

## Full Paper

## Process Development for the Synthesis of a Selective M1 and M4 Muscarinic Acetylcholine Receptors Agonist

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# Process Development for the Synthesis of a Selective M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> Muscarinic Acetylcholine Receptors Agonist

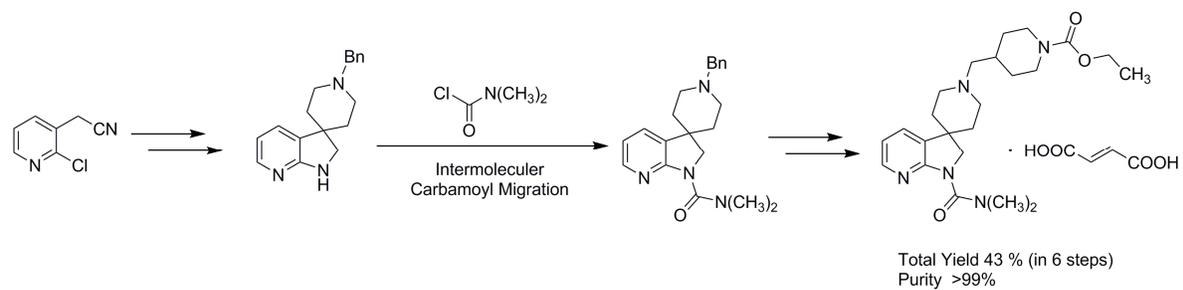
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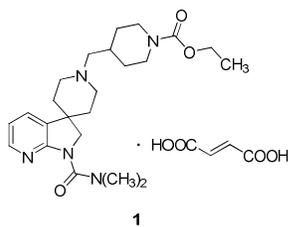
**ABSTRACT**

A practical and chromatography-free synthetic process to selective M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> muscarinic acetylcholine receptors agonist was developed and demonstrated on a several hundred grams scale. The key feature of this route is *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoylation of the anilinic nitrogen on the spiro 7-azaindoline structure via intermolecular migration of the *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoyl group. The resulting compound **1** was prepared in 43% overall yield with a chemical purity >99% via six steps starting with (2-chloropyridin-3-yl)acetonitrile.

**Keywords:** 7-Azaindoline, *N,N*-Dimethylcarbamoylation, Intermolecular migration, Muscarinic acetylcholine receptors agonist, X-ray crystal structure

**INTRODUCTION**

Many of the important central actions of acetylcholine (ACh) are mediated by the muscarinic ACh receptors (mAChRs).<sup>1</sup> To date, five mAChR subtypes (M<sub>1</sub>–M<sub>5</sub>) have been identified and are considered to play important roles in the peripheral and central nervous systems (CNS).<sup>2</sup> Clinical trials with xanomeline, an M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> preferring orthosteric agonist, demonstrated that M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> mAChRs are attractive therapeutic targets for Alzheimer's disease and schizophrenia.<sup>3</sup> During one of our drug discovery program,<sup>4</sup> we have found the 7-azaindoline derivative **1** as a lead candidate with selective M<sub>1</sub> (EC<sub>50</sub> = 133 nM) and M<sub>4</sub> (EC<sub>50</sub> = 47 nM) mAChRs agonistic activity. Further studies led to the selection of this compound as a potential therapy for CNS disorders. However, to support preclinical studies, we had to find a practical synthetic route to **1** suitable for kilogram scale. This is because the initial chemical synthesis of **1** presents not only safety concerns, but also reproducibility and purification challenges. In this report, we describe a successful synthetic route to **1** that overcomes conventional issues and provides a practical process for scale-up to several hundred grams.



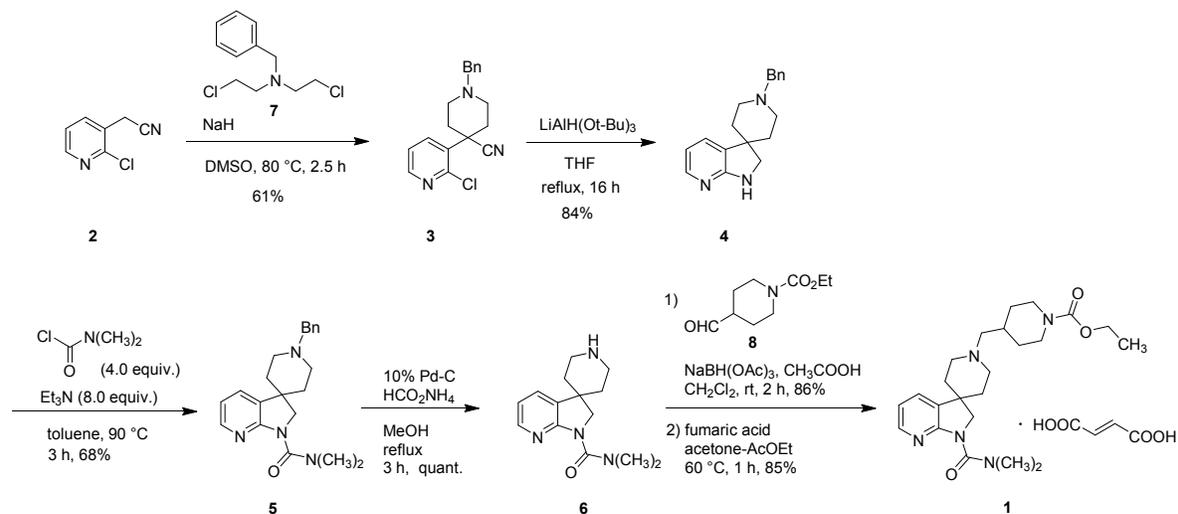
**Figure 1.** Structure of a selective M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> mAChRs agonist **1**

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### Initial Chemical Synthesis of 1.

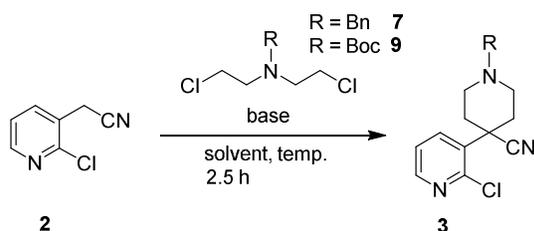
Various effective synthetic approaches of azaspiroindoline<sup>5</sup> or spiroindoline<sup>6</sup> derivatives were reported. However, there are few examples about 7-azaspiroindoline.<sup>7</sup> Based on these literatures, we chose the synthetic route in scheme 1 for construction of 7-azaspiroindoline derivative **1** in terms of short synthetic process. Compound **1** was first prepared from the commercially available (2-Chloropyridin-3-yl) acetonitrile **2** in six steps and 30 % yield (Scheme 1). Deprotection at the benzylic position of compound **2** by NaH followed by reaction with **7** in DMSO gave the spiro compound **3** in 61% yield. Reduction of **3** with LiAlH(O*t*-Bu)<sub>3</sub> and subsequent cyclization provided the 7-azaindoline derivative **4** in 84 % yield. Next, *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoylation of the anilinic nitrogen of **4** was accomplished in 68% yield by use of excess amounts of *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoyl chloride (4.0 equiv.) and triethylamine (8.0 equiv.). Deprotection of the benzyl group of **5** with HCOONH<sub>4</sub> in MeOH, followed by reductive amination with the aldehyde **8** afforded the free form of **1** in 86% yield. Finally, salt formation with fumaric acid and re-crystallization using acetone-ethyl acetate gave the desired product **1** in 85% yield. The initial synthesis enabled the production of gram quantities of **1**. However, further development was necessary to address large-scale safety concerns and multiple chromatography purification. The initial synthesis of **1** presented three major issues. Namely, 1) the potential of explosion in the steps that transform compound **2** to **3** and compound **5** to **6**, 2) the poor reproducibility in the step that provides compound **5** from **4**, and 3) the need for column chromatography purification in the preparation of compounds **3** and **5**.

### Scheme 1. Initial Synthesis of the Selective M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> mAChRs Agonist 1



The preparation of compound **3** required the use of NaH, compound **7** in DMSO, and a temperature of 80 °C. These reaction conditions can cause explosion at scale-up.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the commercially available **7**·HCl had to be desalted with 10% K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> solution before use and, as such, could not be stored for long time. Furthermore, compound **3** could not be purified without column chromatography due to the production of multi undesired by-products. To overcome these challenges, we considered optimization of the reaction conditions.

**Table 1. Optimization of the Reaction Conditions**



entry	reagent	base (equiv.)	solvent	temp.	yield
<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	NaH (2.0)	DMSO	80 °C	61%
<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	KOH (2.0)	DMSO	80 °C	67%
<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	KOH (2.0)	DMSO	30 °C	70%
<b>4</b>	<b>7</b> ·HCl	KOH (3.0)	DMSO	30 °C	82%
<b>5</b>	<b>7</b> ·HCl	NaOH (3.0)	DMSO	30 °C	65%
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> ·HCl	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub> (3.0)	DMSO	30 °C	14%
<b>7</b>	<b>7</b> ·HCl	KOH (3.0)	DMF	30 °C	trace
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> ·HCl	KOH (3.0)	DMSO	30 °C	trace

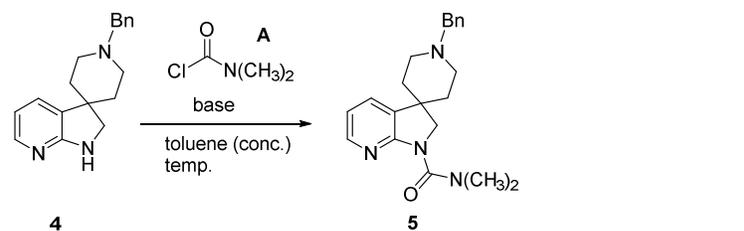
Construction of spiro ring structure at the benzylic position of compound **2** is usually conducted by NaH in DMSO condition at high temperature. In previous literatures, spiro structure at benzylic position was constructed by hexadecyltributylphosphonium bromide in 50% NaOH solution at reflux condition.<sup>9</sup> We tried to adapt and simplify this reaction condition. First, we changed the base used for deprotonation of compound **2** from NaH to KOH (entry 2, Table 1). This change allowed the preparation of compound **3** in 67% yield as compared to 61% with NaH. Lowering the temperature from 80 °C to 30 °C (entry 3) resulted in 70% yield. Next, we tried to use the commercially available **7**·HCl without pre-desaltation and instead used KOH at 3 equiv. to achieve in-situ desaltation. This modification afforded **3** in 82% yield (entry 4). Using NaOH or K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> as a base provided **3** in 65% or 14%, respectively (entries 5 and 6). When the solvent was changed to DMF, **3** was obtained only in trace amount (entry 7). In case of the Boc protected reagent **9**·HCl, multi products were afforded (entry 8). Based on these findings, we selected the conditions of entry 4 for a safe reaction at ambient temperature.

**Preparation of the 7-Azaindoline Derivative **4** and *N,N*-Dimethylcarbamoylation of Anilinic**

## Nitrogen.

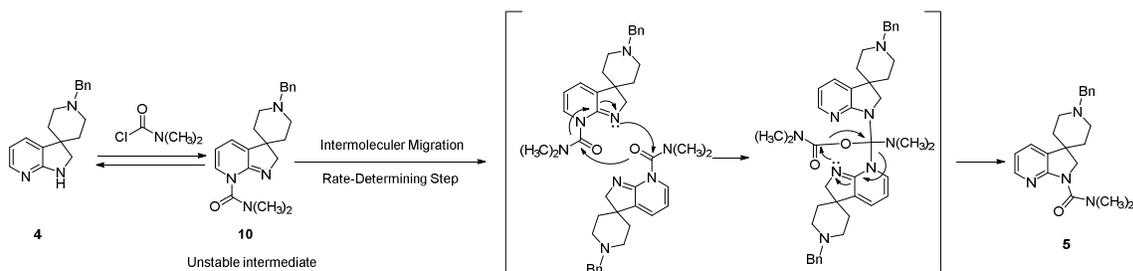
Compound **4** was synthesized in acceptable yield from compound **3** using  $\text{LiAlH}(\text{O}t\text{-Bu})_3$  as a reductive agent.<sup>10</sup> However *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoylation of the anilinic nitrogen of **4** required the use of excess amounts of *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoyl chloride (4.0 equiv.) and triethylamine (8.0 equiv.), giving **5** in 68% yield (entry 2, Table 2). Without these excess amounts (entry 1, Table 2), compound **5** was obtained in only 28% isolated yield. Although the excess conditions provide **5** in 68% yield (entry 2), the reproducibility of this yield is poor, especially in case of large scale production (>10 g). Furthermore, some of the starting material **4** remained after the reaction (entries 1 and 2), necessitating column chromatography for separation of **5**. Thus, perfect conversion will be needed to avoid column chromatography. To avoid chromatography, we conducted further investigation and found that this reaction proceeds in two steps via intermolecular migration of the *N,N*-dimethylcarbamoyl group<sup>11</sup> as depicted in Scheme 2. Details of an experimental and theoretical study of this reaction indicate that the concentration, temperature and procedure are important to accomplish complete conversion of **4** to **5**.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, optimized reaction conditions as described in entry 3 afforded the desired compound **5** in 99% yield (entry 3). Details of the procedure are described in the experimental section.

**Table 2. Effects of Base, Concentration and Temperature on *N,N*-Dimethylcarbamoylation of **4****



entry	A (equiv.)	base (equiv.)	conc.	temp.	yield
1	1.5	$\text{Et}_3\text{N}$ (2.0)	0.2 M	90 °C	28%
2	4.0	DIPEA (8.0)	0.2 M	90 °C	68%
3	1.5 + 0.2	DIPEA (2.0 + 0.6)	2.0 M	reflux	99%

**Scheme 2. Reaction Mechanism of *N,N*-Dimethylcarbamoylation of **4****



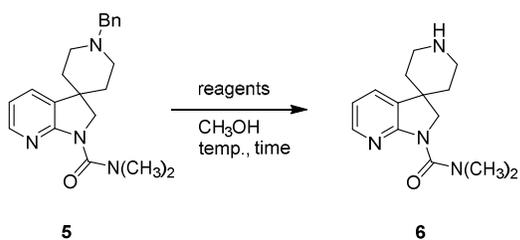
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### Deprotection of the benzyl group of 5, giving compound 6.

In initial synthesis of **1**, deprotection of benzyl group of **5** was achieved by 10%Pd/C and HCOONH<sub>4</sub> in methanol under reflux condition, affording **6** in quantitative yield (Table 3, entry 1). However, at kilogram scale, it is possible that HCOONH<sub>4</sub> decomposition material clogs the reflux condenser. To avoid such risk, hydrogen was used as reducing agent and 10% Pd/C as catalyst (entry 2). Using 20% Pd(OH)<sub>2</sub>/C (entry 3) reduced the reaction time by half to 8 h (entry 3).

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**Table 3. Optimization of Deprotection of the Benzyl Group of 5**



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entry	reagents	temp.	time	conversion
1	HCOONH <sub>4</sub> 10%Pd/C	reflux	3 h	>99%
2	H <sub>2</sub> 10%Pd/C	40 °C	16 h	70%
3	H <sub>2</sub> 20%Pd(OH) <sub>2</sub> /C	40 °C	8 h	>99%

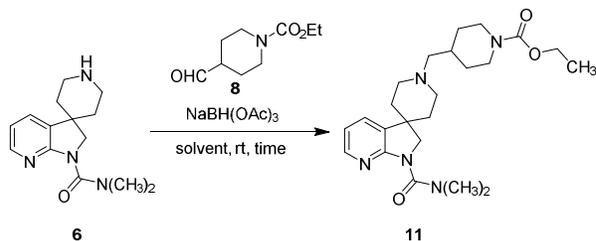
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### Reductive Amination of 6 with 8.

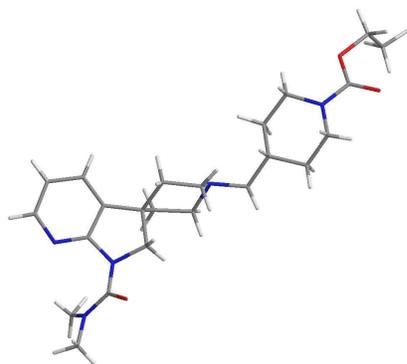
In the initial synthesis of **11**, compound **6** was reacted with the aldehyde **8** and NaBH(OAc)<sub>3</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> to afford compound **11** in 86% yield (entry 1, Table 4). In this reaction, the isolated yield was acceptable, however, a halogenated solvent (dichloromethane) was used. Generally, a replacement for this solvent is desired for pharmaceutical manufacturing. We found that this reaction could be conducted in THF with the desired compound **11** obtained in >99% yield (entry 2, Table 4). By using toluene, the yield of compound **11** decreased to 91%. Furthermore compound **11** was obtained in >99% yield without

addition of acetic acid (entry 3, Table 4). These optimization steps allowed the preparation of compound **11** in 99% yield without the use of a halogenated solvent, which is suitable pharmaceutical manufacturing. Single crystal X-ray structure of the obtained compound **11** is depicted in Figure 2, and the details are described in the supporting information.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4. Reductive Amination of compound 6**



entry	AcOH	solvent	time	yield
1	1.0 equiv.	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	2 h	86%
2	1.0 equiv.	THF	2 h	>99%
3	1.0 equiv.	toluene	2 h	91%
4	-	THF	2 h	>99%

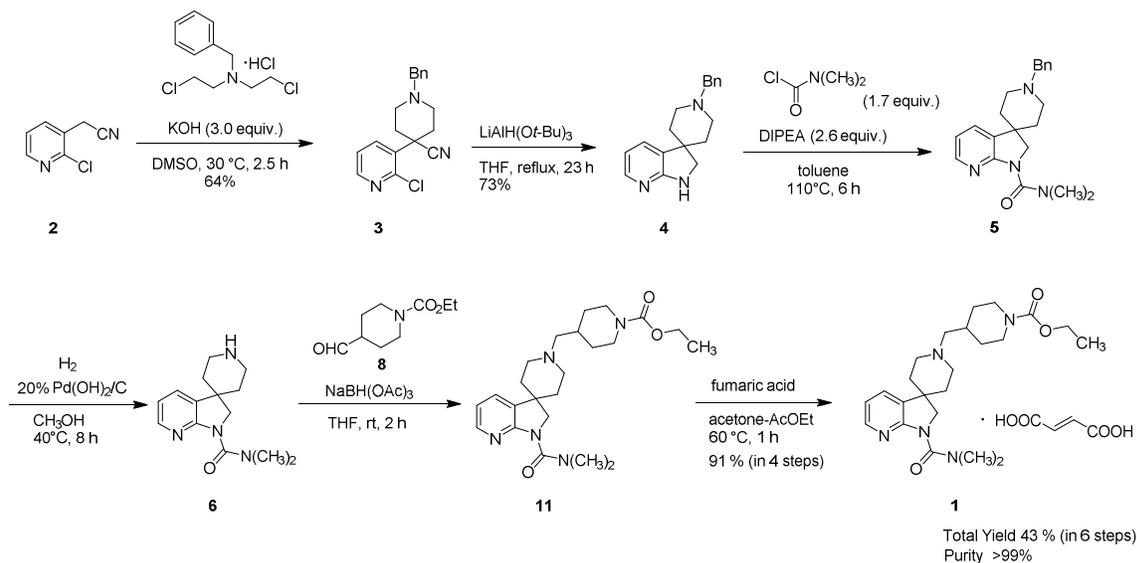


**Figure 2. X-ray crystal structure of 11**

#### Improved Process for Preparation of 1.

Based on all the optimizations described above, we attempted the synthesis of **1** at several hundred grams scale. Starting with 477 g of compound **2**, we were able to generate compound **11** (free form of **1**) in good yield (Scheme 3). Finally, transformation into a salt using fumaric acid in ethanol and re-crystallization with acetone-ethyl acetate at 60 °C afforded the target compound **1** in 43% over all yield and >99% HPLC area purity.

#### Scheme 3. Improved Process for the Preparation of 1



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we described in this study the initial synthesis of compound **1**, a selective M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>4</sub> mAChRs agonist, and carried various optimizations to suit production at several hundred grams scale. Our work addressed safety and methodology concerns and simplified the original synthesis. We also accomplished a higher yield than the initial synthetic route.

## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**General.** All reagents and solvents were purchased from commercial suppliers and used without further purification. Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded at ambient temperature on a JEOL JNM-AL400 FT NMR spectrometer, operating at 400 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H NMR and 100 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C NMR. ESI mass spectra were measured on a SHIMADZU LCMS-2010EV. ESI mass spectra (for HRMS) were measured on a Thermo Fischer Science LTQ Orbitrap Discovery MS equipment. Infrared (IR) spectra were measured on a SHIMADZU IRAffinity-1 equipped with Smiths Detection DuraScope. Melting points were determined on a YANACO MP-J3 without correction. Elemental analysis was performed on a CE Instruments EA1110 and a Yokokawa analytical system IC7000. HPLC analysis was performed on Agilent 1100 Series. NMR spectra of unknown compounds are included within the supporting information. Characterization of compound **4**, **5**, **10** and **11** have been described in our previous paper (*Tetrahedron* **2013**, *69*, 9675-9681).

**1-Benzyl-4-(2-chloropyridin-3-yl)piperidine-4-carbonitrile (3).** To a solution of **2** (477 g, 3.13 mol) in DMSO (9.5 L) was added KOH pellet (544 g, 9.69 mol) portion wise at room temperature.

*N*-Benzyl-bis(2-chloroethyl)amine hydrochloride (840 g, 3.13 mol) was added to reaction mixture

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6 portion wise and reaction was continued at 30 °C for 2.5 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to 20 °C  
7 and poured on water and extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic extracts were washed with brine, dried  
8 over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure to give brown solid (959 g). Ethyl acetate  
9 (190 mL) was added to the brown solid and stirred at 65 °C for 3 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to  
10 5 °C and stirred for 2 h. The reaction mixture was filtrated to give pale brown solid and the solid was  
11 washed by *n*-hexane to afford **3** (627 g, 64%). Brown solid; mp 144 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ  
12 2.10 (dt, *J* = 12.9, 3.7 Hz, 2H), 2.51 (dd, *J* = 12.9, 2.4 Hz, 2H), 2.61 (dt, *J* = 12.9, 2.0 Hz, 2H), 3.05 (d, *J*  
13 = 12.9 Hz, 2H), 3.62 (s, 2H), 7.26–7.34 (m, 6H), 7.75 (dd, *J* = 8.1, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 8.40 (dd, *J* = 4.6, 1.7 Hz,  
14 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR(100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 33.8, 40.4, 50.0, 62.7, 119.7, 122.9, 127.3, 128.4, 129.1, 133.4,  
15 136.0, 138.0, 149.0, 150.5; IR 702, 741, 795, 991, 1400, 1562 cm<sup>-1</sup>; MS (ESI, positive) *m/z* 312 (M+H)<sup>+</sup>;  
16 HRMS (ESI, positive) *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>19</sub>N<sub>3</sub>Cl (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 312.1262, found 312.1270.

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23 **1-Benzyl-1',2'-dihydrospiro[piperidine-4,3'-pyrrolo[2,3-b]pyridine] (4).** To a solution of  
24 LiAlH(O*t*-Bu)<sub>3</sub> (2.55 kg, 10.0 mol) in THF (3.1 L) was added to a THF solution of **3** (625 g, 2.00 mol)  
25 in THF solution (4.4 L) portion wise at 65 °C. The mixture was stirred under reflux for 23 h. The  
26 resulting mixture was cooled to 0 °C and ice water was poured on ice water. The reaction mixture was  
27 extracted with ethyl acetate and washed with 20% NaCl aqueous solution, dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, filtered  
28 and concentrated under reduced pressure to give brown solid (551 g). The brown solid was dissolved in  
29 ethyl acetate (1.1 L) at 75 °C and the reaction mixture was cooled to 25 °C and stirred for 1.5 h.  
30 *n*-Hexane was added the mixture and filtrated to give pale brown solid. The pale brown solid was  
31 washed by *n*-hexane to afford **4** (406 g, 73%).

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37 **1-Benzyl-*N,N*-dimethylspiro[piperidine-4,3'-pyrrolo[2,3-b]pyridine]-1'(2'H)-carboxamide (5).**  
38 *N,N*-Diisopripyethylamine (105 mL, 752 mmol) was added to a stirred solution of **4** (105 g, 376 mmol)  
39 in toluene (247 mL) at room temperature. *N,N*-Dimethylcarbonyl chloride (52 mL, 564 mmol) was  
40 added to the reaction mixture and reaction was continued at reflux condition. After 3 h,  
41 *N,N*-diisopripyethylamine (32 mL, 226 mmol) and *N,N*-dimethylcarbonyl chloride (10 mL, 113 mmol)  
42 were added to reaction mixture. Additional 3 h, the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature  
43 and quenched by water and separated. The water layer was extracted with AcOEt and combined. The  
44 organic extracts were washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO<sub>3</sub> solution and brine, dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>,  
45 filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure to give **5** (132 g).

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51 ***N,N*-Dimethylspiro[piperidine-4,3'-pyrrolo[2,3-b]pyridine]-1'(2'H)-carboxamide (6).**

52 A mixture of **5** (132 g, 376 mmol), 20% Pd(OH)<sub>2</sub> on carbon (23.8 g) and MeOH (1.1 L) was stirred and  
53 stirred at 40 °C under H<sub>2</sub> atmosphere for 8 h. Filtrated Pd on carbon and concentrated under reduced  
54 pressure to give **6** (96 g). White solid; mp 104 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR(400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 1.68–1.71 (m, 2H),  
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6 1.79–1.86 (m, 2H), 2.76–2.83 (m, 2H), 3.01 (s, 6H), 3.03–3.10 (m, 2H), 3.80 (s, 2H), 6.74 (dd,  $J = 7.3$ ,  
7 5.1 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (dd,  $J = 7.3$ , 1.7 Hz, 1H), 8.03 (dd,  $J = 5.1$ , 1.7 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR(100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  
8  $\delta$  36.2, 38.1, 40.3, 43.1, 57.7, 116.2, 130.3, 132.3, 146.5, 157.2, 57.6; IR 771, 1219, 1366, 1381, 1419,  
9 1651  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; MS (ESI, positive)  $m/z$  260 ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$ ; HRMS (ESI, positive)  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{21}\text{ON}_4$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$   
10 261.1710, found 261.1718.

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13 **Ethyl4-{{[1'-(dimethylcarbamoyl)-1',2'-dihydro-1H-spiro[piperidine-4,3'-pyrrolo[2,3-b]pyridin]-1-y**  
14 **l]methyl}piperidine-1-carboxylate fumarate (1).** To a solution of **6** (96 g, 370 mmol) and  
15 4-formylpiperidine-1-carboxylate **8** (69 g, 370 mmol) in THF (542 mL) was added sodium  
16 triacetoxyborohydride (118 g, 555 mmol) at room temperature. After 2 h, 10% aqueous  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$  solution  
17 (963 mL) was added to the mixture drop wise at 0 °C. The mixture was extracted with toluene. Organic  
18 layer was separated and concentrated under reduced pressure to afford **11** as white solid (164 g). The  
19 white solid **11** (130 g, 301 mmol) was dissolved in ethanol (1.2 L) and fumaric acid (35 g, 301 mmol)  
20 was added to the solution. The mixture was stirred for 1 h and solvent was evaporated under reduced  
21 pressure to give colorless amorphous (119 g, 99%). The colorless amorphous was dissolved in acetone  
22 (1.2 L), ethyl acetate (1.0 L) was added to the solution and warmed up to 60 °C. After 1 h, reaction  
23 mixture was cooled to 25 °C and white precipitate was collected by suction filtration. The white  
24 precipitate was washed by ethyl acetate (431 mL) and dried to give **1** (150 g, 91% in four steps, 99.7 %  
25 HPLC area purity). White solid;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ )  $\delta$  0.94–1.06 (m, 2H), 1.15 (t,  $J = 7.1$   
26 Hz, 3H), 1.65–1.78 (m, 5H), 1.88–1.98 (m, 2H), 2.30–2.42 (m, 4H), 2.70–2.89 (m, 4H), 2.90 (s, 6H),  
27 3.65 (s, 2H), 3.89–3.99 (m, 2H), 4.00 (q,  $J = 7.1$  Hz, 2H), 6.58 (dd,  $J = 7.3$ , 5.1 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d,  $J = 6.6$   
28 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d,  $J = 5.1$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ )  $\delta$  14.6, 30.2 ( $\times 2$ ), 32.1, 33.9 ( $\times 2$ ),  
29 37.3 ( $\times 2$ ), 43.2 ( $\times 2$ ), 49.7 ( $\times 2$ ), 57.0, 60.5, 63.0, 116.3, 130.7, 131.4, 134.4 ( $\times 3$ ), 146.2, 154.6, 156.6,  
30 157.2, 166.7 ( $\times 2$ ); IR 1273, 1377, 1423, 1663, 1680  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; MS (ESI, positive)  $m/z$  430 ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$ ; HRMS  
31 (ESI, positive)  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{36}\text{O}_3\text{N}_5$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$  430.2813, found 430.2824; Anal. calcd for  
32  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{35}\text{N}_5\text{O}_3 \cdot \text{C}_4\text{H}_4\text{O}_4 \cdot 1/2 \text{H}_2\text{O}$ : C, 58.47; H, 7.27; N, 12.63. Found: C, 58.28; H, 7.25, N, 12.63.; HPLC  
33 analysis conditions (Column: Eclipse Plus  $\text{C}_{18}$  4.6  $\times$  100 mm, 3.5  $\mu\text{m}$ ; flow 1.0 mL/min; Eluent:  
34 Gradient 10–90% methanol in water containing 0.01% TFA).

## 48 49 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### 50 Supporting Information

51  $^1\text{H}$  NMR and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR of compounds **1**, **3** and **6**. Detail data of a single crystal X-ray structure analysis.

52 This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.  
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**Notes**

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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46 13. Recrystallization of **11**. **11** (5 mg) was dissolved in DMSO (25  $\mu$ L) at 70°C. The solution was leaved  
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6 at room temperature for 1 day. Single crystal of **11** was formed.  
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