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Stereoselective Synthesis of Dihydroisocoumarin Moiety of Microbial Agent AI-77-B: a Diels-Alder Based Strategy

Arun K. Ghosh and John Cappiello

Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois at Chicago, 845 West Taylor Street, Chicago, Illinois 60607.

Abstract

The dihydroisocoumarin fragment of the gastroprotective natural product AI-77-B has been synthesized in optically active form by using a regiospecific Diels-Alder reaction of 1-methoxy-1,3-cyclohexadiene and an acetylenic ester derivative, prepared stereoselectively from leucinal.

The 3,4-dihydroisocoumarins are important structural features for many biologically active natural products.¹ A member of this class is AI-77-B, which contains a dihydroisocoumarin linked to a hydroxylated amino acid side chain. This pseudopeptide was isolated from the culture broth of *Bacillus pumillus* AI-77 in 1982.² The structure and absolute configuration of AI-77-B were established by Shimojima and co-workers through spectral studies and X-ray crystallographic analysis.² AI-77-B represents a unique drug class since it has shown potent antiulcerogenic activity towards stress ulcers without any anticholinergic, antihistaminergic or central suppressive effects.³ In view of its significance as a gastroprotective agent, synthetic studies and further structural modification of AI-77-B has become the subject of immense interest over the years. Already, a number of total syntheses as well as several partial syntheses of AI-77-B have been reported.^{4,5} Thus far, the major strategy for the construction of the dihydroisocoumarin segment has been the addition of anions derived from ortho-toluidyl ester or oxazoline to protected leucinal. This approach generally results in a mixture of epimers at the C-3 position.⁴ Herein, we report a stereoselective route to the dihydroisocoumarin segment of AI-77-B by a regiospecific Diels-Alder reaction of 1-methoxy-1,3-cyclohexadiene and substituted acetylenic ester derivative as a dienophile. Both the natural C-3(*S*)-configuration and its epimer have been generated diastereoselectively by allyl-metal or propargyl-metal addition to leucinal.^{6,7}

As depicted in Figure 1, we planned to construct the dihydroisocoumarin skeleton by a Diels-Alder reaction as the key step. Thermal Diels-Alder reactions of 1-methoxy-1,3-cyclohexadiene and acetylenes have been shown to proceed with extrusion of ethylene providing aromatic compounds conveniently. This strategy has been utilized for the syntheses of mellein, phthalates and phenols.⁸ For the synthesis of dihydroisocoumarin fragment **2**, we first synthesized the acetylenic substrate stereoselectively. As shown in Scheme 1, the known *N*-BOC-leucinal **5** was prepared in multigram scale by LAH reduction of the corresponding Weinreb amide.⁹ Treatment of **5** with 2 equiv of SnCl₄ at –78°C followed by dropwise addition of allyltributyltin in CH₂Cl₂ provided the homoallylic alcohol **6** in 60% yield as a 14:1 mixture of diastereomers by ¹³C-NMR analysis. The

reaction of **5** with allyltrimethylsilane in the presence of SnCl_4 at -78°C has also resulted in **6** with comparable diastereoselectivities.^{6b} The stereochemical assignment of alcohol **6** was based upon a chelated transition state model **A** shown in Figure 2. Such allyl metal addition to α -aminoaldehydes has been previously studied by Kiyooka *et al* and Rich *et al*.⁶ Homoallylic alcohol **6** was converted to protected aldehyde **7** by treatment with dimethoxypropane in the presence of a catalytic amount of *p*-TsOH at 23°C for 12 h followed by ozonolytic cleavage of the resulting olefin at -78°C (76% from **6**). The ^{13}C -NMR analysis revealed the presence of a single diastereomer at this point. Installation of the acetylenic functionality was accomplished by exposure of the aldehyde **7** to 1.5 equiv of 1-diazo-2-oxopropyl phosphonate **8**¹⁰ in propanol followed by addition of 2 equiv of CS_2CO_3 at $0^\circ - 23^\circ\text{C}$ for 12 h. The reaction proceeded smoothly providing the acetylene derivative **9** in 82% yield after silica gel chromatography. Acetylene **9** was then deprotonated with 1.5 equiv of *n*-BuLi in THF at -78°C for 1 h and the resulting lithium acetylide was treated with methyl chloroformate at -78°C to furnish the acetylenic ester **10** in 86% yield. The corresponding C-3 epimer **13** was synthesized stereoselectively by an alternative route. Thus, *N*-BOC-Leucinal **5** in a mixture (1:1) of DMF and Et_2O at 0°C , was treated with 4 equiv of propargyl bromide followed by slow addition of zinc dust at 0°C .⁷ The resulting mixture was allowed to stir at 0° to 23°C for 12 h to provide the homopropargylic alcohol **11** in 62% yield after silica gel chromatography. The ^1H -NMR and ^{13}C -NMR analysis revealed the presence of a single diastereomer. The stereochemical course of such reaction can be explained by a Felkin-type transition-state model **B** in which addition takes place anti to the polar C-N bond as depicted in Figure 2.¹¹ The BOC-aminoalcohol **11** was protected as the isopropylidene derivative by treatment with dimethoxypropane in the presence of a catalytic amount of *p*-TsOH at 23°C to furnish **12** in 95% yield. Acetylene **12** was converted to acetylenic ester **13** as a single diastereomer in 85% yield as described above.

The Diels-Alder reaction of acetylenic ester **10** with excess of 1-methoxy-1,3-cyclohexadiene **3** (10 equiv) was carried out in toluene in a sealed tube at 175°C bath temperature for 72 h (Scheme 2). The cycloaddition proceeded with the extrusion of ethylene to provide the benzoate derivative **15** in 73% yield after silica gel chromatography. Exposure of benzoate derivative **15** to a catalytic amount of *p*-TsOH in MeOH at 23°C for 12 h resulted in the 3,4-dihydroisocoumarin derivative **2** ($\alpha_{\text{D}}^{23} = -45.33$; c, 0.8, CH_3OH) of AI-77-B. The spectral properties of **2** are in full agreement with the reported data.^{5c} For the synthesis of the C-3 epimer, cycloaddition of **3** with dienophile **13** was carried out under similar conditions to furnish the cycloadduct **16** in 84% yield. Treatment of **16** with *p*-TsOH in MeOH afforded the epimeric dihydroisocoumarin derivative **17** ($\alpha_{\text{D}}^{23} = +81.5$; c, 2.92, CH_3OH) in quantitative yield.¹²

In summary, the 'western' fragment of the antiulcer agent AI-77-B has been synthesized using a regiospecific Diels-Alder reaction as the key step. The route allows the diastereoselective synthesis of 3,4-dihydroisocoumarin derivative **2** or its C-3 epimer **17** from *N*-BOC-leucinal. Further synthetic studies of AI-77-B are currently under investigation.

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12. All new compounds gave satisfactory spectroscopic and analytical results. Product 2: ¹H NMR (400 MHz): δ, 7.43 (t, 1H, J=7.9 Hz), 6.89 (d, 1H, J=8.5 Hz), 6.80 (d, 1H, J=7.48 Hz), 4.19–4.14 (m, 1H), 3.93 (s, 3H), 3.11 (dd, 1H, J=12.7, 15.7 Hz), 2.99–2.94 (m, 1H), 2.78 (dd, 1H, J=2.5, 16.0 Hz), 1.79–1.75 (m, 1H), 1.41–1.37 (m, 2H), 0.933 (d, 3H, J=6.5 Hz), 0.897 (d, 3H, J=6.5 Hz); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz): δ, 162.48, 161.02, 142.03, 134.42, 119.28, 113.63, 110.69, 81.65, 56.08, 51.81, 42.53, 31.44, 24.32, 23.54, 21.41. MS, mass (CI) m/z 264 (M++ H); Product 17: ¹H NMR (400 MHz): δ, 7.42 (t, 1H, J=7.9 Hz), 6.88 (d, 1H, J=8.4 Hz), 6.81 (d, 1H, 7.5 Hz), 4.26–4.21 (m, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.25–3.21 (m, 1H), 3.12 (dd, 1H, J=12.6, 15.9 Hz), 2.72 (dd, 1H, 2.4, 16.1 Hz), 1.76–1.69 (m, 1H), 1.31–1.27 (m, 2H), 0.934 (d, 3H, J=6.5 Hz), 0.891 (d, 3H, 6.5 Hz); ¹³C NMR (50 MHz): δ, 162.45, 161.08, 142.15, 134.36, 119.45, 113.65, 110.67, 81.57, 56.04, 50.77, 41.59, 28.44, 24.57, 23.44, 21.52. MS, mass (CI) m/z 264 (M++ H).

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Scheme 1.

Scheme 2.