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Based on molecular docking and rational design method, a series of multi-substituted benzyl acridone derivatives were designed and synthesized as survivin inhibitors for the treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma.



# Novel multi-substituted benzyl acridone derivatives as survivin inhibitors for

# hepatocellular carcinoma treatment

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#### Abstract

Sorafenib was the only small-molecule drug approved by FDA for treatment of the advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). Recent study indicated that YM155 was a promising agent for HCC cells with high survivin expression, however, the antitumor activity needs to be further improved. Based on molecular docking and rational design method, a series of multi-substituted benzyl acridone derivatives were designed and synthesized. MTT assay indicated that some of the synthesized compounds displayed better antiproliferative activity against HepG2 cells than YM155. Later study indicated that the representive compound **8u** may directly interact with survivin protein and induce HepG2 cells apoptosis, which is different from YM155. In addition, ADME property was predicted *in silico*, and it performed well. Moreover, *in vivo* preliminary experiments showed that **8u** may be a good lead compound in the treatment of HCC.

Key words: Acridones, Survivin, YM155, Molecular docking, Antitumor

#### **1. Introduction**

Currently, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is one of the most common potentially lethal human malignancies worldwide [1]. The only approved small-molecule drug for advanced HCC is the multikinase inhibitor Sorafenib, however, it has only little survival advantage in the presence of major side effects [2]. Therefore, the development of novel small molecule inhibitors against HCC is urgently required. Survivin is the smallest member of Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins (IAPs) [3, 4], which is highly expressed in most human solid tumors including HCC, but with little expression in most normal terminally differentiated adult tissues [5-8]. Therefore, survivin has become a putative drug target for cancer therapy [9-14]. Now, it has been regarded as an attractive therapeutic target for the treatment of HCC [15-19].

YM155 (Sepantronium Bromide), a small-molecule survivin suppressant, has entered clinical trials for the treatment of lymphoma, melanoma, prostate and non-small cell lung carcinoma [20, 21]. Additionally, preclinical studies have also shown that YM155 was a promising agent for HCC cells with high survivin expression [17], and it yielded significantly better therapeutic effect than sorafenib in an orthotopic mouse model [16]. Although the anti-cancer mechanisms of YM155 have not yet been fully elucidated [17, 22], a library of YM155 analogs have been designed and synthesized as anti-cancer small molecule inhibitors in recent years because of its excellent anti-cancer activities [23]. The United States National Cancer Institute also developed a novel dioxonaphthoimidazolium derivative NSC80467, the

chemical structure of which is similar to YM155, and it displayed similar antitumor activity against NCI-60 cell lines compared to YM155 [24]. Although series of YM155 derivatives have been developed, few compounds displayed better antitumor activity against HCC have been found. Therefore, it is important to develop new YM155 analogues to treat HCC.

Comparing the structures of YM155 and NSC80467, both of them contain a tricyclic conjugated system (**Figure 1a**, D, red ellipses) and two main side chains, one of which contains an aromatic ring group (**Figure 1a**, blue ellipses) and the other is an alkyl or alkoxy side chain (**Figure 1a**, green ellipses). We found that the D part of YM155 and NSC80467 is similar to acridone structure, which have been developed as good HCC inhibition agents by our group and other researches [23, 25-34]. We think that if two appropriate side chains were introduced to the acridone ring, acridone derivatives can be developed as survivin inhibitors similar to YM155 for the treatment of HCC. The 3D structural superposition of the representive compound **8u** and YM155 is shown in **Figure 1b**, which indicated that **8u** and YM155 might exhibit similar bioactivity. As the main targets of acridones are DNA and its related enzymes (such as topoisomerases, telomerase, etc.), it is very interesting and reasonable to found their new mechanisms of action.

In this paper, a library of novel multi-substituted benzyl acridone derivatives were designed and synthesized based on the chemical structural features of YM155 and NSC80467. The antiproliferative activity of the compounds were tested and their SAR were established. The typical compound **8u** could inhibit the expression of survivin to display HCC inhibition activity *in vitro* and *in vivo*.

# 2. Results and discussion

#### 2.1. Chemistry

The synthesis of targets compounds 5a-b, 7a-b and 8a-w was shown in Scheme 1. Compounds 3a-d were obtained from the Ullmann reaction of anthranilic acid derivatives 1a-d with 2,4-dichlorobenzoic acid 2 in DMF using Cu as the catalyst [35, 36]. Subsequent Friedel-Crafts acylation in concentrated sulfuric acid at 80  $\square$  for 3-5 h gave acridone-4-carboxylic acid derivatives 4a-d in high yields [37], which were corresponding primary aliphatic then reacted with the amines using N,N'-carbonyldiimidazole (CDI) as the condensation agent [38] at room temperature to afford the intermediates acridone-4-carboxamides 6a-h. It is noteworthy that when the reaction temperature raised to 70  $\square$ , it will generate a small amount of **5a-b**. The desired compounds 7a-b and 8a-v were produced by the nucleophilic substitution between the corresponding acridone-4-carboxamides and hydrazine hydrate or various multi-substituted benzyl amines. Additionally, compound 8w was obtained by the reduction reaction of 8u under the iron and ammonium chloride conditions [39]. The structures of all target compounds were established via <sup>1</sup>H NMR, <sup>13</sup>C NMR and high resolution mass spectral data.

# 2.2. In vitro cytotoxicity

The *in vitro* cytotoxicity of 30 desired acridone derivatives against HepG2 cells were firstly assayed by MTT reduction method, and YM155 was used as the positive

control. In order to verify the inhibitory activity of the synthesized compounds on other solid tumor cells, human breast cancer MCF-7 cells were also tested. The structures and bioactivity results were shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Most of these compounds had better antitumor activity than YM155. Table 1 showed the MTT results for the benzylamino-substituted acridone compounds. It can be seen that the R<sub>2</sub> group on the 4-carboxamide side chain had a great effect on the antitumor activity. Acridones with N,N-dimethylamino group displayed better antitumor activity than those with methoxy group except 8n, which can be seen from the IC<sub>50</sub> values of 8e, 8f, 8g, 8h and 8i. These compounds with methoxy group displayed no cytotoxicity (IC<sub>50</sub>> 50  $\mu$ M). Interestingly, when the R<sub>3</sub> substituent was 4-methoxy group, the activities were also outstanding. For example, 8c had an IC<sub>50</sub> value of 2.11 µM against HepG2 cells, and 8r was 1.05 µM against MCF-7 cells. In addition, as shown in Table 1, four compounds (8b, 8c, 8t, and 8u) had IC<sub>50</sub> values of less than 4 µM against HepG2 cells, and these compounds also exhibited good inhibitory activity against MCF-7 cells  $(2.92 \text{ to } 6.84 \mu\text{M})$ . These results suggested that benzylamino acridones had almost the same inhibitory effects on both two solid tumor cells. It should be noted that the difference in chemical structure between 8r and 8u was only the length of the alkyl chains between the N,N-dimethylamino group and 4-carboxamide group (the number of methylene units, n), and the IC<sub>50</sub> values of 8r and 8u on HepG2 cells were almost the same. Thus, the length of the amide side chain had little effect on the antitumor activity. Additionally, the difference between 8w and 8u was only the substituent at the C-5 position (8w:5-NH<sub>2</sub>, 8u: 5-NO<sub>2</sub>), but the IC<sub>50</sub> values against HepG2 cells

were 5.68  $\mu$ M and 3.56  $\mu$ M, respectively. Moreover, the antiproliferative activity of **8w** against MCF-7 cells was about 3 times lower than that of **8u**.

The electronic effects of the 5-position substituent of acridone scaffold were also discussed, including different electron-donating and electron-withdrawing groups on C5 position, such as 5-methyl, 5-methoxy, 5-amino, 5-nitro and 5,7-dichloro substituents. From the biological data shown in **Table 1**, compounds with good activities generally had methyl or nitro groups at the C5 position (**8d** vs. **8u**). The results indicated that electron-negativity and steric effect on C5 position of acridone scaffold might have little change in the cytotoxic profile. However, when 5,7-dichloro substituent was introduced (e.g. **8o**), the antiproliferative activities of HepG2 cells and MCF-7 cells were significantly decreased compared to the other substituents at the 5-position.

**Table 2** showed the structure-activity relationship of no benzyl substituted acridone derivatives (the benzylamino substituents are replaced by -Cl, -NHNH<sub>2</sub> and -N(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> substituents). From the data we can see, most of non-benzylamino acridinone compounds showed poor antiproliferative activities, for instance, **5b** had poor antitumor activity against HepG2 cells with an IC<sub>50</sub> value of 36.82  $\mu$ M. These results indicated that the introduction of the benzylamino group in the target compounds was important for the anticancer activity.

For the most active compounds (**8b**, **8c**, **8t** and **8u**) against HepG2 cells, we further tested their *in vitro* toxicity against human liver cells QGY-7701 [40, 41]. From **Table 3** we can see that only **8u** was less toxic than **8b**, **8c** and **8t** to normal

hepatocytes, and its  $IC_{50}$  value is 11 times lower than for HepG2 cells. However, the other three compounds are still toxic to QGY-7701. Therefore, **8u** was selected for subsequent biological research.

#### 2.3. In silico predictions of druggability, pharmacokinetic properties and toxicity

As compound **8u** displayed good antiproliferative activity and low toxic side effect, the *in silico* predictions of drugability and pharmacokinetics of **8u** using ACD/Percepta Platform (**Table 4, 5**), and toxicity prediction using Osiris soft (**Table 6**) were performed. It is well-known that the Lipinski's rule of five [42] based on the pharmacokinetic properties of small molecule drugs, is important for the prediction of ligand druggability. It can be seen from **Table 4** that the number of hydrogen bond donors and acceptors of **8u** were 10 and 3, respectively; the calculated log P values was 4.77, the molecular weight was 503.55 (Slightly higher); the number of rotatable bonds was 10, the number of rings were 4 and the surface area were 131.53 Å<sup>2</sup>, all of which except the slightly larger molecular weight were within the range specified by the rule. Therefore, the Lipinski's violations of **8u** was 1, which are accorded with the limit of Lipinski's rule ( $\leq$ 1).

The evaluation of pharmacokinetic properties of **8u** was carried out using ACD/Percepta software 14.0.0 (**Table 5**). *In silico* prediction of the passive absorption of drugs based on Caco-2 cell permeability, provides a useful drug discovery tool by predicting human oral absorption of new compounds. Yazdanian et al. [43] reported that compounds with values greater than  $7 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/s had excellent oral absorption. The permeability coefficient of **8u** was greater than  $7 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/s, which indicated

good absorption characteristics. In the analysis of a new drug, it is very important to know the basic pharmacokinetic parameters such as protein binding. For the estimation of binding of compounds to human plasma proteins, e.g., albumin, lipoproteins and alpha-1-acid glycoprotein, we used the %PPB parameter as the cumulative percentage. An ability to cross the blood brain barrier (BBB) is an asset for compounds to be used for therapies of central nervous system (CNS) afflictions, which depends on the lipid-solubility and molecular weight of the drug itself. BBB transport parameters contain the rate of brain penetration (LogPS), extent of brain penetration (LogBB) and the brain/plasma equilibration rate (Log(PS\*fu, brain)). These values were used to classify the compounds as CNS permeable or non-permeable. However, these results showed that **8u** had low brain penetration, which may indicated inactive to CNS.

P-glycoprotein (P-gp) is a well characterized transporter, which moves a variety of substrates across extra- and intracellular membranes. It is an important drug efflux pump, therefore, predicting P-gp transport is important aiming to develop anti-cancer drugs. However, the prediction result is inconclusive. Similarly, the first-pass metabolism also failed to give a prediction. In addition, the predicted solubility of **8u** was only 0.1mg/mL, apparently this result was not good. To this end, we synthesized **8u** hydrochloride, which its solubility in water had a large extent improved. Therefore, we used its hydrochloric acid salt to study *in vivo* experiments.

The toxicity prediction for **8u** was based on the online software Osiris Property Explorer ver. 2. The software was used to predict the toxicity from mutagenic,

tumorigenic, irritant and reproductive aspects. It should be noted that whether compounds are mutagenic, based on their ability to induce DNA damage. The toxicity prediction results were shown in **Table 6**, in mutagenic, tumorigenic, irritant and reproductive aspects, **8u** has shown low toxicity, which was in accordance to the MTT values.

#### 2.4. DNA binding and Topo I/II inhibition experiments

Literature has proved that YM155 is a DNA damaging agent while suppression of survivin is a secondary event [21, 24]. As the structure of **8u** is very similar to YM155, therefore, we firstly studied the DNA binding ability of **8u**, which was shown in **Figure 1s**. The results showed that **8u** was not a DNA binding agent compared to our published DNA binders [25-27, 35, 44].

As most of acridine/acridone derivatives had the inhibitory activity of topoisomerases, it is of interest to evaluate whether our synthesized novel acridone derivative **8u** can also inhibit the activity of topoisomerases. **Figure 2a** showed the relative affinity of **8u** on the relaxation of plasmid pBR322 DNA mediated by Topo I, which indicated that **8u** displayed no Topo I inhibitory activity. **Figure 2b** showed the human Topo II decatenation assay, and two concentrations (1 and 10  $\mu$ M) of Doxorubicin (DOX) were used as the positive controls. From the results we can see, **8u** (50  $\mu$ M) seemed to be weakly bound to Topo II, however, the inhibition rate was only about 10.9% while Doxorubicin (10  $\mu$ M) was 74.4%. Therefore, Topo II is not the main drug target of **8u**. The above results indicated that DNA and topoisomerases are not the main targets of **8u**, which is different from YM155.

#### 2.5. Identification of YM155 and 8u targeting to survivin protein

#### 2.5.1 Molecular modeling

As survivin small-molecule inhibitor, YM155 displays an obvious antiproliferative activity in a large panel of tumor cellular model [45], however, its molecular mechanisms of action needs to be further evaluated [17, 22]. Survivin protein exists as a homodimer in most tumor cells, and the presence of a homodimer is a necessary condition for its physiological function. Targeting of the small molecule into a domain that restricts the dimerization hydrophobic interface may cause destabilization and degradation of the protein, thereby further leading to cancer cells apoptosis [14]. To this end, we used molecular docking methods to verify whether **8u** can be directly binding to survivin hydrophobic surface.

There is a high hydrophobicity surface in survivin dimerization domain, its key residues comprised of Leu6, Pro7, Pro8, Ala9, Trp10, Phe93, Glu94, Glu95, Leu96, Thr97, Leu98, Gly99, Phe101, Leu102, and it is considered to be a good target site for drug discovery [14]. Therefore, molecular docking studies of the representative compound **8u** and YM155 with survivin protein model were conducted using SYBYL-X v1.3 program. As seen from **Figure 3**, **8u** can effectively target the dimerization hydrophobic domain of survivin, and the hydrophobic effect between the ligand and receptor might be due to  $\pi$ -conjugated planar acridone scaffold of **8u**. Moreover, three hydrogen bonds of **8u** were also formed in the hydrophobic domain (residues Phe93, Glu94 and Leu96). Therefore, it was confirmed that **8u** can effectively bind to the critical hydrophobic core, which suggested that survivin protein

may be the main drug target of **8u**. However, there was no interaction between YM155 and survivin, which can be seen in **Figure 2s**.

#### 2.5.2 Fluorogenic titration assay

To verify that **8u** indeed binds to survivin, we performed a fluorogenic titration assay in the presence or absence of survivin. **Figure 4** showed that the fluorescence of **8u** dramatically increased in the presence of survivin, indicating that **8u** likely interacted with survivin protein. Meanwhile, we also carried out the fluorescence experiments of YM155 and survivin protein (**Figure 3s**) and the results showed that with the YM155 concentration increased, the fluorescence trend was not changed, indicating that YM155 may not target survivin protein directly.

#### 2.6. 8u causes survivin degradation and induces cells apoptosis

We next determined if 8u causes survivin degradation by western blot analysis. For this purpose, HepG2 cells were treated with 8u with different concentration gradients. Figure 5 showed that the content of survivin protein in HepG2 cells was significantly decreased with the increase of the concentration of 8u from 1 µM to 10 µM.

In order to understand whether 8u induced cancer cells apoptosis, the activity of cleaved caspase-7 was firstly tested. As shown in Figure 5, 8u at 10  $\mu$ M for 24 h induced significant activation of cleaved caspase-7, suggesting that 8u induced HepG2 cells apoptosis. PARP (poly ADP-ribose polymerase) is the substrate of caspases. During apoptosis, caspases mediated PARP cleavage, which inactivates the enzyme by destroying its ability to respond to DNA strand breaks. The results

revealed the generation of the cleaved PARP. Additionally, Bcl-2, an important member of Bcl-2 family proteins, plays an important role in extending cellular survival. **8u** at 10  $\mu$ M effectively decreased the expression of Bcl-2 protein as shown in **Figure 5**, which further confirmed that **8u** could induce HepG2 cells apoptosis.

#### 2.7. In vivo preliminary experiments

We finally evaluated the *in vivo* anti-tumor effect of compound **8u** (hydrochloride salt) on subcutaneously xenografts tumor models of human hepatocarcinoma cell line HepG2 in nude mice, and measured the body weight and tumor size of the nude mice once every two days after the first administration. Figure 6a showed the effect of 8u on tumor size in the HepG2 implanted model with the days of administration increased. From the data we can see that treatment with **8u** (3 mg/kg) significantly reduced HepG2 tumor volume by 54% after 30 days of treatment, which was comparable to the positive control (64%, 25 mg/kg). In addition, little toxicity of 8u was observed, as demonstrated by the absence of weight loss (Figure 6b) and by the normal growth and behavior of all mice tested. Moreover, 8u had no significant effect on the organ weight of nude mice (Table 7). 8u could obviously increase the spleen weight in a dose-dependent manner, which suggested that 8u might be able to enhance the body's immune capacity. All the results indicated that 8u had efficacious antitumor effect and low adverse effects, which may constitute a novel lead in the search for anticancer drug candidates with new mechanisms of action.

#### **3.** Conclusion

Based on the structural characteristics of survivin inhibitors YM155 and NSC80467, 30 multi-benzylamino acridone derivatives were designed and

synthesized. The synthesized compounds were evaluated through MTT screening, most of them showed good in vitro anti-cancer activities against HepG2 cells and MCF-7 cells. Among them, compound 8u with high activity showed low toxicity to hepatocyte QGY-7701 cells in vitro. Druggability and toxicity prediction showed that 8u conformed to the rules of Lipinski and showed low toxicity in mutagenic, tumorigenic, irritant and reproductive aspects. In addition, the ADME property prediction indicated that 8u has good absorption characteristics, but it was ineffective to CNS. Molecular docking showed that 8u restricts the survivin dimerization hydrophobic domain, and the fluorescence experiments further confirmed that 8u can binding with the survivin protein. Interestingly, DNA binding experiments and topoisomerase inhibition experiments (Topo I/II) found that 8u did not cause direct or indirect DNA damage, which is different from YM155 and NSC80467. In addition, we found that 8u can significantly decrease the content of survivin in HepG2 cells with the increase of drug concentration, which proved the possible mechanism proposed in the molecular docking. The apoptosis mechanism of hepatocellular carcinoma cells further showed that 8u could induce the apoptosis of HepG2 cells. In vivo preliminary experiments exhibited that **8u** effectively suppressed the growth of HepG2 xenograft tumors, and the tumor inhibition rate of 8u reached 54% after 30 days of administration. Moreover, **8u** had not affected the body weight, organ weight and organ index of nude mice, which was consistent with *in vitro* anticancer activity and toxicity assay. Therefore, 8u may be a promising lead compound in the treatment of HCC, moreover, metabolomics and proteomics research of 8u on HepG2 cells is in progress.

#### 4. Experimental section

#### 4.1. Synthesis and characterization

See supporting information for synthetic methods and the preparation of compounds **3a-d**, **4a-d**, **5a-b** and **6a-h**.

#### 4.1.1. General procedure for compounds 7a-b and 8a-v.

9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide derivatives (**6a-h**, 0.28 mmol) and hydrazine hydrate or various multi-substituted benzyl amines (0.84 mmol) were dissolved in 2-ethoxyethanol, and the mixture was stirred at 90-100°C until the TLC showed the disappearance of the starting material. The mixture was cooled to room temperature and partitioned between  $CH_2Cl_2$  (50 mL) and water (50 mL). The organic layer was worked up to give a residue which was purified by column-chromatography eluted with EtOAC/EtOH (9:1 v/v) to give pure product **7a-b** and **8a-v**.

**4.1.1.1.** N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-hydrazinyl-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10-dihydro acridine-4-carboxamide (7a) yellow solid powder, Yield 20.2%; mp 190-192°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.57 (s, 1H), 11.55 (s, 1H), 8.21 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.16 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (br, 2H), 3.55 (dd, *J* = 10.7, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.62 (s, 3H), 2.60-2.52 (m, 2H), 2.32 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  180.9, 169.4, 157.6, 144.5, 138.6, 133.6, 133.4, 124.9, 123.9, 121.7, 121.3, 105.8, 101.4, 99.1, 57.8, 45.2, 36.9, 17.2; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 354.1930; Found: 354.1928.

**4.1.1.2.N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-1-hydrazinyl-5-methoxy-9-oxo-9,10-dihydro acridine-4-carboxamide (7b)** yellow solid powder, Yield 40.4%; mp 236-238°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.58 (s, 1H), 11.58 (s, 1H), 7.91 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.74 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.08 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 6.91 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 3.78 (br, 2H), 3.62-3.51 (m, 2H), 2.58 (t, J = 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.32 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  180.5, 169.1, 157.7, 148.0, 144.0, 133.5, 131.1, 122.4, 121.0, 117.2, 111.3, 106.3, 101.9, 99.0, 57.8, 56.3, 45.2, 36.9; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 370.1879; Found: 370.1870.

4.1.1.3. 1-(benzylamino)-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10-

**dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide** (**8a**) yellow solid powder, Yield 60.9%; mp 144-146°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.58 (s, 1H), 11.41 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.39 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.34 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.28-7.24 (m, 1H), 7.15 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 6.14 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 4.55 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.50 (dd, *J* = 10.6, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.60 (s, 3H), 2.53 (t, *J* = 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.27 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, *d*<sub>6</sub>-DMSO)  $\delta$  180.4, 169.3, 154.6, 144.6, 138.9, 138.5, 135.1, 134.1, 129.1, 127.8, 127.6, 125.1, 123.7, 121.7, 121.5, 106.2, 101.5, 100.3, 58.6, 46.4, 45.7, 37.6, 17.0; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 429.2291; Found: 429.2300.

# 4.1.1.4. N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-((3-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-methyl-

**9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8b)** yellow solid powder, Yield 27.3%; mp 164-166°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.58 (s, 1H), 11.43 (s, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.28-7.24 (m, 1H), 7.16 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.99 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (s, 2H), 6.81 (dd, *J* = 8.1, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.17 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.55 (d, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 3.80 (d, *J* = 13.0 Hz, 3H), 3.53 (dd, *J* = 10.8, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.62 (s, 3H), 2.57 (t, *J* = 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.30 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 181.2, 169.4, 160.1, 155.3, 144.7, 139.8, 138.6, 133.6, 133.4, 129.8, 124.9, 123.9, 121.9, 121.4, 119.4, 112.8, 112.8, 106.8, 101.3, 100.0, 57.7, 55.2, 46.8, 45.1, 36.7, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup>459.2396; Found: 459.2408.

# 4.1.1.5. N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-methyl-

**9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8c)** yellow solid powder, Yield 54.6%; mp 225-227°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.59 (s, 1H), 11.34 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.15 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (s, 1H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.18 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 4.48 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.53 (dd, *J* = 10.7, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.61 (s, 3H), 2.56 (t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.29 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 181.2, 169.4, 158.9, 155.1, 144.8, 138.5, 133.5, 133.5, 130.0, 128.4, 124.9, 123.8, 121.9, 121.4, 114.2, 106.7, 101.1, 99.9, 57.8, 55.3, 46.3, 45.1, 36.8, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 459.2396; Found: 459.2401.

# 4.1.1.6. N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-methyl-

**9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8d)** yellow solid powder, Yield 22.4%; mp 185-187°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.82 (s, 1H), 11.32 (s, 1H), 8.68 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (d, *J* = 6.1 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 7.16 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.20 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (s, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.59 (br, 2H), 2.62 (br, 5H), 2.39 (s, 6H), 1.84 (br, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 181.2, 169.5, 159.0, 155.0, 144.9, 138.59, 133.5, 133.4, 130.0, 128.5, 124.9, 123.8, 121.8, 121.3, 114.2, 106.7, 101.4, 99.8, 59.1, 55.3, 46.3, 45.1, 40.1, 24.9, 17.2; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 473.2552; Found: 473.2566.

#### 4.1.1.7. 1-(benzylamino)-N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10-dihydro

acridine-4-carboxamide (8e) yellow solid powder, Yield 62.1%; mp 191-193°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.50 (s, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.49 (s, 1H), 6.18 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 4.58 (s, 2H), 3.67 (br, 2H), 3.59 (t, *J* = 4.7 Hz, 2H), 3.42 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 3H), 2.62 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  181.2, 169.3, 155.2, 144.7, 138.5, 137.9, 133.7, 133.3, 128.8, 127.4, 127.2, 124.9, 123.9, 121.9, 121.5, 106.8, 101.1, 100.0, 71.3, 58.9, 46.88, 39.4, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup>416.1974; Found: 416.1980.

# 4.1.1.8. 1-((3-methoxybenzyl)amino)-N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-

**9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8f)** yellow solid powder, Yield 61.8%; mp 138-140°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.50 (s, 1H), 11.46 (s, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.31-7.23 (m, 1H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.94 (s, 1H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.48 (s, 1H), 6.17 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.56 (d, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.72-3.64 (m, 2H), 3.59 (t, *J* = 4.7 Hz, 2H), 3.41 (s, 3H), 2.63 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 181.3, 169.3, 160.0, 155.3, 144.7, 139.7, 138.5, 133.7, 133.3, 129.9, 124.9, 123.8, 121.8, 121.5, 119.4, 112.8, 112.7, 106.8, 101.1, 100.0, 71.3, 58.9, 55.3, 46.8, 39.4, 17.2; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 446.2080; Found: 446.2082.

#### 4.1.1.9. 1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-

9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8g) yellow solid powder, Yield 38.6%; mp

232-234°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.49 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.16 (s, 1H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 6.50 (s, 1H), 6.20 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (s, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.66 (br, 2H), 3.59 (br, 2H), 3.41 (s, 3H), 2.61 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  181.2, 169.3, 159.0, 155.1, 144.7, 138.5, 133.6, 133.2, 129.8, 128.5, 124.9, 123.8, 121.9, 121.5, 114.2, 106.7, 101.1, 100.0, 71.3, 58.9, 55.31, 46.4, 39.4, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 446.2080; Found: 446.2078.

#### 4.1.1.10. N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-1-((4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)

**amino)-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide** (**8h**) yellow solid powder, Yield 35.6%; mp 260-262°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.51 (s, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.61-7.58 (m, 3H), 7.52-7.50 (m, 3H), 7.22-7.15 (m, 1H), 6.49 (s, 1H), 6.08 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.64 (s, 2H), 3.66 (d, *J* = 4.6 Hz, 2H), 3.60-3.53 (m, 2H), 3.40 (s, 3H), 2.62 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  181.3, 169.2, 155.1, 144.7, 142.2, 138.5, 133.8, 133.3, 127.3, 125.8, 125.7, 125.0, 123.8, 121.8, 121.6, 106.9, 101.7, 99.7, 71.2, 58.9, 46.4, 39.4, 17.1; <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  -62.45; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 484.1848; Found: 484.1856.

4.1.1.11. N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-1-((3,4,5-trimethoxybenzyl)amino)9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8i) yellow solid powder, Yield 68.0%; mp
230-232°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.53 (s, 1H), 8.25 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H),
7.64 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 7.20 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 6.64 (s,
2H), 6.54 (s, 1H), 6.21 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 4.52 (s, 2H), 3.86 (s, 9H), 3.69 (br, 2H),
3.61 (br, 2H), 3.43 (s, 3H), 2.64 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 181.2, 169.3,

155.1, 153.6, 144.7, 138.5, 137.2, 133.7, 133.7, 133.3, 125.0, 123.8, 121.8, 121.6, 106.8, 104.1, 101.5, 100.2, 71.3, 60.9, 58.9, 56.2, 47.4, 39.4, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 506.2291; Found: 506.2293.

**4.1.1.12.** N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-1-((3,4,5-trimethoxybenzyl) amino)-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8j) yellow solid powder, Yield 33.1%; mp 195-197°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.61 (s, 1H), 11.38 (s, 1H), 8.23 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.23-7.13 (m, 1H), 7.06 (s, 1H), 6.62 (s, 2H), 6.18 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.84 (s, 9H), 3.56 (dd, *J* = 10.6, 5.1 Hz, 2H), 2.62 (br, 5H), 2.35 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  181.3, 169.4, 155.2, 153.6, 144.7, 138.5, 137.3, 133.8, 133.6, 133.6, 124.9, 123.8, 121.8, 121.4, 106.8, 104.1, 101.4, 100.1, 60.8, 57.8, 56.2, 47.2, 45.0, 36.6, 17.1; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 519.2607; Found: 519.2623.

**4.1.1.13. 1**-(**benzylamino**)-**N**-(**2**-(**dimethylamino**)**ethyl**)-**5**-**methoxy**-**9**-**oxo**-**9**,10-**dihydroacridine**-**4**-**carboxamide** (**8k**) yellow solid powder, Yield 57.1%; mp 230-231°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.61 (s, 1H), 11.44 (s, 1H), 7.94 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.42 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.97 (s, 1H), 6.17 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.57 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 3.56 (d, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.56 (t, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 2.29 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  180.9, 169.1, 155.2, 148.0, 144.2, 138.1, 133.6, 131.0, 128.8, 127.3, 127.2, 122.5, 121.1, 117.1, 111.3, 107.2, 101.8, 99.8, 57.9, 56.3, 46.9, 45.1, 36.8; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 445.2240; Found: 445.2252.

# 4.1.1.14. N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methoxy-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)

**amino**)-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (81) yellow solid powder, Yield 70.8%; mp 245-246°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.57 (s, 1H), 11.36 (s, 1H), 7.92 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.17 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.96 (s, 1H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.20 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 4.08 (s, 3H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.61-3.48 (m, 2H), 2.60 (t, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H), 2.33 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  180.8, 169.1, 158.9, 155.2, 147.9, 144.2, 133.6, 131.0, 130.0, 128.4, 122.5, 121.0, 117.1, 114.2, 111.3, 107.2, 101.6, 99.8, 57.9, 56.3, 55.3, 46.4, 45.0, 36.6; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 475.2345; Found: 475.2336.

# **4.1.1.15.** N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-methoxy-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8m) Yellow solid powder, Yield 63.4%; mp 260-261°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) $\delta$ 13.84 (s, 1H), 11.32 (s, 1H), 8.66 (s, 1H), 7.91 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.16 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.18 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 4.07 (s, 3H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.60 (dd, *J* = 10.4, 5.4 Hz, 2H), 2.59-2.50 (m, 2H), 2.33 (s, 6H), 1.84-1.72 (m, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) $\delta$ 180.8, 169.1, 158.9, 154.9, 148.0, 144.3, 133.3, 131.0, 130.0, 128.5, 122.4, 121.0, 117.0, 114.2, 111.1, 107.2, 101.9, 99.6, 59.7, 56.2, 55.3, 46.4, 45.5, 40.7, 25.0; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 489.2502; Found: 489.2493.

# 4.1.1.16. N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methoxy-9-oxo-1-((3,4,5-trimethoxy

benzyl)amino)-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8n) yellow solid powder,

Yield 57.3%; mp 257-259°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.60 (s, 1H), 11.39 (t, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 7.93 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (s, 1H), 6.63 (s, 2H), 6.19 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (d, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 3.85 (s, 9H), 3.57 (dd, *J* = 10.8, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.60 (t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.33 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  180.9, 169.1, 155.2, 153.6, 148.0, 144.1, 137.1, 133.8, 133.7, 131.0, 122.4, 121.2, 117.0, 111.3, 107.2, 104.0, 101.8, 100.0, 60.9, 57.8, 56.3, 56.2, 47.3, 45.1, 36.7; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 535.2557; Found: 535.2556.

**4.1.1.17. 5**,7-dichloro-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-**9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (80)** yellow solid powder, Yield 69.6%; mp 238-240°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  11.11 (d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 1H), 8.23 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.70-7.67 (m, 2H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 7.02 (s, 1H), 6.91 (dd, *J* = 6.7, 4.8 Hz, 2H), 6.25 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.56 (dd, *J* = 10.7, 5.3 Hz, 2H), 2.62-2.55 (m, 2H), 2.32 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  179.2, 168.9, 159.1, 154.9, 144.6, 135.4, 134.0, 132.5, 129.6, 128.4, 126.7, 124.4, 123.4, 122.5, 114.3, 106.7, 101.5, 100.9, 57.7, 55.3, 46.4, 45.1, 36.7; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 513.1460; Found: 513.1467.

4.1.1.18. 1-(benzylamino)-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydro acridine-4-carboxamide (8p) Red solid powder, Yield 33.8%; mp 243-245°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, *d*<sub>6</sub>-DMSO) δ 15.00 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 1H), 8.65 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 8.57 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 8.46 (s, 1H), 8.03 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 4.40-7.37 (m, 5H), 7.29 (d, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 6.45 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 4.61 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.27 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 1H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 2H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 2H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 2H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 2.53 (br, 2H), 2.27 (s, 2H), 10.92 (s, 2H), 10.9

6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, *d*<sub>6</sub>-DMSO) δ 178.8, 168.2, 154.3, 138.7, 135.9, 135.2, 134.4, 131.7, 129.2, 127.8, 127.7, 124.2, 120.7, 106.5, 103.2, 102.5, 58.4, 46.4, 45.4, 37.3; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 460.1985; Found: 460.2000.

**4.1.1.19.** N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-((3-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8q) Red solid powder, Yield 19.8%; mp 155-157°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  15.02 (s, 1H), 11.08 (s, 1H), 8.71 (d, J =7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.66 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.70 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 7.30-7.26 (m, 2H), 6.98 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (s, 1H), 6.83 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.29 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.54 (d, J = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.59 (d, J = 4.6 Hz, 2H), 2.65-2.56 (m, 2H), 2.31 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  179.4, 168.2, 160.1, 154.7, 144.1, 139.3, 135.0, 134.9, 134.5, 134.4, 131.2, 130.0, 124.6, 119.8, 119.3, 112.9, 112.8, 107.1, 103.3, 102.2, 57.8, 55.3, 46.9, 45.1, 36.8; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 490.2090; Found: 490.2091.

**4.1.1.20.** N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8r) Red solid powder, Yield 27.7%; mp 228-230°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  15.01 (s, 1H), 10.99 (s, 1H), 8.69 (d, J =6.8 Hz, 1H), 8.65 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.12 (s, 1H), 6.90 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.31 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 4.48 (s, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.62 (br, 2H), 2.65 (br, 2H), 2.37 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$ 179.3, 168.2, 159.1, 154.6, 144.1, 135.0, 134.8, 134.5, 134.4, 131.1, 129.5, 128.5, 124.6, 119.7, 114.3, 106.9, 103.0, 102.1, 57.9, 55.3, 46.4, 45.0, 36.6; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 490.2090; Found: 490.2099. **4.1.1.21.** N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-1-((3,4,5-trimethoxybenzyl) amino)-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8s) Red solid powder, Yield 49.4%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 15.04 (s, 1H), 11.01 (s, 1H), 8.68 (dd, *J* = 15.5, 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.30-7.28(m, 1H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 6.61 (s, 2H), 6.30 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 4.48 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 3.85 (s, 9H), 3.59 (br, 2H), 2.57 (br, 2H), 2.31 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 179.4, 168.1, 154.6, 153.7, 144.0, 137.4, 135.0, 134.8, 134.4, 134.4, 133.2, 131.2, 124.6, 119.8, 107.0, 104.2, 103.4, 102.1, 60.9, 57.7, 56.2, 47.4, 45.1, 36.8; mp 243-244°C; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 550.2302; Found: 550.2308.

# 4.1.1.22. 1-(benzylamino)-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-

dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8t) Red solid powder, Yield 73.7%; mp 222-224°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  15.25 (s, 1H), 11.06 (s, 1H), 8.71 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 8.65 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.46-7.33 (m, 4H), 7.33-7.26 (m, 2H), 6.31 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.57 (d, *J* = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.64 (br, 2H), 2.58 (br, 2H), 2.35 (s, 6H), 1.82 (br, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  179.4, 168.1, 154.5, 144.2, 137.6, 135.1, 134.9, 134.4, 134.1, 131.1, 128.9, 127.5, 127.2, 124.6, 119.6, 107.1, 103.6, 102.0, 59.4, 46.9, 45.3, 40.5, 24.9; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup>474.2141; Found: 474.2126.

#### 4.1.1.23. N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-5-nitro-

9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8u) Red solid powder, Yield 63.9%;
mp 251-252°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 15.27 (s, 1H), 10.97 (s, 1H), 8.76 (s, 1H), 8.70 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.65 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.33

(d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.27-7,24 (m, 1H), 6.91 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.32 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (d, J = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.64 (br, 2H), 2.56 (br, 2H), 2.35 (s, 6H), 1.80 (br, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  179.4, 168.1, 1591, 154.4, 144.2, 135.1, 134.85, 134.4, 134.1, 131.1, 129.5, 128.5, 124.6, 119.6, 114.3, 107.0, 103.4, 101.9, 59.6, 55.3, 46.5, 45.4, 40.7, 24.9; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 504.2247; Found: 504.2245.

#### 4.1.1.24. N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-1-((4-ethylbenzyl)amino)-5-nitro-9-oxo-

**9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide** (**8v**) Red solid powder, Yield 24.0%; mp 266-267°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  15.27 (s, 1H), 11.03 (s, 1H), 8.79-8.71 (m, 1H), 8.66 (dd, *J* = 8.1, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.21 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.35 (d, *J* = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 4.53 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.66-3.65 (m, 2H), 2.68-2.66 (m, 2H), 2.65-2.63 (m, 2H), 2.41 (s, 6H), 1.86-1.85 (m, 2H), 1.24 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  179.4, 168.3, 154.6, 144.3, 143.6, 135.1, 134.9, 134.7, 134.4, 134.31, 131.1, 128.4, 127.2, 124.6, 119.6, 107.0, 103.3, 102.1, 59.0, 46.8, 45.0, 40.0, 28.5, 24.8, 15.5; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 502.2454; Found: 502.2467.

# 4.1.2. General procedure for compound 8w.

Compound **8u** (0.18 mmol) and iron powder (0.89 mmol) was stirred in anhydrous ethanol (20 mL) and heated at 50°C for 20 minutes. Subsequently, an aqueous solution of ammonium chloride was added to the reaction system (0.014 g ammonium chloride in 3 mL water, 0.27 mmol), the temperature was raised to 80 ° C and stirring for 3 hours. The suspension was cooled to room temperature and the mixture was filtered on cellite to remove the iron. The filtrate was worked up to give a residue which was purified by column-chromatography eluted with EtOAC/EtOH (9:1 v/v) to give pure product  $\mathbf{8w}$ .

**5-amino-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-1-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)-9-oxo-9,10-d ihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (8w)** yellow solid powder, Yield 47.3%; mp 220-222 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.91 (s, 1H), 11.31 (s, 1H), 8.68 (br, 1H), 7.87 (br, 1H), 7.58 (br, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.06 (br, 2H), 6.90 (br, 2H), 6.19 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.49 (br, 2H), 3.80 (br, 5H), 3.58 (br, 2H), 2.59 (br, 2H), 2.38 (s, 6H), 1.82 (br, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  181.1, 169.5, 159.0, 155.0, 144.7, 134.0, 133.2, 130.9, 130.0, 128.5, 122.5, 121.6, 118.9, 117.1, 114.2, 106.8, 101.3, 99.7, 59.2, 55.3, 46.3, 45.2, 40.2, 24.9; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 474.2505; Found: 474.2514.

#### 4.2. Molecular docking

The molecular modeling of small molecule compounds were performed with the molecular modeling package SYBYL-X 1.3 (Tripos associate Inc., St. Louis, MO, USA) according to the reported process [46]. Briefly, the three-dimensional coordinates of survivin protein were acquired from PDB (PDB ID: 1F3H). Only one of the two chains was kept and the protein chain was prepared for docking. The general procedure is as followed: (a) removing the water molecules which co-crystallized with the original protein structure; (b) preparing ligand and receptor and then finding the candidate binding site; (c) docking the test compounds; (d) analysis of results.

#### 4.3. In silico physicochemical, pharmacokinetics and toxicity analysis

Physicochemical, pharmacokinetic and toxicity parameters for selected compound were predicted *in silico* using Advanced Chemistry Development, Inc. (ACD/Labs, ACD/Percepta Platform, version 14.0.0), and Osiris Property Explorer (http://www.organic-chemistry.org/prog/peo).

#### 4.4. Bioassay

#### 4.4.1. Cell culture

HepG-2, MCF-7 and QGY-7701 (adherent cell lines) were cultured in DMEM, with 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS) in humidified air at 37 °C with 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.

# 4.4.2. Cell growth inhibition assay

HepG2 cells, MCF-7 cells and QGY-7701 cells were seeded into 96-well plates at  $6 \times 10^3$  cells/well, treated with the synthesized compounds at different concentrations after these adherent cells hatched for 12 hours at 37 °C, 5% CO<sub>2</sub>. (The final concentrations of these compounds were 50, 25, 10, 1 and 0.1 µM). After 48 h treatment, the cells were incubated with 10 µL MTT solution (5 mg/mL) for 4 h at 37 °C, 5% CO<sub>2</sub>. The formazan precipitates were dissolved in 100 µL DMSO. At 490 nm, the absorbance was measured by Infinite M1000 PRO (TECAN).

# 4.5. Biophysical evaluation

#### 4.5.1. DNA binding experiment

Concentrated stock solutions of compounds were prepared by dissolving them in DMSO. Calf thymus DNA (ct DNA) was obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. All the measurements involving the interactions of tested compound **8u** with ct DNA were

carried out in doubly distilled water buffer containing 5 mM Tris and 50 mM NaCl, and adjusted to pH 7.2 with hydrochloric acid. Stock solutions of ct DNA were prepared in buffer and concentration was determined by UV absorbance by employing an extinction coefficient of  $6600 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$  at 260 nm.

The emission spectra were carried out on Fluorolog spectrometer. 16  $\mu$ L of tested compound **8u** (hydrochloride salt, 5 mM in DMSO) was incubated in Tris-HCl buffer solution (the final concentration of the tested compound was 40  $\mu$ M), and then ct DNA solution (2 mM in Tris-HCl buffer) was also added with the final concentration from 0 to 120  $\mu$ M. The excitation wavelength was set at 280 nm. The incubating time before testing was 5 min.

# 4.5.2. DNA Topo I inhibition assay

The solutions of a mixture of 100 ng of plasmid DNA pBR322 (commercial available from Takara), 1.0 units of recombinant human DNA Topo I (from Takara) and with compounds of different amount were incubated at 37 °C for 30 min in the relaxation buffer (35 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 72 mM KCl, 0.01% bovine serum albumin, 2 mM spermidine, 5 mM dithiothreitol). DNA samples were then electrophoresed on a 1% agarose gel at 100 V for 25 min with a running Buffer (Tris-Acetic acid-EDTA). Gels were visualized by EB staining under ultraviolet light.

#### 4.5.3. DNA Topo II inhibition assay

DNA Topo II inhibition assay were performed by HD Biosciences Corporation, Shanghai. The main steps as follows: (a) Transfer 1  $\mu$ l of compound or 50% DMSO into 96-well plates; (b) Add 19  $\mu$ l reaction mix; (c) Add 5  $\mu$ l of diluted enzyme in the 1X assay buffer; (d) Mix by pipeting up-and-down; (e) Cover the assay plates and incubate at  $35 \pm 2$  °C for 30 min; (f) Add 5 µl of 6X stop buffer; (g) Perform DNA electrophoresis in 1% agarose gel according to the gel layout; (h) Stain the gel with 2.3 µg/ml ethidium bromide for 10 min and destain in water for 20 min; (i) Take gel picture with Tanon GIS 2010 system; (j) Quantify DNA bands using Image J 1.47.

#### 4.5.4. Survivin protein binding assay

The emission spectra were carried out on Fluorolog spectrometer. 10 mg purified survivin protein (obtained from Sino Biological Inc.) was incubated in 10 mM PBS buffer solution (pH 7.4), and then **8u** (100  $\mu$ M in PBS buffer) was also added with the final concentration from 0 to 1.6  $\mu$ M. The excitation wavelength was set at 280 nm. The ambient temperature of this experiment was maintained at 37 °C, and the incubating time before testing was 20 min.

#### 4.5.5. Western blot analysis

HepG-2 cells were cultured in 6 cm dishes, followed by treatment with **8u** for different concentration-periods for 24 h. Protein concentrations in the supernatant were determined using bicinchonininc acid (BCA). Lysate proteins were subjected to 12% sodium dodecylsulfate (SDS)-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE), and electrophoretically transferred to PVDF membrane (amcBiobind NT-200). After blotting, the membrane was blocked in 5% milk for 1 h, and incubated with the specific primary antibody for overnight at 4 °C. Protein bands were detected using the BIO-RAD GelDoc XR after hybridization with the antibody.

#### 4.5.6. In vivo antitumor effect analysis in xenograft tumor model

*In vivo* experiments were performed by Fuwai Hospital, Beijing. For efficacy study, human hepatocarcinoma cell line HepG2 were injected subcutaneously in the flanks of null mice, and the mice were randomized into four different groups (5/group) with one group used as blank control, one group treated by 5-Fluorouracil (5-FU) control and the others by tested drug **8u** at 0.33 mg/kg and 3 mg/kg, respectively. These groups via i.p. injection once every 2 days. It should be noted that the body weight of mice in the 5-FU control group showed a significant 30% reduction at 10th day, and then we stopped administration of the 5-FU group. Tumor volume and body weight were measured every 2 days. On the 30th day after the initial treatment, mice were euthanized and the tumor tissues were harvested and weighed. We also weighed the weights of the kidneys and spleen and calculated the corresponding organ index. Tumor Growth Inhibition (TGI) was calculated in this experiment and the antitumor effect of the tested drug was evaluated.

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# Supplementary data

Supplementary data (the molecular docking of YM155-survivin, the results of YM155-survivin binding assay, the fluorescence spectroscopy of **8u**-DNA binding

experiments, general methods and the preparation of compounds **3a-d**, **4a-d**, **5a-b** and **6a-h**, <sup>1</sup>H NMR, <sup>13</sup>C NMR and High resolution mass spectrometry of synthetic compounds) associated with this article can be found, in the online version.

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#### Captions

Figure 1 (a) The chemical structures of YM155, NSC80467 and novel benzylaminoacridone derivative 8u; (b) The 3D structural superposition of designed

compound 8u and YM155.

**Figure 2** Human Topo I/II inhibition. (a) Effect of the test compound on the relaxation of plasmid DNA by human topo I. Lanes 1-2, DNA pBR322 relaxation by topo I and **8u**; Lane 3, DNA pBR322; Lane 4, topo I + DNA pBR322 + DMSO; Lanes 5-6, Camptothecin (CPT) + Topo I + pBR322 DNA; (b) Gel images of **8u** (50  $\mu$ M) from human topo II decatenation assay. Two concentrations (1 and 10  $\mu$ M) of Doxorubicin (DOX) were used as the positive controls, and no compound (NC) were used as the negative controls. All assays were performed in duplicate.

Figure 3 Docking mode of compound **8u** (stick and ball) and survivin using SYBYL-X v1.3 program. Molecules are colored by atom type and hydrogen bonds are represented by yellow dotted lines. (a) Survivin protein was presented as ribbon; (b) the protein added hydrophobic surface.

Figure 4 Dose-dependent binding of **8u** to survivin. The fluorescence was measured in the absence or presence of survivin,  $\lambda_{ex} = 280$  nm. The concentration of survivin was 0.3 µM.

**Figure 5** HepG2 cells were treated with different concentrations of compound **8u**, and western blot analysis was used to evaluate the levels of Survivin, Bcl-2, C-caspase-7 and C-PARP.

**Figure 6** (a) Effect of **8u** on ectopic xenograft tumor growth in nude mice. The tumor size of nude mice changed with the increase of the days after administration; (b) Effect of **8u** on body weight in nude mice.

**Scheme 1** Reagents and conditions: (i) K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, Cu, DMF, 130 °C, overnight; (ii) Concentrated H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, 80 °C, 5 h; (iii) CDI, various N,N-dimethyldiamines or 2-methoxyethanamine, DMF; (iv) hydrazine hydrate, sodium methoxide, ethanol, reflux; (v) various multi-substituted benzyl amines, 2-eyhoxyethanol, 90 °C; (vi) Fe, NH<sub>4</sub>Cl, ethanol.

 $\label{eq:table1} \textbf{Table 1} \ \textbf{Antiproliferative activities of benzyl acridone derivatives against HepG2 and \\ \textbf{Mathematical States} \ \textbf{Math$ 

MCF-7 cells.

$R_1 \xrightarrow{7} A$	$\begin{array}{c} \mathbf{D}  \mathbf{HN} \\ 1 \\ \mathbf{B}  \mathbf{C} \end{array}$	$\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{\mathbf{$
6 5 10 I		$\sqrt[3]{n}$ $R_2$

$\mathbf{R_1} \xrightarrow{7}_{6} \xrightarrow{6}_{5} \xrightarrow{9}_{10} \xrightarrow{1}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{2}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{5} \xrightarrow{10}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{N}}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{4}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} \xrightarrow{7}_{5} \xrightarrow{7}_{10} \xrightarrow{1}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{7}_{4} 7$						
			$O' \stackrel{N}{H} \stackrel{'n}{H}$	$\mathbf{k}_2$		
			Ι			
						Y
<b>C</b> 1	D	D	D		IC <sub>50</sub> (	μΜ)
Compd	$\mathbf{K}_1$	$\mathbf{R}_2$	<b>K</b> <sub>3</sub>	n	HepG2	MCF7
YM155				Ć	15.26	4.13
8a	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-H	2	7.99	5.48
8b	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	2.82	3.65
8c	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	2.11	6.84
8d	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3	5.94	4.12
<b>8e</b>	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-H	2	17.17	>50
<b>8f</b>	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	>50	>50
8g	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	>50	>50
8h	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	4'-CF <sub>3</sub>	2	>50	>50
8i	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3',4',5'-Trimethoxy	2	>50	>50
8j	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3',4',5'-Trimethoxy	2	4.96	5.06
8k	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-H	2	5.50	13.66
81	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	5.15	6.13
8m	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3	10.80	9.97
8n	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3',4',5'-Trimethoxy	2	>50	>50
80	5,7-dichloro	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	17.46	17.49
8p	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-H	2	9.59	5.61
8q	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	8.61	5.09
8r	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	2	4.50	1.05
<b>8s</b>	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3',4',5'-Trimethoxy	2	7.00	5.73
8t	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-H	3	2.43	2.92
8u	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3	3.56	4.40
8v	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	$4'-C_2H_5$	3	5.78	4.69
<b>8</b> w	5-NH <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	4'-OCH <sub>3</sub>	3	5.68	13.39

Table 2 Antiproliferative activities of no benzyl substituted acridone derivatives against HepG2 and MCF-7 cells.

$\mathbf{R_1} \xrightarrow{7}_{6} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{N}}_{5} \xrightarrow{10}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{R_3}}_{\mathbf{H}} \xrightarrow{2}_{\mathbf{N}} \xrightarrow{2}_{$						
Comnd	D	D			IC <sub>50</sub> (	μM)
Compa	$\mathbf{K}_1$ $\mathbf{K}_2$ $\mathbf{K}_3$	11	HepG2	MCF7		
YM155					15.26	4.13
5a	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2	28.57	3.54
5b	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	3	36.82	9.29
6b	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-Cl	2	>50	>50
6e	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-Cl	_2	24.70	18.53
6g	5-NO <sub>2</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-Cl	2	14.49	2.28
7a	5-CH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-NHNH <sub>2</sub>	2	8.85	12.98
7b	5-OCH <sub>3</sub>	-N(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	-NHNH <sub>2</sub>	2	12.31	14.82

**Table 3** In vitro toxicity test of compounds against normal hepatocytes cellsQGY-7701.

Comed	IC <sub>50</sub>	(μΜ)
Compa	QGY-7701	HepG2
8b	3.12	2.82
8c	6.91	2.11
8t	3.97	2.43
8u	40.67	3.56

Table 4 In silico prediction of physicochemical and drugability properties of 8u using

Lipinski's violations	HBA <sup>a</sup>	HBD <sup>b</sup>	logP <sup>c</sup>	MW <sup>d</sup>	NROTB <sup>e</sup>	Numbers of rings	TPSA <sup>f</sup>
1	10	3	4.77	503.55	10	4	131.53

ACD/Percepta 14.0.0

<sup>a</sup> Number of hydrogen-bond acceptors; <sup>b</sup> Number of hydrogen-bond donors; <sup>c</sup> Octanol/water partition coefficient; <sup>d</sup> Molecular weight; <sup>e</sup> Number of rotatable bonds; <sup>f</sup> Topological polar surface area.

Table 5 In silico prediction of pharmacokinetic properties of 8u using ACD/Percepta

	-	-
1/	Ω	$\mathbf{\Omega}$
14	.U.	<b>U</b> .

Caco-2 Permeability (cm/s)	%PP B <sup>a</sup>	LogPS <sup>c</sup>	LogBB <sup>d</sup>	Log (PS*fu, brain) <sup>e</sup>	P-gp efflux <sup>f</sup>	First-pass metabolism	Solubility (mg/ml)
18*10 <sup>-6</sup>	99%	-2.3	-0.21	-4.2	_g	- <sup>g</sup>	0.1

<sup>a</sup> Plasma protein binding rate; <sup>b</sup> Human intestinal absorption; <sup>c</sup> Rate of brain penetration; <sup>d</sup> Extent of brain penetration; <sup>e</sup> Brain/plasma equilibration rate; <sup>f</sup> P-glycoprotein mediated cellular efflux; <sup>g</sup> inconclusive.

Mutagenic	Tumorigenic	Irritant	Reproductive
low	low	low	low
			A A
	R		
Č			
Y.			

## Table 6 Toxicity Prediction of 8u using Osiris predictions.

C	Statistic -	Live	er	Spleen	
Group		Organ Weight (g)	Organ Index	Organ Weight (g)	Organ Index
Blank	$\frac{1}{x}$	0.434	0.0187	0.248	0.0106
	S	0.069	0.0009	0.071	0.0020
5-FU	$\frac{-}{x}$	0.419	0.0231	0.260	0.0144
	S	0.062	0.0034	0.091	0.0050
8u	$\overline{x}$	0.421	0.0198	0.344	0.0162
3 mg/kg	S	0.032	0.0025	0.084	0.0042
8u	$\frac{-}{x}$	0.441	0.0217	0.231	0.0113
0.33 mg/kg	S	0.040	0.0016	0.044	0.0016

 Table 7 Organ weight and organ index (liver and spleen) of nude mice.









Figure 3

CER HIN





Figure 5



- 30 multi-benzylamine acridone derivatives were designed and synthesized.
- Compound 8u showed high activity against HepG2 cells and low toxicity *in vitro*.
- *In silico* predictions revealed that 8u had good druggability.
- Molecular docking and biological assays verified the mechanism of action of 8u.
- 8u induced HepG2 cells apoptosis and it also had a good *in vivo* anti-tumor effect.

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#### Novel multi-substituted benzyl acridone derivatives as survivin inhibitors for

#### hepatocellular carcinoma treatment

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**Figure 1s** Spectrofluorimetric titration of **8u** (40 mM) in 5 mM Tris-HCl buffer containing 50 mM NaCl (pH 7.2) by increasing the concentrations of ct DNA; [DNA] = 0, 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 60, 80, 120  $\mu$ M;  $\lambda_{ex}$  = 280 nm. The different colors represent the fluorescence intensity at different DNA concentrations.

#### 2. Molecular docking



Figure 2s Docking mode of compound YM155 (stick and ball) and survivin using

SYBYL-X v1.3 program.

#### 1. DNA binding experiment

#### 3. Spectrofluorimetric titration



**Figure 3s** Spectrofluorimetric titration of survivin (0.3µM) in 10 mM PBS buffer (pH 7.4) by increasing the concentrations of YM155; [YM155] = 0, 0.1, 0.3, 0.6, 0.9, 1.2, 1.5, 1.8 µM;  $\lambda_{ex}$  = 280 nm. The different colors represent the fluorescence intensity at different YM155 concentrations.

#### 4. General notes and synthetic procedures

NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker 400 (400 MHz) spectrometer at room temperature. Chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) relative to SiMe4 as internal standard. Coupling constants (J) are in hertz (Hz), and signals are designated as follows: s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; m, multiplet; br s, broad singlet, etc. The mass spectra were obtained on a Waters Micromass Q-TOF Premier Mass Spectrometer. Melting points were determined with a SGW X-4 digital apparatus and are uncorrected. Thin layer chromatography was carried out using plate silica gel F254.

All chemical yields are unoptimized and generally represent the result of a single experiment.

#### 4.1. General procedure for compounds 3a-d.

2,4-dichlorobenzoic acid 2 (0.61 g, 4.05 mmol), anthranilic acid derivatives **1a-d** (5.26 mmol), potassium carbonate (1.12 g, 8.10 mmol) and copper powder (0.13 g, 2.03 mmol) was stirred in DMF (30 mL) and heated at  $130^{\circ}$ C overnight. The suspension was cooled to room temperature and water (40 mL) was added. The mixture was filtered on cellite to remove the copper. The filter bed was washed with water and the resulting solution was acidified with concentrated hydrochloric acid to a pH of 3-4. The resulting suspension was stirred for 30 minutes, and the precipitate was filtered and washed with water and then dried to give solid powder.

4.1.1. 2-((2-carboxy-5-chlorophenyl)amino)-3,5-dichlorobenzoic acid (3a) Yield
45.6%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ 13.36 (s, 2H), 10.10 (s, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.89 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.86 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.85 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 1.9 Hz, 1H), 6.34 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 1H).

4.1.2. 2-((2-carboxy-5-chlorophenyl)amino)-3-methylbenzoic acid (3b) Yield
91.5%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ 13.10 (s, 2H), 9.90 (s, 1H), 7.86 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.08 (s, 1H), 2.12 (s, 3H).

4.1.3. 2-((2-carboxy-5-chlorophenyl)amino)-3-methoxybenzoic acid (3c) Yield
98.9%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ 13.12 (s, 2H), 10.07 (s, 1H), 7.85 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 1H), 7.41-7.21 (m, 2H), 6.76 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 6.28 (s, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H).

#### 4.1.4. 2-((2-carboxy-5-chlorophenyl)amino)-3-nitrobenzoic acid (3d)

Yellow solid powder, Yield 59.6%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, *d*<sub>6</sub>-DMSO) δ 8.19-8.14 (m, 2H), 7.89 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 2.0 Hz, 1H).

#### 4.2. General procedure for compounds 4a-d.

Compound **3a-d** (1.19 mmol) was dissolved in concentrated sulfuric acid (10 mL) and heated to  $80^{\circ}$ C for 5h. The reaction was added onto ice (50 mL) dropwise and then buffered to pH 5 with NaOH (a.q.). The resulting suspension was stirred for 30 minutes, and the precipitate was filtered and washed with water and then dried to give solid powder **4a-d**.

4.2.1. 1,5,7-trichloro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxylic acid (4a) Yield
90.5%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 13.60 (s, 1H), 8.30 (s, 1H), 8.13-8.04 (m, 2H), 8.02 (s, 1H), 7.35-7.33 (m, 1H).

#### 4.2.2. 1-chloro-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxylic acid (4b) Yield

95.0%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>) δ 12.59 (s, 1H), 8.32 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 8.05 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.24 (dd, *J* = 7.9, 7.3 Hz, 1H), 2.54 (s, 3H).

4.2.3. 1-chloro-5-methoxy-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxylic acid (4c)
Yield 92.7%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 13.97 (s, 1H), 12.56 (s, 1H), 8.26 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.70 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.22 (t, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 4.02 (s, 3H).

#### 4.2.4. 1-chloro-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxylic acid (4d)

Red solid powder, Yield 73.9%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz,  $d_6$ -DMSO)  $\delta$  14.62 (s, 1H), 8.72 (dd, J = 8.1, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 8.60 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 8.35 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.42 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H).

#### 4.3. General procedure for compounds 6a-h.

A solution of 9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxylic acid (4) (2.35 mmol) in DMF (15 mL) was added dropwise, with stirring, to a solution of N,N'-carbonyldiimidazole (3.52 mmol) in DMF (10 mL) at room temperature. After the addition was complete, the mixture was still stirred for 30 minutes. Then, the corresponding primary aliphatic amine (7.04 mmol) was added. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature until the TLC showed the disappearance of the starting material. After the reaction was complete, the mixture was partitioned

between  $CH_2Cl_2$  (50 mL) and water (50 mL). The organic extract was washed with water (40 mL×4), dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>) and  $CH_2Cl_2$  was removed under reduced pressure to give a residue which was purified by column-chromatography eluted with EtOAC/EtOH (9:1 v/v) to yield pure **6**.

#### 4.3.1. Preparation of 1,5,7-trichloro-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-9-oxo-9,10-

#### dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (6a)

Yield 49.2%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.43 (s, 1H), 8.28 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.83 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.39 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.25 (s, 1H), 3.60 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.68-2.56 (m, 2H), 2.33 (s, 6H).

#### 4.3.2. Preparation of 1-chloro-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-

#### 9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (6b)

Yield 65.3%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 12.93 (s, 1H), 8.27 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.15 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 3.57 (dd, *J* = 10.9, 5.3 Hz, 2H), 2.64-2.59 (m, 2H), 2.58 (s, 3H), 2.33 (s, 6H).

# 4.3.3. Preparation of 1-chloro-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (6c)

Yield 61.9%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.34 (s, 1H), 9.65 (s, 1H), 8.29 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 7.21-7.15 (m, 2H),

3.64 (dd, *J* = 10.2, 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.67-2.62 (m, 2H), 2.61 (s, 3H), 2.39 (s, 6H), 1.85 (dt, *J* = 11.4, 5.8 Hz, 2H).

# 4.3.4. Preparation of 1-chloro-N-(2-methoxyethyl)-5-methyl-9-oxo-9,10-dihydro acridine-4-carboxamide (6d)

Yield 59.6%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 12.79 (s, 1H), 8.27 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 3.74 (dd, *J* = 9.7, 4.8 Hz, 2H), 3.65 (t, *J* = 4.8 Hz, 2H), 3.45 (s, 3H), 2.58 (s, 3H).

# 4.3.5. Preparation of 1-chloro-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-methoxy-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (6e)

Yield 58.7%; mp 203-205°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  12.90 (s, 1H), 7.97 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 0.9 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (dt, *J* = 8.1, 3.8 Hz, 2H), 7.11 (dd, *J* = 7.8, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 4.08 (s, 3H), 3.60 (dd, *J* = 11.2, 5.0 Hz, 2H), 2.65-2.56 (m, 2H), 2.32 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  176.02, 168.82, 155.70, 147.73, 144.89, 132.92, 130.22, 123.41, 121.16, 117.57, 112.37, 109.91, 105.48, 104.58, 58.68, 56.80, 45.76, 43.80, 37.73; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 374.1271; Found: 374.1283.

4.3.6. Preparation of 1-chloro-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-methoxy-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-4-carboxamide (6f)

Yield 60.5%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 13.27 (s, 1H), 9.51 (s, 1H), 7.97 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.17 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.08 (s, 3H), 3.65 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.69 – 2.57 (m, 2H), 2.36 (s, 6H), 1.83 (dt, *J* = 11.3, 5.8 Hz, 2H).

#### 4.3.7. 1-chloro-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine-

#### 4-carboxamide (6g)

Red solid powder, Yield 61.5%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.67 (dd, *J* = 13.7, 7.9 Hz, 2H), 7.83 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.32 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.27-7.25 (m, 1H), 3.63-3.61 (m, 2H), 2.61 (t, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 2.32 (s, 6H).

# 4.3.8. 1-chloro-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydroacridine -4-carboxamide (6h)

Red solid powder, Yield 28.6%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 14.78 (s, 1H), 9.53 (s, 1H), 8.77 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.70 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (dd, *J* = 14.3, 7.9 Hz, 2H), 3.69 (br, 2H), 2.63 (br, 2H), 2.37 (s, 6H), 1.85 (br, 2H).

#### 4.4. General procedure for compounds 5a-b.

In the previous reaction to produce intermediate **6**, we also found it will generate a small amount of byproducts **5a-b** when the reaction temperature was raised to  $70^{\circ}$ C.

#### 4.4.1. 1-(dimethylamino)-N-(2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihydr

#### oacridine-4-carboxamide (5a)

Red solid powder, Yield 24.4%; mp 168-170°C; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 398.1828; Found: 398.1833. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, *d*<sub>6</sub>-DMSO) δ 14.75 (s, 1H), 8.60 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 8.50 (br, 1H), 8.48 (s, 1H), 8.02 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.37-7.28 (m, 1H), 6.72 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 3.44-3.43 (m, 2H), 2.96 (s, 6H), 2.54 (br, 2H), 2.28 (s, 6H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 175.32, 168.30, 155.59, 144.71, 134.96, 134.67, 134.51, 132.76, 130.43, 125.85, 119.41, 109.89, 107.19, 105.56, 58.06, 44.78, 43.69, 36.38.

# 4.4.2. 1-(dimethylamino)-N-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)-5-nitro-9-oxo-9,10-dihyd roacridine-4-carboxamide (5b)

Red solid powder, Yield 34.2%; mp 216-218°C; HR-MS(ESI): Calcd for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 412.1985; Found: 412.1983. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 14.96 (s, 1H), 8.83 (br, 1H), 8.65-8.60 (m, 2H), 7.72 (s, 1H), 7.26-7.22 (m, 1H), 6.62 (br, 1H), 3.65 (br, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H), 2.67 (br, 2H), 2.43 (s, 6H), 1.88 (br, 2H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 175.44, 168.16, 155.50, 144.85, 134.91, 134.74, 134.66, 132.23, 130.40, 125.89, 119.29, 110.14, 107.22, 106.10, 58.93, 45.01, 43.70, 39.99, 24.78.

## 5. NMR Spectra














zhangb-20130723 4c-3-2 CDC13







## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**





































6. High resolution mass spectrometry























## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT





