A stereoselective synthesis of a 3,4,5-substituted piperidine of interest as a selective muscarinic (M₁) receptor agonist

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* deceased October 2012

Dedicated to Steve Ley on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

Abstract A stereoselective synthesis of (1RS,2SR,6SR)-7-benzyl-6-cyclobutyl-2-methoxymethyl-4,7-diaza-9-oxobicyclo[4.3.0]nonan-8-one, representative of a novel series of selective muscarinic (M₁) receptor agonists, is described.

Key words piperidines, oxazolidinones, hydroboration, muscarinic receptors, trifluoroacetimidates.

Agonists of muscarinic M₁ receptors have been identified as potential chemotherapeutic agents for the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease.1 In particular, they could provide alternatives to cholinesterase inhibitors that tend to lose efficacy over time. Indeed several M₁ receptor agonists have been found to alleviate the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.2 It is, however, crucial to find compounds selective for M₁ receptors to avoid side-effects arising from stimulation of other muscarinic receptor subtypes. Early modelling studies using the bovine rhodopsin as a substitute for the M₁ receptor, led to the identification of the oxazolidinonylpiperidines 1 and 2 as possibly selective M₁ agonists, see Figure 1.3 We now describe a stereoselective synthesis of the first representative of these novel compounds.

Figure 1 Oxazolidinonylpiperidines of interest as M₁ receptor agonists

The first member of the series selected for synthesis was the 7-benzyl-6-cyclobutyl-2-methoxymethyl analogue 3. The oxazolidinone 4 was identified as a likely precursor of the piperidine 3 and the alkenyloxazolidinone 5, possibly accessible from the aldehyde 6, was considered a plausible intermediate for the synthesis of the oxazolidinone 4. The aldehyde 6 is the equivalent of an alkylated, reduced serine derivative but the presence of the cyclobutyl group limited the options available for its synthesis. In the end, it was decided to study a preparation of the aldehyde 6 from the ketone 7 that in turn would be prepared from the commercially available cyclobutane carboxylic acid 8, see Figure 2. Although not unreasonable, it was recognised that the stereoselectivities of several of the steps in this proposed synthesis were difficult to predict.

Figure 2 Proposed synthesis of the oxazolidinonylpiperidine 3

A synthesis of the racemic modification of the aldehyde 6 is outlined in Scheme 1. The tert-butyklimethylsilyloxymethyl ketone 7 was prepared in four steps from cyclobutane carboxylic acid by conversion into the methyl ketone 9, bromination of the ketone and hydrolysis of the known bromide 10 to give the corresponding alcohol that was protected as its silyl ether 7. A Wadsworth-Emmons-Horner reaction of the protected hydroxyketone 7 followed by reduction of the resulting αβ-
unsaturated esters gave a 75 : 25 mixture of the geometrical isomers of the alcohols 11, the major alcohol being identified as the (Z)-isomer on the basis of a significant nOe between 2-H and 3-CH. This mixture of alcohols was converted into the corresponding trifluoroacetimidates 12 by reaction with trifluoroacetic anhydride, and heating the trifluoroacetimidates initiated a [3,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement to give the racemic tertiary trifluoroacetamide 13.\(^5\) Cleavage of the trifluoroacetamide was carried out under mild conditions using sodium borohydride in ethanol and the resulting amine 14 was converted into its Cbz-derivative 15 that was ozonolysed to give the required aldehyde (±)-6, see Scheme 1.

Scheme 1 Synthesis of the aldehyde (±)-6 Reagents and conditions (i) MeLi, Et₂O, 0°C to rt, 3 h (90%); (ii) Br₂, MeOH, 0°C to 15°C, 1.5 h (80%); (iii) (a) KOC(O)Me, MeOH, heat under reflux, 12 h (71%) (b) TBSCI, imid., DMAP (cat.), TBAI (cat.), DCM, rt, 1 h (62%); (iv) (a) (EtO)₂P(O)CH₂CO₂Et, NaH, THF, rt, 45 min, add 7, rt, 2.5 h (b) di-BAL-H, hexanes, THF, −78°C, 3 h, rt, 30 min [89% from 7, (2) : (E) = 75 : 25]; (v) NaH, THF, rt, 1 h, add to CF₃CN, THF, −115°C to −78°C, 1 h (88%); (vi) xylene, heat under reflux 18 h (91%); (vii) NaBH₄, EtOH, 0°C to rt, 18 h (80%); (viii) CBzCl, Et-N, DCM, rt, 18 h (83%); (ix) O₃, DCM, −78°C, then Ph,P, rt (84%).

The next step was the conversion of the aldehyde 6 into the oxazolidinone 5. This was achieved in one pot using an excess of isopropenylmagnesium bromide with a prolonged reaction time to facilitate cyclisation.\(^6\) This reaction was highly stereoselective and gave the cyclised product 5 exclusively. The formation of this oxazolidinone is consistent with addition of the Grignard reagent onto the less hindered face of the chelated, deprotonated aldehyde 16 to give the adduct 17. This cyclised in situ, possibly via the isocyanate 18 formed by loss of lithium benzylxide, to give the oxazolidinone after work-up, see Scheme 2. The structure assigned to the oxazolidinone 5 was confirmed by X-ray diffraction,\(^7\) see Figure 3.

To convert the oxazolidinone 5 into the cyclisation precursor 4 it was necessary to oxidise the methyl group, benzylate the oxazolidinone and hydrate the alkene stereoselectively. These conversions are outlined in Scheme 3. Epoxidation of the alkene 5 gave a mixture of the epoxides 19 and 20, ratio 77 : 23, that were reacted as a mixture with lithium 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidide\(^a\) to give the allylic alcohol 21.

Scheme 2 Preparation of the oxazolidinone 5 Reagents and conditions (i) CH₃(CMgBr)₂ = CH₂, THF, toluene, −78°C, 2 h then rt, 48 h (66%).

Figure 3 The structure of the oxazolidinone 5 as established by X-ray diffraction.

Alkylation using sodium hydride-benzyl bromide gave the N-benzyl oxazolidinone 23 as the major product with the bis-benzylated material 22 as only a minor side-product. Methylation of the alcohol 23 led to the methyl ether 24 and hydroboration-oxidation of this alkene using borane in THF at 0°C gave a mixture of the epimeric alcohols 4 and 25, ratio 4 : 25 = 85 : 15,\(^8\) see Scheme 3.

Scheme 3 Synthesis of the (±)-oxazolidinone 4 Reagents and conditions (i) (i) mCPBA, DCM, rt, 18 h (75%); (ii) 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidide, THF, BuLi, 0°C to rt, 1 h, added to 19 and 20, THF, 0°C to rt, 3 h (67%); (iii) NaH, BnBr, THF, heat under reflux, 6 h (23, 79%); (22, 66%); (iv) NaH, THF, MeI, rt, 18 h (90%); (v) BH₃·THF, 0°C, 18 h, then EtOH, NaOAc, 30% aq. H₂O₂, heat under reflux 1 h (95%, 4 : 25 = 85 : 15).

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The mixture of hydroboration products was not separated and the structure of the major product, which turned out to be the required epimer, was only confirmed later in the synthesis. The stereoselectivity can be explained by participation of transition structure in the hydroboration step, see Figure 4, but molecular modelling studies of the hydroboration were not carried out.

Figure 4 Facial selectivity of the hydroboration of alkene

The completion of the synthesis of the oxazolidinonylpiperidine is outlined in Scheme 4. Desilylation of the mixture of the hydroboration products and was converted into the N-benzylpiperidines and , ratio ca. 85 : 15, by reaction of the mesylates with an excess of benzylamine.10 Following separation of the major N-benzylpiperidine by chromatography, a selective transfer hydrogenolysis of the piperidine N-benzyl group gave the required oxazolidinonylpiperidine.11

The structures of the products shown in Scheme 4 were consistent with their spectroscopic data, although the configurations of the oxazolidinonylpiperidines at C2 were difficult to assign from their 1H NMR spectra. The structures of these products were eventually confirmed by selective demethylation of the major N-benzylpiperidine to give the alcohol that was crystalline and whose structure was confirmed by X-ray diffraction, as shown in Figure 5. The vicinal coupling constant of the oxazolidinonylpiperidines was found to be diagnostic of their relative configuration at C2, being less than 5 Hz for the major products 3, 30 and 32, and greater than 8 Hz for the minor product 31.

Figure 5 The structure of the (±)-oxazolidinonylpiperidine as established by X-ray data.

This work has resulted in the synthesis of the first member of a novel series of compounds, oxazolidinonylpiperidines, of interest as potentially selective ligands for muscarinic receptors. Indeed the methyl ether was found to be a 50% partial agonist of muscarinic receptors with micromolar potency, as measured by the relaxation responses of rat duodenum compared with the full agonist McN-A-343. Of interest in the synthetic work was the stereoselectivities of the Grignard addition and hydroboration steps and the overall strategy. This chemistry has been applied to the synthesis of oxazolidinonylpiperidines with both alkoxymethyl and hetaryl substituents at C2. This work will be described in full elsewhere.

Acknowledgment

We thank Dr. J. Raftery for help with X-ray data.

References and Notes

(3) Davies, R. H. unpublished observations.


(6) (4SR,5SR)-4-(tert-Butyldimethylsilyloxy)methyl)-4-cyclobutyl-5-propen-2-yl-1,3-oxazolidin-2-one (5) Propen-2-ylnium bromide (0.5 M in toluene, 297 mL, 148.5 mmol, 3.75 eq.) was added over 1 h to the aldehyde 6 (15.5 g, 39.6 mmol) in THF (800 mL) at −78 °C, and the reaction mixture stirred at −78 °C for 2 h then allowed to warm to rt overnight. The reaction mixture was stirred for another 36 h at rt before saturated aqueous ammonium chloride (500 mL) was added.

(7) X-Ray data: Oxazolidin-5-one, C3H3NO2S, unit cell parameters: a = 12.250(3) b = 13.606(3) c = 12.818(3); P21/c, CCD number 1413285. Alcohol 3, C6H9NO2, unit cell parameters: a = 22.546(14) b = 9.314(10) c = 10.283(9); P21/c, CCD number 1413286.


(9) (4SR,5SR)-4-(tert-Butyldimethylsilyloxy)methyl)-4-cyclobutyl-5-([S]-cis)-6S-(1-hydroxy-3-methoxyprop-2-yl)-1,3-oxazolidin-2-ones (4) and (25) Borane (1 M in THF, 8.2 mL, 8.22 mmol, 5 eq.) was added dropwise to the alkene 24 (660 mg, 1.48 mmol) in THF (5 mL) at 0 °C and the reaction mixture was stirred at this temperature for 18 h before ethanol (7.1 mL), saturated aqueous sodium acetate (23 mL) and hydrogen peroxide (30%) in H2O, 8 mL were added. The reaction mixture was heated under reflux for 1 h then cooled. The aqueous phase was extracted with ether (3 × 35 mL) and the organic extracts were dried (MgSO4) and concentrated under reduced pressure.

(10) (1R5S,6R)-7-Benzyl-6-cyclobutyl-2-methoxymethyl-4,7-diaza-9-oxabicyclo[4.3.0]nonan-8-ones (30) and (31) Freshly distilled methane sulfonate chloride (0.112 mL, 1.42 mmol, 3 eq.) and Et3N (0.20 mL, 1.42 mmol, 3 eq.) were added successively to a mixture of the diols 27 and 28 (166 mg, 0.475 mmol) in DCM (5 mL) at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to rt and was stirred for 1 h before the addition of ether (5 mL) and saturated aqueous ammonium chloride (10 mL). The aqueous phase was extracted with ether (3 × 10 mL) and the organic extracts were dried (MgSO4) and concentrated under reduced pressure to leave a mixture of the bis-mesylates 29 (228 mg) that was used without purification. The bis-mesylates 29 (228 mg) were dissolved in benzylamine (15 mL) and the solution heated at 80 °C for 18 h. After cooling to rt, the benzylamine was removed by distillation under reduced pressure. Chromatography [ethyl acetate : light petroleum = 1 : 20] of the residue obtained gave partial separation of the piperedines 30 and 31 to give the title compound 30 (72 mg, 36%). Rf = 0.28 (ethyl acetate : light petroleum = 1 : 2) (Found: M+1 = 502.2410. Calcd: M+1 requires M, 502.2413). 

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63.4, 71.4, 73.6, 127.8, 127.8, 128.7, 138.1 and 158.7; m/z (Cl+),
331 (M^+ 1, 60%) and 91 (100).