

The background of the cover is decorated with several stylized chemical structures. In the top left, there are faint, light blue skeletal structures of benzene and naphthalene rings. On the right side, there is a green skeletal structure of a biphenyl derivative. In the bottom right, there are faint, light green skeletal structures of benzene and naphthalene rings. In the bottom center, there is a faint, light red skeletal structure of a benzene ring. The main title is centered in the middle of the cover.

INNOVATIVE DRUG SYNTHESIS

Edited by
Jie Jack Li and Douglas S. Johnson

WILEY

Innovative Drug Synthesis

Innovative Drug Synthesis

Edited by:

Jie Jack Li

University of San Francisco

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Pfizer Worldwide Research and Development

WILEY

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Contents

Preface	xi
Contributors	xiii
PART I. INFECTIOUS DISEASES	1
Chapter 1. Entecavir (Baraclude): A Carbocyclic Nucleoside for the Treatment of Chronic Hepatitis B	3
1 Background	3
2 Pharmacology	5
3 Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	6
4 Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	7
5 Efficacy and Safety	8
6 Syntheses	8
7 References	14
Chapter 2. Telaprevir (Incivek) and Boceprevir (Victrelis): NS3/4A Inhibitors for Treatment for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)	15
1 Background	16
2 Pharmacology	16
3 Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	17
4 PK and Drug Metabolism	20
5 Efficacy and Safety	22
6 Synthesis	24
7 Conclusions	38
8 References	39
Chapter 3. Daclatasvir (Daklinza): The First-in-Class HCV NS5A Replication Complex Inhibitor	43
1 Background	43
2 Discovery Medicinal Chemistry	45
3 Mode of Action	48
4 Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	49
5 Efficacy and Safety	49
6 Syntheses	52
7 References	57
Chapter 4. Sofosbuvir (Sovaldi): The First-in-Class HCV NS5B Nucleotide Polymerase Inhibitor	61
1 Background	61
2 Pharmacology	63
3 Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	64

4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	68
5	Efficacy and Safety	69
6	Syntheses	72
7	Summary	76
8	References	76

Chapter 5. Bedaquiline (Sirturo): A Diarylquinoline that Blocks Tuberculosis ATP Synthase for the Treatment of

	Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis	81
1	Background	81
2	Pharmacology	84
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	85
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	86
5	Efficacy and Safety	87
6	Syntheses	88
7	References	96

PART II. CANCER 99

Chapter 6. Enzalutamide (Xtandi): An Androgen Receptor Antagonist for Late-Stage Prostate Cancer

		101
1	Background	101
2	Pharmacology	103
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	104
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	108
5	Efficacy and Safety	109
6	Synthesis	111
7	Compounds in Development	114
8	References	115

Chapter 7. Crizotinib (Xalkori): The First-in-Class ALK/ROS Inhibitor for Non-small Cell Lung Cancer

		119
1	Background: Non-small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) Treatment	119
2	Discovery Medicinal Chemistry Effort: SAR and Lead Optimization of Compound 2 as a c-Met Inhibitor	120
3	ALK and ROS in Non-small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) Treatment	127
4	Preclinical Model Tumor Growth Inhibition Efficacy and Pharmacology	127
5	Human Clinical Trials	128
6	Introduction to the Synthesis and Limitations of the Discovery Route to Crizotinib Analogs	129
7	Process Chemistry: Initial Improvements	131
8	Process Chemistry: Enabling Route to Crizotinib	135
9	Development of the Commercial Process	141
10	Commercial Synthesis of Crizotinib	147
11	References	152

Chapter 8.	Ibrutinib (Imbruvica): The First-in-Class Btk Inhibitor for Mantle Cell Lymphoma, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, and Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia	157
1	Background	157
2	Pharmacology	159
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	159
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	161
5	Efficacy and Safety	161
6	Syntheses	162
7	References	164
Chapter 9.	Palbociclib (Ibrance): The First-in-Class CDK4/6 Inhibitor for Breast Cancer	167
1	Background	167
2	Pharmacology	168
3	Discovery Program	169
4	Preclinical Profile of Palbociclib	175
5	Clinical Profile of Palbociclib	176
6	Early Process Development for Palbociclib	177
7	Commercial Process for Preparation of Palbociclib	192
8	References	193
PART III.	CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES	197
Chapter 10.	Ticagrelor (Brilinta) and Dabigatran Etexilate (Pradaxa): P2Y₁₂ Platelet Inhibitors as Anti-coagulants	199
1	Introduction	200
2	Dabigatran Etexilate	200
3	Ticagrelor	207
4	The Future	219
5	References	220
PART IV.	CNS DRUGS	223
Chapter 11.	Suvorexant (BELSOMRA): The First-in-Class Orexin Antagonist for Insomnia	225
1	Background	225
2	Pharmacology	229
3	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	230
4	Efficacy and Safety	231
5	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	231
6	Synthesis	233
7	References	239

Chapter 12.	Lorcaserin (Belviq): Serotonin 2C Receptor Agonist for the Treatment of Obesity	243
1	Background	243
2	Pharmacology	245
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	246
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	248
5	Efficacy and Safety	249
6	Synthesis	250
7	References	253
Chapter 13.	Fingolimod (Gilenya): The First Oral Treatment for Multiple Sclerosis	255
1	Background	255
2	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	257
3	Pharmacology	259
4	Human Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	260
5	Efficacy and Safety	261
6	Syntheses	263
7	Summary	268
8	References	269
Chapter 14.	Perampanel (Fycompa): AMPA Receptor Antagonist for the Treatment of Seizure	271
1	Background	271
2	Pharmacology	273
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	274
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	276
5	Efficacy and Safety	277
6	Syntheses	278
7	References	280
PART V.	ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS	283
Chapter 15.	Tofacitinib (Xeljanz): The First-in-Class JAK Inhibitor for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis	285
1	Background	285
2	Structure–Activity Relationships (SAR)	287
3	Safety, Pharmacology and Pharmacokinetics	289
4	Syntheses	290
5	Development of the Commercial Manufacturing Process	292
6	References	300

PART VI.	MISCELLANEOUS DRUGS	303
Chapter 16.	Ivacaftor (Kalydeco): A CFTR Potentiator for the Treatment of Cystic Fibrosis	305
1	Background	305
2	Pharmacology	306
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	307
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	308
5	Efficacy and Safety	310
6	Syntheses	311
7	References	315
Chapter 17.	Febuxostat (Uloric): A Xanthine Oxidase Inhibitor for the Treatment of Gout	317
1	Background	317
2	Pharmacology	319
3	Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)	320
4	Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism	321
5	Efficacy and Safety	322
6	Syntheses	323
7	Drug in Development: Lesinurad Sodium	328
8	References	330
Index		331

Preface

Our first three installments on drug synthesis, *Contemporary Drug Synthesis*, *The Art of Drug Synthesis*, and *Modern Drug Synthesis* were published in 2004, 2007, and 2010, respectively. They have been warmly received by the chemistry community. The current title, *Innovative Drug Synthesis*, is our fourth installment of Wiley's *Drug Synthesis Series*.

This book has six sections. Section I, "Infectious Diseases" covers five drugs; Section II, "Cancer" reviews five drugs, three of which are kinase inhibitors; Section III covers one drug that targets cardiovascular and metabolic diseases; Section IV on central nervous system diseases concerns four classes of recent drugs; Section V summarizes a new anti-inflammatory drug; and Section VI covers two additional drugs.

In addition to a detailed account of the drug synthesis, each chapter also covers background material on the drug class and/or disease indication, as well as key aspects relevant to the discovery of the drug, including, structure-activity relationships, pharmacokinetics, drug metabolism, efficacy and safety.

We are indebted to the contributing authors from both industry and academia. Many of them are veterans and well-known experts in medicinal chemistry. Some of them discovered the drugs that they reviewed. As a consequence, their work tremendously elevated the quality of this book. One of us (JJL) would like to thank his students, Elizabeth N. Cruz, Taylor D. Krueger, Cho K. Lai, Amanda N. Moules, Emily S. Murzinski, Karla E. Rodriguez, and Theresa V. Song for taking part in this writing project.

Meanwhile, we welcome your critique and suggestions so we can make this *Drug Synthesis Series* even more useful to the medicinal/organic chemistry community.

Jack Li and Doug Johnson
May 1, 2015

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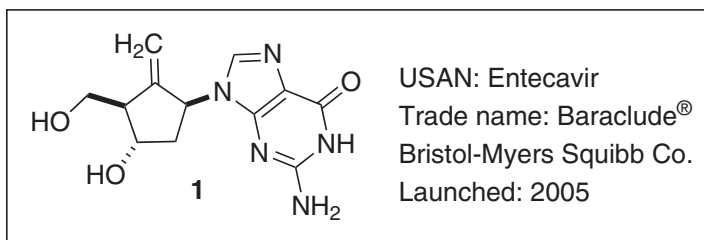
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I

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Entecavir (Baraclude): A Carbocyclic Nucleoside for the Treatment for Chronic Hepatitis B

Jie Jack Li

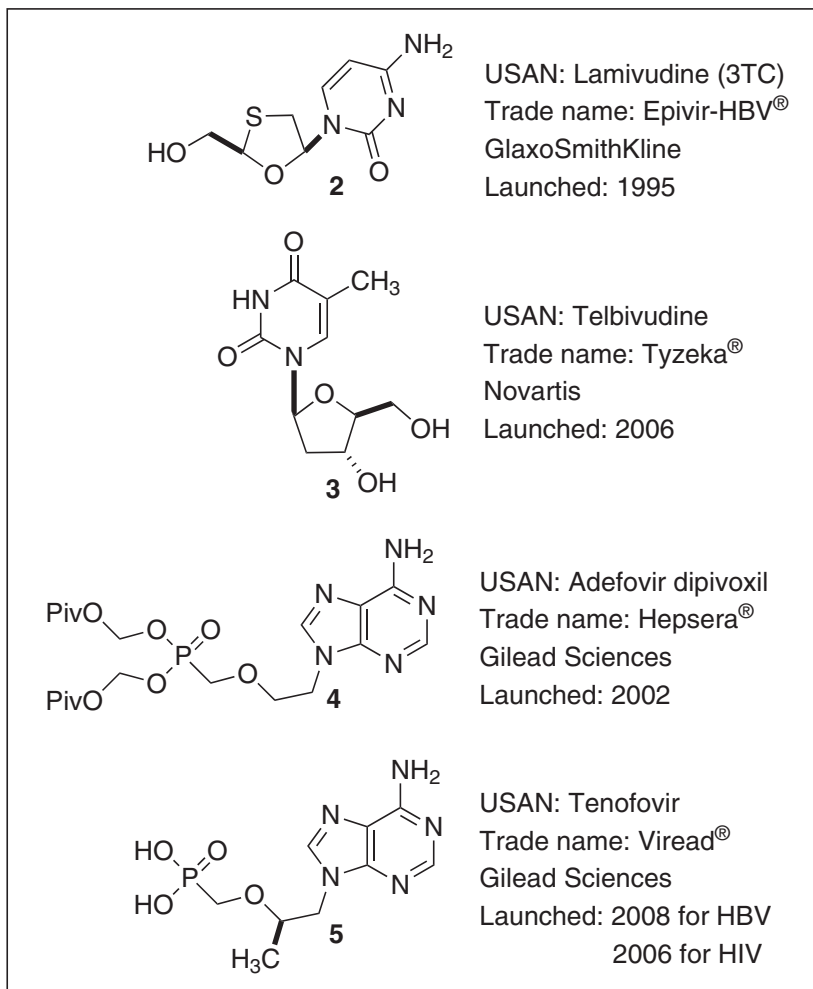


1 Background

Chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a major global cause of morbidity and mortality. An estimated 400 million people worldwide have chronic HBV infection and more than half a million people die every year because of complications from HBV-related chronic liver disease such as liver failure and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). In the United States, 12 million people have been infected at some time in their lives with HBV. Of those individuals, more than 1 million people have subsequently developed chronic hepatitis B infection. These chronically infected persons are at highest risk of death from liver scarring (cirrhosis) and liver cancer. In fact, more than five thousand Americans die from hepatitis B-related liver complications each year. In many Asian and African countries where the HBV is endemic, up to 20% of the population may be carriers, and transmission occurs primarily through perinatal or early childhood infection. In some of these areas, the perinatal transmission rate may be as high as 90%!¹⁻⁴

During the last 10 years, hepatitis B treatment has made significant progresses. For example, two biologics have been approved by the FDA, namely, interferon- α (IFN- α) and Pegylated-interferon- α (PEG-IFN- α). Also on the market are five small molecule

antiviral agents for the treatment of chronic HBV, namely, entecavir (1), lamivudine (2), telbivudine (3), adefovir dipivoxil (4), and tenofovir (5).



As a biologic, INF- α is effective only in a subset of patients, is often poorly tolerated, requires parenteral administration, and is expensive. Hence, there is a need for alternative therapies for chronic hepatitis B. The introduction of lamivudine (2) in 1995, the first oral treatment for chronic HBV, ushered in a new era in the treatment of chronic hepatitis B when safe, effective, and well-tolerated oral medications were made available. It is a nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) with activity against both human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) and HBV. It has been used for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B at a lower dose than for the treatment of HIV, and it improves the

seroconversion of e-antigen-positive hepatitis B and also improves histology staging of the liver. Unfortunately, long-term use of lamivudine (**2**) leads to emergence of a resistant HBV mutant (Tyr-Met-Asp-Asp, YMDD). Despite this fact, lamivudine (**2**) is still used widely as it is well tolerated.⁵

Telbivudine (**3**), a synthetic thymidine nucleoside analog, is the unmodified L-enantiomer of the naturally occurring D-thymidine. It prevents HBV DNA synthesis by acting as an HBV polymerase inhibitor. Within hepatocytes, telbivudine (**3**) is phosphorylated by host cell kinase to telbivudine-5'-triphosphate which, once incorporated into HBV DNA, causes DNA chain termination, thus inhibiting HBV replication. In this sense, telbivudine (**3**), like most nucleotide antiviral drugs, is a prodrug. Clinical trials have shown telbivudine (**3**) to be significantly more effective than lamivudine (**2**) or adefovir dipivoxil (**4**) and less likely to cause resistance.⁶

Adefovir dipivoxil (**4**) was initially developed as a treatment for HIV, but the FDA in 1999 rejected the drug due to concerns about the severity and frequency of kidney toxicity when dosed at 60 or 120 mg, respectively. However, **4** was effective at a much lower dose of 10 mg for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B in adults with evidence of active viral replication and either evidence of persistent elevations in serum alanine aminotransferases (primarily ALT) or histologically active disease. It works by blocking reverse transcriptase, an enzyme that is crucial for the HBV to reproduce in the body. Overall, the efficacy of **4** against wild-type and lamivudine (**2**)-resistant HBV and the delayed emergence of **4**-resistance during monotherapy contribute to the durable safety and efficacy observed in a wide range of chronic hepatitis B patients.⁷

Tenofovir (**5**), a nucleotide analog closely related to adefovir dipivoxil (**4**) has been approved for the treatment of HBV in 2008, subsequent to its approval for the treatment of HIV infection in 2006. *In vitro* studies showed that it has activity against HBV with equimolar potency to **4**. Clinical studies confirmed the efficacy of **5** in suppressing HBV replication, and it appears to be equally effective against both wild-type and lamivudine (**2**)-resistant HBV. The role of **5** in the rapidly expanding armamentarium of hepatitis B treatments will depend on the demonstration of long-term safety (renal and skeletal) and efficacy against wild-type HBV and HBV mutants that involve substitution of methionine within the YMDD motif, as well as a very low rate of resistance in NA-naïve as well as NA-experienced patients.⁸⁻¹⁰ NA stands for nucleos(t)ide analog.

The approval of the nucleotide and nucleoside analogs **1-5** marked a significant advance in the treatment of chronic hepatitis B. In comparison to compounds **2-5**, entecavir (**1**) is a novel carbocyclic nucleoside analog with potent and highly selective activity against HBV, as well as a low rate of resistance. In this chapter, the pharmacological profile and syntheses of entecavir (**1**) will be profiled in detail.

2 Pharmacology

The hallmark of acute HBV infection is elevated alanine aminotransferase (ALT) levels. As a matter of fact, ALT levels are routinely screened during our annual physical exams where an elevated ALT level is a sign of a concern with regard to the liver function. For

instance, long-term consumption of too much alcohol would cause liver to become hardened along with elevated ALT levels. Other telltale signs of acute HBV infection also include the presence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), IgM antibody to hepatitis B core antigen (anti-HBc), and hepatitis B e-antigen (HBeAg), although the latter serological test is not routinely used. Chronic hepatitis B is defined as the presence of HBsAg or other viral markers in serum for more than 2 months.

Entecavir (**1**) is converted in mammalian cells *in vitro* to the 5'-triphosphate, which then acts as an inhibitor of hepadnaviral polymerase with an IC_{50} value for inhibition of HBV of 0.2–0.3 nM. The K_i value for binding of **1**-triphosphate to HBV polymerase is 3.2 nM. In the HepG2 stably transfected cell line 2.2.15, **1** had an EC_{50} (50% effective concentration) value of 3.5 nM against HBV and an CC_{50} (50% cytotoxic concentration) value of ~ 30 μ M against HBV as determined by analysis of secreted HBV DNA.^{11,12} This represents an excellent selectivity index of $\sim 8,000$ (toxicity dose is 8,000-fold greater than the concentration needed to inhibit HBV replication in the same cell line). Direct comparison with other nucleoside analogs in this cell line demonstrated that **1** is the most potent inhibitor of HBV replication, as shown in Table 1.¹³

Table 1. Potency of various nucleoside analogs for HBV inhibition based on the EC_{50} for inhibition of HBV replicase in HepG2.2.15 cell line.¹³

Analog	EC_{50} (μ M)	Relative potency
Entecavir (1)	0.004	1
Lamivudine (2)	0.02	0.2
Adefovir dipivoxil (4)	0.11	0.04
Tenofovir (5)	0.14	0.03

Woodchucks (*Marmota monax*) infected with woodchuck hepatitis virus (WHV) were used as an *in vivo* model of HBV infection. During the first 4 weeks of study, **1** was administered at various doses and was found to suppress HBV DNA replication by approximately 3 log₁₀ copies/mL regardless of the dose administered. After 12 weeks, most of the animals became HBV DNA-negative, reflecting greater than a 1,000-fold suppression in circulating HBV. Similar results were observed for **1** using ducks as the animal model.¹³

3 Structure–Activity Relationship (SAR)

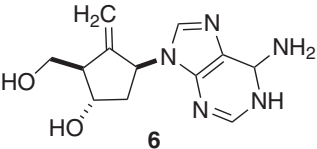
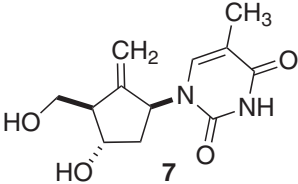
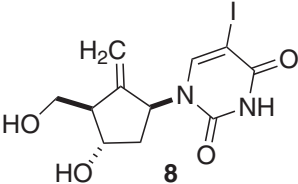
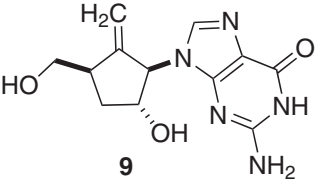
The structure–activity relationship (SAR) around entecavir (**1**) was exhaustively investigated, and **1** was found to be the most potent member in the series as tested against HBV in HepG2.2.15 cells. As shown in Table 2 (next page), the enantiomer of **1** (*ent*-**1**) was inactive, while **1** was 6.6-fold more potent than lamivudine (**2**, entry 3).¹⁴ Similarly, the adenine analog **6** (entry 4) was 43-fold less potent than **1**, while the thymine analog **7** (entry 5) and the 5-iodouracil analog **8** (entry 6) were much less potent in HepG2.2.15 cell culture.

In 2004, Ruediger et al. at Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) prepared the 3'-deoxy analog (**9**) of entecavir (**1**), which is the carbocyclic 2'-deoxyguanosine.¹⁵ Unfortunately, both the 3'-deoxy analog **9** and its enantiomer (*ent*-**9**) were found to be inactive against HBV in HepG2.2.15 cell culture.

4 Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism

The plasma half-life of entecavir (**1**) in rats and dogs was 4–9 h. It was metabolized by HepG2 cells to the corresponding mono-, di-, and triphosphates. The uptake of **1** was linear between 1–25 μM , and intracellular triphosphate accumulated most efficiently in the micro-molar range, with an intracellular half-life for **1**-triphosphate determined to be 15 h.¹¹

Table 2. Activity of nucleoside analogs against HBV in HepG2.2.15 cells.

Entry	Compound	EC ₅₀ (μM)
1	1	0.03
2	<i>ent</i> - 1	100
3	2 (3TC)	0.2
4	 6	0.128
5	 7	>100
6	 8	10.5
7	 9	>100
8	<i>ent</i> - 9	>100

In humans, peak plasma concentration occurred between 0.5 and 1.5 h following oral administration of **1** in healthy males. Steady-state concentration was achieved in 6–10 days, with a twofold accumulation and an effective accumulation half-time of about 24 h. Compound **1** is not a substrate, inducer, or inhibitor of the cytochrome P450 enzyme system; therefore, it has limited potential for drug–drug interactions (DDIs).¹³

5 Efficacy and Safety

Entecavir (**1**) is a potent inhibitor of HBV replication. It is active against lamivudine (**2**)-resistant HBV and also offers the convenience of once daily dosing and a favorable safety profile.

In phase III clinical trials, more than 1,500 patients participated in three major studies: AI463-022, which compared the investigational agent **1** to treatment with **2** in nucleoside-naïve, HBeAg-positive chronic hepatitis B patients; AI463-027 which compared **1** to **2** in nucleoside-naïve patients with HBeAg-negative chronic hepatitis B; and AI463-026, which evaluated patients with **2**-refractory HBeAg-positive chronic hepatitis B who were either switched directly to **1** or continued to receive **2**. Entecavir (**1**) demonstrated significant histological improvement and significantly reduced viral load versus **2**, with a similar safety profile at 48 weeks in these three studies. The most common adverse events of moderate to severe intensity that occurred in >1% of patients treated with **1** were headache, fatigue, diarrhea, and dyspepsia.¹³

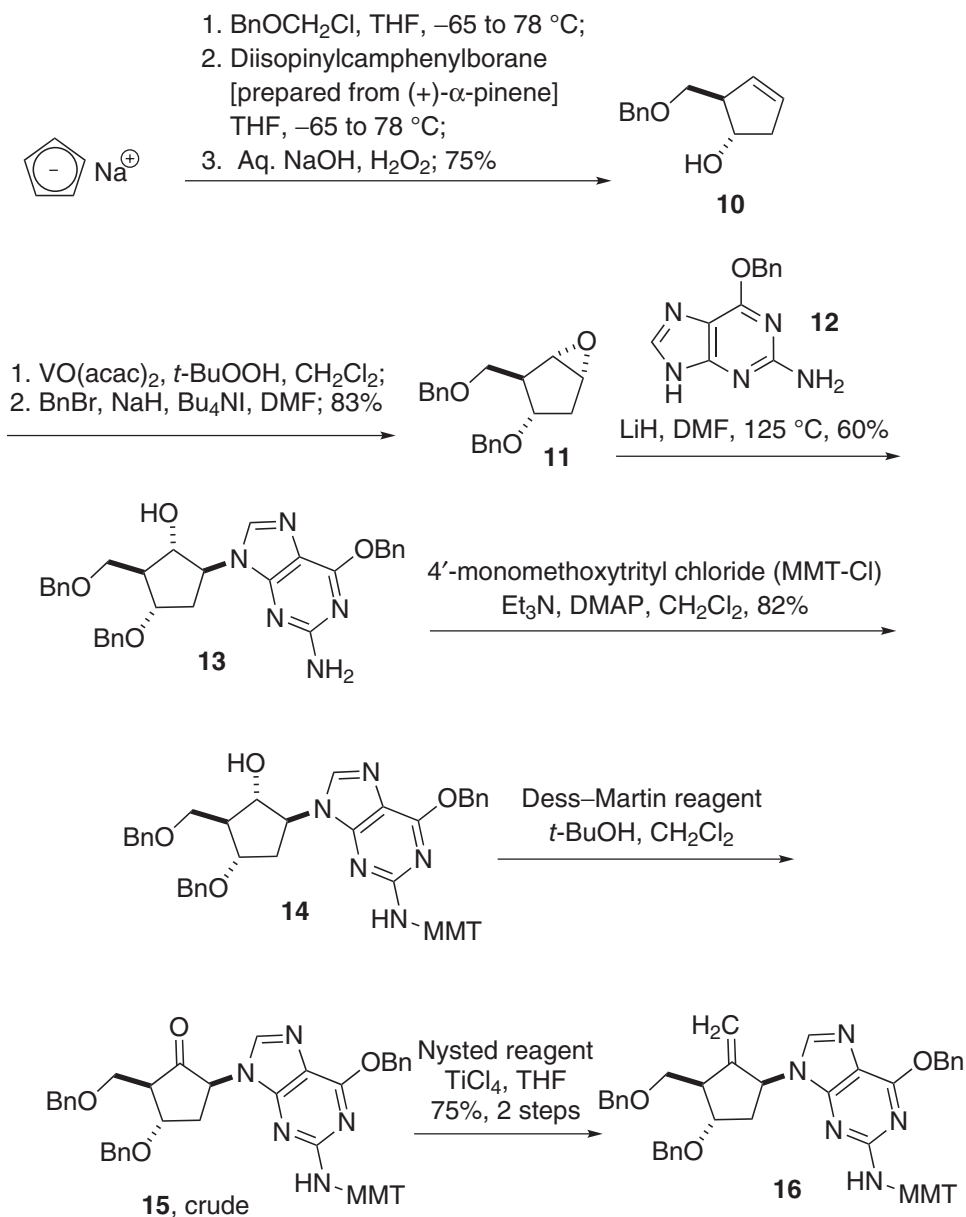
6 Syntheses

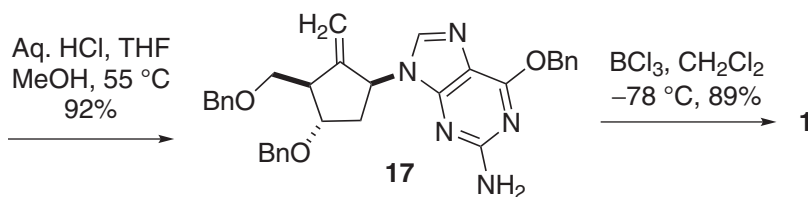
6.1 Discovery Synthesis

The BMS discovery synthesis of entecavir (**1**) was patented by Zahler and Slusarchyk,^{16,17} whereas Bisacchi and Zahler et al.^{14,17,18} of BMS reported the process synthesis of **1**. Although the synthetic route of the process synthesis of **1** is similar to the discovery approach, the process synthesis was superior with regard to yields and ease of operation on large scales.

The process synthesis of **1**, as reported by Bisacchi and Zahler et al.,¹⁴ commenced with the known chiral synthon **11**. Thus, cyclopentene **10** was prepared in 75% yield and 96.6–98.8% *ee* using commercially available sodium cyclopentadienide.¹⁹ Cyclopentyl epoxide **11** was easily assembled by epoxidation of **10** with VO(acac)₂ and *t*-butyl peroxide, followed by O-benylation. Lithiation of 6-(benzyloxy)-9*H*-purin-2-amine (**12**) with LiH was followed by reaction with epoxide **11** to afford the *N*-9 adduct **13**. Protection of the purine amine was found to be necessary for the subsequent oxidation of the cyclopentyl alcohol, and this was done using 4'-monomethoxytrityl chloride (MMT-Cl). Subsequent oxidation was achieved using the Dess–Martin reagent to give ketone **15**, while other oxidation methods such as Moffatt and TPAP–NMMO oxidation did not work as well. Several methods for the methylenation of ketone **15** were successfully employed, with the Nysted reagent working better on large scales in comparison to the Tebbe reagent, the Simmons–Smith reagent, and the Lombardo reagent, to afford olefin **16**. Acid-mediated deprotection then provided **17** and a final

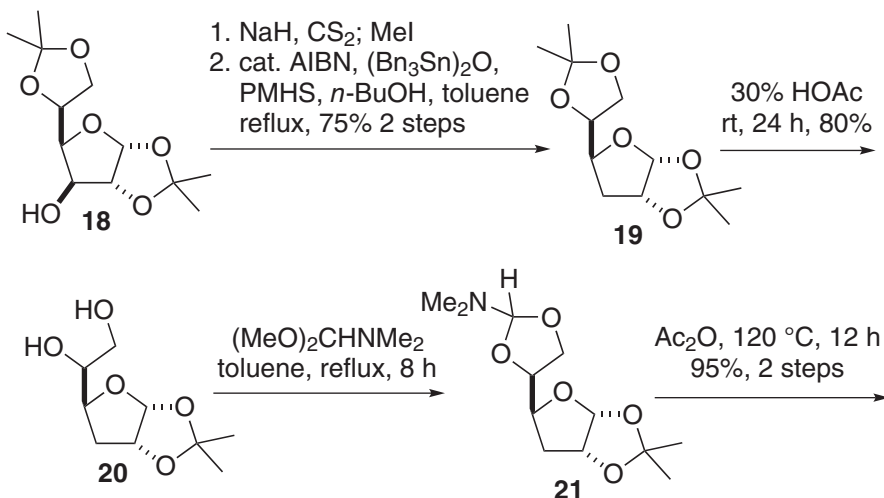
global de-benzoylation step afforded **1** in 11 total steps and an overall yield of 18%. This route was used to make up to 20 g of **1**.

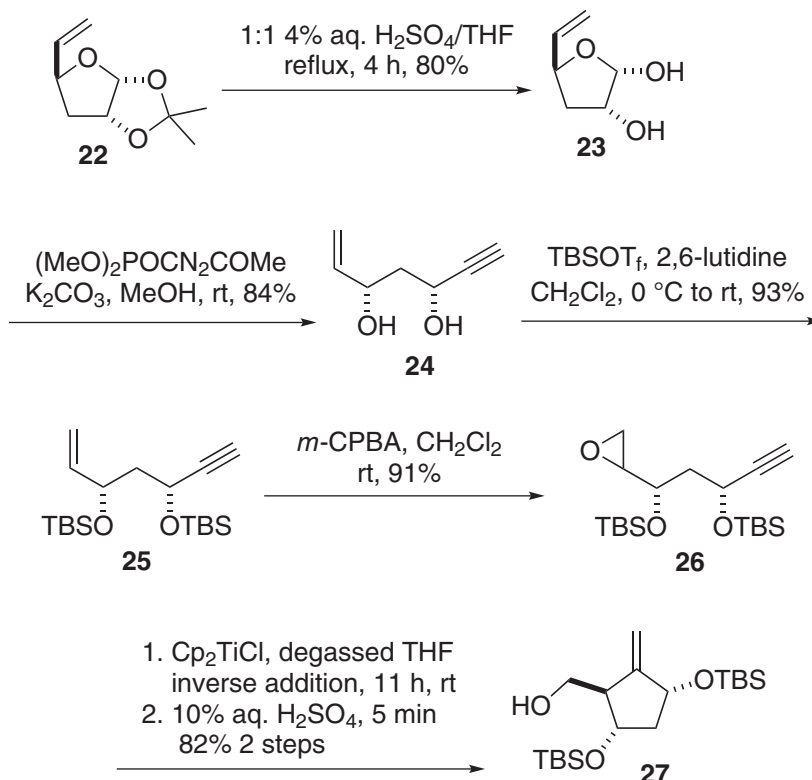




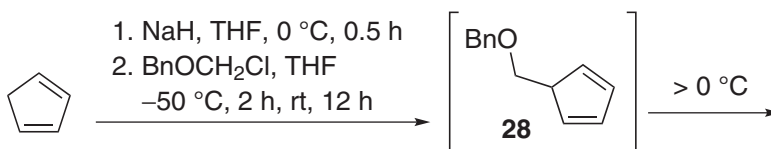
6.2 Alternative Syntheses

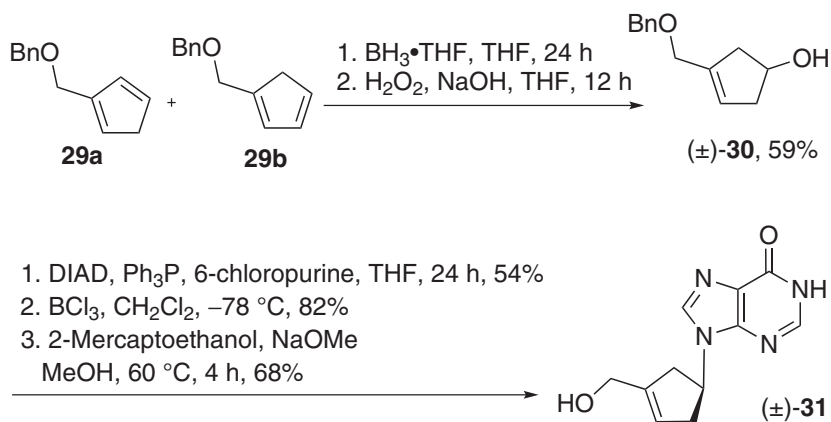
Ziegler reported a strategy, involving radical cyclization, which offered an alternative approach to the carbocyclic core of **1**.²⁰ The approach is intellectually interesting but less practical due to the lengthy synthesis. Ziegler began his endeavor using D-diacetone glucose (**18**) as the starting material. A Barton–McCombie deoxygenation of **18**, using Fu's catalytic $n\text{-Bu}_3\text{SnH}$ protocol with polymethylhydrosiloxane (PMHS), removed the free hydroxyl group to give **19**. After chemo-selective removal of the pendant acetonide, the resulting diol **20** was converted to amide acetal **21** using the Eastwood procedure. Treatment of **21** with acetic anhydride at $120 ^\circ\text{C}$ then provided olefin **22**. Acetonide hydrolysis of **22** afforded **23**, which was treated with $(\text{MeO})_2\text{POCH}_2\text{COMe}$ under Ohira's mild alkaline conditions to give acetylenic diol **24** in excellent yield. Bis-silylation of **24** gave **25**, which was non-selectively epoxidized using $m\text{-CPBA}$ to give **26**. The stereochemical outcome is inconsequential here because the chirality would be obliterated later. With epoxy-acetylene **26** in hand, a Ti(III)-mediated generation of β -alkoxy carbon radical and subsequent cyclization delivered the desired methylene cyclopentane **27** after a quick acidic workup. Again, Ziegler's approach proved that the radical cyclization of epoxy-acetylene **26** would indeed produce the desired carbocyclic core of **1**, but this did not ultimately contribute to the manufacture of entecavir (**1**, Baraclude) or hasten its path to the market.





More recently, Reichardt and Meier²¹ reported an efficient synthesis for racemic cyclopent-3-en-1-yl nucleoside analogs, which could, in principle, be applicable to the synthesis of entecavir (**1**). Their synthesis started from inexpensive cyclopentadiene, which was deprotonated with NaH and then quenched with benzyloxymethyl chloride to give diene **28**, which isomerized to give a mixture of two thermodynamically more stable alkylated cyclopentadienes **29a,b**. Regioselective hydroboration of **29a,b** was followed by oxidative alkaline workup to give rise to the key intermediate cyclopentenol (\pm)-**30**. Condensation of (\pm)-**30** with 6-chloropurine was then achieved using a modified Mitsunobu reaction. The adduct was debenzylated and the resulting chloropurine derivative was treated with sodium methoxide and 2-mercaptoethanol to produce the inosine nucleoside (\pm)-**31**. It is conceivable that this interesting approach could be adapted to the synthesis of (\pm)-entecavir (**1**).





During the development of entecavir (**1**), Ogan et al.²² at BMS described the synthesis of [^{14}C]-radiolabeled entecavir, which was required for clinical studies of absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (ADME). As a key step in their synthesis, they chose to elaborate the pyrimidine **46** to purine **47**, a known strategy in the literature for the synthesis of labeled nucleosides. To that end, chiral epoxide **11** was treated with sodium azide, and Staudinger reduction of the resulting azido-alcohol gave amino-alcohol **32**. Heating **32** with 4,6-dichloropyrimidin-2-amine then furnished 6-chloro-diaminopyrimidine **33**. Pyrimidine **33** was subsequently treated with the diazonium salt generated from *p*-chloroaniline to afford a bright yellow 5-diazopyrimidine, which was treated with potassium methoxide to provide the 4-methoxy-5-diazopyrimidine **34**. Cleavage of the diazo linkage of **34** with zinc in acetic acid gave the triaminopyrimidine **35**, which was treated with triethyl [^{14}C]-orthoformate to effect a ring annulation, and subsequent protection with the 4-methoxytrityl group provided the guanine **36**. Oxidation of **36** with Dess–Martin periodinane was followed by Nysted methylenation to afford the exocyclic methylenic compound **37**. Global de-protection of **37** then completed the synthesis of [^{14}C]-radiolabeled entecavir (**1**).

