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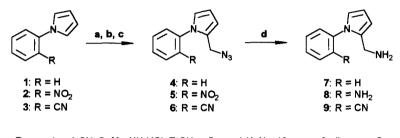
Synthesis of the Novel Pyrrolo[2,1-d][1,2,5]benzotriazepine, Pyrrolo[2,1-e][1,3,6]benzotriazocine and Pyrrolo[1,2-a]tetrazolo[1,5-d][1,4]benzodiazepine Ring Systems. A New Route to Pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline via Transamination of in Situ Generated 1-(2-Aminophenyl)-2-iminomethylpyrroles

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Abstract: Selective reduction of 2-azidomethyl-1-(2-nitrophenyl)pyrrole 5 afforded 2-aminomethyl-1-(2-nitrophenyl)pyrrole 10. Pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline 15 is obtained by treating aminoester 12 with formaldehyde. Diamine 8 reacts with either formaldehyde or benzaldehyde to give pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline 19. Compound 10 was reductively cyclised to pyrrolo[2,1-d][1,2,5]benzotriazepine 22. Intramolecular coupling of diamine 8 with triphosgene or carbon disulfide yields pyrrolo[2,1-e][1,3,6]benzotriazocine 23 and 24, respectively. Intramolecular 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of cyanoazide 6 gives pyrrolo[1,2-a]tetrazolo[1,5-d][1,4]benzodiazepine 25. Copyright © 1996 Elsevier Science Ltd

The anthramycins are an important group of naturally-occurring DNA-interactive antitumour antibiotics. They possess the pyrrolo[2,1-c][1,4]benzodiazepine ring system that can recognise and bind to specific sequences of DNA. However, the pronounced antitumour activity of these drugs is accompanied by dose-limiting cardiotoxicity and acute tissue necrosis at the site of injection.¹ Recently, we began a program aimed at synthesising structurally related analogues of these compounds for biological study. So far we have synthesized several examples of the pyrrolo[1,2-a][1,4]benzodiazepine, pyrrolo[2,1-c][1,4]benzodiazocine and pyrrolo[2,1-b][1,3]benzodiazepine ring systems. These compounds have been prepared by intramolecular cyclisation of appropriately substituted 2-aminomethyl-1arylpyrroles,² 2-aminomethyl-1-benzylpyrroles³ or 1-(2-ethoxy-carbonylbenzyl)-2-nitropyrrole,⁴ respectively. 2-Aminomethyl-1-arylpyrroles 7-9 have been synthesized *via* a three step reaction sequence, by converting 1-arylpyrroles 1-3 to Mannich bases, iodomethylating the Mannich bases to quaternary salts, and displacing trimethylamine from the quaternary salts by azide anion to give azides 4-6, which are then catalytically reduced as shown in Scheme 1.²

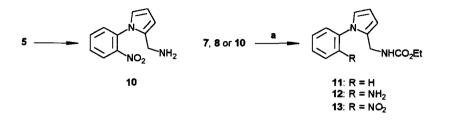


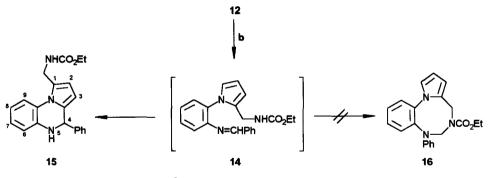
Reagents: a) CH2O, Me2NH.HCl, EtOH, refluxc) NaN3, 18-crown-6, dioxan, refluxb) Mel, Et2O, room temperatured) H2, Pd-C, MeOH, 3 atmospheres

Scheme 1

We report here further studies on the chemistry of 2-azidomethyl-1-(2-nitrophenyl)pyrrole 5, 2azidomethyl-1-(2-cyanophenyl)pyrrole 6 and 1-(2-aminophenyl)-2-aminomethylpyrrole 8, which have been used as precursors for the preparation of tricycles 18, 22, 25-27 and tetracycle 28.

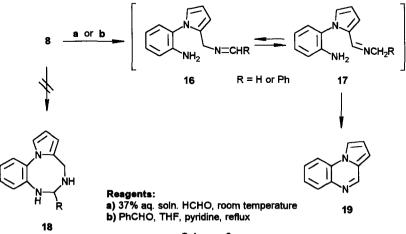
Pyrrole 10 was chosen as a useful precursor for the synthesis of novel tricycles since it possesses both electrophilic and nucleophilic groups. It was synthesised by selectively reducing the azido group of pyrrole 5. This was accomplished *via* the Staudinger reaction followed by subsequent hydrolysis of the intermediate iminophosphorane. Thus, although reaction with triphenylphosphine⁵ failed, with tributylphosphine a 72% yield of 2-azidomethylpyrrole 5 was obtained. 2-Aminomethylpyrroles 7, 8 and 10 were treated with ethyl chloroformate in tetrahydrofuran containing triethylamine to yield the corresponding 2-ethoxycarbonyl-aminomethyl derivatives 11, 12 and 13 in 88, 70 and 81% yields, respectively. Attempted cyclisation of aminoester 12 in refluxing pyridine, or toluene containing ptoluenesulfonic acid, or with trimethylaluminium in dichloromethane at room temperature,⁶ failed. Reduction of nitroester 13 with sodium borohydride in the presence of 10% palladium on carbon and 2% aqueous sodium hydroxide, reaction conditions that are known to reduce aromatic nitro compounds to hydroxylamines,⁷ gave aminoester 12. Treatment of the latter with an equivalent of benzaldehyde in pyridine afforded 4,5-dihydropyrroloquinoxaline 15 and not pyrrolo-benzotriazocine 16 as predicted. The postulated intermediate for this reaction is imine 14 (Scheme 2). This type of intramolecular cyclisation of 1-arylpyrroles has been reported in 1971 by Cheeseman and Rafig.⁸





Reagents: a) CICO₂Et, Et₃N, THF, 0 °C- room temperature, b) PhCHO, pyridine, reflux Scheme 2

Attempted synthesis of the pyrrolobenzotriazocine 18 (R = H or Ph) by reacting diamine 8 with either aqueous formaldehyde at room temperature and then refluxing in pyridine or benzaldehyde in a refluxing mixture of tetrahydrofuran and pyridine, gave instead the known pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline 19⁹ as the sole product. The reaction with formaldehyde was spontaneous and did not require further heating with pyridine. We propose that the above reactions proceed by initial formation of the imine 16 (R = H or Ph) transamination involving prototropic rearrangement to the corresponding imine 17 (R =H or Ph) and then intramolecular cyclisation to pyrroloquinoxaline 19 with loss of methylamine and aniline, respectively (Scheme 3). This tautomerism for imines containing hydrogen as a substituent on both carbon and nitrogen was first introduced by Ingold and Piggot¹⁰ and since then has been studied in depth.¹¹ Several applications of the reaction in synthesis have been reported including the conversion of primary amines into carbonyl compounds.¹²

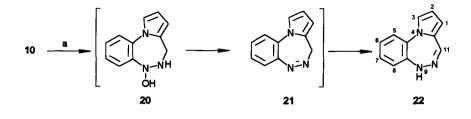


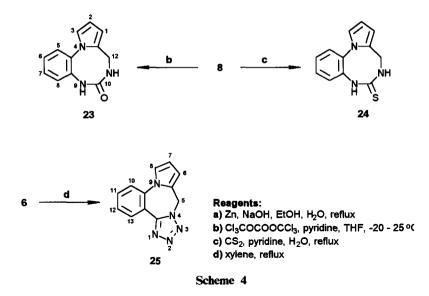
Scheme 3

Although the reaction of aromatic nitroso compounds with primary arylamines is well established for the preparation of symmetrical or unsymmetrical azo compounds,¹³ intramolecular reactions between alkyl or arylamines and the nitroso group are unknown. Reductive cyclisation of compound 10 with zinc in boiling aqueous sodium hydroxide afforded pyrrolo[2,1-d][1,2,5]benzotriazepine 22, in 30% yield. Similar reaction conditions have been used for the reductive cyclisation of onitrobenzamides to indazolinones.¹⁴ The proposed mechanism (Scheme 4) involves intramolecular coupling between amino and in *situ* generated nitroso group to give intermediate 20. Under the strongly basic conditions the latter loses water to give azo intermediate 21, which undergoes prototropic interconversion to hydrazone 22. We have isolated compound 20 by reductively cyclising compound 10 with zinc and aqueous ammonium chloride. These reaction conditions have been used by Bird and Latif¹⁵ to cyclise 3-hydroxy-2'-hydroxynitrodiphenyl ethers to 3H-phenoxazin-3-ones.

Recently, 1,3-benzodiazocines were prepared by reacting an appropriate diamine with phosgene or carbon disulphide.¹⁶ Phosgene however being a highly toxic gas is difficult and dangerous to handle. In 1987 Eckert and Foster¹⁷ introduced bis(trichloromethyl)carbonate (triphosgene) as a safe alternative. Since then the reagent has been used for several heterocyclic ring closures.¹⁸⁻²⁰ When diamine 8 was treated with triphosgene in tetrahydrofuran containing pyridine intramolecular coupling occurred to give pyrrolo[2,1-e][1,3,6]benzotriazocine 23 in 45% yield. The corresponding thioxo derivative 24 was prepared in 57% yield by heating diamine 8 in a mixture of carbon disulphide, water and pyridine (Scheme 4). The IR spectra of compounds 23 and 24 show absorption bands due to the NH groups at 3210 and 3195 cm⁻¹ and to the C=O and C=S groups at 1690 and 1610 cm⁻¹, respectively. In the ¹H NMR spectra the methylene groups appear as broad doublets at δ = 3.75 ppm for compound 23 and at δ = 3.82 ppm (J=16.8Hz) and δ = 3.97 ppm (J=16.8Hz) for compound 24.

Tetrazoles can be synthesised by 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition between aromatic azides and aliphatic or aromatic nitriles.²¹ By heating cyanoazide 6 with xylene gave pyrrolotetrazolobenzodiazepine 25 in 88% yield. This is the first example of an intramolecular 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition between an aliphatic azide and an aromatic nitrile.





EXPERIMENTAL

Mps were recorded on a Blichi 510 apparatus and are uncorrected. Infrared spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 257 spectrometer. Solids were taken as Nujol mulls and liquids as thin films between sodium chloride discs. Elemental analyses were performed on a Carlo Erba 1106 elemental analyser. The nmr spectra were measured at 360.1 MHz on a Brüker AM 360 spectrometer or at 400.1 MHz on a Brüker AMX 400 spectrometer using tetramethylsilane as internal standard. Mass spectra were obtained with a JEOL JMS-AX 505W machine.

Analytical TLC was carried out on Fluka silica gel 60 F_{254} . Preparative 'flash' chromatography was carried out using Merck 9385 silica gel. Light petroleum refers to the fraction with bp 40-60 °C. Solvents and reagents were used as received from the manufacturers except for dichloromethane, ethanol, ethyl acetate, methanol and light petroleum which were purified according to methods described by Perrin *et al.*²²

2-Aminomethyl -1-(2-nitrophenyl)pyrrole (10).

To a stirred solution of the azide 5 (2.4 g, 9.9 mmol) in dry dichloromethane (50 ml) under argon, was added dropwise a solution n-tributylphosphine (2 g, 9.9 mmol) in dry dichloromethane (5 ml). Stirring was continued for 16h at room temperature and then water (50 ml) was added and the mixture stirred vigorously for 36h. The organic phase was separated and the aqueous phase washed with dichloromethane (3×15 ml). The combined organic phases were washed with brine, dried, the solvent

evaporated and the residual oil eluted through a flash column with ethyl acetate/methanol (1:1). The second fraction contained 10 (1.56 g, 73%) as a brown oil, bp 130-132 °C/5 mmHg; i.r. (Nujol) 3365 asym (NH), 3285 sym (NH), 1510 asym (NO₂) and 1355 sym (NO₂) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; CDCl₃): 2.01 (s, br, 2H, NH₂), 4.53 (s, 1H, CH₂), 6.25-6.27 (m, 2H, H-3 and H-4), 6.62 (dd, 1H, J=2.6, 1.9Hz, H-5), 7.52 (dd, 1H, J=7.8, 1.2Hz, H-6'), 7.59 (td, 1H, J=7.8, 1.2Hz, H-4'), 7.70 (td, 1H, J=7.8, 1.4Hz, H-5') and 7.96 (dd, 1H, J=7.8, 1.4Hz, H-3'); m/z(%): 217 (M⁺, 30), 200 (26), 169 (76), 147 (73), 120 (79) and 105 (36) (Found: m/z 217.0850. C₁₁H₁₁N₃O₂ requires: 217.0851)

General Procedure for Preparation of 1-Aryl-2-ethoxycarbonylaminomethylpyrroles (11-13).

To a solution of amines 7, 8 or 10 (5 mmol) in dry THF (20 ml) containing triethylamine (5 mmol) at $0 \circ C$ was added dropwise ethyl chloroformate (5 mmol). The temperature of the mixture was allowed to rise to room temperature for 1h. Triethylamine hydrochloride was filtered off and the solvent evaporated to dryness. The residual oil was purified by flash chromatography (silica, 1:4 ethyl acetate/light petroleum) to afford 11-13.

2-Ethoxycarbonylaminomethyl-1-phenylpyrrole 11: Obtained as an oil; (88%), b.p. 77-79 \circ C/11 mmHg; i.r. (neat) 3330 (NH), 1715 (CO) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; CDCl₃): 1.19 (t, 3H, CH₃), 4.05 (q, 2H, *CH*₂CH₃), 4.30 (d, 2H, CH₂), 4.69 (br s, 1H, NH), 6.21-6.27 (m, 2H, H-3 and H-4), 6.79 (dd, 1H, J=2.8, 1.9, H-5), 7.26-7.48 (m, 5H, benzenoid); m/z(%): 245 [(M+1)⁺, 96), 215 (32), 199 (19), 171 (16), 156 (100), 77 (6) (Found: m/z 245.2493. C₁₇H₁₇N₂O₂ requires 245.2489).

1-(2-Aminophenyl)-2-ethoxycarbonylaminomethylpyrrole 12: Obtained as an oil; (70%); b.p. 98-100 °C/9 mmHg; i.r. (neat) 3370 (NH and NH₂), 1720 (CO) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (250 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.16 (t, 3H, CH₃), 3.51 (br s, 2H, NH₂), 4.17 (q, 2H, *CH*₂CH₃), 5.13 (br s, 1H, NH), 6.26 (t, 1H, J=2.6Hz, H-4), 6.66 (t, 1H, J= 2.2Hz, H-3), 6.77-6.84 (m, 2H, H-3' and H-5), 7.09-7.26 (m, 3H, benzenoid); m/z(%): 259 (M⁺, 4), 169 (100) and 157 (57) (Found: m/z 259.1317. C₁₄H₁₇N₃O₂ requires 259.1321).

2-Ethoxycarbonylaminomethyl-1-(2-nitrophenyl)pyrrole 13: Obtained as an oil; (81%), b.p. 48-50 °C/6 mmHg; i.r. (neat) 3330 (NH), 1715 (CO) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.14 (t, 3H, CH₃), 4.05 (q, 2H, *CH*₂CH₃), 4.23 (d, 2H, CH₂), 4.78 (br s, 1H, NH), 6.24-6.28 (m, 2H, H-3 and H-4), 6.63 (dd, 1H, J=2.7, 1.9Hz, H-5), 7.48 (dd, 1H, J=7.8, 1.0Hz, H-6'), 7.61 (td, 1H, J=7.8, 1.0 Hz, H-4'), 7.70 (td, 1H, J=7.8, 1.5Hz, H-5'), 7.97 (dd, 1H, J=7.8, 1.5Hz, H-3'); m/z(%): 289 (M⁺, 27), 272 (48) 255 (73), 241 (20), 201 (50),183 (29), 169 (100), 155 (87), 143 (45) (Found: m/z 289.1062. C₁₄H₁₅N₃O₄ requires 289.1063).

4,5-Dihydro-1-ethoxycarbonylaminomethyl-4-phenylpyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline (15).

A mixture of compound 12 (143 mg, 0.55 mmol) in pyridine (5 ml) containing benzaldehyde (58 mg, 0.55 mmol) was heated under reflux for 16h. The solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure and to the residue water was added and then extracted with chloroform and dried (sodium sulfate). After removal of chloroform the residue was purified by flash chromatography (silica, 1:4 ethyl acetate/light petroleum) to give compound 15 (95 mg, 50%), m.p. 135-137 \circ C (off-white plates from 2-propanol); i.r. (nujol) 3400 (NH), 3310 (NH), 1705 (CO) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (360 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.70 (t, 3H, CH₃), 4.02 (q, 2H, *CH*₂CH₃), 4.44 (d, 2H, *CH*₂NH), 5.36 (s, 1H, H-4), 5.46 (d, 1H, J=3.3Hz, H-2), 6.07 (d, 1H, J=3.3Hz, H-3), 6.58 (s, br, 1H, NH), 6.71-7.4 (m, 9H, benzenoid), 7.62 (t, 1H, *NH*CH₂); m/z(%): 347 (M⁺, 71), 270 (100) 245 (56), 181 (9), 113 (6), 77 (2) (Found: m/z 347.1622. C₂₁H₂₁N₃O₂ requires 347.1634).

Pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline (19).

Method A. A mixture of diamine 8 (0.5g, 2.75 mmol), formaldehyde (0.22 ml, 2.75 mmol, 36.5% aqueous solution), pyridine (10 ml) and ethanol (10 ml) was heated under reflux for 12h. The solvents were evaporated and the residue purified by flash chromatography (silica, 1:4 ethyl acetate/light petroleum) to give compound 19 (0.34 g, 74%).

Method B. Compound 19 was prepared in 58% yield by the same experimental method used for the synthesis of compounds 15. Compound 19 obtained from Methods A and B was identical in all respects with an authentic sample of pyrrolo[1,2-a]quinoxaline.⁹

8-Hydroxy-11H-pyrrolo[2,1-d][1,2,5]benzotriazepine (20).

To a stirred solution of nitroamine 10 (1.22 g, 1 mmol) in ethanol (15 ml) was added a solution of ammonium chloride (0.16g, 3 mmol) in water (5 ml). The mixture was cooled to -5 - 0 °C, zinc dust (0.4 g, 6 mmol) was added and left stirring for 30 minutes. The reaction mixture was then filtered and concentrated in vacuo to about 5 ml. Water (20 ml) was added, extracted with dichloromethane (3 × 10 ml), the combined extracts dried with anhydrous sodium sulfate and the solvent evaporated. The oily residue was eluted through a flash column (silica, ethyl acetate, 8:1 ethyl acetate/methanol) to give in the second fraction compound 20 (0.12 g, 58%) as a deep orange viscous oil; i.r. (neat) 3400 broad (NH) and (OH) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; CDCl₃) 3.87-3.95 (m, 2H, CH₂), 4.01 (s, br, 1H, NH), 6.24 (t, 1H, J_{1,2}=3.2Hz, H-1), 6.44 (dd, 1H, J_{2,3}=3.4Hz, H-2), 6.65 (dd, 1H, J_{3,1}=2.6Hz, H-3), 6.76 (td, 2H, J=7.6, 1.3Hz, H-6 and s, br, 1H, OH), 6.93 (dd, 1H, J=7.6, 1.3Hz, H-8), 7.06 (dd, 1H, J=7.6, 1.5Hz, H-5), 7.20 (td, 1H, J=7.6, 1.5Hz, H-7).

Pyrrolo[2,1-d][1,2,5]benzotriazepine (22).

A stirred solution of nitroamine 10 (0.15 g, 0.75 mmol), sodium hydroxide (0.06 g, 1.84 mmol) ethanol (6 ml) and water (3 ml) was treated with zinc dust (0.09 g, 2.76 mmol) and the resulting mixture heated under reflux for 3h. The reaction mixture was filtered, concentrated to about one-third of its volume, water (10 ml) added and the pH adjusted to 7.5-8 by the addition of dilute hydrochloric acid. The oily suspension was extracted with dichloromethane (3×5 ml) and the combined organic extracts dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate and evaporated to give a solid which was recrystallized from toluene/hexane to afford 22 (0.06 g, 45%), m.p. 117-119°C (pale yellow microcrystals). (Found: C, 72.23; H, 5.01; N, 22.64. C₁₁H₉N₃ requires C, 72.11; H, 4.95; N, 22.73); i.r. (Nujol) 3370 (NH), 1620 (C=N) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; CDCl₃): 6.32 (t, 1H, J_{2,3}=3.0Hz, H-2), 6.45 (dd, 1H, J_{1,2}=3.6Hz, H-1), 6.67 (br, 1H, NH), 6.85 (dd, 1H, J=7.7, 1.4Hz, H-8), 7.06 (td, 1H, J=7.7, 1.5Hz, H-6), 7.10-7.12 (m, 2H, H-3 and H-5), 7.15 (td, 1H, J=7.7, 1.6Hz, H-7), 7.45 (s, 1H, H-11); m/z (%): 184 [(M+1)⁺,100], 183 (M⁺, 63), 169 (18), 155 (200), 131 (6), 77 (13).

9,10-Dihydro-10-oxo-12H-pyrrolo[2,1-e][1,3,6]benzotriazocine (23).

To a solution of diamine 8 (0.2 g, 1.1 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 ml) and dry pyridine (0.1 ml) at -20 °C was slowly added triphosgene (0.11 g, 0.36 mmol). The mixture was stirred at -20 °C for 4h and then at room temperature for 16h. The solvents were removed under *vacuo*, water (25 ml) was added to the residue and the mixture extracted with dichloromethane (3×10 ml). The combined extracts were dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate, the solvent was evaporated, and the residue was recrystallised from ethyl acetate to give 23 (0.12 g, 54%), m.p. 237-238 °C (colourless needles). (Found: C, 67.52; H, 5.36; N, 19.76. C₁₂H₁₁N₃O requires C, 67.59; H, 5.20; N, 19.71); i.r. (Nujol) 3210 (NH), 1690 (CO) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; DMSO-d_6): 3.75 (d, br, 2H, CH₂), 6.15 (dd, 1H, J_{1,2}=3.8Hz, H-1), 6.21 (t, 1H, J_{2,3}=3.6Hz, H-2), 6.86 (t, 1H, NH), 6.98 (dd, 1H, J_{3,1}=3.1Hz, H-3), 7.27-7.43 (4 H, m, benzenoid); m/z (%): 213 (M⁺, 46), 169 (100), 129 (2), 84 (6).

9,10-Dihydro-10-thioxo-12H-pyrrolo[2,1-e][1,3,6]benzotriazocine (24).

A mixture of diamine 8 (0.3 g, 1.6 mmol), carbon disulphide (3 ml), pyridine (3 ml) and water (3 ml) was heated under reflux for 16h. The solvents were evaporated and to the residue acetone (1 ml) and water (3 ml) were added. The resulting solution was acidified with 4N hydrochloric acid to pH 2. The precipitated solid was filtered off, washed with water, ethanol and dried. Flash chromatography of the solid (silica, 0.5:1:4 chloroform/ethyl acetate/light petroleum) gave 24 (0.21 g, 57%), mp 194-195 \circ C (off-white needles from 2-propanol). (Found: C, 62.61; H, 4.28; N, 18.25. C₁₂H₁₁N₃S requires C, 62.86;

H, 4.84; N, 18.33); i.r. (Nujol) 3195 (NH) and 1610 (CS) cm⁻¹; ¹H n.m.r. δ (400 MHz; DMSO-d₆): 3.82 (d, 1H, J=16.8Hz, H_a-12), 3.97 (d, 1H, J=16.8Hz, H_b-12), 6.19 (dd, 1H, J=3.7, 1.7Hz, H-2), 6.24 (t, 1H, J=3.6, H-3), 7.07 (dd, 1H, J=3.1, 1.8Hz, H-1), 7.30-7.47 (m, 4H, benzenoid) 8.76 (br s, 1H, NHCH₂) and 9.61 (s, 1H, NH); m/z (%): 229 (M⁺, 86), 195 (84), 169 (100), 116 (31) and 70 (83).

5H-Pyrrolo[1,2-a]tetrazolo[1,5-d][1,4]benzodiazepine (25).

A stirred solution of azide 6 (1 g, 4.5 mmol) in xylene (80 ml) was heated under reflux for 48h. After cooling, activated charcoal (0.2 g) was added and the mixture heated with stirring for 5 min. The charcoal was filtered off and the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure to give a residue which was crystallised from toluene. Recrystallisation from toluene gave compound **25** (0.88 g, 88%), m.p. 150-152 °C (colourless needles). (Found: C, 64.52; H, 4.24; N, 31.25. $C_{12}H_9N_5$ requires C, 64.56; H, 4.06; N, 31.38); ¹H n.m.r. δ (360 MHz; DMSO-d₆): 5.81 (s, 2H, CH₂), 6.33 (t, 1H, J=3.1Hz, H-7), 6.47 (dd, 1H, J=3.4, 1.7Hz, H-6), 7.38 (dd, 1H, J=3.8, 1.8Hz, H-8), 7.59 (td, 1H, J=7.0, 1.6Hz, H-11), 7.78-7.86 (m, 2H, H-10 and H-12), 8.08 (dd, 1H, J=7.3, 0.9Hz, H-13); m/z (%): 223 (M⁺, 54), 194 (100), 162 (12), 151 (11), 113 (10).

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