

Copper catalyzed C(sp³)-OH cleavage with concomitant C-C coupling: Synthesis of 3-substituted isoindolinone

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Copper catalyzed C(sp³)-OH cleavage with concomitant C-C coupling:

Synthesis of 3-substituted isoindolinones

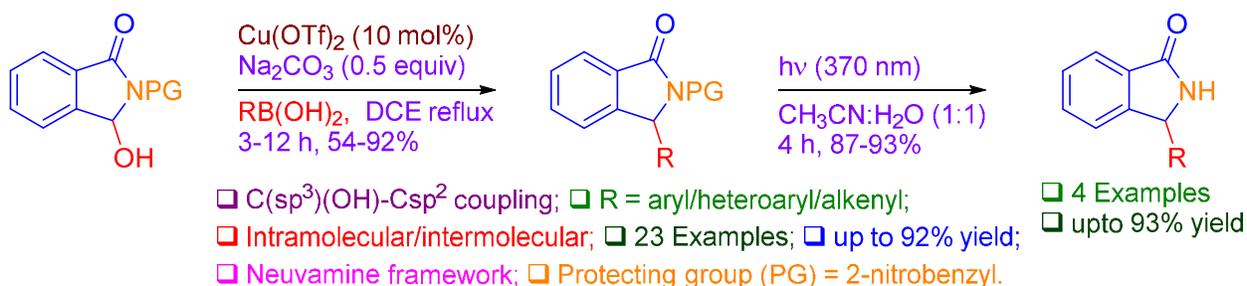
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Graphical Abstract



Abstract: Copper(II) trifluoromethanesulfonate (Cu(OTf)₂) efficiently catalyzes C-C coupling of 3-hydroxyisoindolinones with a variety of aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl boronic acids to furnish C(3) aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl substituted isoindolinones. The coupling reactions work smoothly in 1,2-dichloroethane (DCE) reflux, to effect both inter- and intra-molecular versions. This is the first report on C(sp³)-OH cleavage with concomitant C-C coupling. Photolabile 2-nitrobenzyl protecting group is most appropriate to promote the coupling reaction and for the deprotection. Tetracyclic ring motif of the alkaloid neuvamine was prepared by applying newly developed copper catalyzed C-C coupling.

Introduction

Unlike indole, its isomer, isoindole (*2H*-isoindole) is not a common structural element in natural products.¹ However, bioactive molecules built around isoindole structure are considered privileged due their multifarious medicinal properties.² Amongst isoindoles, the C(3) substituted isoindolinones occur as a part structure in a few alkaloids. Representative examples of such isoindole alkaloids are nuevamine **1**, the first known isoindoloisoquinoline alkaloid and lennoxamine **2**, an isoindolobenzazepine alkaloid, both of which have been isolated from *Berberis darwinii* (Figure 1).³ Pestalachloride A **3**, an antifungal alkaloid isolated from an endophytic fungus *Pestalotiopsis adust*⁴ and taliscanine **4**, an antiparkinson alkaloid isolated from the rhizomes of *Aristolochia taliscana*,⁵ are other examples of alkaloids with C(3) substituted isoindole structure (Figure 1). Besides medicinally important alkaloids listed above, some central nervous system (CNS) active drug candidates like (*S*)-pazinaclone **5** and (*R*)-PD 172939 **6** possess C(3) substituted isoindole structure (Figure 1). Apart from these two drug candidates, the C(3)-substituted isoindolinones exhibit varied biological activities that include antipsychotic,⁷ antihypertensive,⁸ antiulcer⁹ and anxiolytic¹⁰ properties. In view of importance of isoindolinones, there have been hectic synthetic efforts towards these coveted structures.¹¹

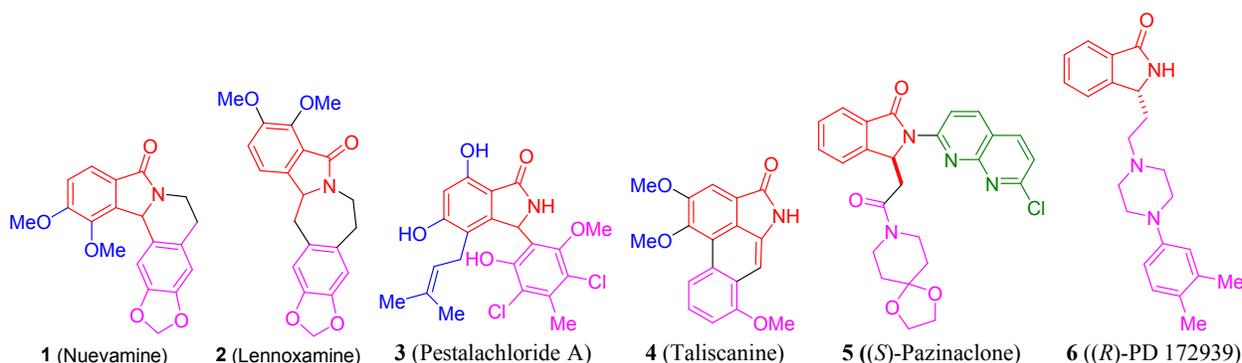
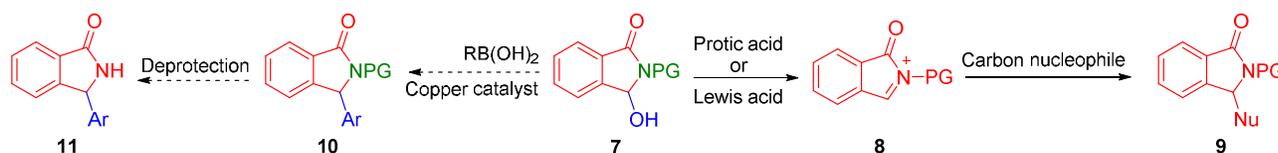


Figure 1. Examples of naturally occurring (**1 - 4**) and biologically active (**5** and **6**) C(3) substituted isoindolinones

The C(3) substituted isoindolinones **9** can be viewed as derivatives of phthalimide. Generally they have been synthesized from their hydroxy counterparts **7** by S_N1 substitution at hydroxy carbon with electron rich aromatic compounds (carbon nucleophiles; Scheme 1). Due to poor leaving ability of the hydroxy group, strong protic acids like triflic acid,¹² trifluoroacetic acid,¹³ conc. H_2SO_4 ,¹⁴ conc. HCl ¹⁵ or Lewis acids like $Bi(OTf)_3$,¹⁶ $Sn(NTf_2)_4$,¹⁷ Ir-Sn₃ bimetallic complexes,¹⁸ gold catalysts¹⁹ have been employed to generate iminium ion **8**, for quenching with electron-rich aromatic compounds or nucleophiles. Such reactions are generally conducted on **7** having a nitrogen protecting group (PG). Indeed, most of the researchers till date took recourse to robust benzyl as nitrogen PG, but benzyl group is difficult to remove without destroying the isoindolinone ring. Overall, existing methods are beleaguered with several drawbacks like requirement of (i) concentrated protic acids or Lewis acids, (ii) electron rich aromatic compounds to quench acyl iminium ion and (iii) protecting group that cannot be removed without affecting the isoindolinone ring. Thus, there is a need to discover conditions for facile replacement of the hydroxyl group in **7** with electron deficient aromatic, heteroaromatic, or alkenyl groups through C-C coupling without going through acyl iminium ion **8**. Furthermore, there is a need for a PG on nitrogen of the isoindolinone ring, which can be removed under non-hydrogenating, neutral and milder reaction conditions. Towards this goal, we resolved to develop suitable copper-catalyzed C-C coupling reactions and suitable PG for synthesis of C(3) substituted isoindolinones.



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3 **Scheme 1.** The existing method for substitution of the OH group in **7** to form **9** and the proposed
4 method for replacement of the OH group in **7** with aryl groups through C-C coupling
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10 In recent years, organic synthesis involving transition metal catalyzed C-C coupling, *via*
11 substitution of halides or its congeners involving organometallic intermediates is responsible for
12 paradigm shift in synthetic planning from classical acid-base to coupling pathways.²⁰ Although
13 palladium catalysts have been in forefront of the emergence of C-C bond coupling reactions,
14 high cost and extreme toxicity of the metals even in trace quantities, forced researchers to look
15 for alternatives.²¹ In this quest, copper catalysts have emerged as viable alternatives. Advantages
16 of copper catalyst include (i) variable oxidation states of copper (+1, +2 and +3), (ii) solubility of
17 many copper salts in organic solvents, (iii) low cost, bench-top availability and air- stability, (iv)
18 environmental and biocompatibility.²² Of late, copper catalyzed cross coupling reactions have
19 become practicable choice for building C-O, C-S and C-N bonds (for example Chan-Lam-Evans
20 Coupling).²³ The Cu catalyzed C-C coupling reactions, however, are yet to become well
21 established for C-C coupling, possibly due to low yields and harsh reaction conditions (e.g.
22 Ulmann coupling).²⁴ With the advent of organoboron reagents, copper catalyzed C-C coupling
23 reactions are becoming feasible on a variety of substrates.²⁵ Organoboranes are stable, exhibit
24 higher functional-group tolerance and commercially available or easy to prepare.²⁶ We have
25 recently demonstrated facile copper catalyzed Csp³-Csp² cross coupling reactions of
26 organoboron reagents with 4*H*-chromenes having C(4) SMe group to furnish a variety of 4-aryl-
27 4*H*-chromenes.²⁷ In continuation of this study, we present herein the copper catalyzed
28 intermolecular/intramolecular coupling reaction of isoindolinol **7** with aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl
29 boronic acids for facile synthesis of C(3) substituted isoindolinones (Scheme 1). Although some
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3 examples of Pd(II) or Ni(0) catalyzed cross coupling of organoboron reagents with activated
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5 benzylic hydroxyl are known,²⁸ ours is the first report on such cross coupling involving free
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7 benzylic hydroxyl group, arylboronic acid and a copper catalyst.
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10 **Results and discussion**

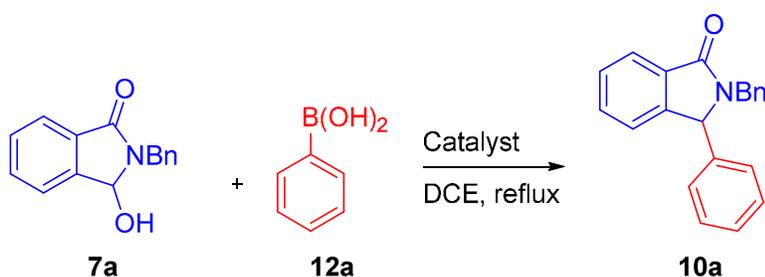
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12 Our initial efforts were directed towards unearthing a suitable copper catalyst and
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14 reaction conditions for coupling of *N*-benzyl protected 3-hydroxyisoindolin-1-one **7a** and
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16 phenylboronic acid **12a** to furnish 2-benzyl-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one **10a** (Table 1). Following
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18 our experience,²⁷ as a first attempt, we employed Cu(OAc)₂.H₂O in 10 mol% in dichloromethane
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20 (DCM) reflux but the reaction provided **10a** in less than 5% yield. The yield rose to 45% when
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22 the reaction was conducted in higher boiling dichloroethane (DCE) reflux (entry 1). The yield
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24 gradually rose to a plateau of about 85% with increased catalytic loading (entries 2 and 3).
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28 Alternate Cu(II) catalysts like Cu(CF₃COO)₂.H₂O, Cu(acac)₂, CuCl₂.2H₂O, CuBr₂, CuSO₄.5H₂O
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30 and CuO (entries 4-9) did not provide desired **10a** in better yield. However, in the genre of
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32 Cu(II) catalysts, 10 mol% of copper(II) trifluoromethane sulfonate (Cu(OTf)₂) provided the best
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34 yield (86%) after chromatographic purification of the product (entry 10). Lesser amounts of
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36 catalytic loading (5 mol%) was not sufficient to complete the transformation in reasonable time
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38 (entry 12) and higher amount of catalytic loading (20 mol%) did not improve the yield further.
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42 Moreover, we made certain that Cu(OTf)₂ catalysis was not due to minor triflic acid impurity, by
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44 conducting the reaction in the presence of sodium carbonate as the buffering agent (entry 11). In
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46 reality, the yield perceptibly rose to 92% in the presence of 0.5 equivalents of Na₂CO₃ indicating
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48 that minor amount of TfOH, which is inevitable in commercial Cu(OTf)₂ may actually impede
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50 the reaction. Furthermore, a run with 10 mol% of TfOH alone was conducted to convincingly
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52 rule out the possibility of TfOH being responsible for the reaction as a Brønsted acid. As
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3 anticipated, the reaction did not proceed to provide **10a** (entry 13). The copper(I) salts like CuCl,
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5 CuBr, CuI, Cu₂O or stable copper(I) complexes like CuBrSMe₂, Cu(PPh₃)₃Br, copper(I)-
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7 thiophene-2-carboxylate (CuTC) or Cu(I)-3-methylsalicylate (CuMeSal) did not promote the
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9 coupling (entries 14-21) indicating that copper(I) species may not be involved in the reaction.
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11 Low yield obtained in the cases of CuCl, CuBr, CuTC, CuMeSal can be attributed to Cu(II)
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13 impurities or facile switch of Cu(I) to Cu(II). Notably, there was no reaction when palladium(II)
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15 catalyst (Pd(OAc)₂, entry 22) or palladium(0) catalyst (Pd₂(dba)₃, entry 23) was employed in
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17 presence or absence of a base. To evaluate if Cu(OTf)₂ catalysis is due to its Lewis acidic nature,
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19 we conducted the reaction in presence of catalytic amounts of similar borderline Lewis acids²⁹
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21 such as Sc(OTf)₃, Fe(OTf)₃, Zn(OTf)₂ and Yb(OTf)₃ but the reactions did not work (entries 24-
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23 27).

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32 **Table 1.** Optimization conditions of coupling reactions conducted in DCE reflux in presence of
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34 different catalysts



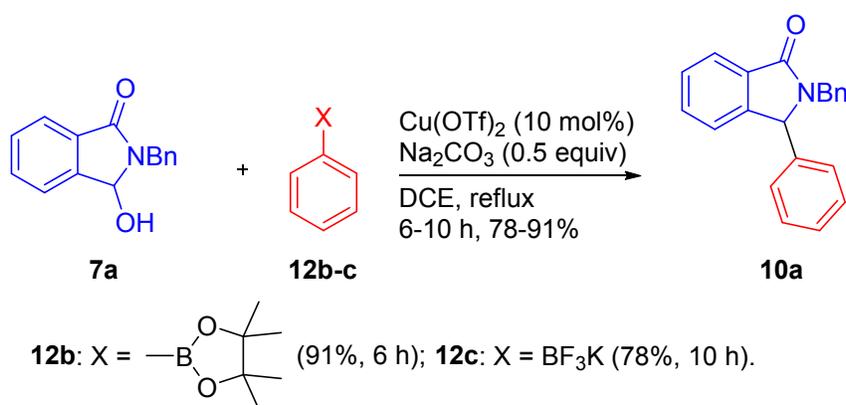
Entry	Catalyst	Time (h)	mol (%)	Yield (%)
1	Cu(OAc) ₂ .H ₂ O	16	10	45
2	Cu(OAc) ₂ .H ₂ O	16	20	62
3	Cu(OAc) ₂ .H ₂ O	14	30	85
4	Cu(CF ₃ COO) ₂ .H ₂ O	12	10	72

5	Cu(acac) ₂	14	10	48
6	CuCl ₂ ·2H ₂ O	14	10	16
7	CuBr ₂	14	10	25
8	CuSO ₄ ·5H ₂ O	12	10	nr
9	CuO	13	10	nr
10	Cu(OTf) ₂	4	10	86
11	Cu(OTf)₂, Na₂CO₃ (0.5 equiv)	4	10	92
12	Cu(OTf) ₂	14	5	64
13	TfOH	8	10	nr
14	CuCl	14	10	26
15	CuBr	16	10	32
16	CuI	12	10	nr
17	Cu ₂ O	12	10	nr
18	Cu(I)BrSMe ₂	12	10	nr
19	Cu(PPh ₃) ₃ Br	12	10	nr
20	CuTC	12	10	34
21	CuMeSal	12	10	38
22	Pd(OAc) ₂ , Na ₂ CO ₃ (1 equiv)	6	5	nr
23	Pd ₂ (dba) ₃ Na ₂ CO ₃ (1 equiv)	8	5	nr
24	Sc(OTf) ₃	12	10	nr
25	Fe(OTf) ₃	12	10	nr
26	Zn(OTf) ₂	12	10	nr
27	Yb(OTf) ₃	12	10	nr

nr = no reaction

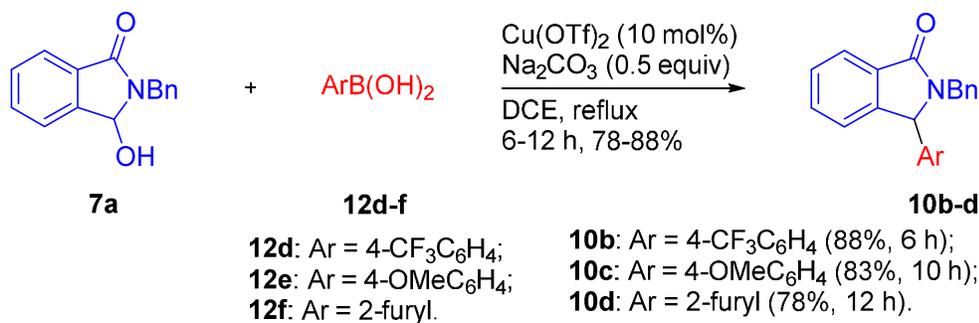
As an alternative to DCE we screened some common solvents and changed reaction parameters to decipher best conditions. Of the alternate solvents investigated such as toluene (42%), tetrachloroethane (TCE; 76%), acetonitrile (28%) and dioxane (48%), none of them worked as good as DCE (92%). The transformation worked best under an atmosphere of nitrogen. Under oxygen atmosphere the yield of **10a** was only 16% indicating that the reaction does not go through oxygen mediated catalyst regeneration. Surprisingly, metal complexing and organic solvent solubilising ligands like PPh₃ (34%) or phenanthroline (42%) actually decreased the yield of **10a**.

Next, we looked into the reactivity of two derivatives of phenylboronic acids, namely, phenylboronic acid pinacol ester **12b** and potassium phenyltrifluoroborate **12c** towards the coupling reaction, since both of the reagents have been employed previously in place of phenylboronic acid with concomitant advantages (Scheme 2).³⁰ We, however, found that in such runs there is not much difference in the yield of **10a** over the reaction when phenylboronic acid was employed. As a result, because of easy availability, we chose to go ahead with phenylboronic acids for further studies.



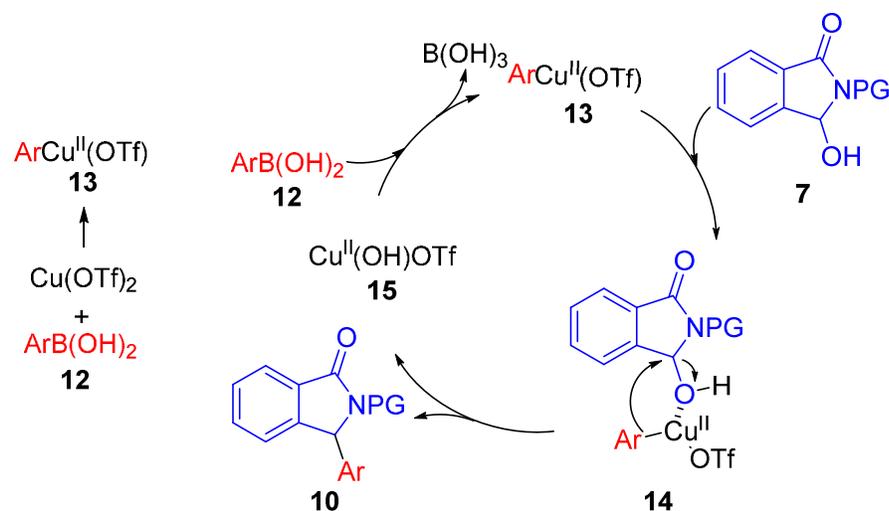
Scheme 2. Scope of Cu-catalyzed cross coupling of aryl boronic acid derivatives with 2-benzyl-3-hydroxyisoindolinone **7a**.

With the optimized conditions in hand, we evaluated generality of 3-arylisindolinone synthesis and outcome of the reaction as a consequence of electron density of the aromatic ring (Scheme 3). We conducted coupling between 2-benzyl-3-hydroxyisoindolinone **7a** and three more aryl boronic acids, namely 4-trifluoromethylphenylboronic acid **12d** having highly electron-withdrawing C4-CF₃ group, 4-methoxyphenylboronic acid **12e** having highly electron-donating C4-OMe group and furan-2-boronic acid **12f** in which boronic acid is on an electron rich heteroaromatic ring. Each reaction provided corresponding 3-arylisindolinones **10b-d** in good to excellent yield. Among the three boronic acids **12d-f**, the reaction with furan-2-boronic acid **12f** provided lowest yield (78%) and the reaction took longer time (12 h) reflecting sluggish nature of the reactant in coupling reactions.³¹ The isoindolinone **10a** was characterized by spectral (IR, ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR and DEPT-135) and analytical data. A singlet at about δ 5.0 ppm assignable to C(3)H in the ¹H NMR spectrum of 2-benzyl-3-phenylisoindolin-1-ones **10a** is the diagnostic signal. Spectral and analytical data of **10b-d** compared well with those of **10a**.



Scheme 3. Scope of Cu-catalyzed cross coupling of different arylboronic acids with 2-benzyl-3-hydroxyisoindolinone **7a**.

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3 To understand the reaction mechanism of Csp^3-Csp^2 coupling and to rule out the
4 possibilities of nucleophilic substitution, we conducted two reactions on 3-hydroxyisoindolinone
5 **7a** in THF; one with PhMgBr, a hard nucleophile and the other with $2(PhMgBr)CuI$,³⁵ a soft
6 nucleophile. Both the reactions did not provide the substitution product **10a** ruling out
7 possibilities of a nucleophilic substitution. As noted in Table 1 (entries 10 and 11) TfOH
8 impurity in $Cu(OTf)_2$ or TfOH (entry 13) impede the reaction by engineering towards generation
9 of *N*-acyl iminium ion intermediates, instead of channeling the reactant **7** towards coupling
10 pathways. Based on the evidences so far accumulated, possible mechanism was depicted and
11 shown in Scheme 5. First and important step is the insertion of copper into fragile carbon-boron
12 bond to provide reactive intermediate $PhCu(OTf)$ **13**.³⁶ The intermediate **13** then enters into the
13 catalytic cycle to react with 3-hydroxyisoindolinone **7** to provide the intermediate **14**. Crucial C-
14 C coupling with concomitant C-O bond cleavage then takes place on **14** to provide the product
15 **10** and copper(II) species **15**. The reaction of **15** with arylboronic acid **12** regenerates **13** and
16 stable boric acid. Throughout the catalytic cycle copper remains in the oxidation state of +2.
17 Interaction of copper(II) species with the C(3) hydroxy group in the intermediate **14** could reflect
18 its Lewis acid characteristics. Driving force for coupling reaction is the formation of stable C-C
19 bond in **10** and Cu-O bond in **15**, at the cost of Ar-Cu and C-OH bonds. Although metal salt
20 solubilizing ligands like PPh_3 and phenanthroline helped dissolution of $Cu(OTf)_2$ in DCE,
21 decreased yield of the desired product **10** (vide supra) indicates that ligand bound copper catalyst
22 is sterically hindered to allow formation of **14**.
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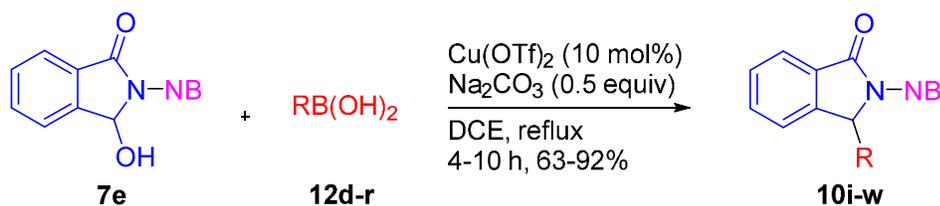


Scheme 5. Plausible mechanism for copper mediated formation of 3-substituted isoindolinones **10**.

To demonstrate scope of the coupling reaction, a range of arylboronic acids **12d-p** were reacted with 3-hydroxy-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one **7e** under optimized conditions to realize fourteen 2-(2-nitrobenzyl)-3-arylisoindolin-1-ones **10i-u** (Table 2). The arylboronic acids **12d-p** were selected with a view of their structural diversity and potential binding to biological targets. High efficiency of cross-coupling was observed regardless of the presence of strongly electron-withdrawing (**12d**, **12g-h** to **10i**, **10l-m**), mildly electron withdrawing (**12i-k** to **10n-p**), strongly electron donating (**12e** to **10j**) or mildly electron donating (**12l-m** to **10q-r**) nature of the substitution in the aryl ring. Notably, the cross-coupling reaction worked well even with *ortho*-substituted boronic acids (**12n-p** to **10s-u**) indicating that the cross coupling is not highly sensitive to the steric bulk on the aryl ring. Boronic acid on an electron-rich heterocyclic ring, namely, furan-2-boronic acid **12f** participated in the coupling with **7e** to furnish isoindolinone **10k**. However, the coupling did not work with thiophene-2-boronic acid, pyridine-3-boronic acid and quinolone-3-boronic acid indicating that the reaction is sensitive to boronic acids that contain coordinating sites. The copper mediated cross coupling between 3-hydroxyisoindolin-1-

one **7e** and alkenyl boronic acids **12q-r** to furnish alkenyl substituted isoindolinones **10v-w** took place without any difficulty.

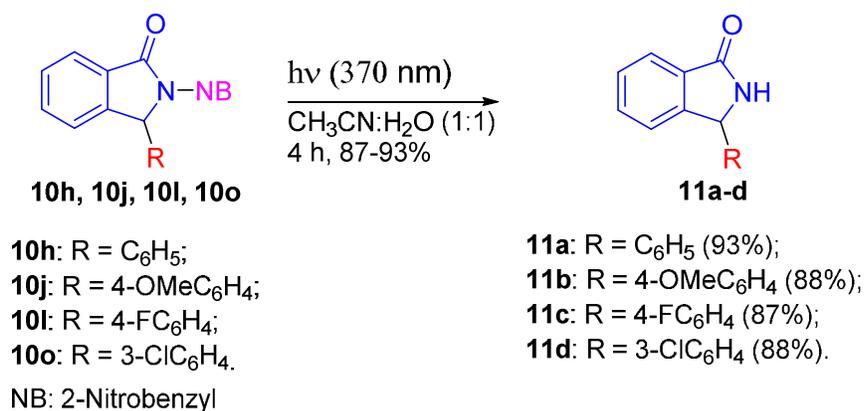
Table 2. Scope of Cu-catalyzed cross coupling of 2-nitrobenzyl protected 3-hydroxyisoindolinone **7e** with different aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl boronic acids.



Entry	R	Substrate	Product	Time (h)	Yield (%)
1	4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	12d	10i	4	92
2	4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	12e	10j	10	77
3	2-Furyl	12f	10k	6	79
4	4-FC ₆ H ₄	12g	10l	4	91
5	3,5-F ₂ C ₆ H ₃	12h	10m	5	81
6	4-ClC ₆ H ₄	12i	10n	6	81
7	3-ClC ₆ H ₄	12j	10o	6	88
8	4-BrC ₆ H ₄	12k	10p	8	85
9	4-MeC ₆ H ₄	12l	10q	8	89
10	3-MeC ₆ H ₄	12m	10r	10	86
11	2,3-(OMe) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	12n	10s	6	79
12	2,5-(OMe) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	12o	10t	6	81
13	2,6-(OMe) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	12p	10u	10	74

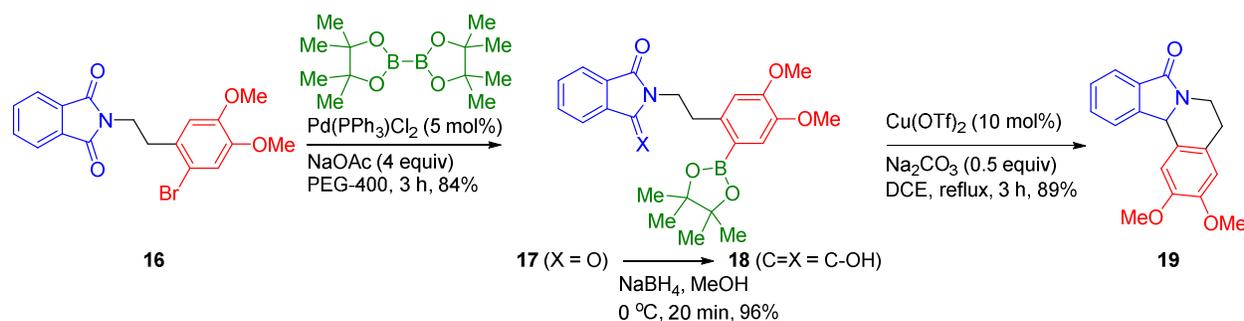
14	<i>n</i> -Hex-1-enyl	12q	10v	4	63
15	Styreneyl	12r	10w	6	84

After demonstrating feasibility of synthesis of different C(3)substituted isoindolinones **10h-w** with NB as *N*-protecting group, our next task was to cleave photo-labile NB, so that free isoindole moiety gets exposed. We irradiated dilute (10^{-2} M) $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}:\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1:1) solutions of four selected isoindolinones namely, **10h**, **10j**, **10l** and **10o**, with $4 \times 3 \mu\text{W}$ LED lamps emitting at 370 nm (see supplementary information for an image of the in-house built reactor).³⁷ The photochemical cleavage reaction was clean and took place within 4 h to provide deprotected products **11a-d** in excellent yield (Scheme 6). The photo cleavage was facile on substrates having aryl ring with electron-donating (**10j**) or electron-withdrawing (**10l**, **10o**) substituent's. We found that the LED lamps as a source of 370 nm light for NB deprotection is far superior compared to conventional high pressure mercury vapor lamps as LED lamps do not generate heat and filter to cut-off unwanted light is not required.³⁸



Scheme 6. The cleavage of NB in the presence of UV light (370 nm).

Finally, we attempted synthesis of tetracyclic lactam system **19** of neuvamine **1** from arylboronic acid **17** to demonstrate intramolecular version of our newly developed Cu(OTf)₂ catalyzed C-C coupling reaction (Scheme 7). Starting phthalimide derivative³⁹ **16** was prepared from corresponding amine⁴⁰ and phthalic anhydride in toluene reflux. The aryl bromide **16** was converted into the boronic acid derivative **17** by palladium-catalyzed reaction with bis(pinacolato)diboron.⁴¹ Controlled reduction of one of the carbonyl groups in **17** with sodium borohydride provided isoindolin-3-ol **18** which on treatment with Cu(OTf)₂ under our optimized reaction conditions provided neuvamine framework **19** in excellent yield.



Scheme 7. Synthesis of neuvamine like molecule **19** via Cu-catalyzed intramolecular coupling reaction.

Conclusion

In summary, we described facile Cu(OTf)₂ catalyzed Csp³-Csp² coupling involving 3-hydroxyisoindolinones and a variety of aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl boronic acids to efficiently furnish C(3) aryl/heteroaryl/alkenyl substituted isoindolinones. This is the first report on copper catalyzed C(sp³)-OH cleavage with concomitant C-C coupling. In this way, we demonstrated facile substitution of OH group in 3-hydroxyisoindolinones with electron rich, electron deficient aryl and alkenyl groups with equal facility. We have shown that photolabile 2-nitrobenzyl is the best *N*-protecting group and DCE reflux is the best medium for the transformation. We

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3 demonstrated both inter- and intra-molecular versions through synthesis of twenty four C(3)
4 substituted isoindolinones and tetracyclic ring motif of the alkaloid neuvamine.
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10 **Experimental section**

11 **General experimental methods**

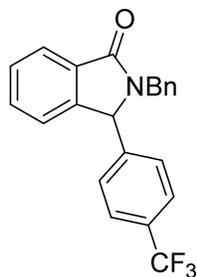
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13 Progression of all the reactions was monitored by TLC using hexanes (60-80 °C boiling mixture)
14 / ethyl acetate mixture as eluent. Column chromatography was performed on silica gel (100-200
15 mesh) using increasing percentage of ethyl acetate in hexanes. ¹H-NMR spectra (400 MHz), ¹³C
16 NMR (100MHz) and DEPT-135 spectra were recorded for (CDCl₃, CDCl₃ + CCl₄ (1:1) or
17 DMSO-*d*₆) solutions on 400 MHz spectrometer with TMS as internal standard. Coupling
18 constants *J* are given in Hz. IR spectra were recorded as KBr pellets on a FT-IR spectrometer.
19 High resolution mass spectra were recorded on quadrupole-time-of-flight (QTOF) mass
20 spectrometer using electrospray ionization mode. The X- ray diffraction measurements were
21 carried out at 298 K on equipped with a graphite monochromator and a Mo-K α fine-focus sealed
22 tube ($\lambda = 0.71073 \text{ \AA}$). Organic solvents were dried by standard methods. The catalyst Pd₂(dba)₃
23 and the alkenyl boronic acids were prepared according to literature procedures.⁴¹ Light mediated
24 deprotection of NB group to generate isoindolinones was carried out using home-built reactor
25 having four UV-LED (3 μ W) lamps with emission maximum at 370 nm (see supplementary
26 information for the photograph). Maximum intensity of the LED bulbs as determined using a
27 intensity and wave-length characterization possible UV-visible spectrometer having resolution of
28 0.23 nm in the range 200-1100 (see Figure 3 in the supplementary information).
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53 **General procedure for synthesis of 2-benzyl-3-arylisoindolin-1-one 10a-e.**
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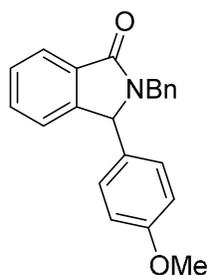
Synthesis of 2-benzyl-3-phenylisoindolinone 10a: An oven-dried 25 mL two-neck round-bottom flask connected to Shlenk line through a condenser was charged with phenylboronic acid **12a** (60 mg, 0.5 mmol), Cu(OTf)₂ (18 mg, 0.05 mmol) and Na₂CO₃ (27 mg, 0.25 mmol). The flask was sealed with a rubber septum, evacuated under vacuum and purged nitrogen gas three times. Anhydrous dichloroethane (DCE, 2 mL) was added through a syringe and the contents were stirred for 10 min. 2-Benzyl-3-hydroxyisoindolin-1-one **7a** (120 mg, 0.5 mmol) in DCE (4 mL) was next added at rt (30 °C) over 5 min. The resulting reaction mixture was refluxed for 4 h while periodically checking by TLC for completion of reaction. The reaction mixture was then extracted with dichloromethane (DCM, 2 × 20 mL). The organic layer was washed with water (2 × 20 mL), brine (1 × 10 mL) followed by removal of DCM under reduced pressure. The crude product was subjected to column chromatography (silica gel, gradient elution with increasing volume of EtOAc in hexanes) to yield 2-benzyl-3-phenyl-isoindolinone **10a**.



2-Benzyl-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one 10a: Colourless solid (143 mg, 92% yield) Mp: 135 °C (reported 136 °C); IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3030, 2920, 1695, 1613, 1494, 1464, 1399, 1291, 1075, 1026, 978, 761, 738, 701; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.94 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 7.50-7.39 (m, 2H), 7.39-7.02 (m, 1H), 5.40 (d, *J* = 14.8 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (s, 1H), 3.73 (d, *J* = 14.8 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.6 (C), 146.4 (C), 137.1 (C), 136.8 (C), 131.9 (CH), 131.4 (C), 129.2 (CH), 128.8 (2 X CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 123.8 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 63.6 (CH), 43.9 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₁H₁₇NO (M + H) 300.1382, found 300.1382.

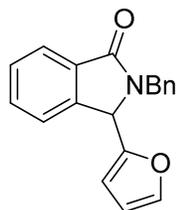


2-Benzyl-3-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)isoindolin-1-one 10b: Colourless solid (167 mg, 88% yield) Mp: 115 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3064, 3033, 2926, 2861, 1702, 1618, 1494, 1467, 1398, 1327, 1119, 1068, 891, 848, 795, 737, 700, 609; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 7.95 (d, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.52-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.28-7.06 (m, 8H), 5.40 (d, $J = 14.9$ Hz, 1H), 5.27 (s, 1H), 3.72 (d, $J = 14.9$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) 168.4 (C), 145.6 (C), 141.3 (C), 136.8 (C), 132.2 (CH), 131.4 (C), 131.2 (q, $J = 32$ Hz, C), 128.9 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 127.9 (CH), 126.3 (q, $J = 4$ Hz, CH), 125.3 (C), 124.2 (CH), 123.1 (CH), 63.0 (CH), 44.1 (CH_2); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{16}\text{F}_3\text{NONa}$ (M + Na) 390.1082, found 390.1085.

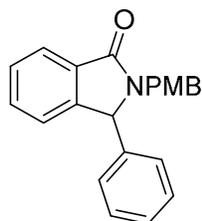


2-Benzyl-3-(4-methoxyphenyl)isoindolin-1-one 10c: Colourless solid (136 mg, 83% yield) Mp: 124 °C; (reported 124 °C) IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3062, 2927, 2872, 1694, 1611, 1527, 1468, 1400, 1344, 1305, 1142, 1094, 858, 790, 738, 702; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.86-7.77 (m, 1H), 7.35-7.24 (m, 2H), 7.16-7.11 (m, 3H), 7.06 (d, $J = 6.6$ Hz, 2H), 6.98-6.92 (m, 1H), 6.88-6.69 (m, 4H), 5.25 (d, $J = 14.8$ Hz, 1H), 5.08 (s, 1H), 3.66 (d, $J = 3.8$ Hz, 3H), 3.61 (d, $J = 14.9$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 168.3 (C), 159.8 (C), 146.6 (C), 137.1 (C), 131.8 (CH), 131.3 (C),

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3 129.0 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 127.5 (CH), 123.5 (CH), 123.1 (CH), 114.4
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5 (CH), 63.0 (CH), 55.2 (CH₃), 43.6 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₂₀NO₂ (M + H) 330.1488,
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7 found 330.1486.
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19 **2-Benzyl-3-(furan-2-yl)isoindolin-1-one 10d**: Colourless solid (106 mg, 78% yield) Mp: 108
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21 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1693, 1592, 1567, 1529, 1305, 1195, 1072, 743, 708; ¹H NMR (400 MHz,
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23 CDCl₃) δ 8.00-7.86 (m, 1H), 7.54-7.45 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.19 (m, 6H), 6.29-6.36 (m, 2H), 5.40 (s,
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25 1H), 5.32 (d, *J* = 14.9 Hz, 1H), 3.94 (d, *J* = 14.9 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.0
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27 (C), 149.1 (C), 143.5 (CH), 143.0 (C), 137.0 (C), 131.8 (CH), 128.79 (CH), 128.72 (CH), 128.3
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29 (CH), 127.5 (CH), 123.8 (CH), 123.0 (CH), 110.5 (CH), 110.0 (CH), 57.0 (CH), 44.2 (CH₂);
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31 HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₁₉H₁₅NO₂ (M + H) 290.1175, found 290.1776.
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44 **2-(4-Methoxybenzyl)-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one 10e**: Colourless solid (88 mg, 54% yield)
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46 Mp: 132 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3033, 2929, 2835, 1691, 1612, 1512, 1464, 1399, 1246, 1176, 1033,
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48 817, 737, 699; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.93 (dd, *J* = 6.0, 2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.51-7.30 (m, 5H),
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50 7.17-7.00 (m, 5H), 6.82 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 5.34 (d, *J* = 14.7 Hz, 1H), 5.22 (s, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H),
51
52 3.68 (d, *J* = 14.7 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.5 (C), 159.1 (C), 146.4, 136.9 (C),
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54 131.8 (CH), 131.5, 129.8 (CH), 129.27 (C), 129.21 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 127.8 (CH),
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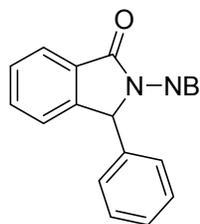
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123.7 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 114.1 (CH), 63.5 (CH), 55.3 (CH₃), 43.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₂₀NO₂ (M + H) 330.1488, found 330.1487.

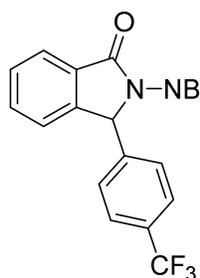


Synthesis of 3-hydroxy-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 7e: To a stirred solution of 2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindoline-1,3-dione⁴³ (500 mg, 1.77 mmol) in a mixture of tetrahydrofuran and methanol (5:0.5 mL) sodium borohydride (114 mg, 2.65 mmol) was added during 10 min at -10 °C. Resulting mixture was stirred at -10 °C for 2 h. Subsequently, excess sodium borohydride was quenched with aqueous 3 N HCl (0.5 mL). Evaporation of solvents on rotary evaporator resulted in colourless solid which washed with water to provide 3-hydroxy-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one **7e** in 88% yield (443 mg). Mp: 98 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3340, 2865, 1681, 1609, 1577, 1525, 1469, 1431, 1344, 1305, 1207, 1060, 961, 925, 858, 788, 748, 728; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 8.07 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.73-7.52 (m, 6H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.78 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.06 (d, *J* = 17.3 Hz, 1H), 4.88 (d, *J* = 17.3 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 166.6 (C), 147.8 (C), 144.8 (C), 133.5 (CH), 132.9 (C), 132.0 (CH), 131.0 (C), 129.2 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 124.5 (CH), 123.6 (CH), 122.4 (CH), 81.1 (CH), 39.8 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₁₅H₁₂N₂O₄Na (M + Na) 307.0695, found 307.0698.

Synthesis of 2-(2-nitrobenzyl)-3-phenylisoindolin-1-ones 10h-w: The general procedure described for synthesis of 2-benzyl-3-arylisoindolin-1-one **10a-e** was followed for synthesis of 2-(2-nitrobenzyl)-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one **10h-w**.

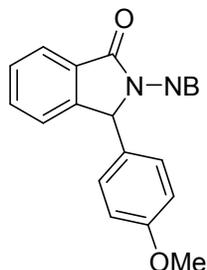


2-(2-Nitrobenzyl)-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one 10h: Colourless solid (109 mg, 91% yield), Mp: 116 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3062, 2927, 2872, 1694, 1611, 1527, 1468, 1400, 1344, 1305, 1142, 1094, 858, 790, 738, 702; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.95 (d, $J = 6.9$ Hz, 2H), 7.54-7.48 (m, 3H), 7.40-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.28 (m, 3H), 7.19-7.17 (m, 1H), 7.01 (d, $J = 4.8$ Hz, 2H), 5.40 (d, $J = 17.2$ Hz, 1H), 5.40 (s, 1H), 4.50 (d, $J = 17.2$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 169.3 (C), 148.4 (C), 146.4 (C), 136.3 (C), 133.6 (C), 132.7 (CH), 132.4 (CH), 130.8 (C), 130.0 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 125.5 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 65.0 (CH), 41.2 (CH_2); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{16}\text{N}_2\text{O}_3\text{Na}$ ($M + \text{Na}$) 367.1059, found 367.1058.

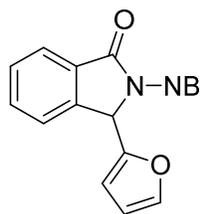


2-(2-Nitrobenzyl)-3-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)isoindolin-1-one 10i: Colourless solid (134 mg, 92% yield), Mp: 141 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3070, 2935, 2860, 1699, 1617, 1528, 1395, 1326, 1166, 1125, 1067, 854, 790, 734; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 7.94-7.89 (m, 2H), 7.56-7.48 (m, 6H), 7.40-7.38 (m, 1H), 7.19 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.15-7.11 (m, 1H), 5.49 (s, 1H), 5.33 (d, $J = 16.0$ Hz, 1H), 4.57 (d, $J = 16.0$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 169.1 (C), 148.7 (C), 145.8 (C), 140.9 (C), 133.67 (CH), 132.64 (CH), 132.5 (C), 131.5 (C), 131.0 (CH), 130.8 (C), 129.0 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 126.3 (m, CH), 124.9 (CH), 124.3

(CH), 123.3 (CH), 64.6 (CH), 41.3 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₅F₃N₂O₃Na (M + Na) 435.0932, found 435.0932.

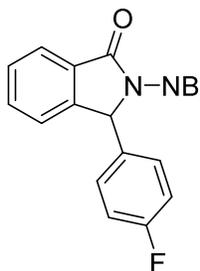


3-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10j: Light yellow solid (93 mg, 77% yield), Mp: 115 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3071, 2935, 2840, 1695, 1609, 1525, 1466, 1400, 1344, 1304, 1248, 1176, 1107, 1027, 787, 731; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.97-7.93 (m, 2H), 7.54-7.48 (m, 3H), 7.40-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.18-7.16 (m, 1H), 6.92 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 5.39-5.35 (m, 2H), 4.48 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.2 (C), 160.0 (C), 148.4 (C), 146.7 (C), 133.7 (CH), 132.9 (C), 132.3 (CH), 130.9 (C), 129.9 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 127.9 (C), 125.0 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 114.6 (CH), 64.5 (CH), 55.4 (CH₃), 41.1 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₈N₂O₄ Na (M + Na) 397.1164, found 397.1168.

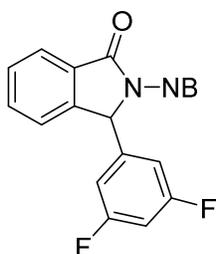


3-(Furan-2-yl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10k: Colourless solid (93 mg, 79% yield) Mp: 140 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1697, 1596, 1577, 1470, 1395, 1343, 1305, 1190, 1080, 858, 786, 750, 702; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.97-7.93 (m, 2H), 7.61-7.43 (m, 3H), 7.38-7.32 (m, 3H), 7.22 (s, 1H), 6.24 (s, 2H), 5.55 (s, 1H), 5.25 (d, *J* = 16.9 Hz, 1H), 4.83 (d, *J* = 16.9 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 168.4 (C), 148.6 (C), 148.2 (C), 143.5

(CH), 142.8 (C), 133.3 (CH), 132.7 (C), 132.1 (CH), 131.4 (C), 129.5 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 127.9 (CH), 124.7 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 110.5 (CH), 110.2 (CH), 58.3 (CH), 41.5 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₁₉H₁₄N₂O₄Na (M + Na) 357.0851, found 357.0851.

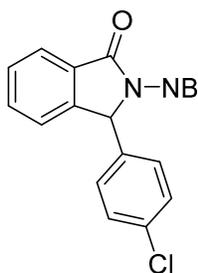


3-(4-Fluorophenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10l: Light yellow solid (116 mg, 91% yield), Mp: 157 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3071, 2930, 1695, 1607, 1527, 1469, 1397, 1342, 1226, 1158, 1097, 856, 788, 737; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.94-7.91 (m, 2H), 7.53-7.48 (m, 3H), 7.40-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.16-7.13 (m, 1H), 7.01-6.93 (m, 4H), 5.40 (s, 1H), 5.35 (d, *J* = 16.4 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (d, *J* = 16.4 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.1 (C), 162.8 (d, *J* = 241 Hz, C), 148.3 (C), 146.2 (C), 133.6 (CH), 132.5 (C), 132.4 (CH), 132.1 (d, *J* = 3 Hz, C), 130.7 (C), 130.1 (CH), 129.4 (d, *J* = 9 Hz, CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 116.2 (d, *J* = 22 Hz, CH), 64.2 (CH), 41.0 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₁H₁₅FN₂O₃Na (M + Na) 385.0964, found 385.0964.

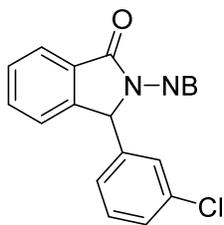


3-(3,5-Difluorophenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10m: Light yellow solid (108 mg, 81% yield), Mp: 167 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1713, 1650, 1574, 1530, 1464, 1409, 1333, 1116, 855, 790, 729; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.96 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.56-7.51 (m, 3H), 7.45-7.39

(m, 2H), 7.18 (d, $J = 4.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.74 (t, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 1H), 6.61 (d, $J = 5.6$ Hz, 2H), 5.41-5.37 (m, 2H), 4.57 (d, $J = 16.8$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 169.2 (C), 16.3.5 (d, $J = 249$ Hz, C) 163.4 (d, $J = 250$ Hz, C), 148.5 (C), 145.3 (C), 140.8 (C), 133.8 (CH), 132.7 (CH), 132.2 (C), 130.54 (C), 130.48 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 125.1 (CH), 124.3 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 110.4 (t, $J = 18$ Hz, CH), 104.5 (t, $J = 25$ Hz, CH) 64.2 (CH), 41.3 (CH_2); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{14}\text{F}_2\text{N}_2\text{O}_3\text{Na}$ ($\text{M} + \text{Na}$) 403.0870, found 403.0871.

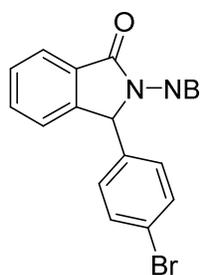


3-(4-Chlorophenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10n: Colourless solid (109 mg, 81% yield), Mp: 151 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 1698, 1612, 1526, 1490, 1468, 1395, 1345, 1307, 1088, 789, 748, 719; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 7.92 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.52-7.39 (m, 5H), 7.27-7.24 (m, 2H), 7.14-7.12 (m, 1H), 6.98 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 5.39 (s, 1H), 5.33 (d, $J = 16.4$ Hz, 1H), 4.51 (d, $J = 16.4$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 169.0 (C), 148.5 (C), 146.0 (C), 135.0 (C), 134.9 (C), 133.5 (C), 132.5 (CH), 132.4 (CH), 130.8 (C), 130.6 (CH), 129.5 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 64.3 (CH), 41.1 (CH_2); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{15}\text{ClN}_2\text{O}_3\text{Na}$ ($\text{M} + \text{Na}$) 401.0669, found 401.0673.

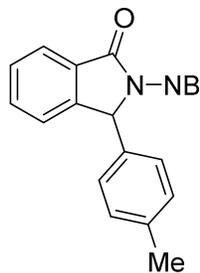


3-(3-Chlorophenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10o: Colourless solid (118 mg, 88% yield), Mp: 165 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3063, 2918, 2859, 1697, 1526, 1470, 1396, 1344, 1305,

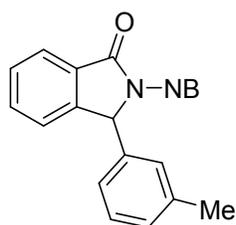
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3 1191, 787, 703; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.94-7.91 (m, 2H), 7.53-7.49 (m, 3H),
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5 7.44-7.38 (m, 2H), 7.25-7.15 (m, 3H), 6.98-6.96 (m, 2H), 5.39 (s, 1H), 5.35 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz,
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7 1H), (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 169.1 (C), 148.5 (C), 145.8
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9 (C), 138.6 (C), 135.2 (C), 133.6 (CH), 132.5 (CH), 132.4 (C), 130.7 (C), 130.5 (CH), 130.4
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11 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 125.8 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 124.1 (CH),
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13 123.3 (CH), 64.5 (CH), 41.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₁H₁₅ClN₂O₃Na (M + Na)
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15 401.0669, found 401.0664.
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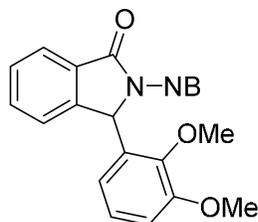
30 **3-(4-Bromophenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10p**: Colourless solid (126 mg, 85%
31
32 yield), Mp: 114 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1697, 1613, 1526, 1469, 1396, 1344, 1306, 1072, 1011, 788,
33
34 745; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.93 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.54-7.49 (m, 3H), 7.42-7.37 (m,
35
36 4H), 7.15-7.13 (m, 1H), 6.91 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 5.38-5.34 (m, 2H), 4.51 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 2H);
37
38 ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.2 (C), 148.5 (C), 145.9 (C), 135.5 (C), 133.7 (CH), 132.5
39
40 (CH), 132.4 (2C, C,CH), 130.7 (C), 130.3 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 125.0
41
42 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 123.0 (C), 64.4 (CH), 41.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for
43
44 C₂₁H₁₅BrN₂O₃Na (M + Na) 445.0164, found 445.0162.
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4 **2-(2-Nitrobenzyl)-3-(*p*-tolyl)isoindolin-1-one 10q**: Colourless solid (113 mg, 89% yield), Mp:
5
6 135 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1696, 1609, 1527, 1468, 1400, 1345, 1305, 1200, 1158, 1095, 858, 787,
7
8 734, 706; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.92 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 7.59-7.30 (m, 5H),
9
10 7.20-7.03 (m, 3H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 5.38-5.33 (m, 2H), 4.45 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 2.31
11
12 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 169.0 (C), 148.5 (C), 146.6 (C), 138.7 (C),
13
14 133.5 (CH), 133.2 (C), 132.9 (C), 132.2 (CH), 131.0 (C), 130.1 (CH), 129.9 (CH), 128.5 (CH),
15
16 128.1 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 64.7 (CH), 41.0 (CH₂), 21.3
17
18 (CH₃); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₈N₂O₃Na (M + Na) 381.1215, found 381.1215.
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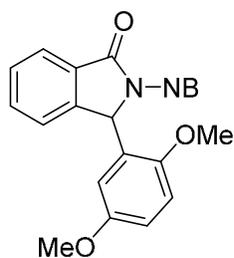


32 **2-(2-Nitrobenzyl)-3-(*m*-tolyl)isoindolin-1-one 10r**: Colourless solid (109 mg, 86% yield), Mp:
33
34 129 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹), 3049, 2922, 1694, 1609, 1578, 1526, 1469, 1397, 1342, 1304, 1200,
35
36 1095, 857, 787, 770, 730, 706; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.93-7.91 (m, 2H),
37
38 7.53-7.47 (m, 3H), 7.40-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.18-7.13 (m, 2H), 7.08-7.06 (m, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz,
39
40 1H), 6.77 (s, 1H), 5.38 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 5.35 (s, 1H), 5.49 (d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 2.25 (s, 3H);
41
42 ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 169.2 (C), 148.4 (C), 146.4 (C), 139.0 (C), 136.1 (C),
43
44 133.5 (CH), 132.8 (C), 132.3 (CH), 130.9 (C), 130.0 (CH), 129.7 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 128.5 (CH),
45
46 128.2 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 124.8 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 65.0 (CH), 41.1
47
48 (CH₂), 21.4 (CH₃); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₈N₂O₃Na (M + Na) 381.1215, found 381.1214.
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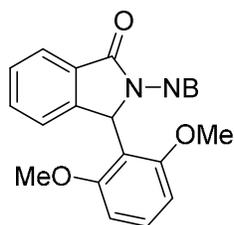
3-(2,3-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10s: Light yellow colour solid

(113 mg, 79% yield), Mp: 122; °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3066, 2937, 2837, 1697, 1605, 1522, 1465, 1399, 1263, 1141, 1027, 858, 788, 730; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 7.84-7.80 (m, 2H), 7.42-7.36 (m, 4H), 7.30-7.26 (m, 1H), 7.10-7.08 (m, 1H), 6.68 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 6.56 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 6.27 (s, 1H), 5.25-5.21 (m, 2H), 4.47 (d, $J = 17.6$ Hz, 1H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 3.61 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 168.7 (C), 149.6 (C), 149.5 (C), 148.5 (C), 146.4 (C), 133.2 (CH), 132.7 (C), 132.1 (CH), 130.8 (C), 130.2 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.3 (C), 128.0 (CH), 124.6 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 120.5 (CH), 111.4 (CH), 109.9 (CH), 64.8 (CH), 55.75 (CH_3), 55.71 (CH_3), 40.8 (CH_2); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{20}\text{N}_2\text{O}_5\text{Na}$ ($\text{M} + \text{Na}$) 427.1270, found 427.1269.

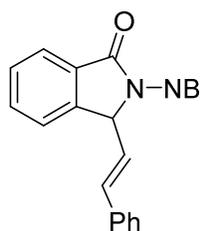


3-(2,5-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10t: Colourless solid (116 mg, 81% yield), Mp: 130 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3002, 2936, 2836, 1694, 1526, 1468, 1340, 1280, 1218, 1047, 856, 789, 748; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 7.93 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.50-7.46 (m, 3H), 7.36-7.28 (m, 3H), 6.78-6.72 (m, 2H), 6.17 (s, 1H), 6.03 (s, 1H), 5.38 (d, $J = 16.8$ Hz, 1H), 5.57 (d, $J = 16.8$ Hz, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 3.58 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 169.3 (C), 153.9 (C), 151.9 (C), 148.4 (C), 146.4 (C), 133.4 (CH), 133.3 (C), 132.1

(CH), 131.4 (C), 129.7 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 127.9 (CH), 125.3 (C), 124.7 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 114.4 (CH), 112.8 (CH), 111.9 (CH), 57.4 (CH), 55.8 (CH₃), 55.5 (CH₃), 41.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₃H₂₀N₂O₅Na (M + Na) 427.1270, found 427.1273.

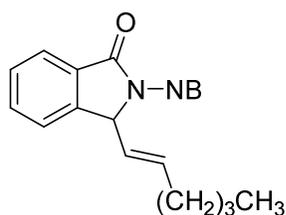


3-(2,6-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10u: Colourless solid (93 mg, 74% yield), Mp: 154 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 2933, 2831, 1693, 1528, 1462, 1392, 1284, 1217, 1032, 853, 783, 747; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.98-7.94 (m, 2H), 7.51-7.47 (m, 3H), 7.41-7.22 (m, 3H), 6.53 (s, 1H), 6.47-6.26 (m, 2H), 5.98 (s, 1H), 5.38 (d, *J* = 17.0 Hz, 1H), 4.54 (d, *J* = 17.1 Hz, 1H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 3.68 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.4 (C), 161.1 (C), 158.9 (C), 148.3 (C), 146.8 (C), 133.5 (C), 133.5 (CH), 132.1 (CH), 131.5 (C), 129.3 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 124.7 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 116.4 (C), 105.3 (CH), 98.4 (2 × CH), 57.1 (CH), 55.4 (CH₃), 55.3 (CH₃), 41.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₃H₂₀N₂O₅Na (M + Na) 427.1270, found 427.1275.

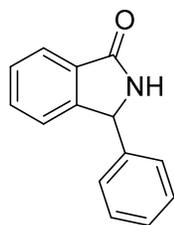


(E)-2-(2-Nitrobenzyl)-3-styrylisoindolin-1-one 10v: Viscous solid (82 mg, 63% yield). IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3058, 3028, 2960, 2927, 2869, 1696, 1609, 1527, 1469, 1402, 1345, 1305, 1149, 1084, 970, 857, 751, 698; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.95 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 7.90 (dd, *J* = 6.7, 1.0 Hz, 2H), 7.59-7.49 (m, 6H), 7.44 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.37 (t, *J* = 7.5

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3 Hz, 4H), 7.28-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.26-7.23 (m, 3H), 6.75 (d, $J = 15.7$ Hz, 1H), 5.71 (dd, $J = 15.7, 9.2$
4 Hz, 1H), 5.31 (d, $J = 16.8$ Hz, 1H), 4.99 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 4.91 (d, $J = 16.8$ Hz, 1H); ^{13}C NMR
5
6 (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) δ 168.7 (C), 148.7 (C), 144.8 (C), 136.6 (C), 135.6 (CH), 133.6
7
8 (CH), 133.3 (C), 132.2 (CH), 131.5 (C), 130.2 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.3
9
10 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 125.1 (CH), 125.0 (CH), 124.2 (CH), 123.5 (CH), 64.2 (CH), 41.3 (CH_2);
11
12
13 HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{18}\text{N}_2\text{O}_3\text{Na}$ ($\text{M} + \text{Na}$) 393.1215, found 393.1215.
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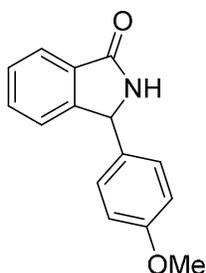
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27 **(E)-3-(Hex-1-en-1-yl)-2-(2-nitrobenzyl)isoindolin-1-one 10w**: Viscous solid (103 mg 84%). IR
28 (KBr, cm^{-1}) 2958, 2928, 2864, 1767, 1696, 1613, 1467, 1401, 1343, 1304, 1223, 1148, 1099,
29
30 1049, 974, 857, 789, 731; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.01 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.89 (d, $J =$
31
32 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.59-7.47 (m, 3H), 7.43-7.32 (m, 3H), 5.95-5.82 (m, 1H), 5.28 (d, $J = 17.0$ Hz, 1H),
33
34 5.05-4.99 (m, 1H), 4.90 (d, $J = 17.0$ Hz, 1H), 4.79 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 2.06-2.00 (m, 2H), 1.30-
35
36 1.25 (m, 4H), 0.86 (t, $J = 6.9$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 168.8 (C), 148.5 (C),
37
38 145.2 (C), 139.2 (CH), 133.6 (CH), 133.3 (C), 132.1 (CH), 131.3 (C), 129.7 (CH), 128.6 (CH),
39
40 128.1 (CH), 125.6 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 64.2 (CH), 41.0, 31.9 (CH_2), 30.9
41
42 (CH_2), 22.1 (CH_2), 13.9 (CH_3); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{22}\text{N}_2\text{O}_3\text{Na}$ ($\text{M} + \text{Na}$) 373.1528, found
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44 373.1528.
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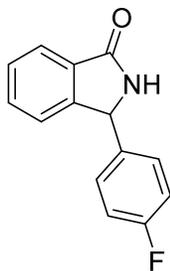
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General procedure for deprotection of 2-nitrobenzyl group for synthesis of C(3) substituted isoindolin-1-ones 11a-d.

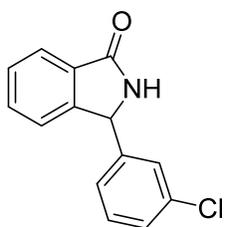
Synthesis of 3-phenylisoindolin-1-one 11a: The stirred solution of 2-(2-nitrobenzyl)-3-phenylisoindolin-1-one **10h** (50 mg, mmol) in CH₃CN:H₂O (1:1; 10 mL) in a Pyrex test tube of 20 mL capacity was exposed to light irradiation with emission maximum at 370 nm emitted by UV-LEDs (4 × 3μW) lamps (see supplementary information for an image of the in-house built reactor). After completion of deprotection (4 h) solvents was removed under reduced pressure, and the resulting white faintly colored solid was subjected to column chromatography (silica gel, gradient elution with increasing volume of EtOAc in hexanes) to separate 3-phenylisoindolin-1-one **11a** from nitroso benzaldehyde. The isoindolin-1-one **11a** was obtained as colourless solid (28 mg, 93% yield). Mp: 219 °C (reputed 219 °C). Spectral data (IR, ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR and DEPT) of **11a** matched with those reported by Slavov and coworkers.⁴⁴



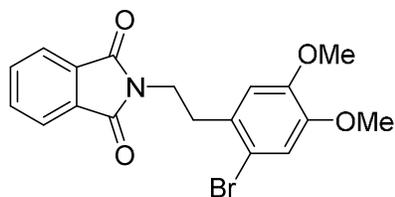
3-(4-Methoxyphenyl)isoindolin-1-one 11b: Colourless solid (28 mg, 88% yield), Mp: 155 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3200, 3074, 2955, 1732, 1697, 1589, 1514, 1346, 1246, 732; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.92-7.86 (m, 1H), 7.53-7.43 (m, 2H), 7.21 (dd, *J* = 7.5, 0.9 Hz, 1H), 7.16 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.63 (s, 1H), 5.58 (s, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 171.0 (C), 159.9 (C), 148.3 (C), 132.4 (CH), 130.9 (C), 130.3 (C), 128.4 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 114.5 (CH), 60.4 (CH₃), 55.4 (CH); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₁₄H₁₁FNO (M + H) 240.1019, found 240.1019.



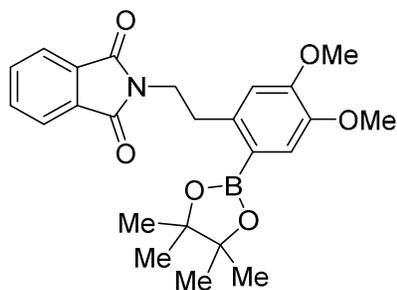
3-(4-Fluorophenyl)isoindolin-1-one 11c: Colourless solid (27 mg, 87% yield), Mp: 179 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3194, 3068, 2837, 1685, 1610, 1512, 1465, 1358, 1247, 1178, 1033, 731; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) 7.83 (m, 1H), 7.63 (bs, 1H), 7.50-7.49 (m, 2H), 7.25-7.18 (m, 3H), 7.01 (t, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 5.60 (s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) 171.3 (C), 162.9 (d, $J = 247$ Hz, C), 148.0 (C), 134.4 (d, $J = 3$ Hz, C), 132.4 (CH), 131.1 (C), 128.7 (CH), 128.6 (d, $J = 6$ Hz, CH), 124.1 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 116.2 (d, $J = 21$ Hz, CH), 60.4 (CH); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{11}\text{FNO}$ (M + H) 228.0819, found 228.0813.



3-(3-Chlorophenyl)isoindolin-1-one 11d: Colourless solid (28 mg, 88% yield), Mp: 157 °C; IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3191, 3071, 2924, 1690, 1552, 1469, 1352, 1191, 1139, 1088, 784, 749, 705; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) 7.51-7.48 (m, 1H), 7.29-7.27 (m, 2H), 7.25-7.15 (m, 6H), 6.97 (bs, 1H), 5.58 (s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3 + \text{CCl}_4$; 1:1) 171.6 (C), 147.5 (C), 140.7 (C), 135.2 (C), 132.6 (CH), 131.0 (C), 130.5 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 127.1 (CH), 125.0 (CH), 124.2 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 60.5 (CH); HRMS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{11}\text{ClNO}$ (M + H) 244.0529, found 244.0524.



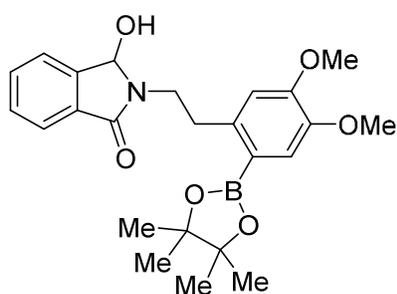
Preparation of 2-(2-bromo-4,5-dimethoxyphenethyl)isoindoline-1,3-dione 16: A suspension of phthalic anhydride (600 mg, 4 mmol), 2-(2-bromo-4,5-dimethoxyphenyl)ethan-1-amine (1.036 g, 4 mmol) in 15 mL toluene in an oven dried 25 mL round bottom flask fitted with Dean-Stark apparatus was heated to reflux until clear solution of the product was obtained (6 h). The condensation worked better in toluene relax with Dean-Stark apparatus compared to the condensation with phthaloyl dichloride in acetonitrile in presence of Hunig's base as described by DiMugno and coworkers.³⁹ After completion the reaction mixture was concentrated under reduced pressure to give a residue which was subjected to column chromatography (silica gel, gradient elution with increasing volume of EtOAc in hexanes) to furnish **16** as a colourless solid (1.31 g, 82% yield). Mp = 143 °C. IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 1713, 1583, 1467, 1386, 1121, 1084, 883, 768, 712; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.81 (dd, *J* = 5.5, 3.0 Hz, 2H), 7.69 (dd, *J* = 5.4, 3.1 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (s, 1H), 6.66 (s, 1H), 3.94 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 3.06 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.2 (C), 148.48 (C), 148.44 (C), 134.0 (CH), 132.1(C), 129.4 (C), 123.3 (CH), 115.69 (CH), 114.5 (C), 113.3 (CH), 56.1 (CH₃), 56.0 (CH₃), 37.7 (CH₂), 34.4 (CH₂).⁴³



2-(4,5-Dimethoxy-2-(4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)phenethyl)isoindoline-1,3-

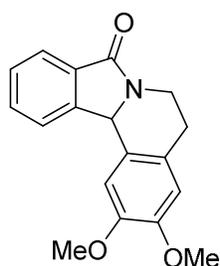
dione 17: A viscous solution of 2-(2-bromo-4,5-dimethoxyphenethyl)isoindoline-1,3-dione **16** (300 mg 0.75 mmol), bis(pinacolato)diboron (222 mg, 0.90 mmol), NaOAc (242 mg, 3 mmol) and Pd(PPh₃)₂Cl₂ (26 mg, 0.08 mmol) in PEG 400 (3 mL) was stirred in an oil bath at 80 °C for an 3 h time under an atmosphere of nitrogen. After completion (TLC, 20% EtOAc in hexanes, R_f = 0.5), cooled reaction mixture was extracted with methyl *tert*-butyl ether (MTBE, 2 × 10 mL).

The ether layer was washed with brine and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. Crude product obtained after removal of MTBE was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, gradient elution with increasing volume of EtOAc in hexanes) resulted **17** as colourless solid (269 mg, 84% yield) Mp: 124 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3005, 2941, 1712, 1500, 1394, 1361, 1255, 1213, 1163, 1097, 999, 869, 800, 717; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.79 (dd, *J* = 5.4, 3.0 Hz, 2H), 7.67 (dd, *J* = 5.4, 3.0 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (s, 1H), 6.65 (s, 1H), 4.00-3.92 (m, 2H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 3.30-3.22 (m, 2H), 1.37 (s, 12H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.3 (C), 150.9 (C), 146.8 (C), 139.1 (C), 133.8 (CH), 132.2 (C), 123.1 (CH), 118.3 (CH), 113.1 (CH), 83.6 (C), 55.9 (CH₃), 55.7 (CH₃), 40.1 (CH₂), 33.9 (CH₂), 24.9 (CH₃); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₄H₂₈NO₆BNa (M + Na) 460.1908, found 460.1906.

**2-(4,5-Dimethoxy-2-(4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)phenethyl)-3-**

hydroxyisoindolin-1-one 18: To a stirred solution of 2-(4,5-dimethoxy-2-(4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)phenethyl)isoindoline-1,3-dione **17** (200 mg, 0.46 mmol) in

Mixture of tetrahydrofuran (3 mL) and methanol (0.3 mL) kept in an ice-water bath sodium borohydride (34 mg, 0.92 mmol) was added in three portions during 10 min. The reaction mixture was then stirred at 0-5 °C for 20 min by which time reduction was complete (TLC). Excess sodium borohydride was quenched with water (1 mL). Removal of THF and MeOH under reduced pressure in a rotary evaporator resulted in a suspension of white solid in residual water. Filtration of solid followed by washing with water (5 mL) provided **18** as a colourless solid in 96% yield (192 mg). Mp 138 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3171, 2943, 1660, 1589, 1516, 1440, 1263, 1143, 1024, 819, 744, 698; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.57-7.43 (m, 3H), 7.36-7.26 (m, 1H), 7.25 (d, *J* = 1.1 Hz, 1H), 6.64 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 5.56 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 3.87 (d, *J* = 1.0 Hz, 3H), 3.73 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 3H), 3.65-3.56 (m, 1H), 3.53-3.43 (m, 1H), 3.21-3.11 (m, 1H), 3.06-2.96 (m, 1H), 1.33 (s, 12H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 167.3 (C), 151.4 (C), 146.9 (C), 144.0 (C), 139.9 (C), 132.0 (C), 131.9 (CH), 129.5 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 123.2 (CH), 118.8 (CH), 113.1 (CH), 83.7 (C), 82.1 (CH), 55.9 (CH₃), 55.7 (CH₃), 42.0 (CH₂), 34.2 (CH₂), 24.9 (CH₃), 24.8 (CH₃); HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₄H₃₀NO₆BNa (M + Na) 462.2064, found 462.2064.



2,3-Dimethoxy-5,12b-dihydroisoindolo[1,2-a]isoquinolin-8(6H)-one 19: By following the general procedure described for the copper mediated coupling reactions described earlier, the intramolecular coupling in 2-(4,5-dimethoxy-2-(4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)phenethyl)-3-hydroxyisoindolin-1-one **18** (100 mg, 0.23 mmol) in presence of Cu(OTf)₂ (8

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3 mg, 0.023 mmol) and Na₂CO₃ (12 mg, 0.11 mmol) in DCE (2 mL) furnished 2,3-dimethoxy-
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5 5,12b-dihydroisoindolo[1,2-a]isoquinolin-8(6*H*)-one **19** as a colourless solid in 89% yield (59
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7 mg). Mp 60 °C; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 2912, 1678, 1518, 1417, 1253, 1228, 1205, 1093, 724; ¹H NMR
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9 (400 MHz, CDCl₃ + CCl₄; 1:1) δ 7.85 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.79 (dd, *J* = 7.7, 0.6 Hz, 1H), 7.58 (td,
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11 *J* = 7.5, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.08 (s, 1H), 6.62 (s, 1H), 5.58 (s, 1H), 4.51-4.45
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13 (m, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 3.41 - 3.38 (m, 1H), 3.02-2.94 (m, 1H), 2.74 (dt, *J* = 15.8, 4.0
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15 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃+ CCl₄; 1:1) δ 167.9 (C), 148.6 (C), 148.1 (C), 144.8 (C),
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17 132.9 (C), 131.6 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 127.1 (C), 126.2 (C), 124.2 (CH), 123.1 (CH), 112.2 (CH),
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19 109.0 (CH), 59.1 (CH), 56.3 (CH₃), 56.0 (CH₃), 38.3 (CH₂), 29.2 (CH₂); HRMS (ESI) calcd for
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21 C₁₈H₁₈NO₃ (M + H) 296.1287, found 296.1276.
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35 spectra.
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38 Associated content

39 Supporting information

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42 Copies of ¹H, ¹³C NMR and DEPT-135 spectra for all compounds prepared, ORTEP plot of the
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44 X-ray structure of **10h** along with crystal data. This material is available free of charge via the
45
46 Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.
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