

Electronic supplementary information (ESI)

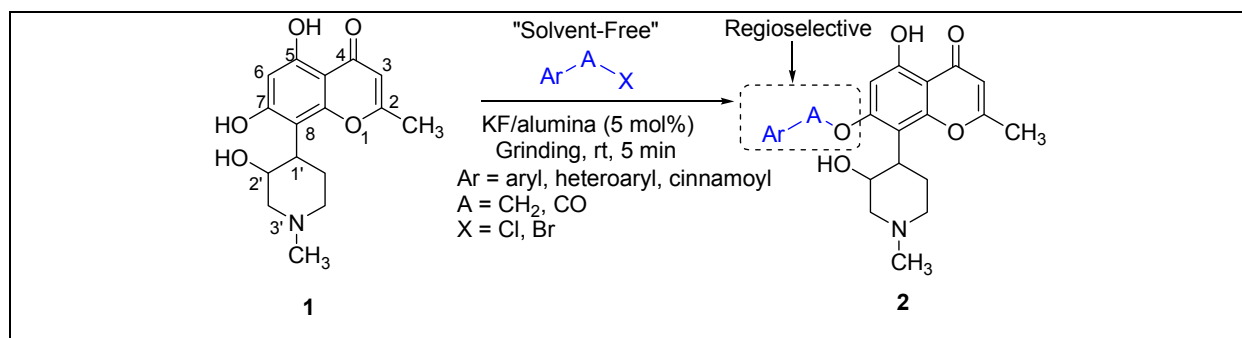
KF/alumina catalyzed regioselective benzylation and benzoylation using solvent-free grind-stone chemistry

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S1. General

All chemicals were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich Company and used as received. ^1H , ^{13}C and DEPT NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker-Avance DPX FT-NMR 500 and 400 MHz instruments. Chemical data for protons are reported in parts per million (ppm) downfield from tetramethylsilane and are referenced to the residual proton in the NMR solvent (CDCl_3 , 7.26 ppm; CD_3OD , 3.31 ppm). Carbon nuclear magnetic resonance spectra (^{13}C NMR) were recorded at 125 MHz or 100 MHz: chemical data for carbons are reported in parts per million (ppm, δ scale) downfield from tetramethylsilane and are referenced to the carbon resonance of the solvent (CDCl_3 , 77.16 ppm; CD_3OD , 49.0 ppm). ESI-MS spectra were recorded on Agilent 1100 LC-Q-TOF. IR spectra were recorded on Perkin-Elmer IR spectrophotometer. Melting points were recorded on digital melting point apparatus.

S2. Procedure for preparation of KF-alumina

A mixture of potassium fluoride (45 g) and basic alumina (55 g, type T, Merck) in water (100 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 10 min. The resulting suspension was concentrated on rotary evaporator at 50 °C, and then dried in calcium chloride desiccator under vacuum for 15 h. Use of basic alumina in the solid support gave better results relative to the neutral one.

S3. General procedure for *ON/S*-benzylation/benzoylation of phenols, other aromatics and heteroaromatics

Hydroxy aromatic compounds/ aromatic amines/ NH-heteroarenes/ thiophenols (**1**, **3** or **5**, 1 mmol), KF/ Al_2O_3 (5 mol%) and benzyl/benzoyl halides (1.2 mmol) were mixed in a mortar and grinded intermittently using a pestle. The mixture changed to mushy state within a proper reaction time and then gets solidified itself. Formation of product was monitored by TLC. After filtration of the catalyst, the filtrate was washed with aqueous NaOH (10%) and the organic phase was evaporated under reduced pressure to furnish the desired product. The crude product was sufficiently pure (as observed by TLC and ^1H NMR), and further purification was performed by column chromatography. All products were characterized by melting point, MS and ^1H NMR

data and their physical data were similar to those reported in the literature. Spectral characterization data for new compounds is provided:

7-(4-Methoxybenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (2a): White powder; m.p. 208-210 °C; ¹H NMR (200 MHz, D₂O, ppm): δ 12.39 (s, 1H, H-bonded), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 5.82 (s, 1H), 5.57 (s, 1H), 5.29 (d, *J* = 12.7 Hz, 1H), 4.71 (d, *J* = 12.7 Hz, 1H), 4.15 (brs, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.57-3.35 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.83 (s, 3H), 2.27 (s, 3H), 1.54 (m, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 179.62, 176.46, 163.71, 159.99, 159.69, 155.30, 134.37, 120.21, 113.72, 106.80, 106.12, 102.14, 98.04, 68.37, 62.58, 62.27, 61.80, 54.84, 51.53, 35.55, 19.85, 19.38; IR (KBr): ν_{max} 3415, 2854, 1617, 1352, 1258, 1180 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 448.20 [M+Na]⁺.

7-(Benzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (2b): Light yellowish powder; m.p. 218-220 °C; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 7.16 (m, 5H, ArH), 6.64 (s, 1H, H-6), 6.13 (s, 1H, H-3), 5.22 (brs, 2H), 4.29 (brs, 1H, H-3'), 3.80-3.45 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.99 (s, 3H), 2.47 (s, 3H) 1.96 (m, 1H); IR (KBr): ν_{max} 3325, 2923, 1658, 1588, 1420, 1270, 1120, 1028 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 396.2103 [M+H]⁺.

7-(4-Bromobenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (2c): Off-white powder; m.p. 248-250 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): 7.68 (m, 4H), 5.97 (s, 1H), 5.37 (s, 1H), 5.33 (d, *J* = 12 Hz, 1H), 4.84 (d, *J* = 12 Hz, 1H), 4.33 (brs, 1H), 3.73-3.30 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.89 (s, 3H), 2.43 (s, 3H), 1.71 (m, 1H); ESI-MS: *m/z* 476.0895 [M+H]⁺.

7-(4-Nitrobenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (2d): White powder; m.p. 234-236 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 8.33 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 8.08 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.17 (m, 2H), 5.97 (d, *J* = 12.8 Hz, 1H), 4.80 (d, *J* = 12.8 Hz, 1H), 4.13 (brs, 1H), 3.77-3.35 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.95 (s, 3H), 2.35 (s, 3H), 1.74 (m, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 183.46, 176.22, 167.33, 162.22, 157.66, 149.16, 136.55 (2C), 124.89 (2C), 107.94, 107.88, 104.36, 104.03, 101.85, 70.89, 65.17, 64.55, 62.78, 57.29, 37.71, 21.73, 20.28; ESI-MS: *m/z* 441.1692 [M+H]⁺.

7-(2-Bromobenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-

chromen-4-one (2e): White powder; m.p. 238-241 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 8.10 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.83 (m, 1H), 7.48 (m, 2H), 5.98 (brs, 2H), 5.48 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H), 5.17 (d, *J* = 13.3 Hz, 1H), 4.37 (brs, 1H), 3.95-3.59 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.41 (s, 3H), 2.01 (s, 3H), 1.84 (m, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 184.43, 169.35, 164.14, 161.97, 158.39, 137.24, 136.47, 135.66, 133.73, 129.69, 128.96, 108.81, 106.27, 105.51, 100.37, 72.14, 68.83, 66.74, 64.61, 53.39, 38.00, 21.31, 20.76; ESI-MS: *m/z* 474 [M+1]⁺.

7-(Cinnamyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-

4-one (2f): Yellow powder; m.p. 242-246 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 7.57 (m, 2H), 7.37 (m, 3H), 7.08 (d, *J* = 15.6, 1H), 6.51 (m, *J* = 15.6, 1H), 6.07 (s, 1H), 5.97 (s, 1H), 4.85 (m, 1H), 4.51 (m, 1H), 4.28 (brs, 1H), 3.78-3.33 (m, 6H of piperidine ring), 3.10 (s, 3H), 2.36 (s, 3H), 1.74 (m, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 180.75, 165.22, 164.62, 159.96, 155.80, 140.84, 135.21, 128.6 (2C), 127.03(2C), 117.2, 106.71, 106.60, 101.68, 101.22, 68.25, 64.8, 63.7, 62.4, 52.2, 36.1, 19.95, 19.76; ESI-MS: *m/z* 423.0771 [M+H]⁺.

7-((1H-Benzo[d]imidazol-2-yl)methoxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-

methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (2g): White powder; m.p. 217-220 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 7.61 (dd, *J* = 3.2, 6 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (dd, *J* = 2.8, 6 Hz, 2H), 5.90 (s, 1H), 5.82 (s, 1H), 5.50 (d, *J* = 13.6 Hz, 1H), 4.99 (d, *J* = 13.6 Hz, 1H), 4.27 (brs, 1H), 3.91-3.26 (m, 6H of piperidin), 2.58 (s, 3H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 1.54 (m, 1H); ESI-MS: *m/z* 436.1835 [M+H]⁺.

5-Hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4-oxo-4H-chromen-7-yl-furan-

2-carboxylate (2h): White powder; m.p. 184-186 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 7.73 (dd, *J* = 0.4, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (dd, *J* = 0.8, 3.6 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (dd, *J* = 1.6, 3.6 Hz, 1H), 6.22 (s, 1H), 5.96 (s, 1H), 5.58 (brs, 1H), 3.89-3.33 (m, 6H of piperidine), 2.97 (s, 3H), 2.14 (s, 3H), 2.10 (m, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 184.16, 169.03, 164.07, 162.34, 158.66, 158.21, 148.77, 145.03, 120.90, 113.27, 108.67, 105.18, 104.62, 99.79, 70.35, 58.27, 56.92, 44.67, 36.52, 24.37, 20.47; IR (KBr): *v*_{max} 3416, 2924, 1617, 1560, 1424, 1290, 1177, 1113 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 400.16 [M+H]⁺.

5-Hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4-oxo-4H-chromen-7-yl-2-

methylbenzoate (2i): White powder; m.p. 244-246 °C; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CD₃OD, ppm): δ 8.03 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (dd, *J* = 7.2, 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.23-7.13 (m, 2H), 6.187 (s, 1H), 5.83 (s, 1H), 5.61 (brs, 1H), 3.84-3.40 (m, 6H of piperidin), 2.94 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.03 (m, 1H); ESI-MS: *m/z* 424.4592 [M+H]⁺.

1-((4-Sec-butylphenoxy) methyl)benzene (4d): White solid; m.p. 121-124 °C; ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃, ppm): δ 7.64-6.43 (m, 9H), 5.03 (s, 2H), 2.52 (m, 1H), 1.53 (m, 2H), 1.23 (m, 3H), 0.93 (m, 3H); ESI-MS: *m/z* 239 [M-H]⁺.

1-((4-Isopropyl-3-methylphenoxy)methyl)benzene (4e): White solid; 131-133 °C; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃, ppm): δ 7.44-7.13 (m, 6H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 5.02 (s, 2H), 3.13 (m, 1H), 2.33 (s, 3H), 1.23 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 6H); ESI-MS: *m/z* 239 [M-H]⁺.

4-(Benzyloxy)-6-bromoquinazoline (6d): White crystalline solid; m.p. 127-129 °C; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃, ppm): δ 8.46 (s, 1H), 8.10 (s, 1H), 7.84 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (m, 5H), 5.19 (s, 2H); IR (KBr): *v*_{max} 3434, 3064, 2953, 1673, 1605.97, 1468.39, 1363, 1318, 1256, 1151, 1077 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 315.12 [M+H]⁺.

2-(Dibenzylamino)-4-nitrophenol (6g): Red solid; m.p. 185-187 °C; ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃, ppm): δ 7.78 (m, 1H), 7.61 (brs, 1H), 7.25 (m, 10H), 6.85 (m, 1H), 4.30 (s, 4H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃, ppm): δ 105.5, 112.9, 114.51, 116.01, 119.3, 120.90, 128.15, 129.2, 129.64, 129.9, 139.15, 141.58, 57.07; IR (KBr): *v*_{max} 3410, 1584, 1527, 1497, 1332, 1277, 1100 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 335.23 [M+H]⁺.

1-Benzyl-5-nitro-1H-indazole (6ja): Cream colored solid; m.p. 118-121 °C; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 200 MHz): δ 8.69 (d, *J* = 1.5 Hz, 1H), 8.17 (s, 1H), 8.09 (dd, *J* = 2.0, 9.5 Hz, 1H), 7.77 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.42-7.36 (m, 3H), 7.33-7.31 (m, 2H), 5.64 (s, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz): 142.36 (C-5), 141.17 (C-7a), 136.04 (C-3), 135.7 (C-1'), 128.93 (C-4'), 128.23 (C-2',6'), 127.24 (C-3',5'), 123.45 (3a), 121.48 (C-6), 118.92 (C-4), 109.61 (C-7), 53.51 (C-7'); IR (CHCl₃): *v*_{max} 3436, 3032, 1622, 1498, 1339, 1331, 1068 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 275.14 [M+Na]⁺ (¹H NMR data is in accordance with literature values: *Org. Process Res. Dev.* 2011, **15**, 565–569).

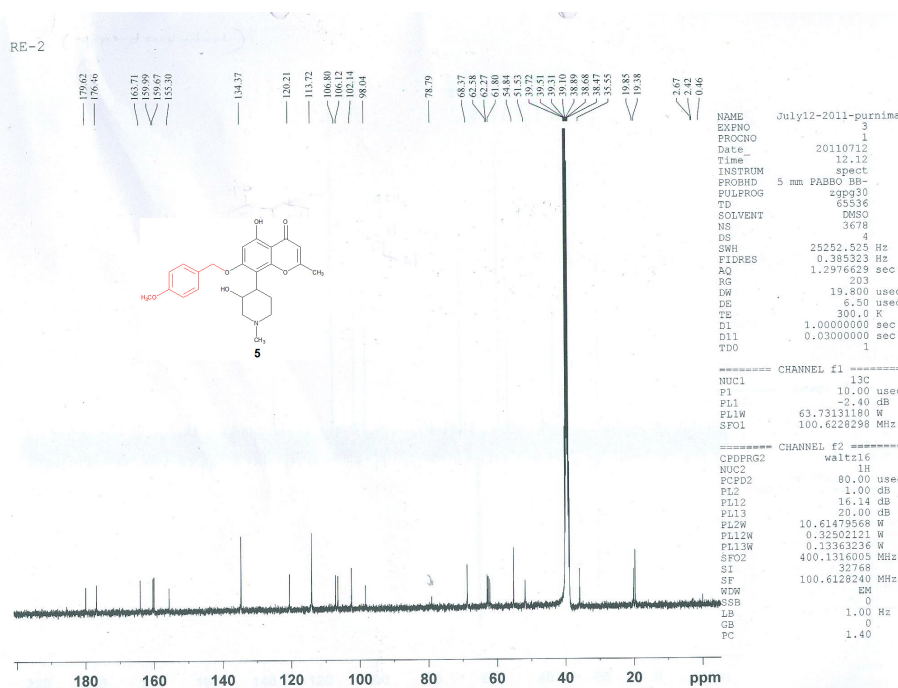
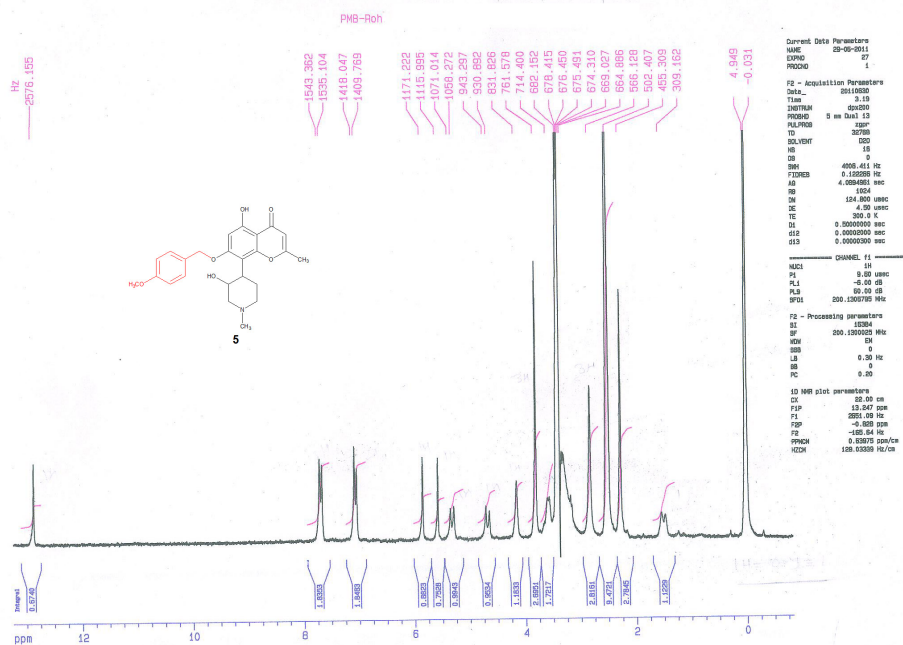
2-Benzyl-5-nitro-2H-indazole (6jb): Light yellow solid; m.p. 128-131 °C; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 200 MHz): δ 8.73 (s, 1H), 8.25 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 9.5 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.34-7.28 (m, 3H), 7.22-7.19 (m, 2H), 5.65 (s, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz): 149.90 (C-5), 143.08 (C-7a), 134.60 (C-1'), 129.16 (C-3',5'), 128.90 (C-4'), 128.28 (C-2',6'), 127.07 (C-3), 120.24 (C-3a), 120.25 (C-6), 128.90 (C-4), 118.49 (C-7), 58.16 (C-7'); IR (CHCl₃): ν_{max} 3436, 3147, 3111, 1542, 1488, 1339, 1285, 1124 cm⁻¹; ESI-MS: *m/z* 275.14 [M+Na]⁺.

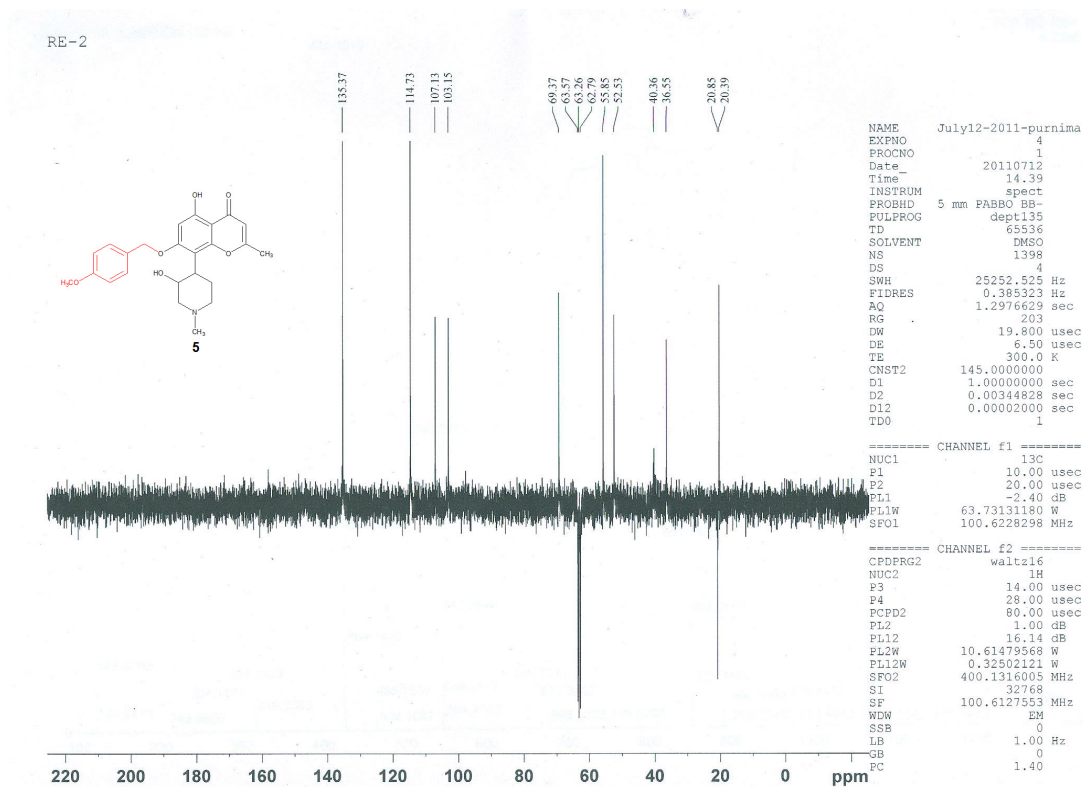
S4. Recyclability studies of KF/alumina catalyst

A mixture of rohitukine (**1**, 500 mg, 1 mmol), KF/Al₂O₃ (5 mol%) and PMB-Cl (1.2 mmol) was mixed in a mortar and grinded intermittently using a pestle for 20 min. After completion of reaction, organic solvent was added to the reaction mixture and filtered. The residual KF/Al₂O₃ catalyst obtained from the reaction mixture was washed with ethyl acetate then dried under vacuum at 100 °C for 10 h and reused in next cycle. The catalyst was recycled 5 times and the amount of catalyst recovered and percentage yield of **2a** was determined.

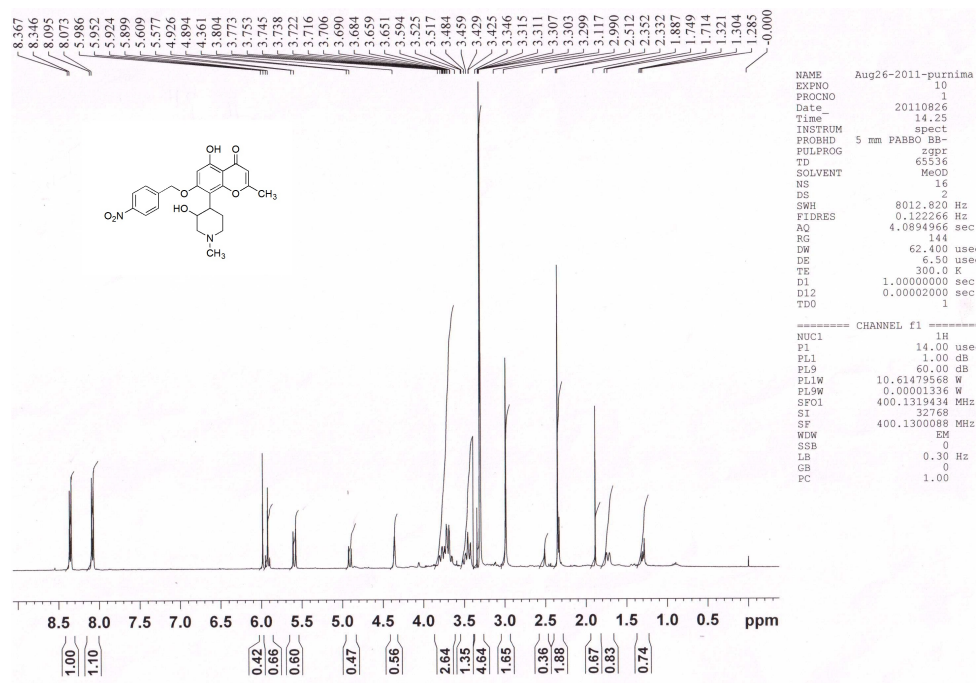
S5. Scanned spectra's of representative compounds

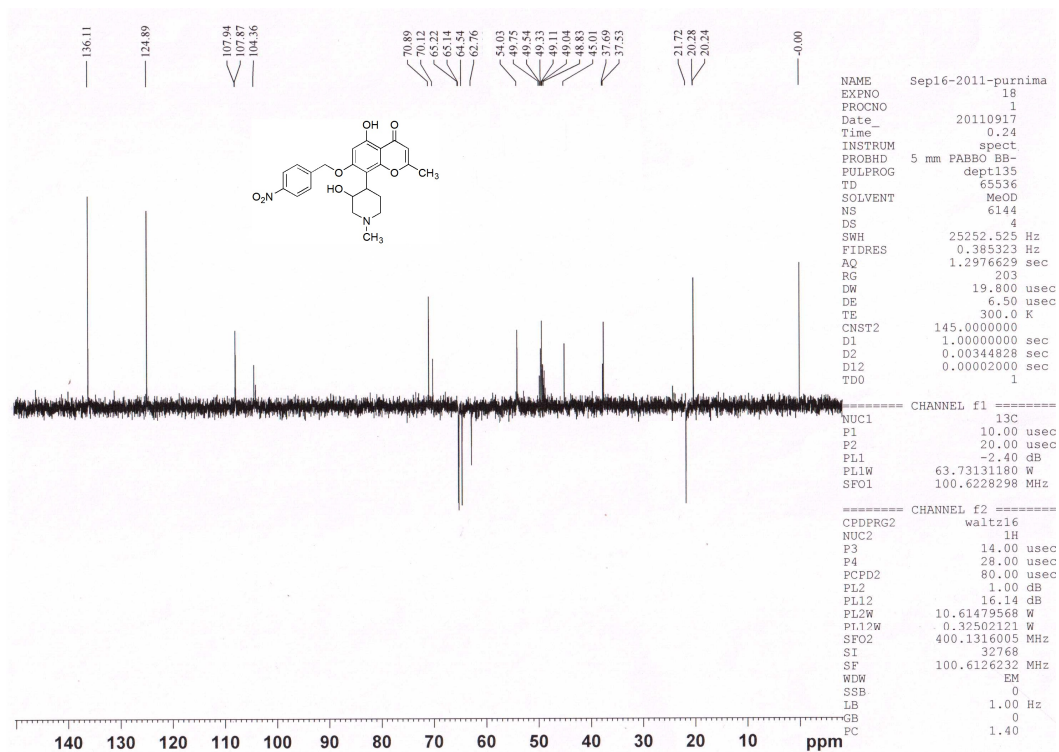
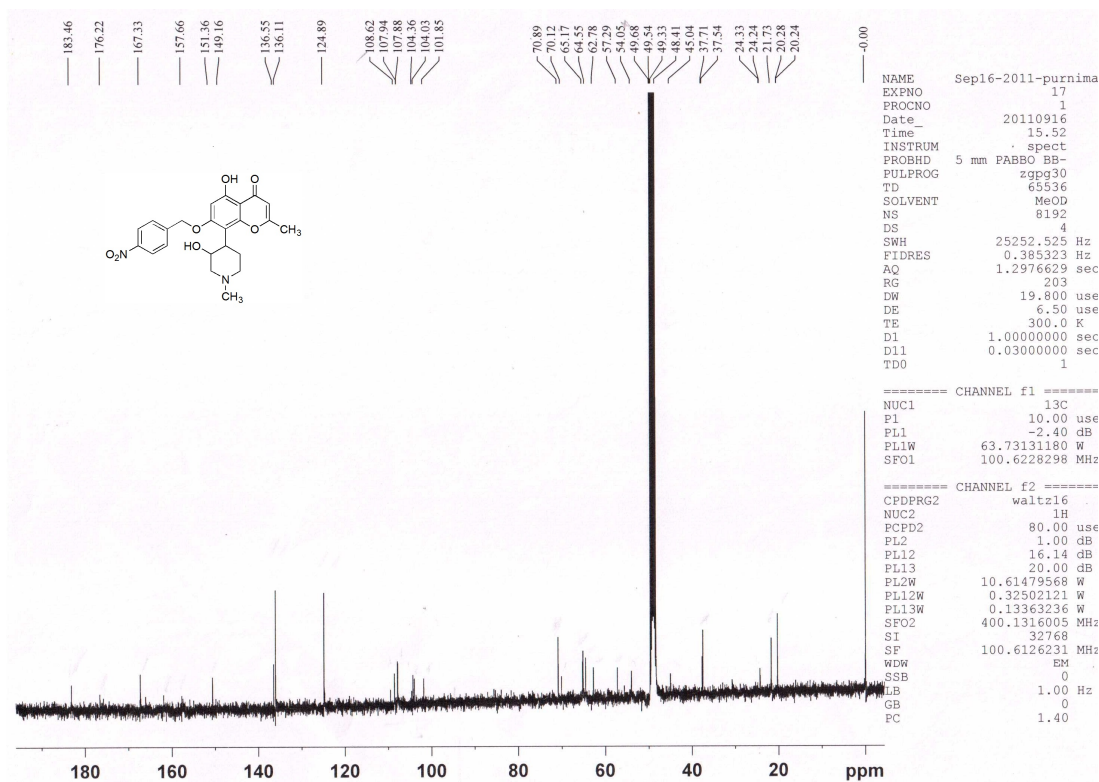
1. ^1H NMR, ^{13}C NMR and DEPT-135 spectrum of 7-(4-Methoxybenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (**2a**) in DMSO-d_6



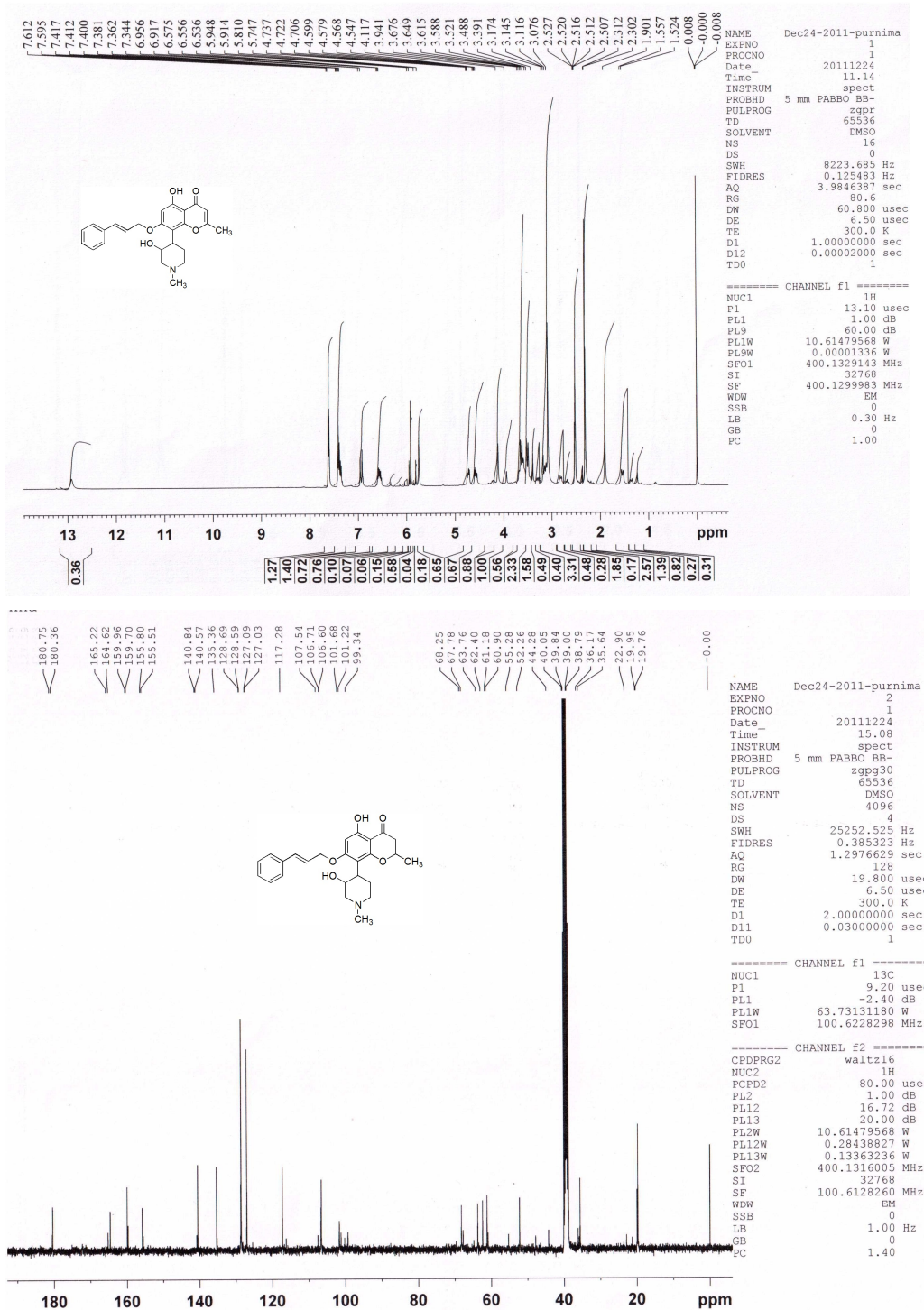


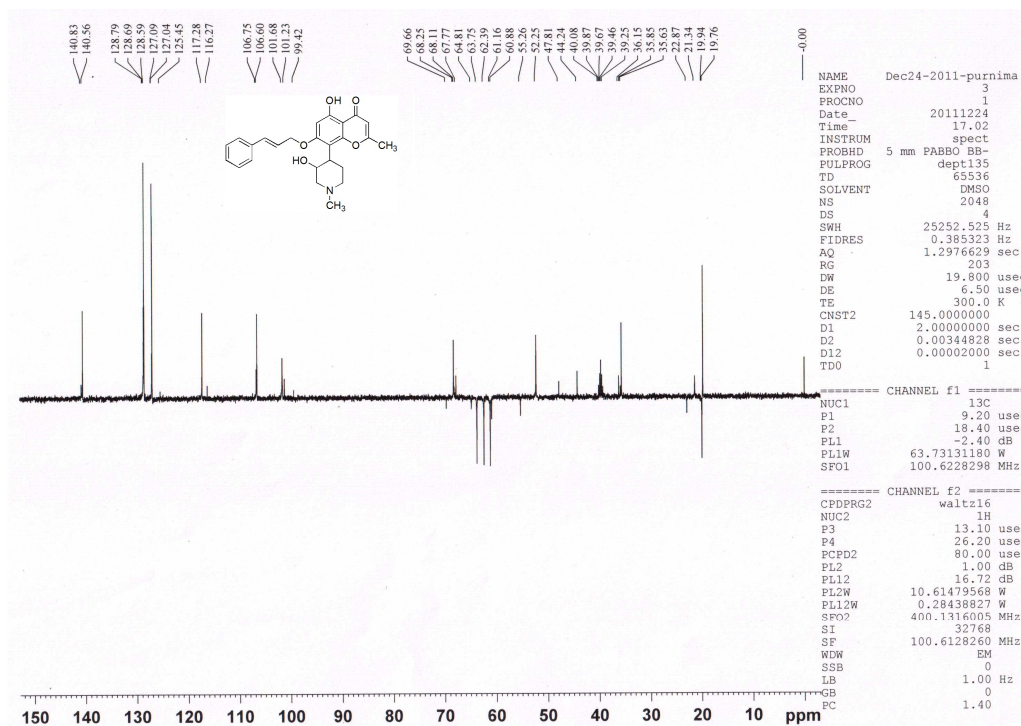
2. ^1H NMR, ^{13}C NMR and DEPT-135 spectrum of 7-(4-nitrobenzyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (**2d**) in CD_3OD



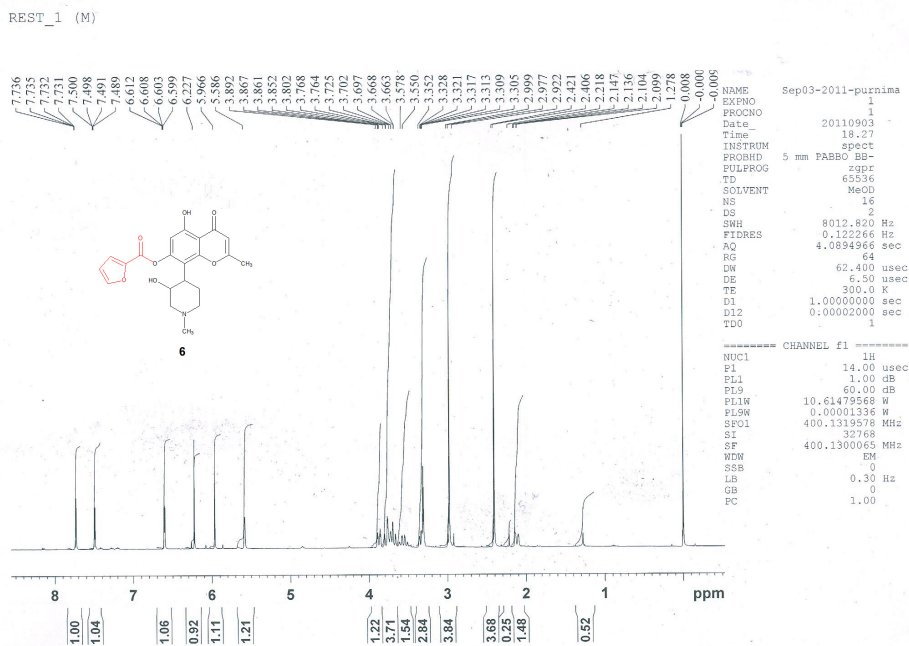


3. ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR and DEPT-135 spectrum of 7-(cinnamyloxy)-5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4H-chromen-4-one (**2f**) in DMSO-d₆

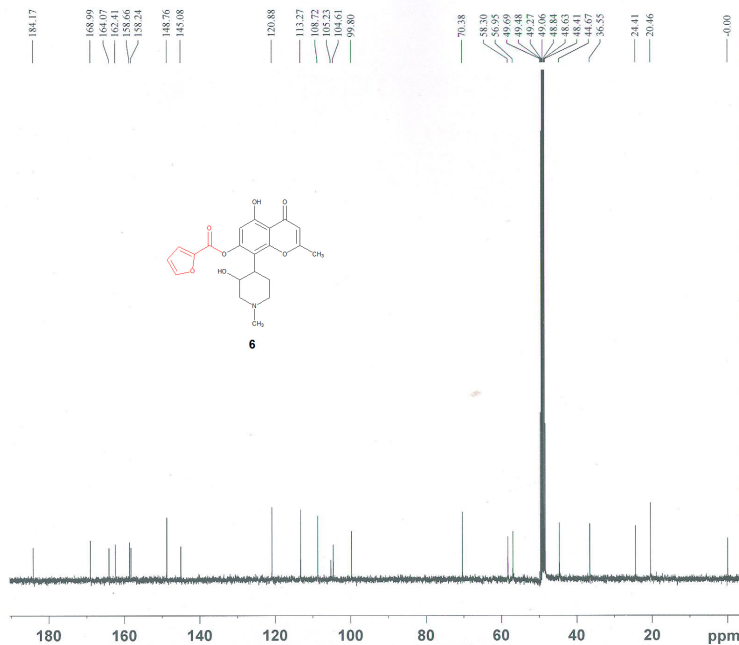




4. ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR and DEPT-135 spectrum of 5-hydroxy-8-(3-hydroxy-1-methylpiperidin-4-yl)-2-methyl-4-oxo-4H-chromen-7-yl-furan-2-carboxylate (**2h**) in CD₃OD



REST-1 (Furyl)



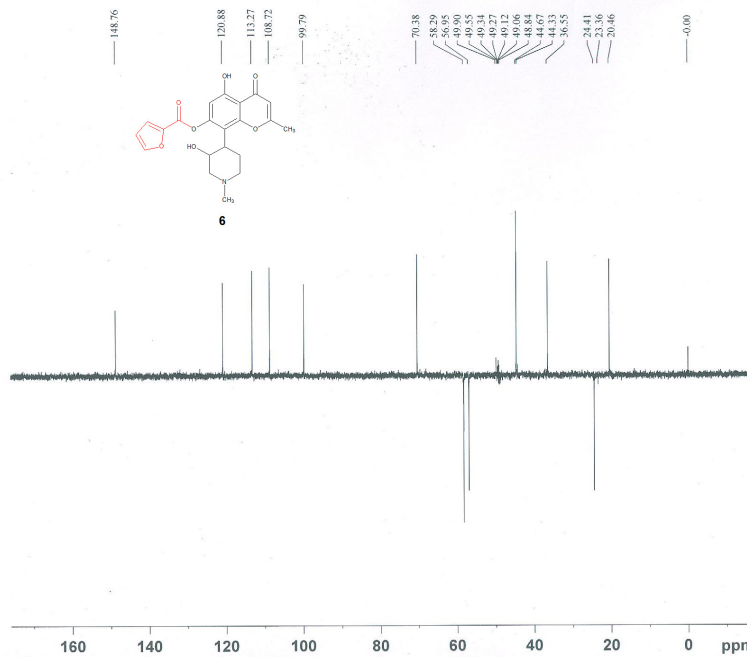
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REST-1 (Furyl)



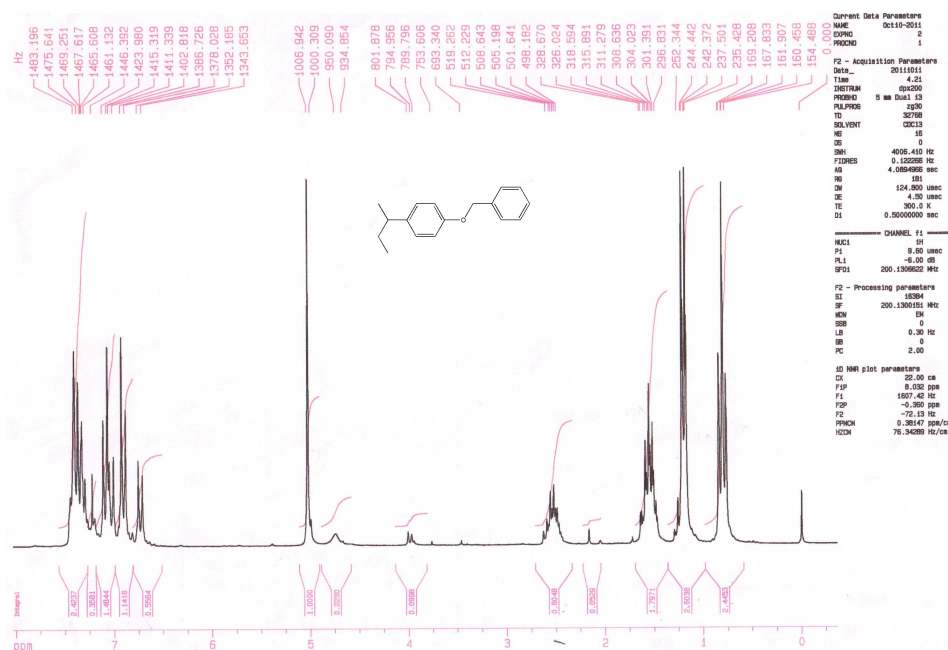
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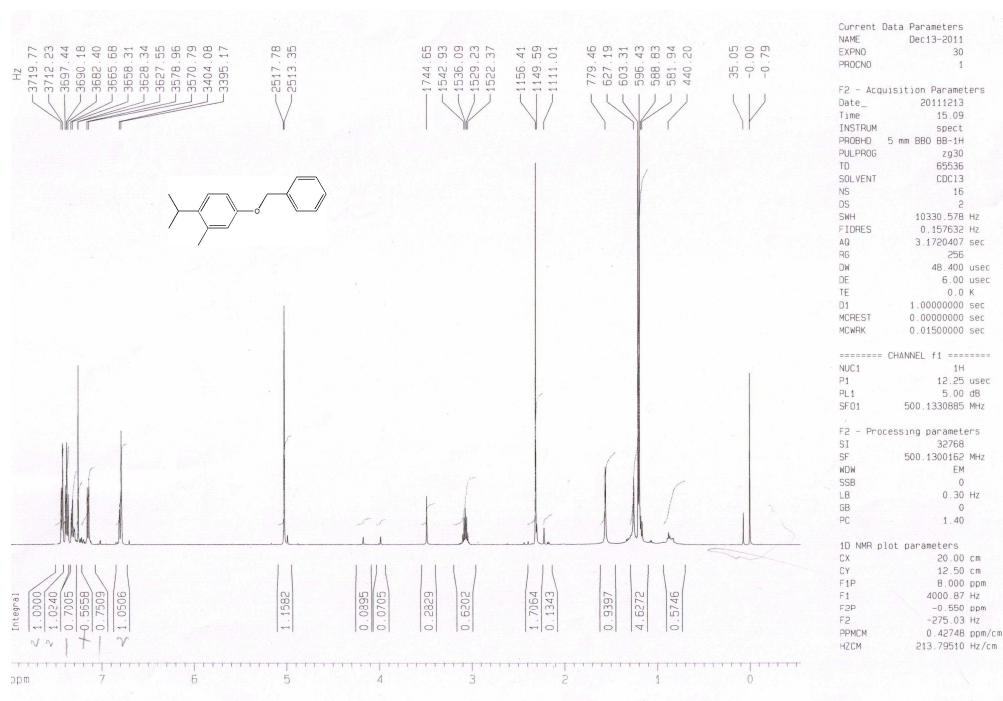
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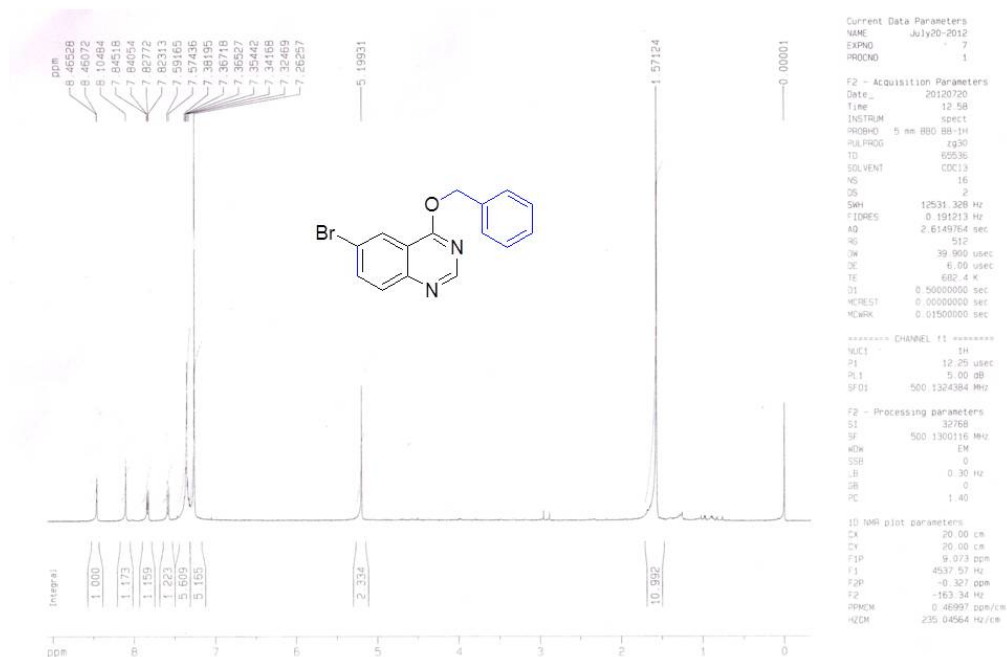

5. ^1H NMR of 1-((4-*Sec*-butylphenoxy) methyl)benzene (**4d**) in CDCl_3



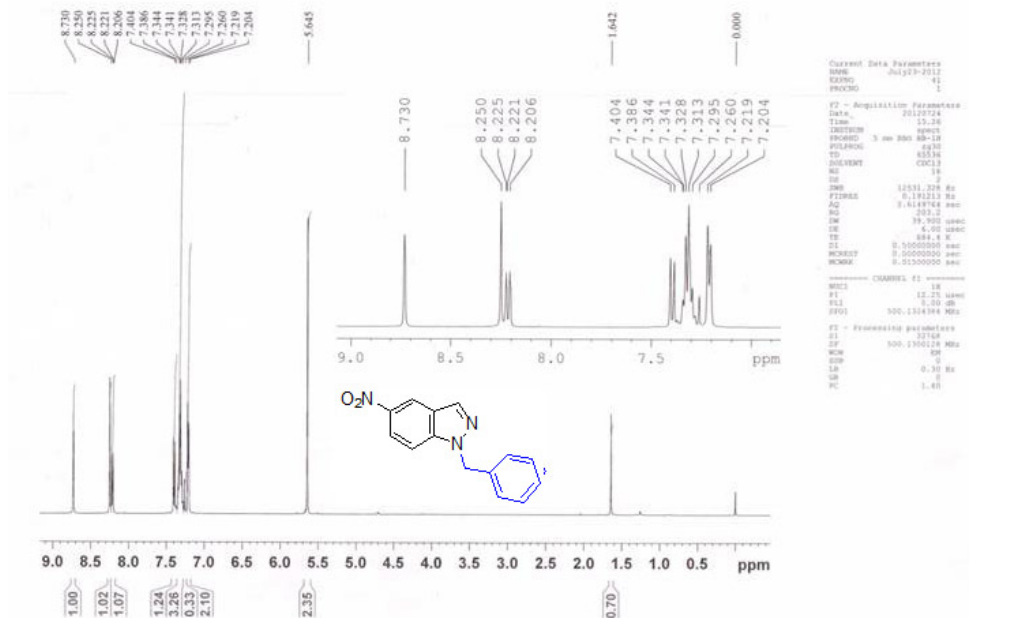
6. ^1H NMR of 1-((4-isopropyl-3-methylphenoxy)methyl)benzene (**4e**) in CDCl_3

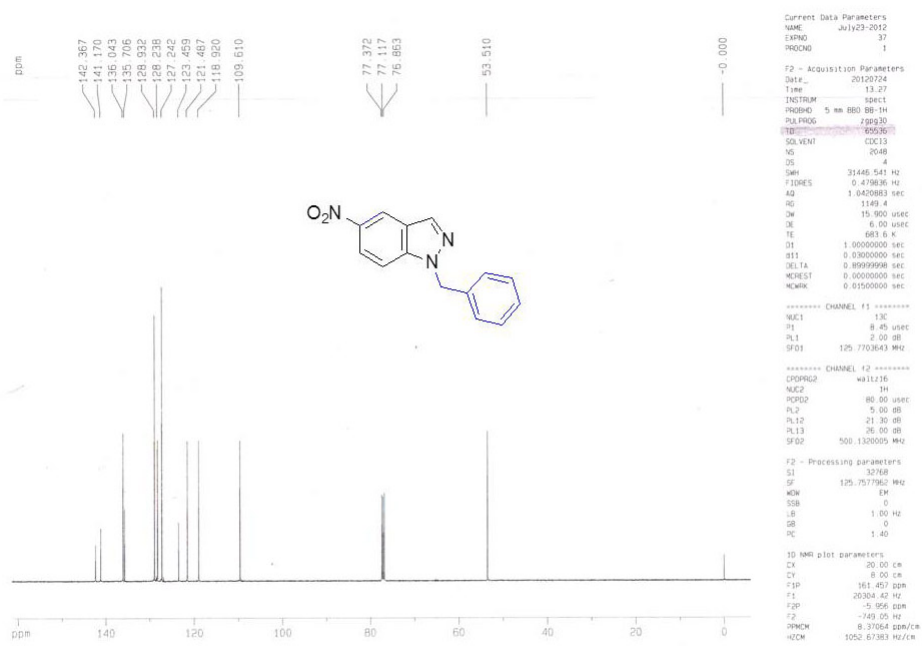


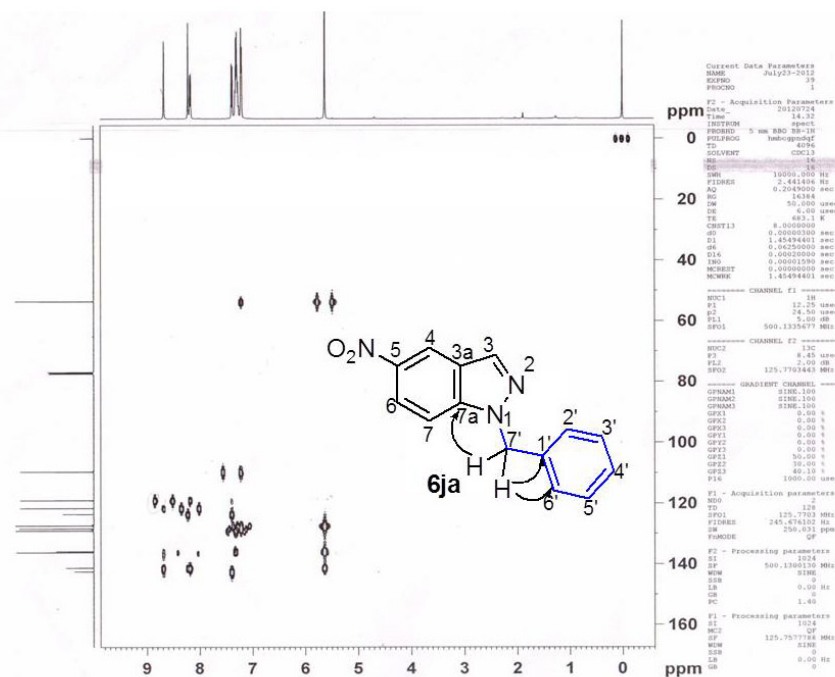
7. ^1H NMR of 4-(benzyloxy)-6-bromoquinazoline (**6d**) in CDCl_3



8. ^1H , ^{13}C , DEPT135 NMR and HMBC of 1-benzyl-5-nitro-1H-indazole (**6ja**) in CDCl_3







9. ^1H , ^{13}C , DEPT135 NMR and HMBC of 2-benzyl-5-nitro-2H-indazole (**6jb**) in CDCl_3

