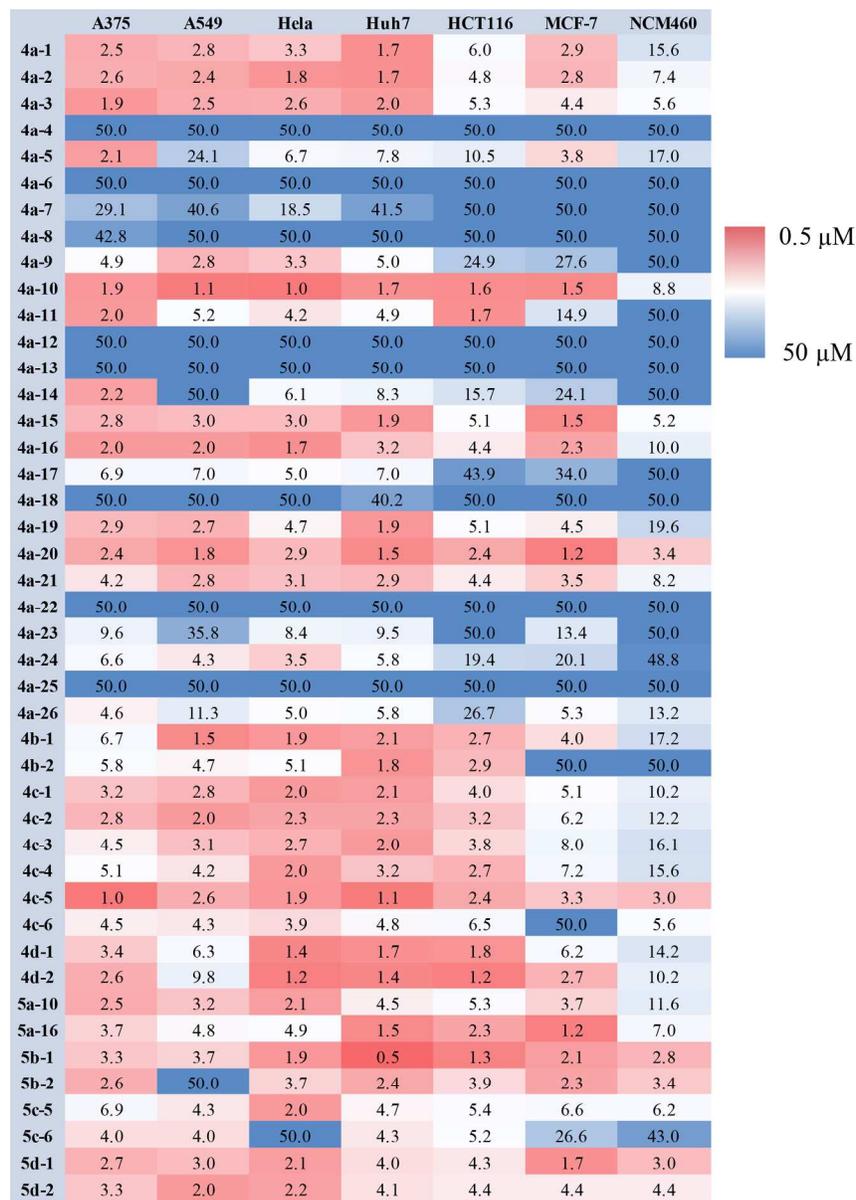


Figure 3. The IC₅₀ of the MSQ derivatives on proliferation of human melanoma cells A375, human lung adenocarcinoma cells A549, human cervical cancer cells HeLa, human hepatoma cells Huh7, human colon cancer cells HCT116, human breast cancer cells MCF-7, and human normal colon mucosal epithelial cells NCM460. The active strength of these compounds is marked by gradient color, in which deep red represents the lowest IC₅₀ value while deep blue represents the highest IC₅₀ value. The experiments were repeated separately for three times.

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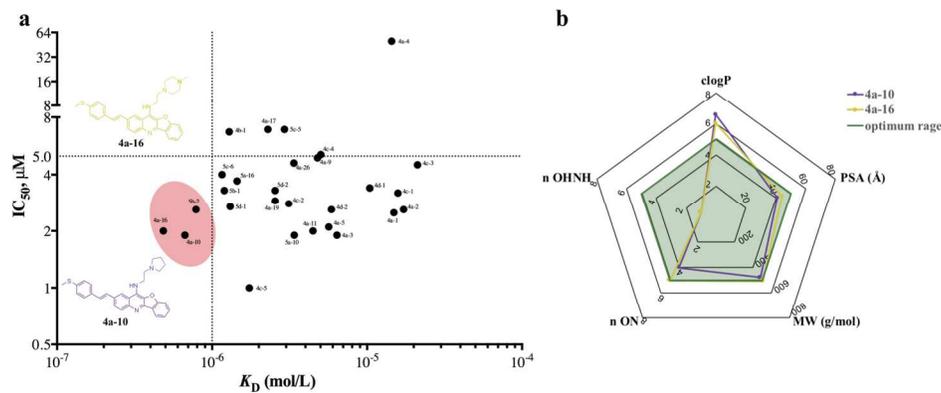


Figure 4. (a) Plots of IC_{50} values of each compounds for A375 cells plotted as an effect of the binding of compounds to the NRAS G-quadruplex. (b) Radar chart for the physicochemical properties of 4a-10 (violet) and 4a-16 (yellow). The green shaded area indicates the optimum range for each feature. n OHNH, number of hydrogen bond donors (≤ 5); n ON, number of hydrogen bond acceptors (≤ 5); Mw, molecular mass (≤ 500 Da); PSA, polar surface area ($\leq 50 \text{\AA}^2$); $clogD$, partition coefficient (≤ 5).

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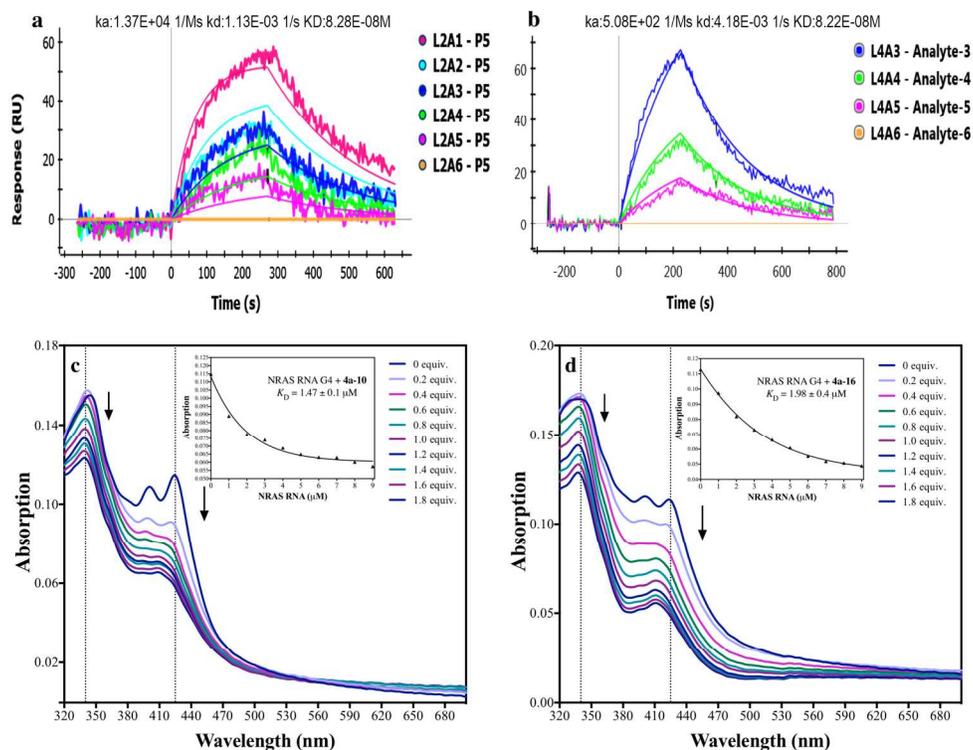


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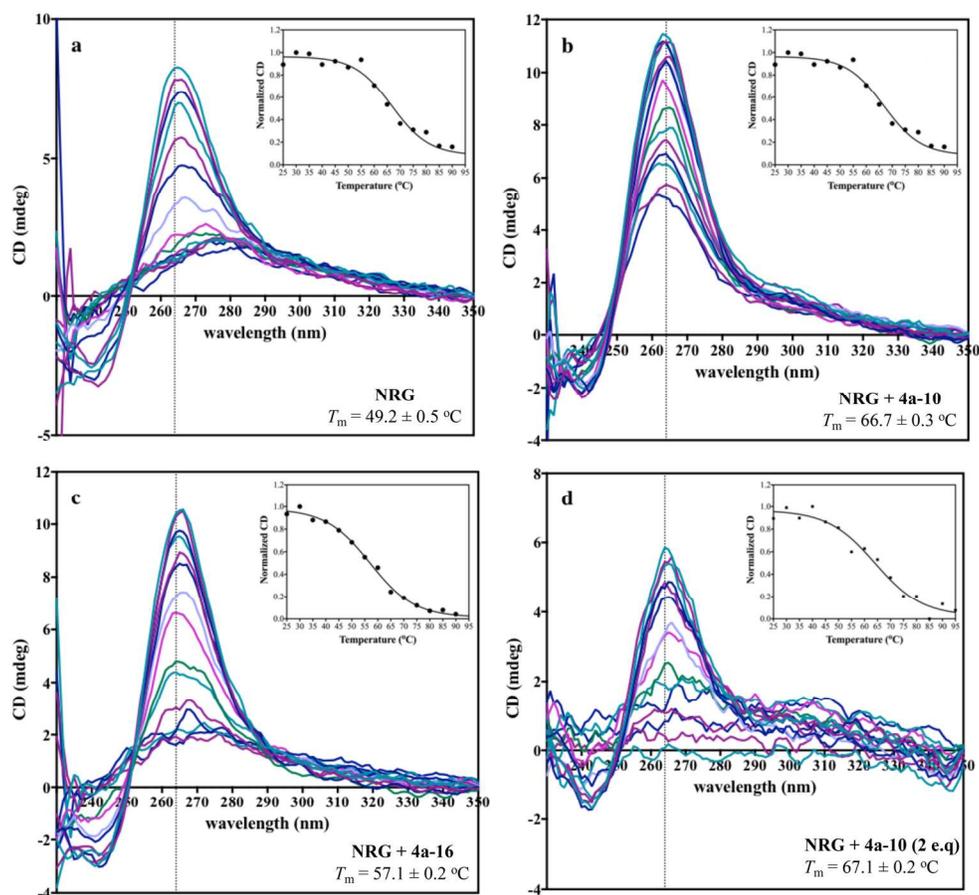


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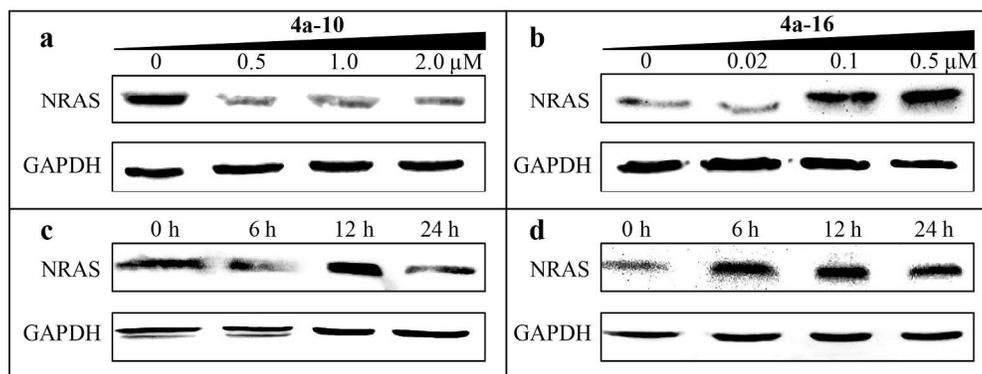


Figure 7. Western blot results of the NRAS protein from A375 cells treated with 4a-10 or 4a-16 with increasing concentration for 6 h (a) and (b), or treated with 1 μM 4a-10 or 4a-16 and collected cells from different time points (c) and (d). GAPDH was used as an internal control.

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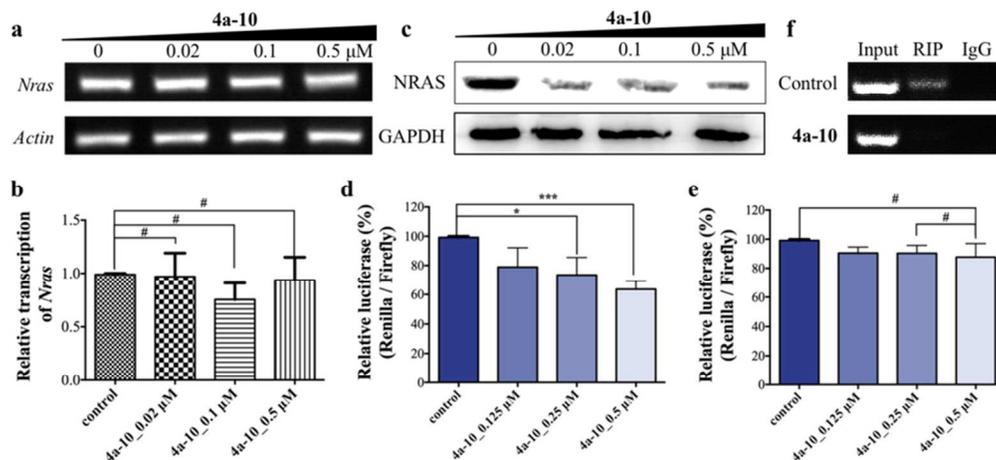


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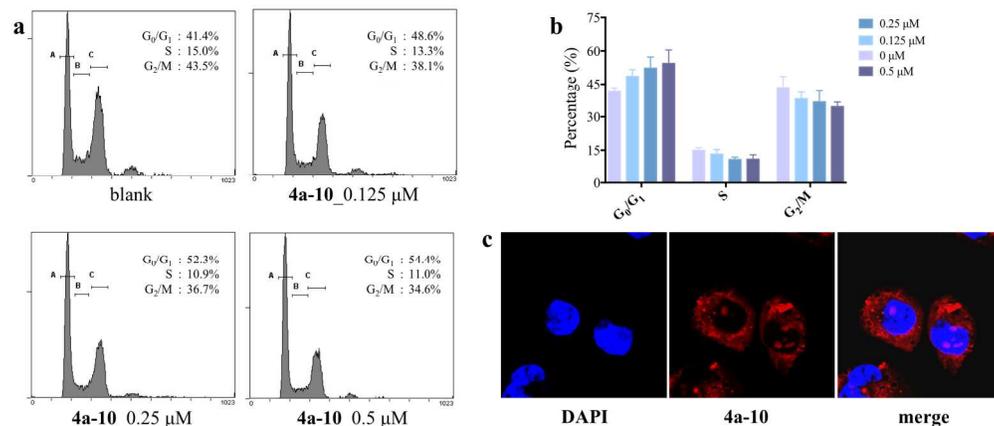


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210x90mm (300 x 300 DPI)