

Synthesis of some ribonucleosides derivatives and molecular docking analysis against variant corona virus omicrone

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ABSTRACT

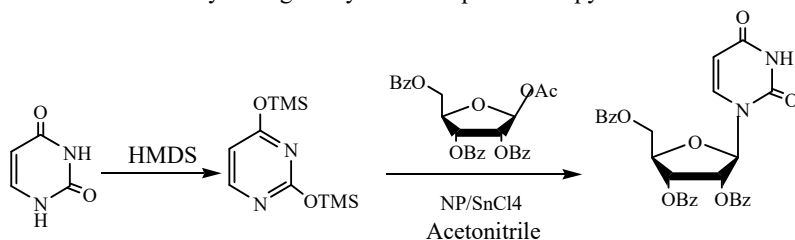
In this work, ribonucleoside products have been prepared by employing stannic tetrachloride (SnCl₄) and natural phosphate as catalysts. The obtained result suggests that this catalyst facilitates the reactions of ribonucleoside-like products in a stereo-controlled manner, exhibiting β-selectivity when reacting with trimethylsilyl uracil, the ribonucleosides derivatives were obtained in suitable yields. In addition, we have performed the molecular docking analysis, demonstrated that the synthesized compounds have potential for antiviral activity against the omicron variant of coronavirus, and the D3, D4, E and F products have a higher binding energy than the molnupiravir drug, indicating that these products may be a probable drugs for the omicron variant.

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1. Introduction

Nucleotides are precursors to DNA and RNA, they help to explain several biological and pharmaceutical phenomena¹. Nucleosides exhibit anticancer, antiviral activities such as anti HIV (AIDS)²⁻⁴, anti HBV, anti HCV (Hepatitis B and C viral infections)⁵⁻¹⁰, and more recently anti SARS-CoV-2.¹¹⁻²³

Vorbruggen coupling is one of the methods of nucleoside synthesis²⁴⁻²⁶, this method can be considered as a modification of the Hilbert-Johnson method. The coupling takes place this time in the presence of Lewis acid, between a base in the form of silylated iminol ethers and a methyl or acetyl ribofuranoside. 1,2-dichoroethane and acetonitrile are the solvents generally used, on other hand the use of the required Lewis acids and trimethylsilyltrifluoromethanesulfonate (Me₃SiOSO₂CF₃), leads to suitable yields with better stereoselectivity during the synthesis of purine and pyrimidine ribonucleosides (**Scheme 1**).



Scheme 1. Synthesis of 2', 3', 5'-tri-O-benzoyl-β-D- Uridine

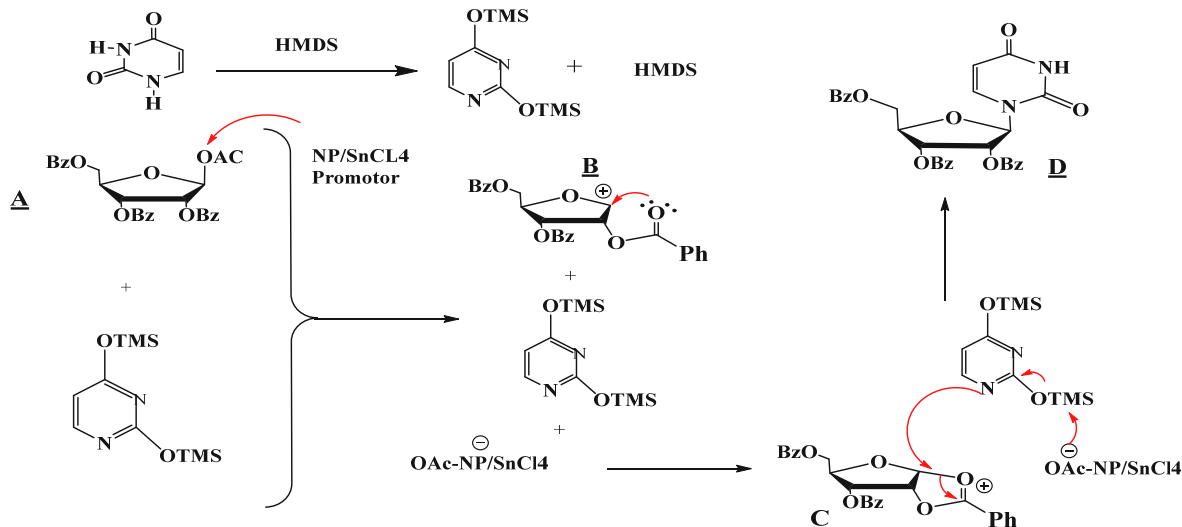
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The general mechanism of this coupling can be described in two steps. Lewis acid makes it possible to initiate the nucleofuge departure of the activating group introduced beforehand on the anomeric position of the carbohydrate; this thus results in the formation of an electrophilic intermediate of the resonance-stabilized oxonium type²⁷. The next step concerns the nucleophilic addition of the silylated nucleic base to the anomeric carbon of the aforementioned intermediate. During this glycosylation, the two faces of the oxonium remain available for the addition of the nucleic base. This step is therefore not stereoselective and logically leads to the formation of mixtures of α and β anomers. The free nucleoside is then obtained by hydrolysis of the protective groups (**Scheme 2**).



Scheme 2. The general mechanism to prepare ribonucleoside

Many methodological approaches have been developed in recent years, such as heterogeneous catalysis or supported catalysis. The catalytic agents are supported on species such as alumina Al_2O_3 ²⁸, silica SiO_2 ²⁹, montmorillonite K-10 (MK-10)³⁰ and recently naturel phosphate³¹.

Herein, and within the framework of green chemistry, we will carry out the synthesis of ribonucleoside products, using stannic tetrachloride (SnCl_4) supported on natural phosphate, in addition we will test the products obtained against the variant corona virus omicron using molecular docking and compared with molnupiravir drug (**Fig. 1**).

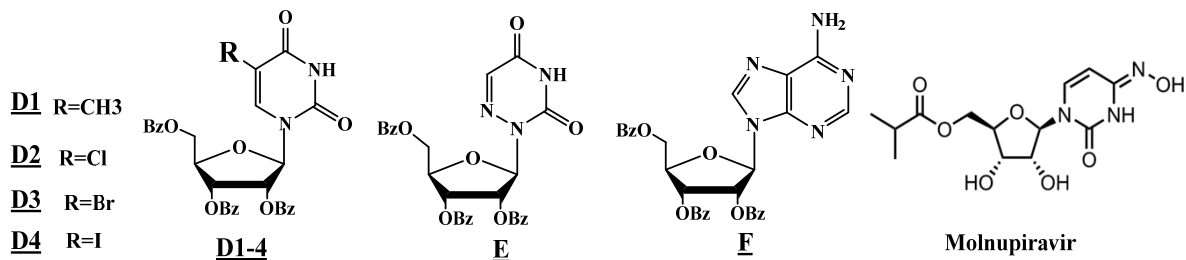


Figure 1. Products tested against the corona variant virus Omicron

2. Results and discussion

2.1 General method for preparation of N-glycosylation

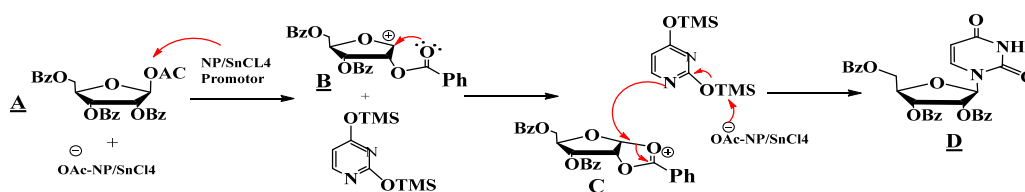
The results grouped in Table 1 of the first experiment when only natural phosphate has been employed, the condensation of 1-O-acetyl-2, 3, 5-tri-O-benzoyl- β -D-ribofuranoside with uracil silylated gave the ribonucleoside in 8% yield, when using SnCl_4 the ribonucleoside is obtained with a yield of 30% and when SnCl_4 mixed with naturel phosphate (catalyst A) the desired ribonucleoside was obtained in 64% yield. Other catalysts (entries 4 to 14) were used for the N-glycosylation reaction which gives yields of approximately 64%, this reaction is regioselective and stereoselective.

To understand how the N-glycosilation reaction takes place, we propose a reaction mechanism that explains the formation of the nucleoside. In this context, the C-N glycosidic bond formed can be α or β (respectively axial or equatorial on a pyrano ring in the gluco, manno or galacto series). The stereoselectivity of this bond is largely controlled by the nature of the protective group in position 2. In this case the group is involved (for example an ester), it intervenes in the selective

formation of a glycosidic bond β . In this case, as described in scheme 3, the intermediate cation B will be trapped intramolecularly, resulting in the formation of the acyloxonium intermediate C. This is called “anchimeric assistance”. The face of the acyloxonium leading to α product is not accessible, hence the observed β selectivity. For natural nucleosides, the bond between the base and the sugar is always equatorial (β). It is therefore judicious to insert a participating group in position 2 of the donor.

Table 1. Synthesis of 2,3,5-tri-O-benzoyl- β -D-Uridine

Entry	Catalysts	Yield %
<u>1</u>	Natural Phosphate (NP) 325 mg	8
<u>2</u>	SnCl ₄ (1eq : 0.1ml)	30
<u>3</u>	SnCl ₄ (0.5eq :0.05ml)	20
<u>4</u>	SnCl ₄ (0.2eq :0.02 ml)	No Reaction
<u>5</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (A) (1eq : 470mg)	64
<u>6</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (A) (1eq : 470mg)+0.2eq of SnCl ₄ (0.02 ml)	32
<u>7</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (A) (0.5eq :235mg)	55
<u>8</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (A) (0.2eq : 94mg)	35
<u>9</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (B) (1eq : 470mg)	46
<u>10</u>	NPSnCl ₄ (B) (0.5eq :235mg)	36
<u>11</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (B) (0.2eq : 94mg)	30
<u>12</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (C) (1eq : 470mg)	37
<u>13</u>	NPSnCl ₄ (C) (0.5eq :235mg)	32
<u>14</u>	NP/SnCl ₄ (C) (0.2eq : 94mg)	20



Scheme 3. N-glycosylation mechanism

2.2 Molecular Docking

Omicron mutated variant (B.1.1.529) of SARS-CoV-2 is a recently emerged, reported for high infectivity³². Although various antiviral drugs have been developed against Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), we still do not have an effective therapeutic strategy to control this viral infection. Molnupiravir is the first oral antiviral for COVID-19 approved by Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)³³. The investigated (**D1**, **D2**, **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F**) compounds were tested for their antiviral activity against omicron S protein (PDB ID: 7T9J) by comparing to the standard drug molnupiravir, which was found to be more efficient in comparison to other drugs against COVID-19^{34,35}. In the present study, the molecular docking study between **D1**, **D2**, **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F** compounds, and omicron S protein (PDB ID: 7T9J)³⁶ performed to find the best orientational of ligands with protein by using the Autodock 4.2 software tool interfaced with the AutoDock Tools (ADT) version 1.5.6³⁷. Protein preparation was performed by the removal of water, addition of polar hydrogen and Kollman charges. Discovery Studio Visualizer software was applied to visually verify 2D diagrams of the docked compounds and its H-bond interactions³⁸. PyMol was used to analyze and visualize the protein-ligand complex molecules³⁹. The active site has been determined using the Discovery Studio Visualizer software and it corresponds to the coordinates: $x=177.335$, $y=146.474$ and $z=258.535$. The grid size was set at $60 \times 60 \times 60$ xyz points with grid spacing of 0.375 \AA . The results (inhibition constant μM , intermolecular energy kcal/mol, binding energy kcal/mol) of molecular docking for the compounds (**D1**, **D2**, **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F**, and molnupiravir) are listed in Table 1. In comparison, we can conclude that compound **E** has the lowest binding energy (stronger interactions between ligand and the receptor) -8.13 kcal/mol , while compound **D2** has the highest binding energy -5.49 kcal/mol from the data of Table 1. As shown in Table 1, **D1** and **D2** compounds (binding affinities -5.92 and -5.49 kcal/mol) showed comparatively higher binding affinities compared to the parent molnupiravir drug. From Fig. 1 it can be observed that hydrogen and oxygen atoms in the **D1**, **D2**, **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F** compounds are responsible for forming conventional hydrogen bonds with omicron S protein residues. It was also observed in Fig. 1 that all **D1**, **D2**, **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F** ligands that interacted with this omicron 7T9J protein had conventional hydrogen bond with the amino acid GLN134 with bond lengths of 2.1 , 2.1 , 2.4 , 2.4 , 2.0 , and 2.1 \AA , respectively, in the active site of the omicron S protein. Hence, all these results of **D3**, **D4**, **E**, **F** compounds will be useful for the development of anti-viral drugs.

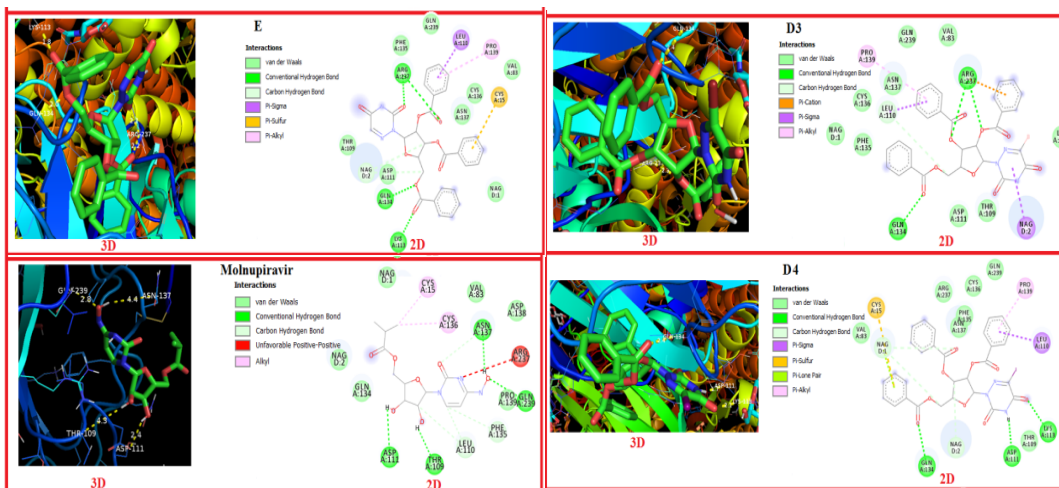


Fig. 2. Interactions of D3, D4, E and molnupiravir with residues of variant omicron of COVID-19 main protease

2.3 Experimental part

a. Preparation of catalysts

Method 1. Preparation of NP/SnCl₄ catalyst (A)

In a flask, put 1g of SnCl₄ (0.45 ml) and 5 ml of water, stir for 3 minutes then add 1g of natural phosphate and stir for 15 minutes. The mixture is evaporated to dryness and finally the precipitate is obtained.

Method 2. Preparation of NP/SnCl₄ catalyst (B), we take the NP/SnCl₄ (A) and wash it with water, the residue is evaporated to dryness, after which we obtain a new precipitate, it is the NP/SnCl₄ (B).

Method 3. Preparation of NP/SnCl₄ catalyst (C) 1 g of SnCl₄ (0.45 ml) and 5 ml of acetonitrile are put in a flask and stirred for 3 minutes, then 1 g of natural phosphate is added, the mixture is stirred for 15 minutes then evaporated to dryness, the precipitate obtained is NP/SnCl₄(C).

b. Procedure experimental: N-Glycosylation

1 mmol of uracil, 4 ml of HMDS and 10 mg of ammonium sulfate are added, and then the mixture is heated under reflux for two hours. The 1-O-acetyl-2,3,5-tri-O-benzoyl-β-D-ribofuranose (0.9eq, 453mg), NP/SnCl₄ (A) (526mg, 1eq of SnCl₄) and 5 ml of acetonitrile are added. Overnight at reflux, the mixture is filtered, and the solvent is evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography (CH₂Cl₂/MeOH (98/2 v/v) to give the desired nucleoside with 64% yield

¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra of 2', 3', 5'-Tri-O-benzoyl-β-D-uridine

¹H NMR (CDCl₃) (300MHz) δ(ppm) 4.40 (m,2H,H'5) 4.90 (m,1H,H'4) 5.55 (d,1H,H5,J=6Hz) 5.65 (t,1H,H'3) 5.80 (t,1H,H'2) 6.38 (d,1H,H'1βJ=5.4Hz) 7.44 (d,1H,H6,J=6Hz) 7.40-8.10 (m,15H,HaromBz) 8.10 (m,6H) 10.40 (s,1H,N-H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ(ppm) 64.01 (C5') 71.38 (C4') 75.01 (C3') 79.99 (C2') 88 (C1'β) 100.59 (C5) 128.43-133.70 (Ph) 145.09 (C6) 150.33 (C4) 163 (C2) 165.05-168.77 (PhCO).

3. Conclusion

In this work we have described a simple and less expensive reaction for the synthesis of D-ribonucleosides using SnCl₄ supported on rock phosphate as the solid phase. This method is kind to the environment and more ecological; in addition, we have done molecular docking for derivatives similar to the molnupiravir drug which has been used against Covid-19. Our results show that D3, D4, E and F products have the potential for conventional hydrogen bonding, which is very important for the stability of the protein-ligand complex, with higher binding affinity than molnupiravir. We speculated that these products might be drugs for the SARS-CoV-2 omicron variant.

Table 2. The obtained docking parameters of the (D1, D2, D3, D4, E, F) compounds by comparing to the standard drug molnupiravir.

Protein [PDB ID]	Bonded residues	Bond distances (Å)	Inhibition constant (μM)	Intermolecular energy (kcal/mol)	Binding energy (kcal/mol)
D1	ASN17	2.3	45.87	-9.20	-5.92
	ASN17	2.2			
	GLN134	2.6			
	GLN134	2.1			
D2	GLN14	2.6	95.17	-8.77	-5.49
	GLN134	2.1			
D3	ARG237	2.3	27.98	-9.49	-6.21
	GLN134	2.4			
D4	ASP111	1.7	4.52	-10.57	-7.29
	LYS113	2.1			
	GLN134	2.4			
E	ARG237	2.2	1.1	-11.41	-8.13
	ARG237	2.2			
	GLN134	2.0			
	LYS113	1.8			
F	GLN134	2.1	18.79	-10.03	-6.45
	GLN134	3.2			
	ARG237	1.9			
	GLN239	2.3			
Molnupiravir	ASN137	4.4	31.84	-8.52	-6.14
	GLN239	2.8			
	ASP111	2.4			
	THR109	4.3			

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