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Supporting Information

The Palladium-Catalyzed Cyanation of Indole C-H Bonds with the
Combination of NH_4HCO_3 and DMSO as a Safe Cyanide Source

Xinyi Ren, Jianbin Chen, Fan Chen* and Jiang Cheng*

E-mail: jiangcheng@wzu.edu.cn; fanchen@wzu.edu.cn

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1) General experimental details:

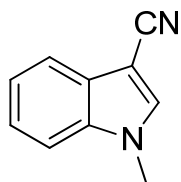
Chemicals were either purchased or purified by standard techniques without special instructions. ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra were measured on a 500 MHz spectrometer (^1H 500 MHz, ^{13}C 125 MHz), using CDCl_3 as the solvent with tetramethylsilane (TMS) as the internal standard at room temperature. Chemical shifts (δ) are given in ppm relative to TMS, the coupling constants J are given in Hz.

General procedure:

Under O_2 , a sealed tube was charged with 1-methyl-1*H*-indole (0.2 mmol), NH_4HCO_3 (0.3 mmol, 1.5 equiv.), PdCl_2 (10 mol %), $\text{Cu}(\text{OAc})_2$ (1.1 equiv.), and DMSO (1.5 mL). The tube was kept stirring at 140 °C for 6 h. After the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC, brine was added (10 mL), and the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (3×5 mL). The ethyl acetate extract was purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel to give the product.

2) Spectral data for the products

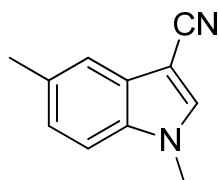
1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2a)¹



¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz): δ 7.76 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (s, 1H), 7.41-7.29 (m, 3H), 3.85 (s, 3H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz): δ 136.0, 135.5, 127.8, 123.8, 122.1, 119.8, 115.9, 110.3, 85.5, 33.6.

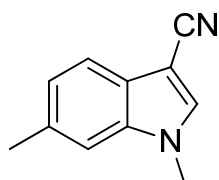
1,5-dimethyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2b)¹



¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz): δ 7.47 (s, 1H), 7.43 (s, 1H), 7.21-7.19 (m, 1H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 2.41 (s, 3H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz): δ 135.3, 134.4, 131.8, 128.1, 125.5, 119.5, 116.1, 109.9, 84.8, 33.6, 21.3.

1,6-dimethyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2c)



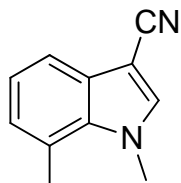
¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz): δ 7.61 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (s, 1H), 7.17 (s, 1H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.51 (s, 3H);

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz): δ 136.4, 135.0, 133.9, 125.5, 123.8, 119.3, 116.1, 110.2, 85.1, 33.4, 21.8.

IR (prism, cm⁻¹): 3039, 2208, 1532, 1251, 738.

MS(EI) 170 (M⁺); HRMS Calcd. for C₁₁H₁₀N₂ (M⁺) 170.0844, found 170.0850.

1,7-dimethyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2d)²



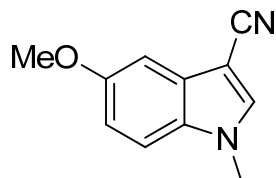
¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz): δ 7.57 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.43 (s, 1H), 7.14 (t, *J* = 7.5

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Hz, 1H), 7.03 (d, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 2.76 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 136.7, 134.8, 129.0, 126.4, 122.3, 122.2, 117.9, 115.9, 85.3, 37.6, 19.4.

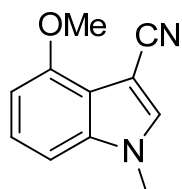
5-methoxy-1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2e)¹



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.43 (s, 1H), 7.19 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.09 (s, 1H), 6.90 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 156.0, 135.3, 131.0, 128.7, 116.1, 114.6, 111.2, 100.8, 85.0, 55.8, 33.8.

4-methoxy-1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2f)



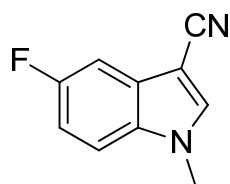
^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.40 (s, 1H), 7.20-7.17 (m, 1H), 6.90 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 1H), 6.58 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.74 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 153.7, 137.5, 135.0, 124.9, 117.5, 116.7, 103.1, 101.8, 84.0, 55.6, 33.8.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3122, 2215, 1527, 1264, 733.

MS(EI) 186 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{10}\text{N}_2\text{O}$ (M^+) 186.0793, found 186.0797.

5-fluoro-1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2g)



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.58 (s, 1H), 7.39 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.32 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.09 (t, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H).

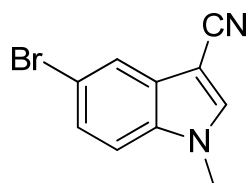
^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 159.2 (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 238.4$ Hz), 136.7, 132.6, 128.4, (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 10.8$ Hz), 115.4, 112.6 (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 26.4$ Hz), 111.4 (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 9.6$ Hz), 105.1 (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 24.8$ Hz), 85.6 (d, $J_{\text{C-F}} = 4.6$ Hz), 33.9.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3051, 2220, 1534, 1191, 740.

MS(EI) 174 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_7\text{N}_2\text{F}$ (M^+) 174.0593, found 174.0585.

5-bromo-1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2h)

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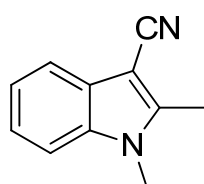
^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.89 (s, 1H), 7.55 (s, 1H), 7.44 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.26 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 136.3, 134.7, 129.2, 127.0, 122.5, 115.8, 115.1, 111.8, 85.3, 33.8.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3053, 2219, 1540, 1266, 740.

MS(EI) 233 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_7\text{N}_2\text{Br}$ (M^+) 233.9793, found 233.9798.

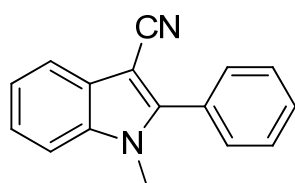
1,2-dimethyl-1H-indole-3-carbonitrile (2i)¹



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.65 (d, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.32-7.23 (m, 3H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 2.58 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 145.6, 136.3, 127.0, 123.0, 121.9, 119.0, 116.6, 109.7, 84.9, 30.1, 12.0.

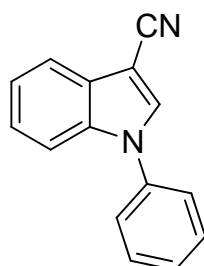
1-methyl-2-phenyl-1H-indole-3-carbonitrile (2j)¹



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.79 (d, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.59-7.53 (m, 5H), 7.45-7.32 (m, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 148.1, 136.8, 129.9, 129.8, 129.0, 128.7, 127.6, 123.9, 122.4, 119.6, 116.6, 110.5, 85.6, 31.7.

1-phenyl-1H-indole-3-carbonitrile (2k)¹

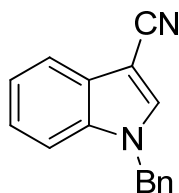


^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.85-7.83 (m, 1H), 7.81 (s, 1H), 7.60-7.57 (m, 2H), 7.53-7.48 (m, 4H), 7.36-7.34 (m, 2H).

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^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 137.8, 135.6, 134.6, 130.0, 128.4, 128.0, 124.9, 124.5, 122.8, 120.0, 115.5, 111.5, 88.1.

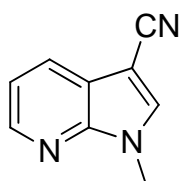
1-benzyl-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2l)¹



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.80-7.78 (m, 1H), 7.61 (s, 1H), 7.38-7.29 (m, 6H), 7.16-7.14 (m, 2H), 5.35 (s, 2H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 135.6, 135.2, 134.9, 129.1, 128.4, 128.0, 127.1, 124.0, 122.3, 120.0, 115.8, 110.8, 86.3, 50.9.

1-methyl-1*H*-pyrrolo[2,3-*b*]pyridine-3-carbonitrile (2m)



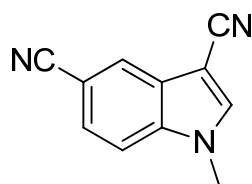
^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 8.41 (s, 1H), 8.01 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (s, 1H), 7.21-7.19 (m, 1H); 3.90 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 146.8, 145.1, 135.9, 128.3, 120.1, 118.1, 115.1, 84.3, 32.1.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3051, 2219, 1533, 1266, 740.

MS(EI) 157 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_9\text{H}_7\text{N}_3$ (M^+) 157.0640, found 157.0639.

1-methyl-1*H*-indole-3,5-dicarbonitrile (2n and 2o)



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 8.10 (s, 1H), 7.72 (s, 1H), 7.59 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 3.92 (s, 3H).

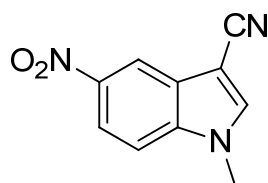
^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 137.7, 137.5, 127.4, 126.8, 125.2, 119.3, 114.2, 111.5, 105.9, 87.1, 34.0.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3051, 2219, 1533, 1267, 737.

MS(EI) 181 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_7\text{N}_3$ (M^+) 181.0640, found 181.0637.

1-methyl-5-nitro-1*H*-indole-3-carbonitrile (2p)

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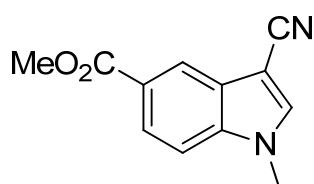
^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 8.72 (s, 1H), 8.27 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.75 (s, 1H), 7.49 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.95 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 143.6, 138.6, 138.5, 127.1, 119.4, 116.9, 114.0, 110.8, 88.6, 34.2.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3051, 2220, 1533, 1266, 738.

MS(EI) 201 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_7\text{N}_3\text{O}_2$ (M^+) 201.0538, found 201.0537.

methyl 3-cyano-1-methyl-1H-indole-5-carboxylate (2q)



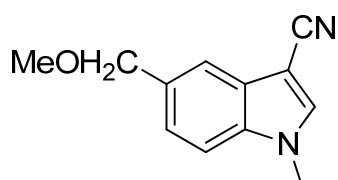
^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 8.48 (s, 1H), 8.04 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.63 (s, 1H), 7.41 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 1H), 3.95 (s, 3H), 3.89 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 167.2, 138.3, 136.9, 127.2, 125.1, 124.3, 122.4, 115.0, 110.2, 87.2, 52.2, 33.8.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3109, 2209, 1700, 1530, 1239, 742.

MS(EI) 214 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$ (M^+) 214.0742, found 214.0749.

5-(methoxymethyl)-1-methyl-1H-indole-3-carbonitrile (2r)



^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 7.72 (s, 1H), 7.56 (s, 1H), 7.37 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 2H), 4.58 (s, 2H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 3.40 (s, 3H).

^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz): δ 135.8, 135.6, 132.3, 127.8, 124.1, 119.3, 115.8, 110.4, 85.6, 74.8, 58.0, 33.7, 29.7.

IR (prism, cm^{-1}): 3115, 2217, 1529, 1248, 741.

MS(EI) 200 (M^+); HRMS Calcd. for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{12}\text{N}_2\text{O}$ (M^+) 200.0950, found 200.0951.

3) The CN^- was detected by indicator paper

(1) Principle:

The combination of CN^- with acids produces hydrocyanic acid, which reacts with picric acid showed rose-red colour.

(2) Detection of CN^- : A picric acid test strip was inserted into a glass tube, and drops of saturated sodium carbonate solution was dropped on it to make it wet. Then, the glass tube was inserted into the rubber stopper with a suitable hole. 0.2 g of tartrate solid and 1.5 mL of the reaction solution were added to flask, which was stuffed by rubber stopper fitted with glass tube, immediately. The flask was heated in the water bath under 80 °C for 20 minutes. The test paper appeared rose-red, which proved the existence of CN^- .

Table S1 Detection of CN^- by indicator paper^a

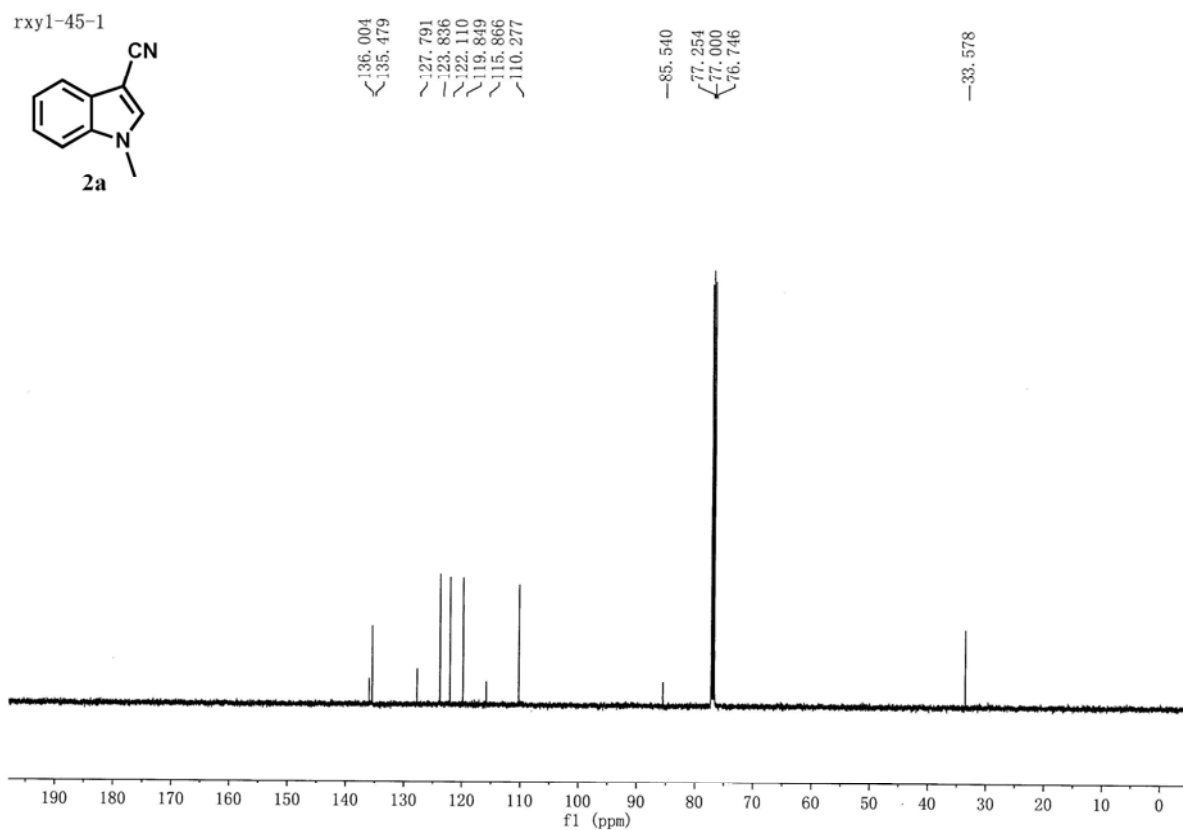
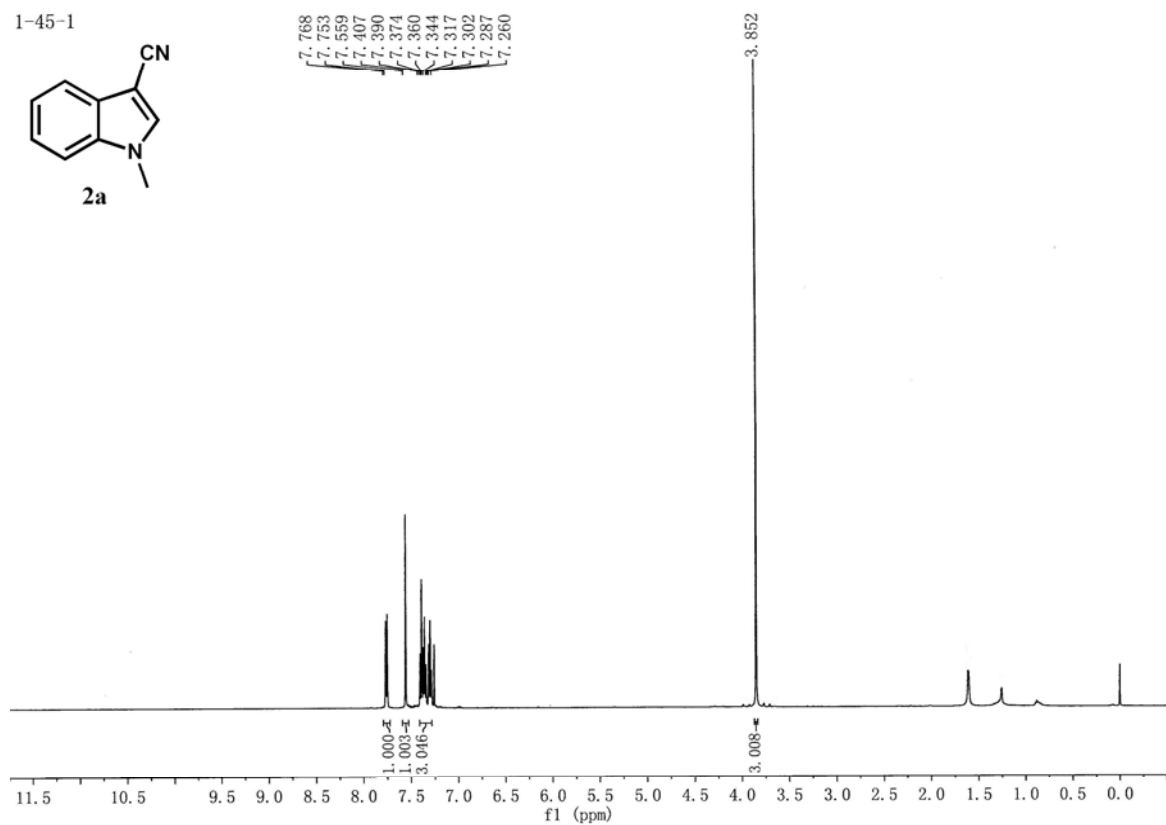
DMSO	NH_4HCO_3	O_2			-
DMSO	NH_4HCO_3	O_2	PdCl_2		-
DMSO	NH_4HCO_3	O_2		$\text{Cu}(\text{OAc})_2$	+
DMSO	NH_4HCO_3	O_2	PdCl_2	$\text{Cu}(\text{OAc})_2$	+

^a Reaction conditions: the mixture was heated under 140 °C for 3 h. “-” means negative; “+” means positive.

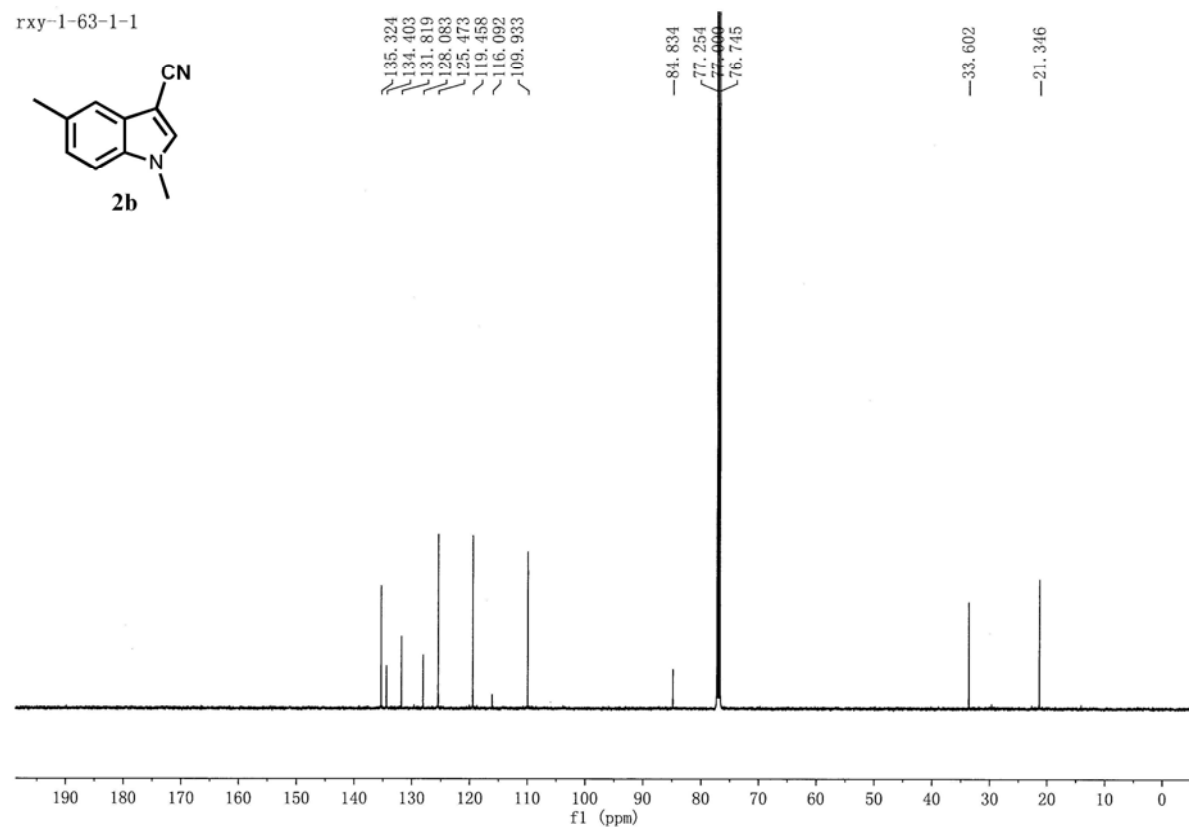
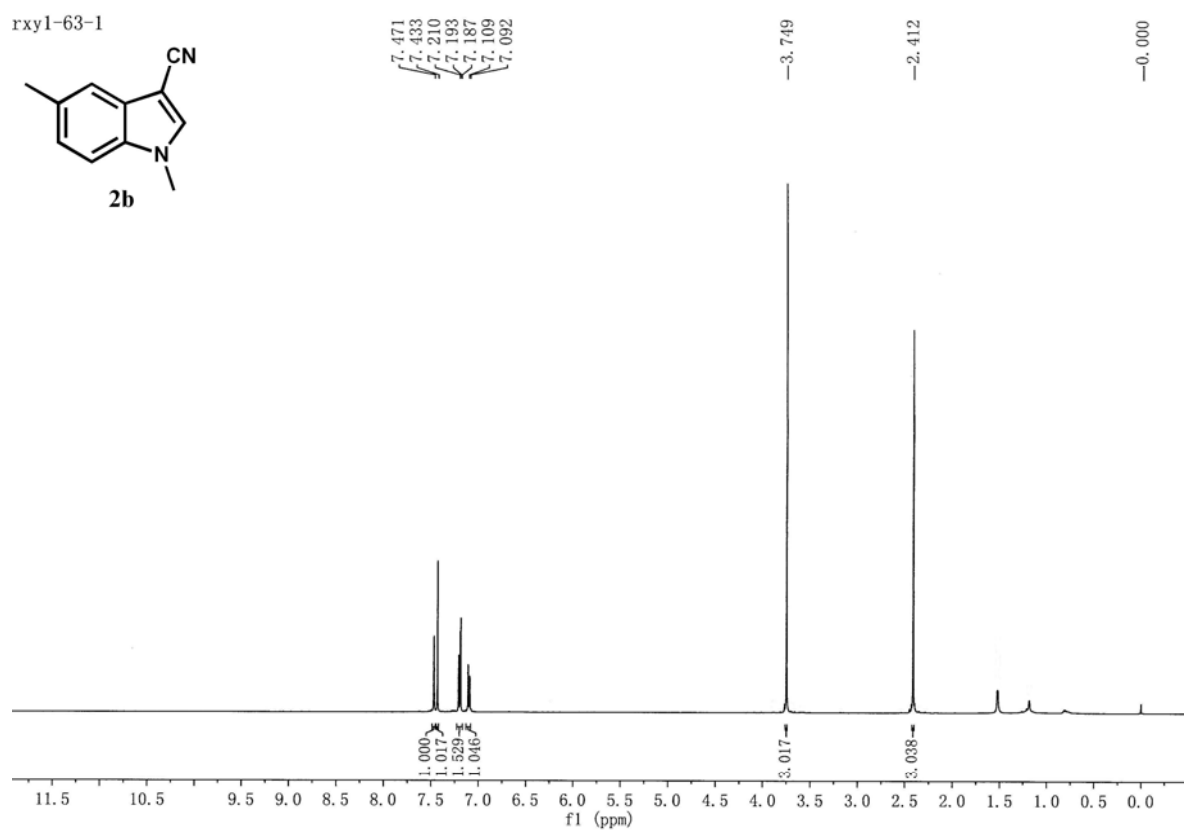
4) References

- (1) G. Yan, C. Kuang, Y. Zhang and J. Wang, *Org. Lett.*, 2010, **12**, 1052..
- (2) C. J. Swain, R. Baker, C. Kneen, J. Moseley, J. Saunders, E. M. Seward, G. Stevenson, M. Beer and J. Stanton, *J. Med. Chem.*, 1991, **34**, 140.

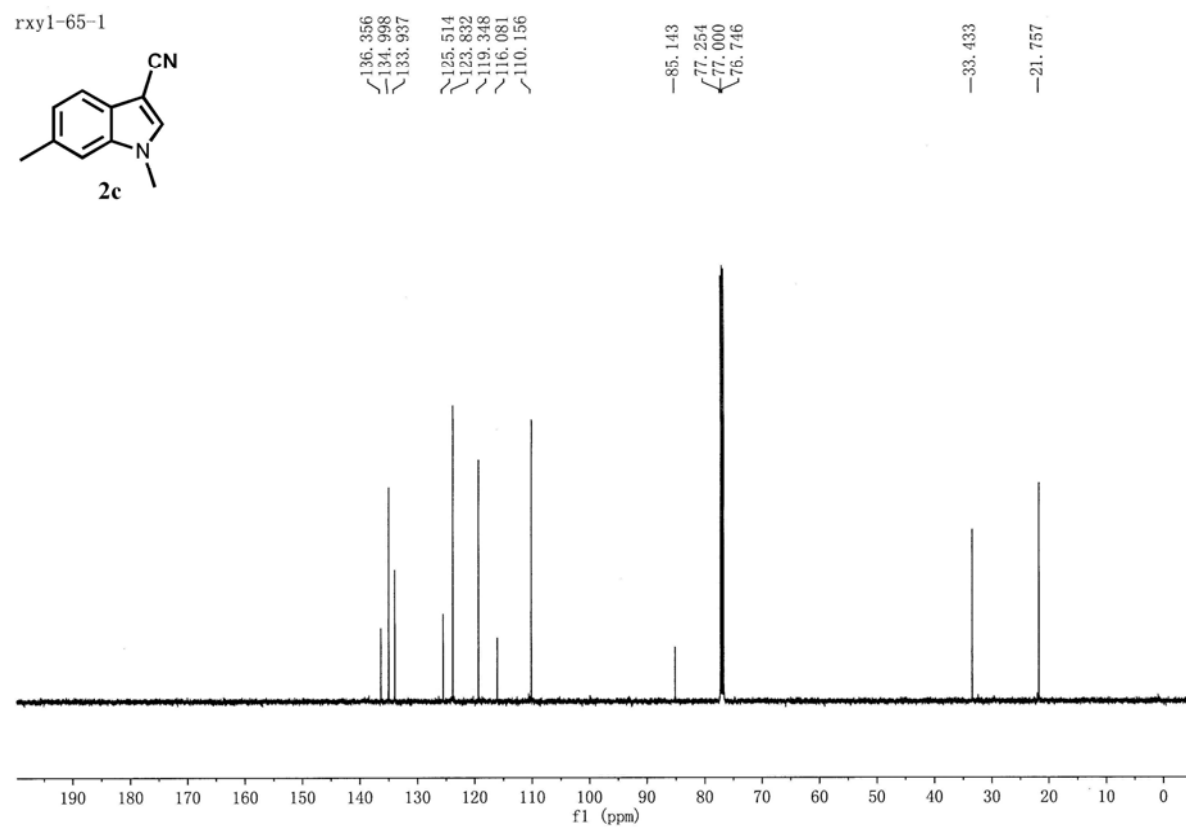
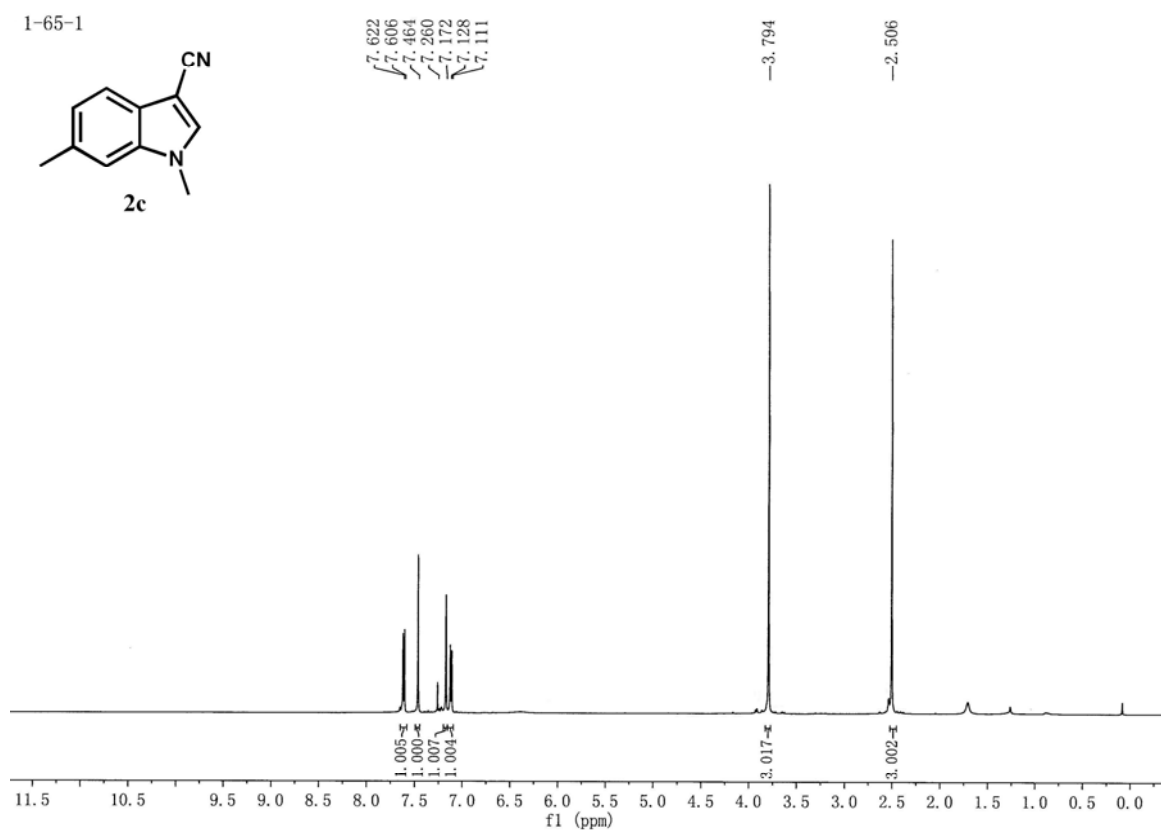
S9



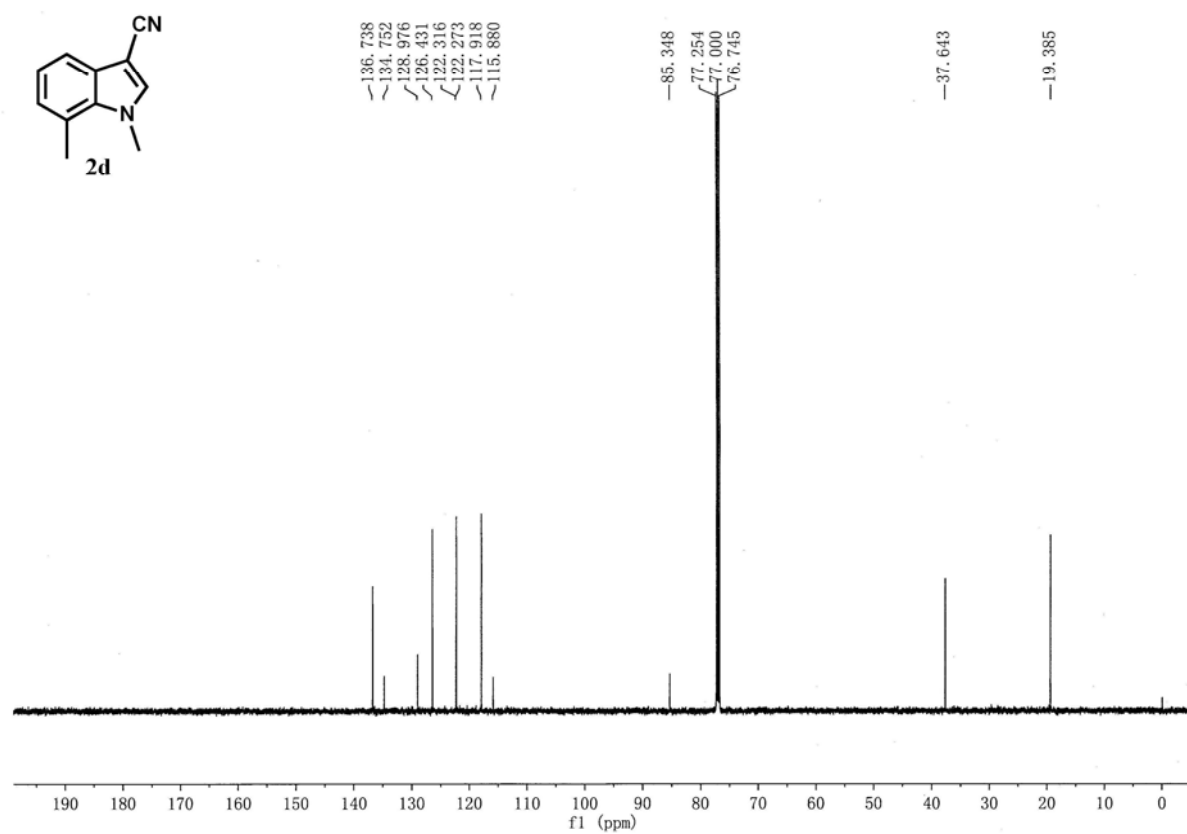
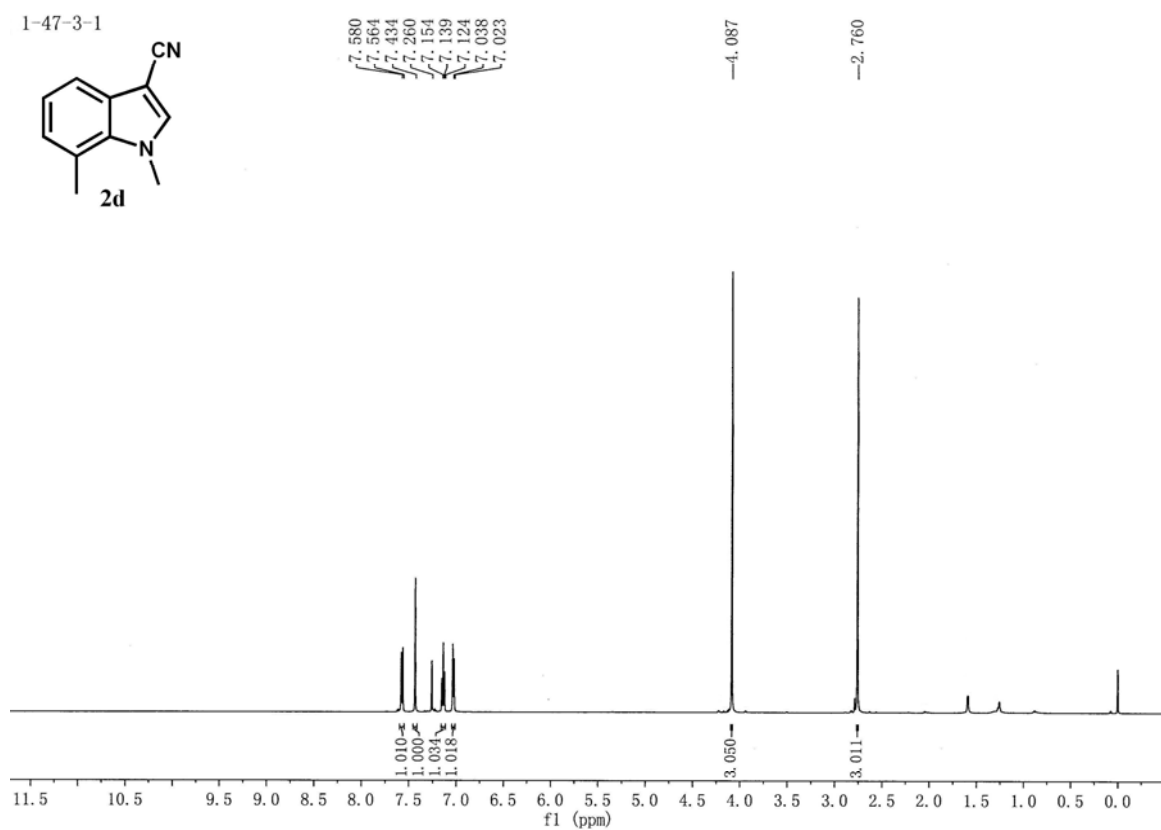
S10



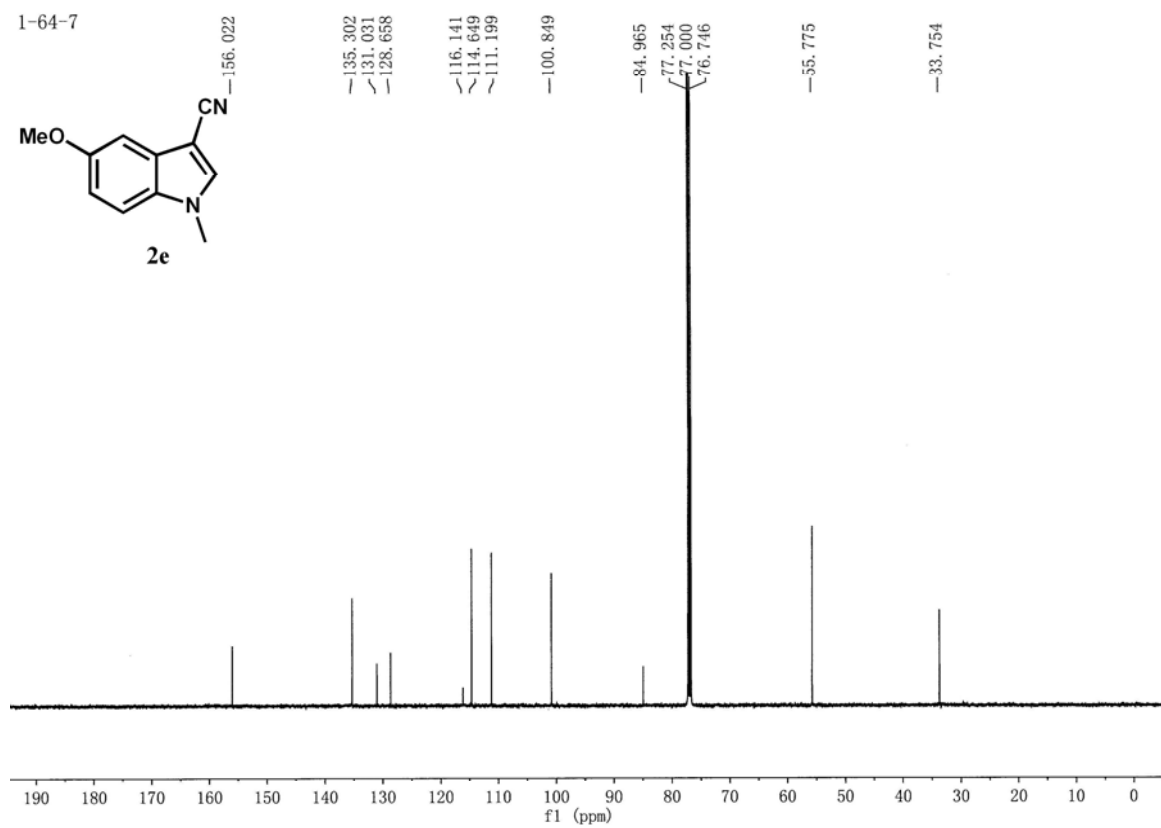
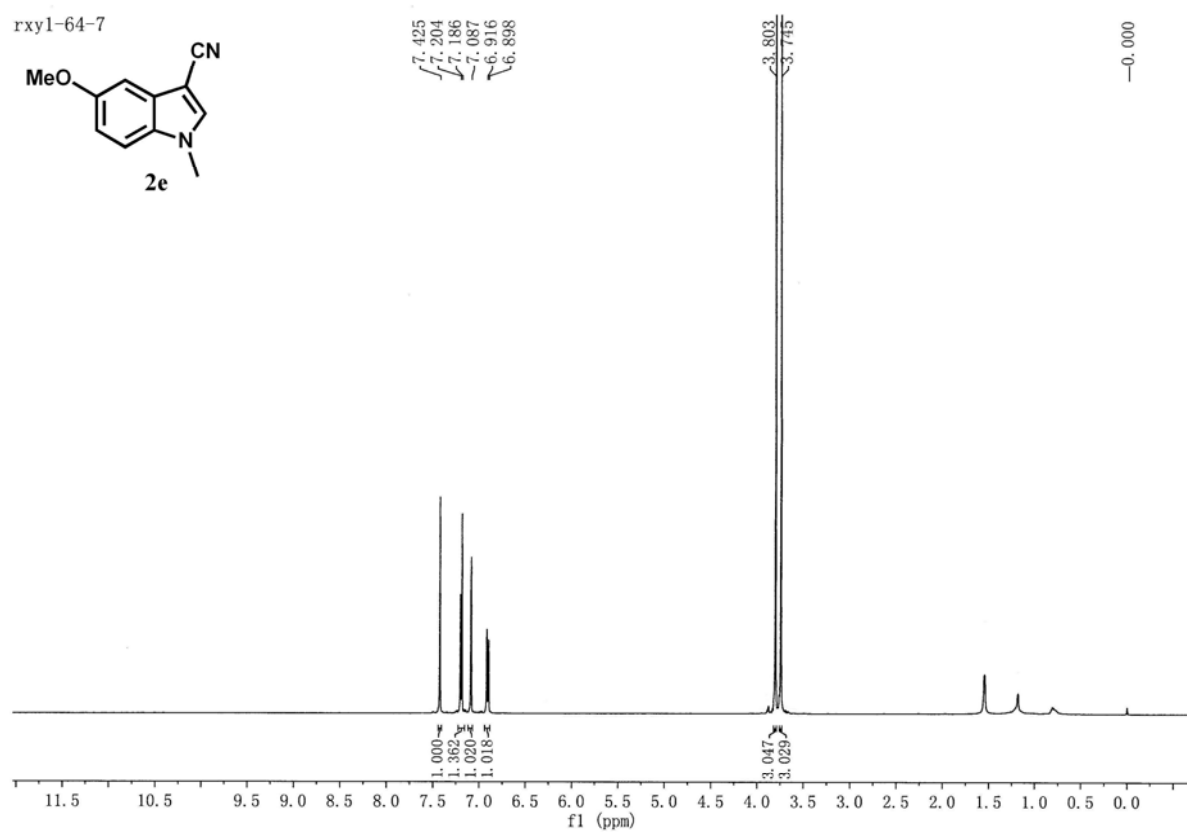
S11



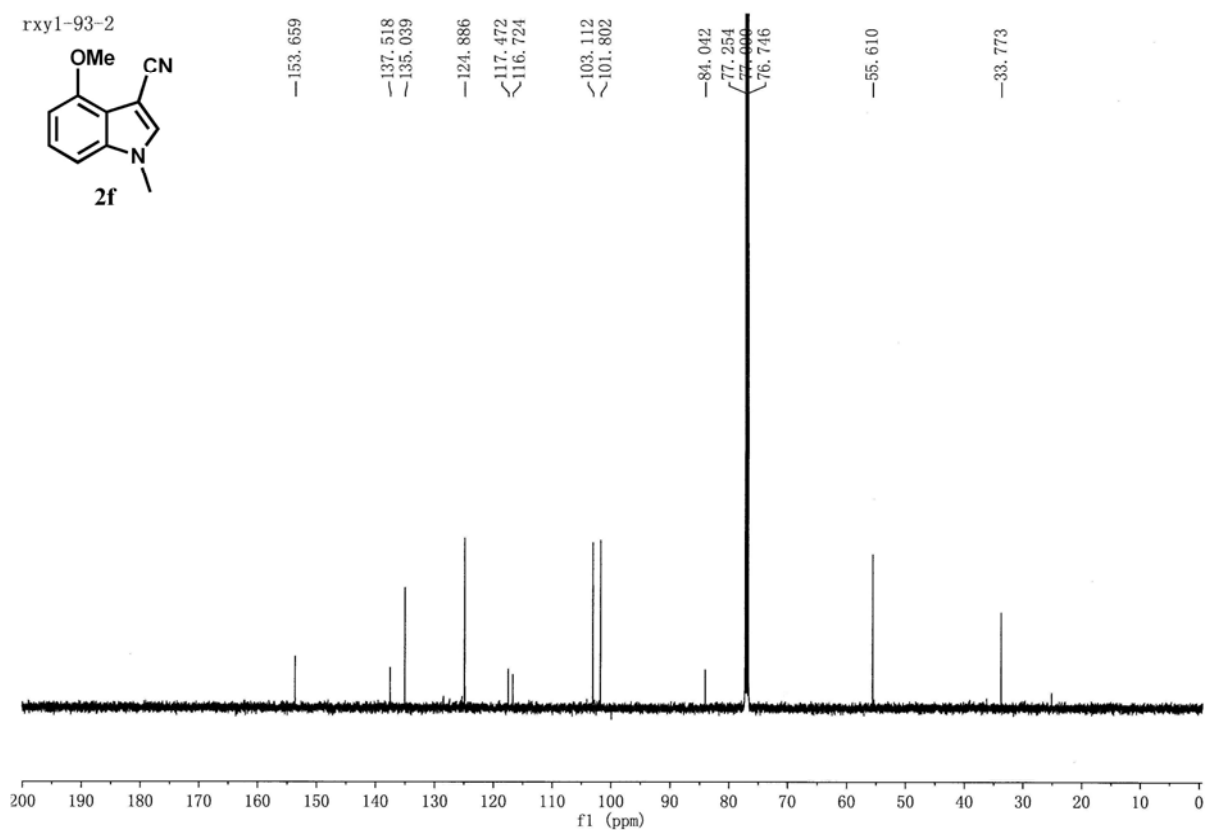
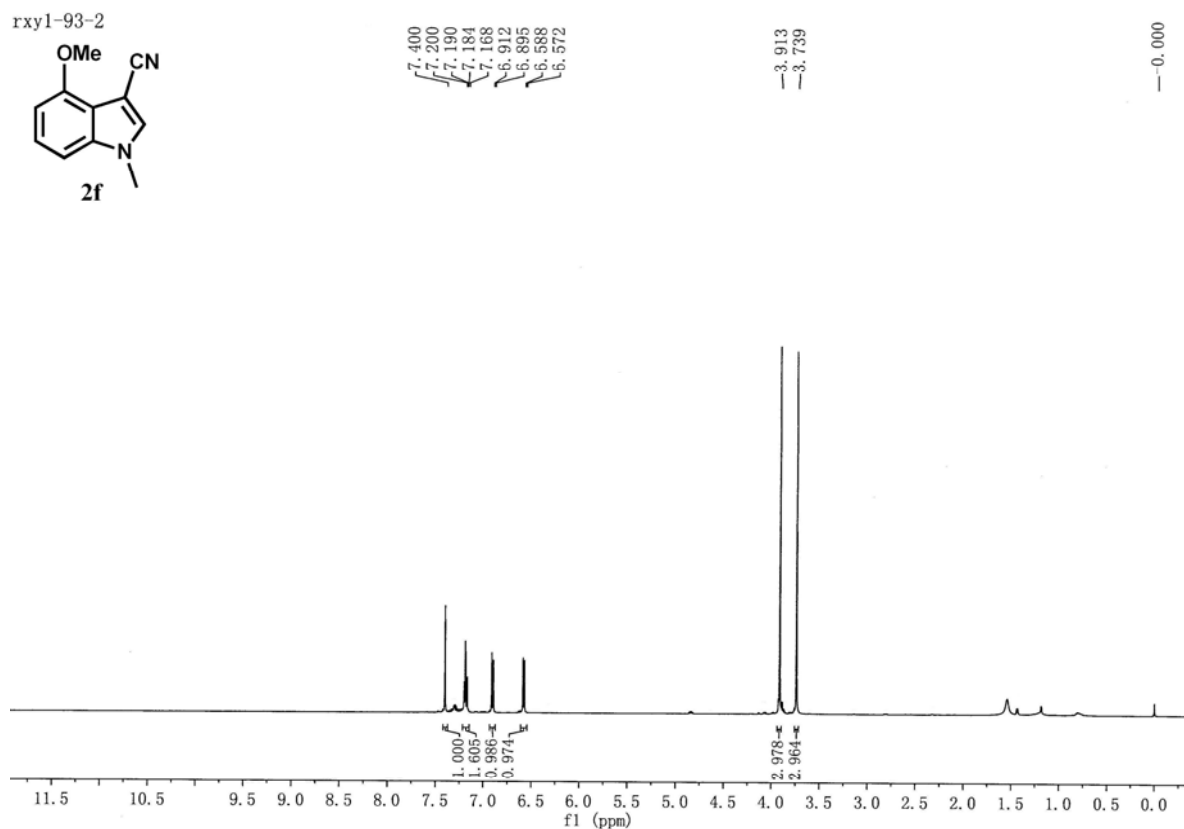
S12



S13

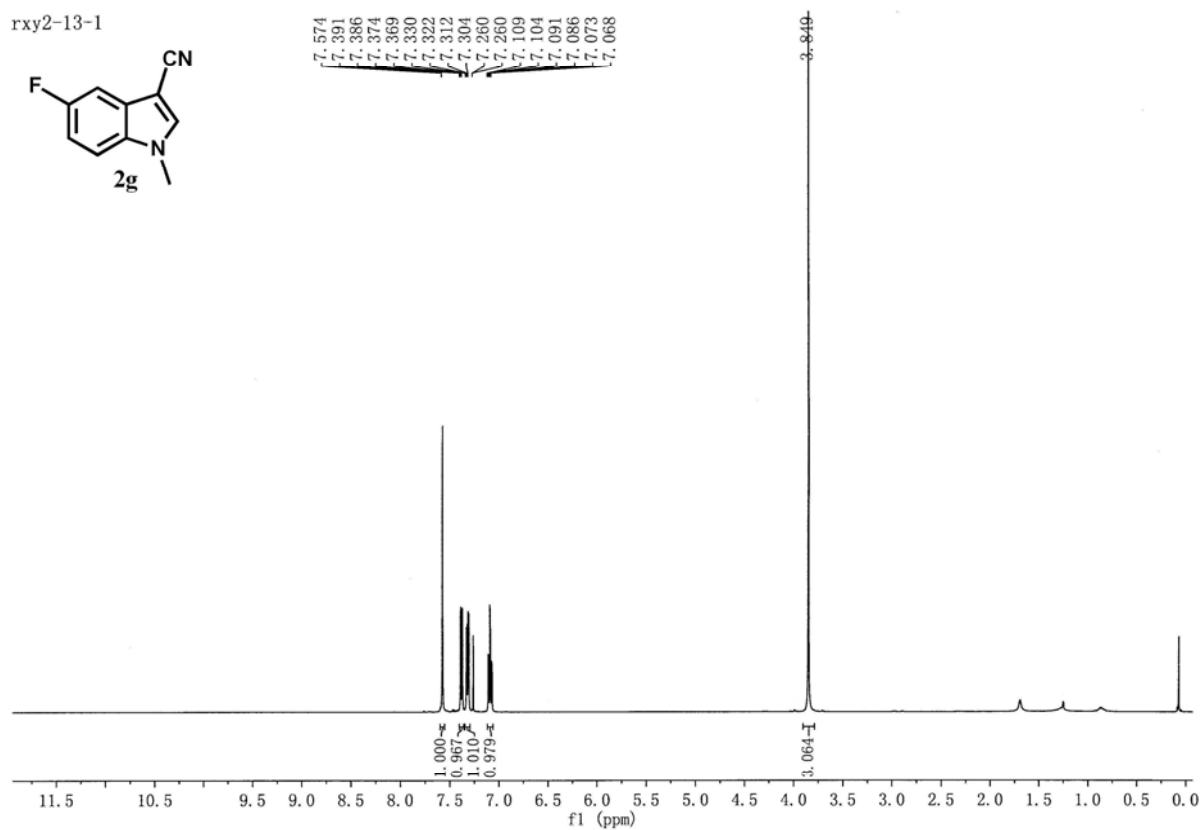
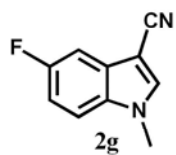


S14

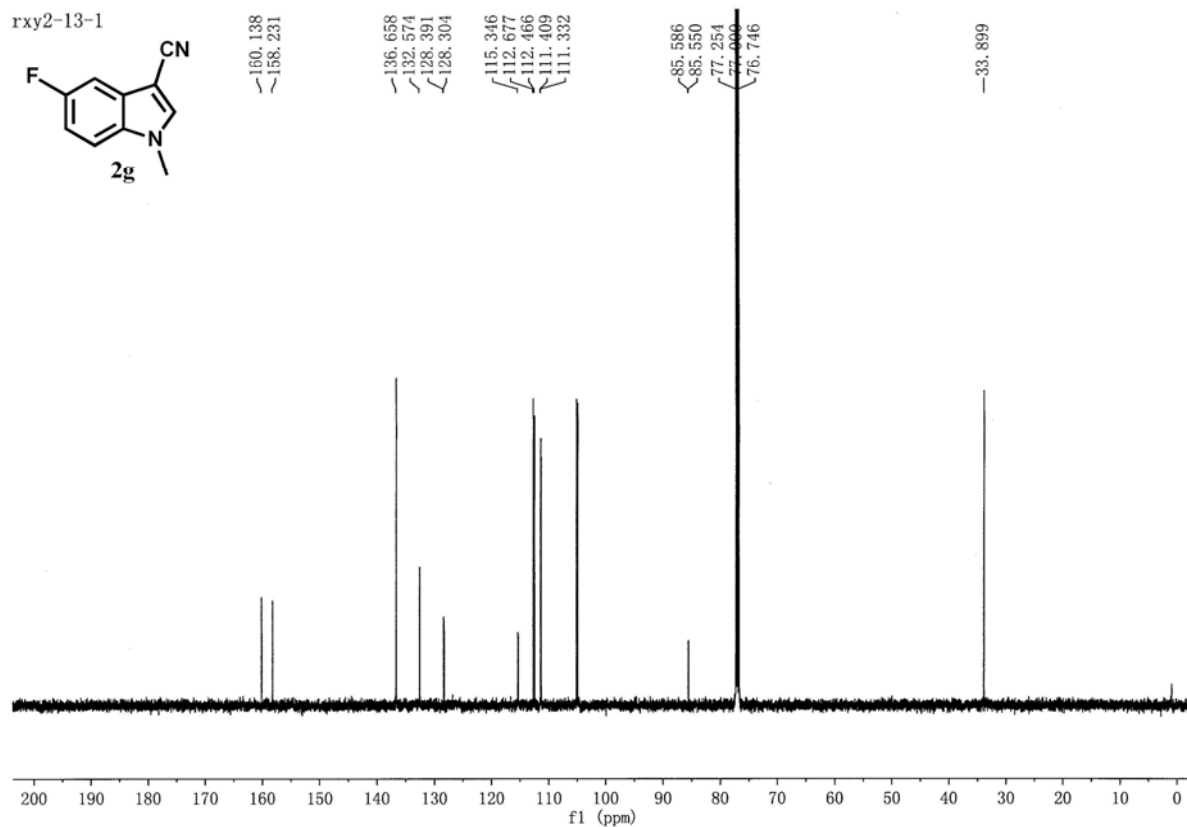
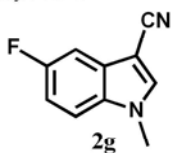


S15

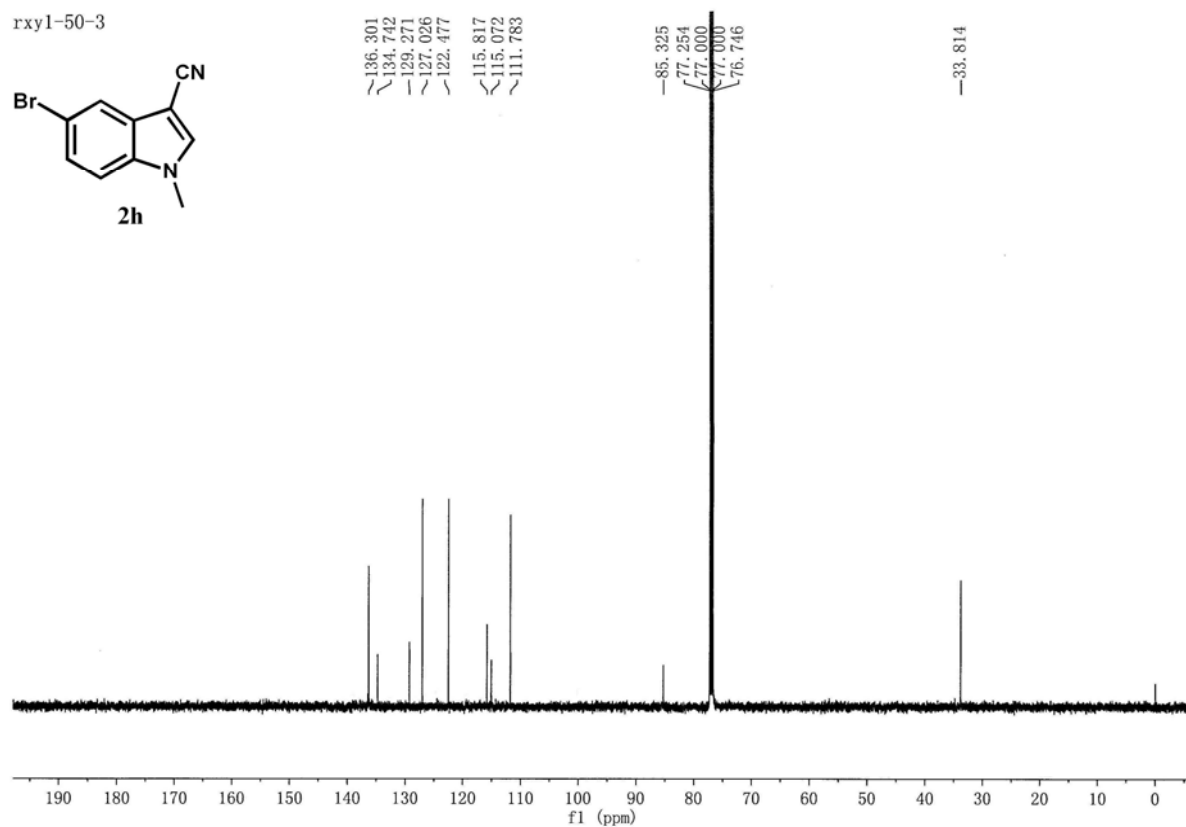
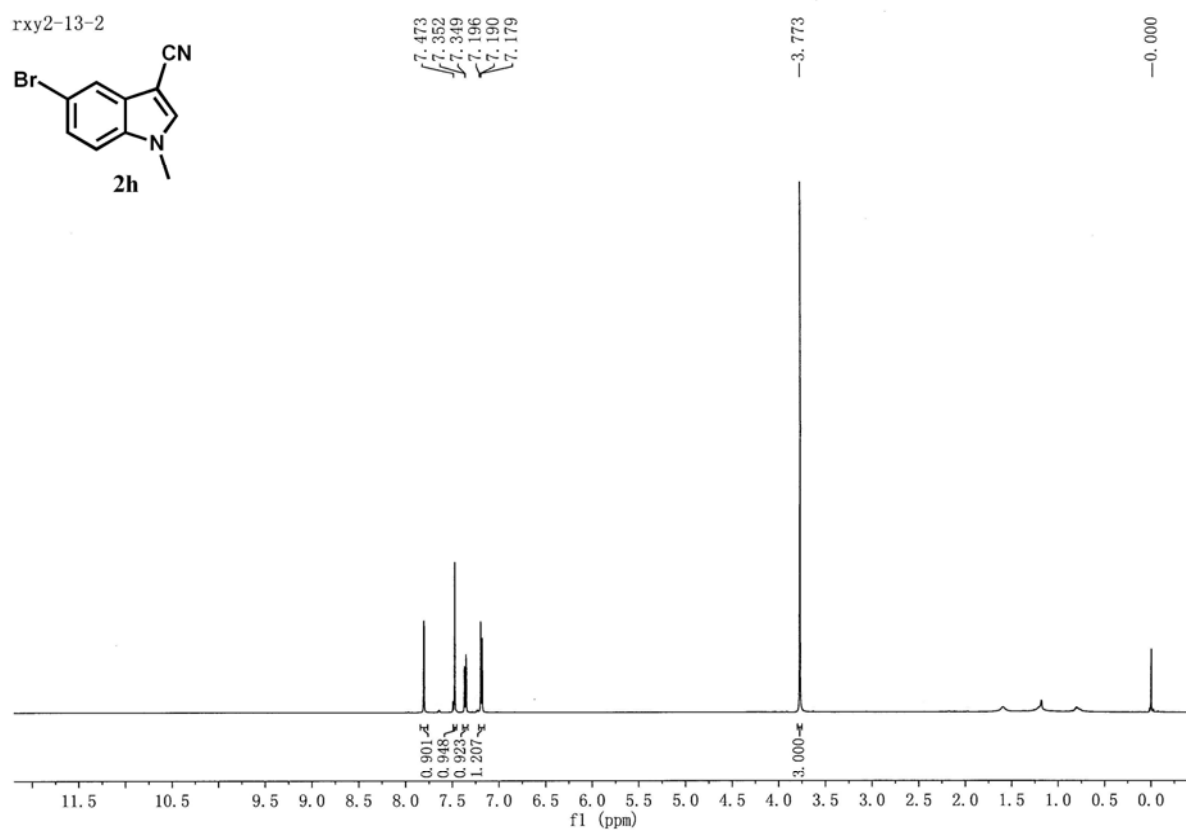
rxxy2-13-1



rxxy2-13-1

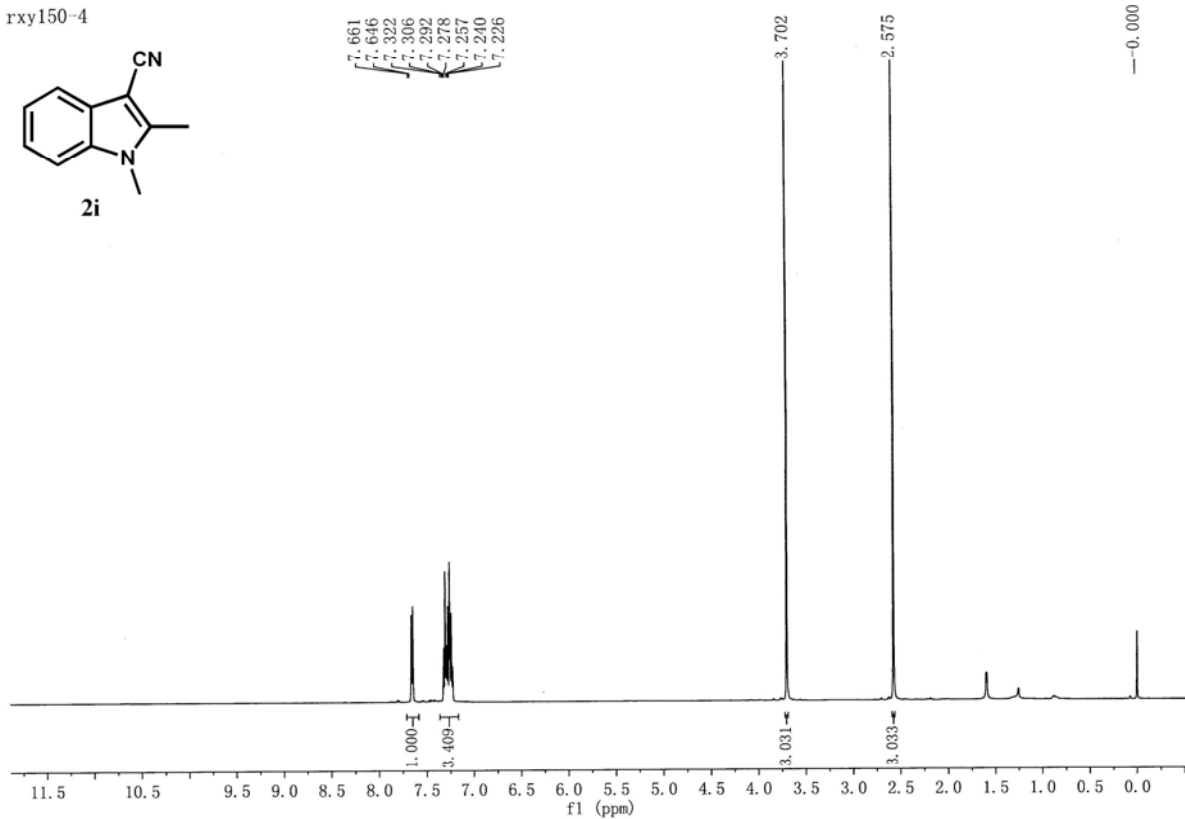
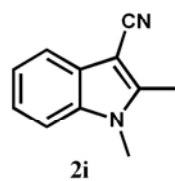


S16

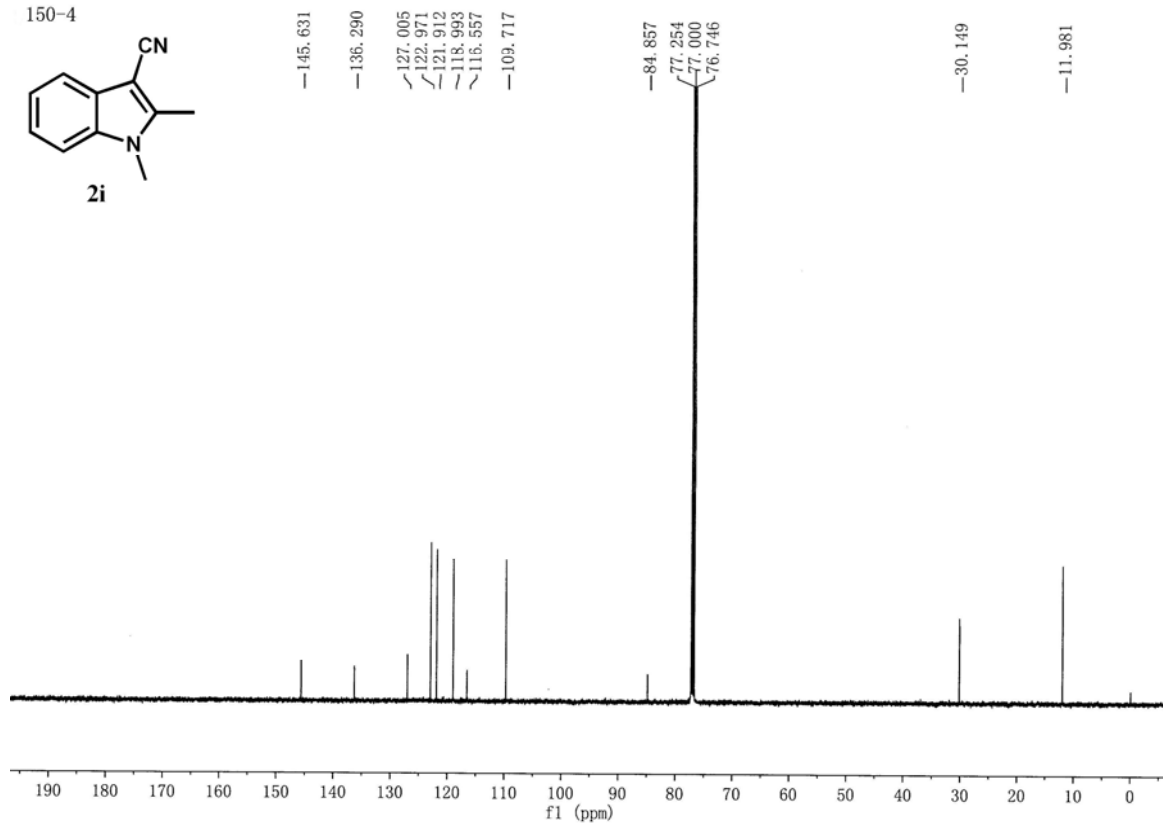
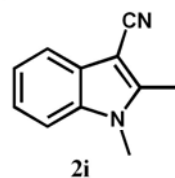


S17

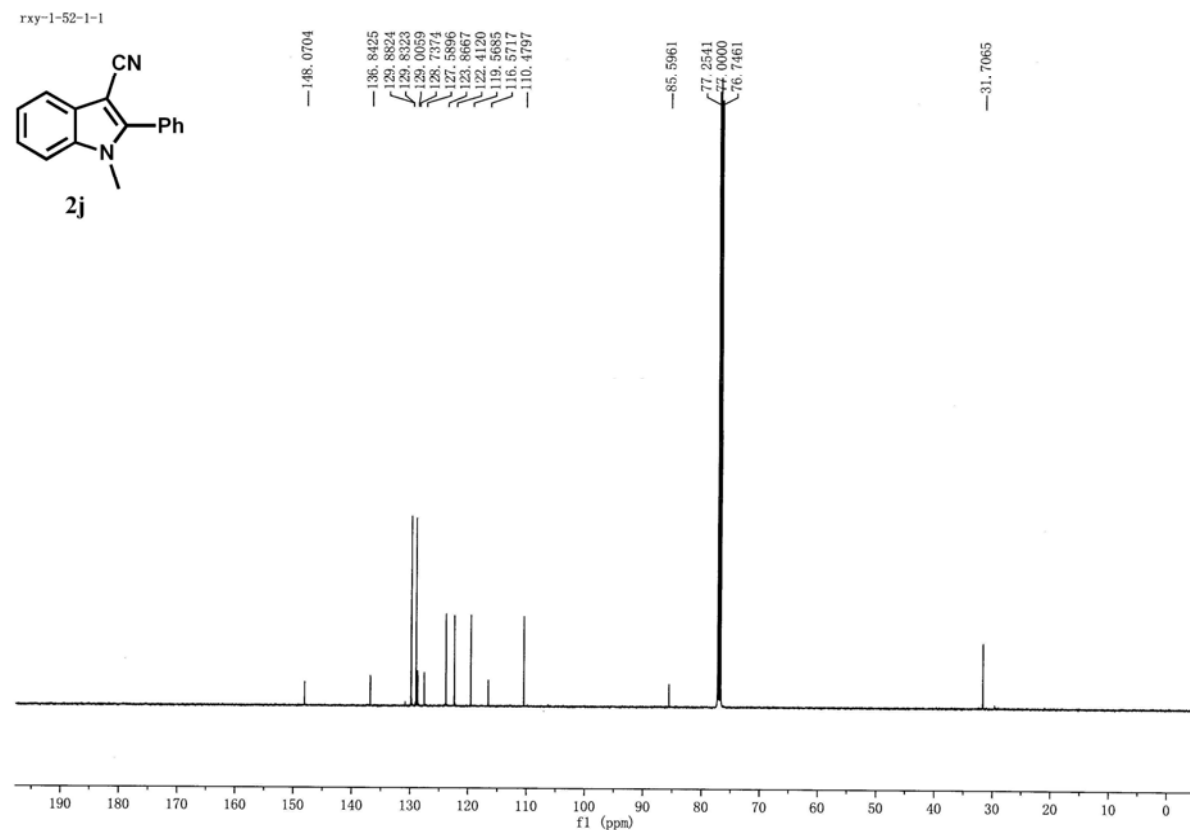
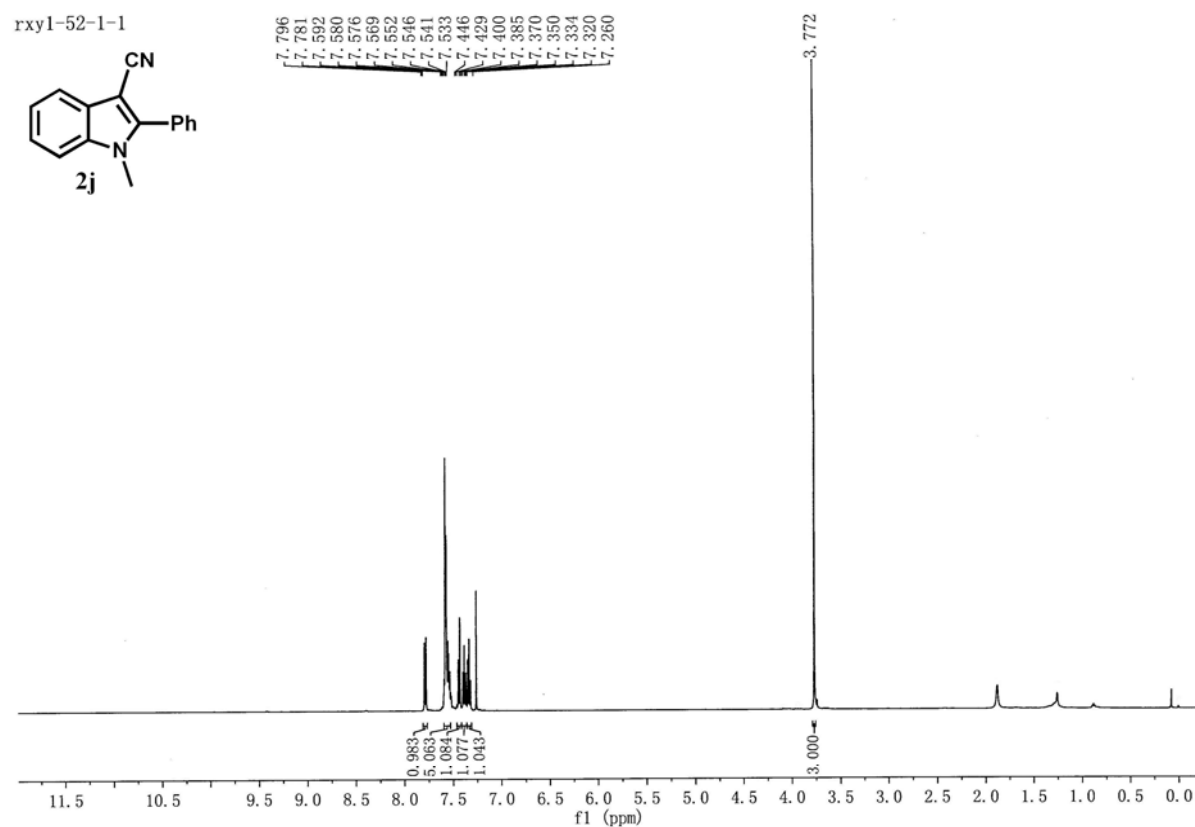
rxyl50-4



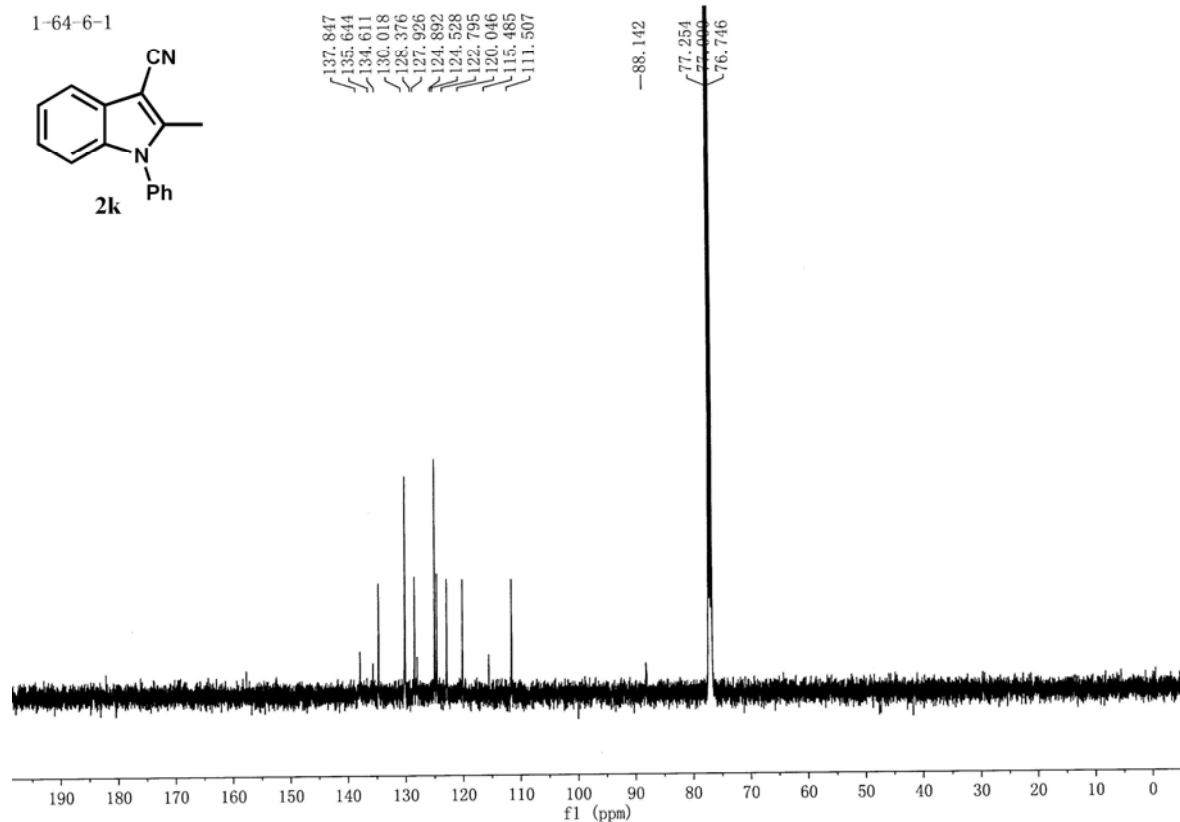
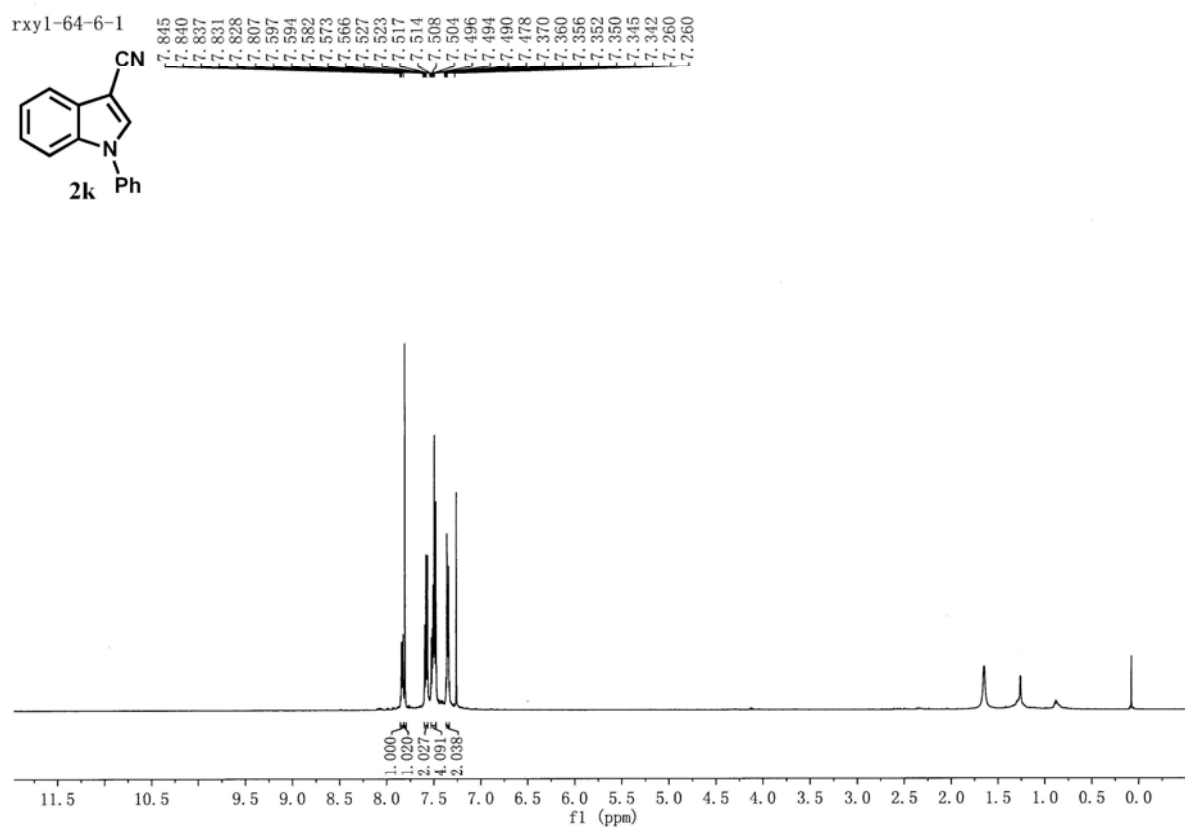
150-4



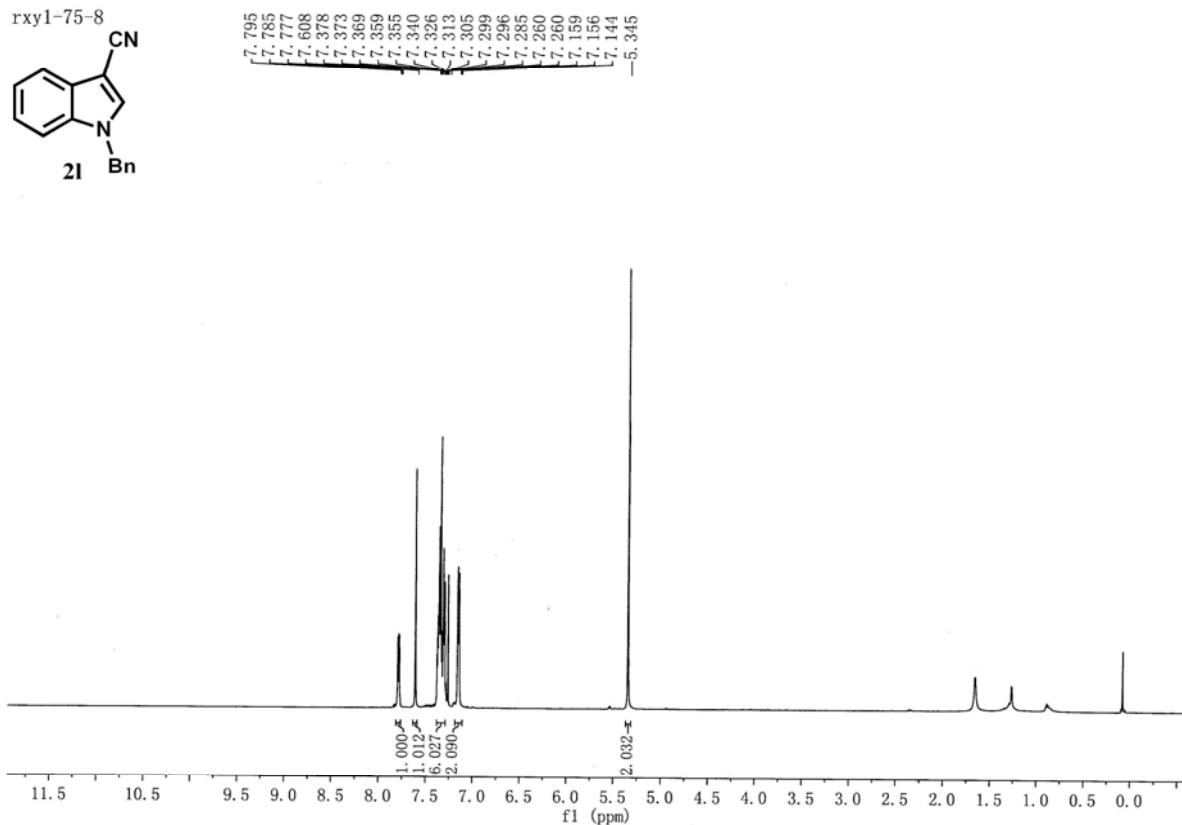
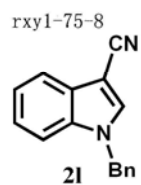
S18



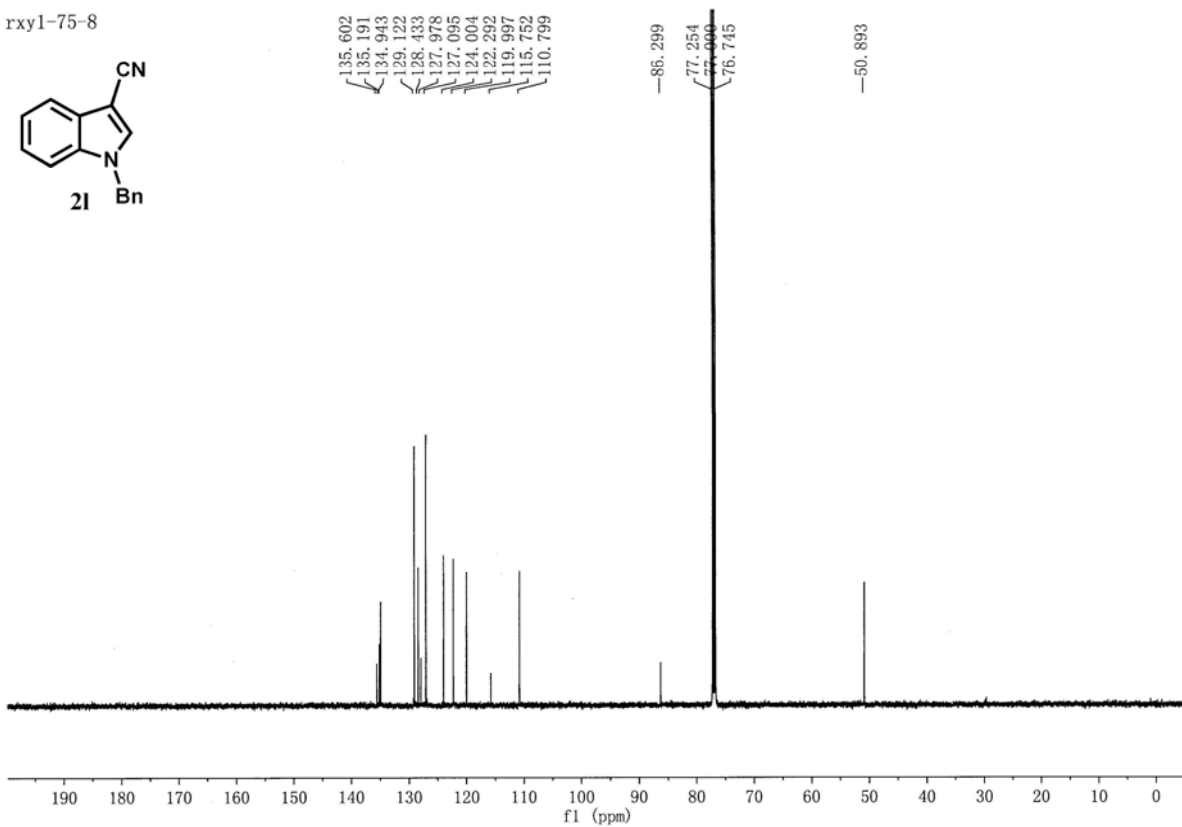
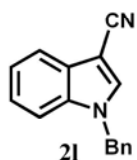
S19



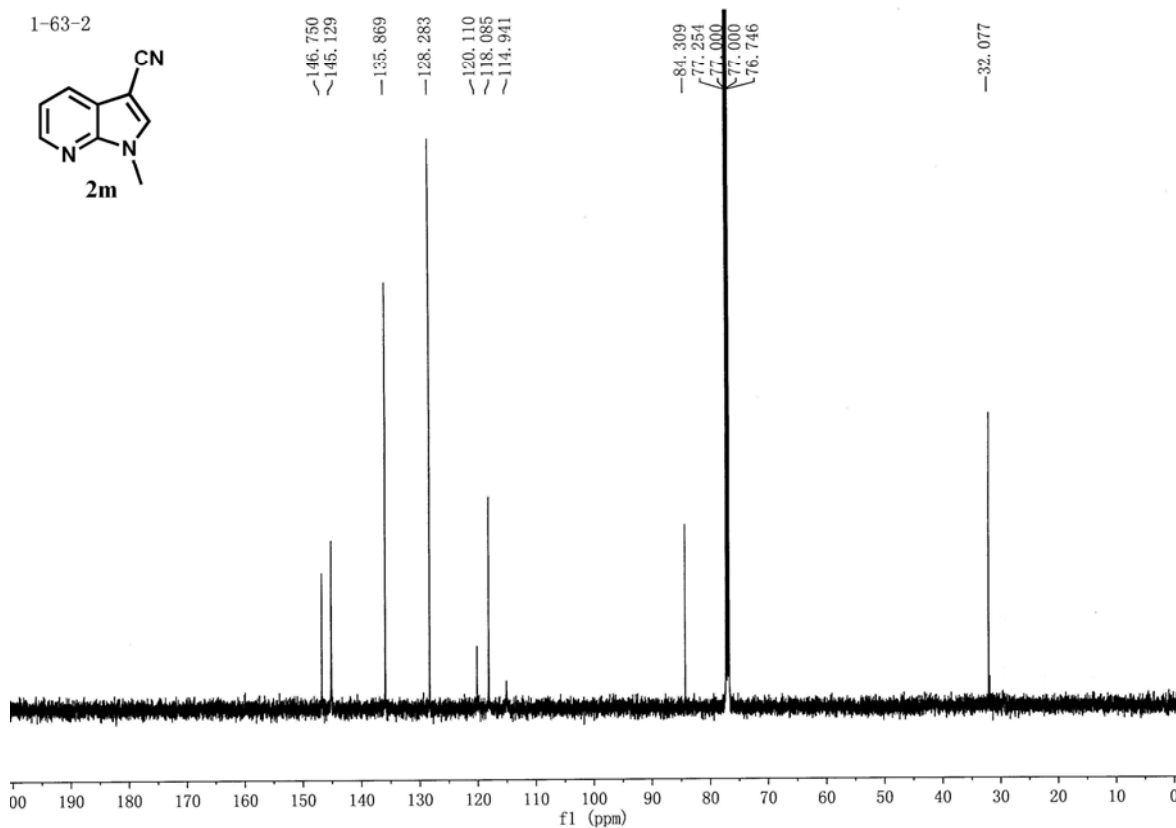
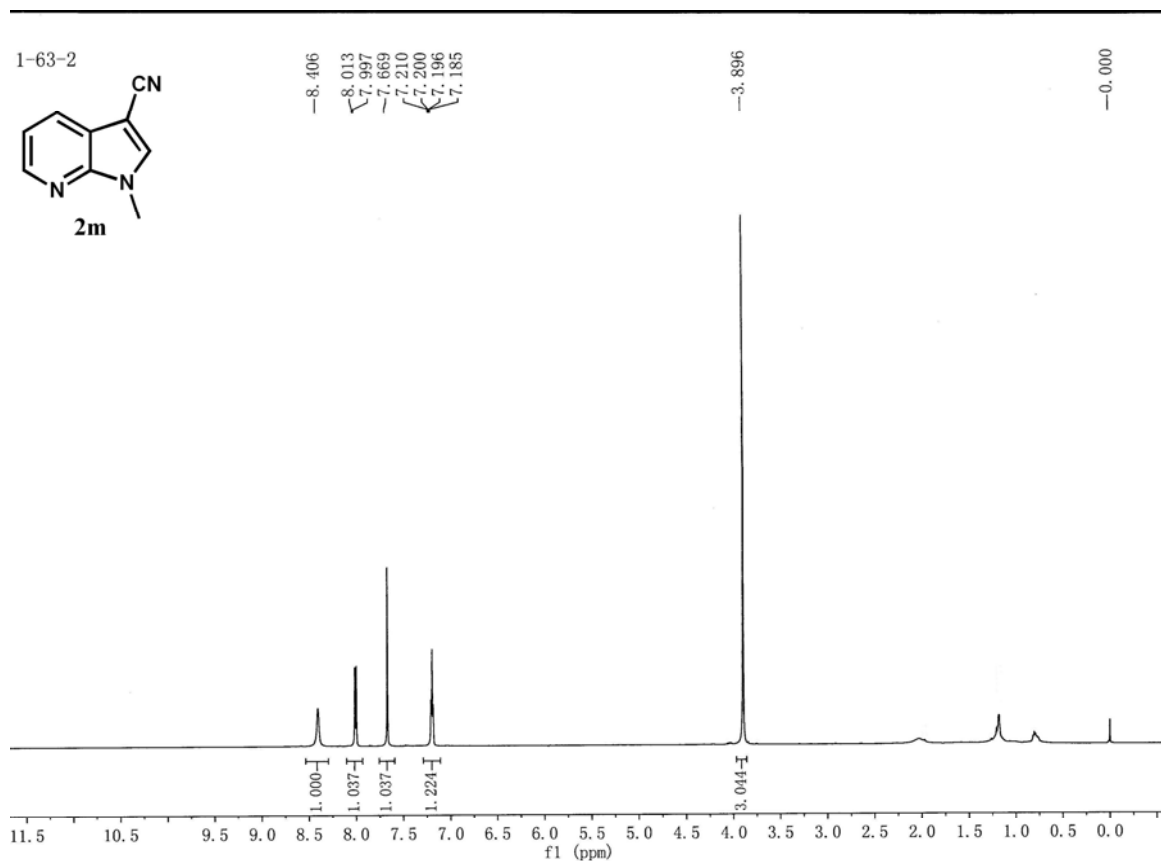
S20



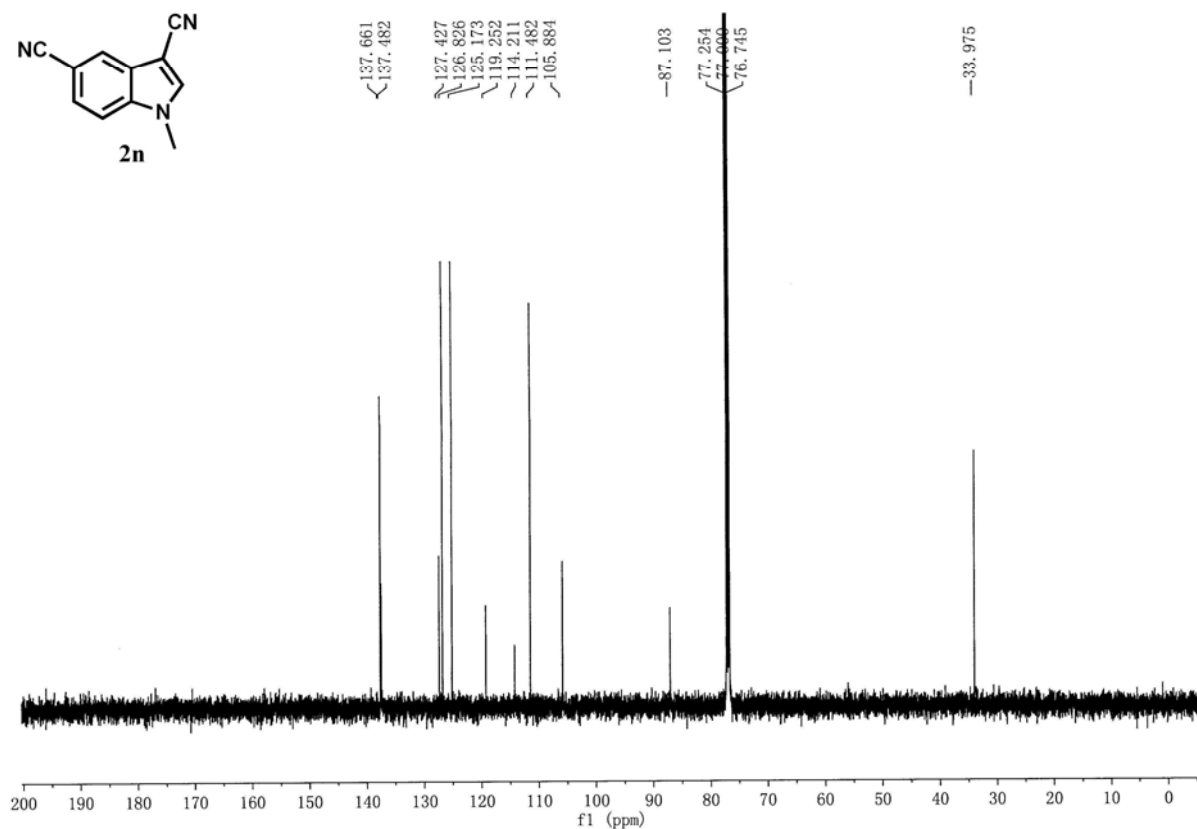
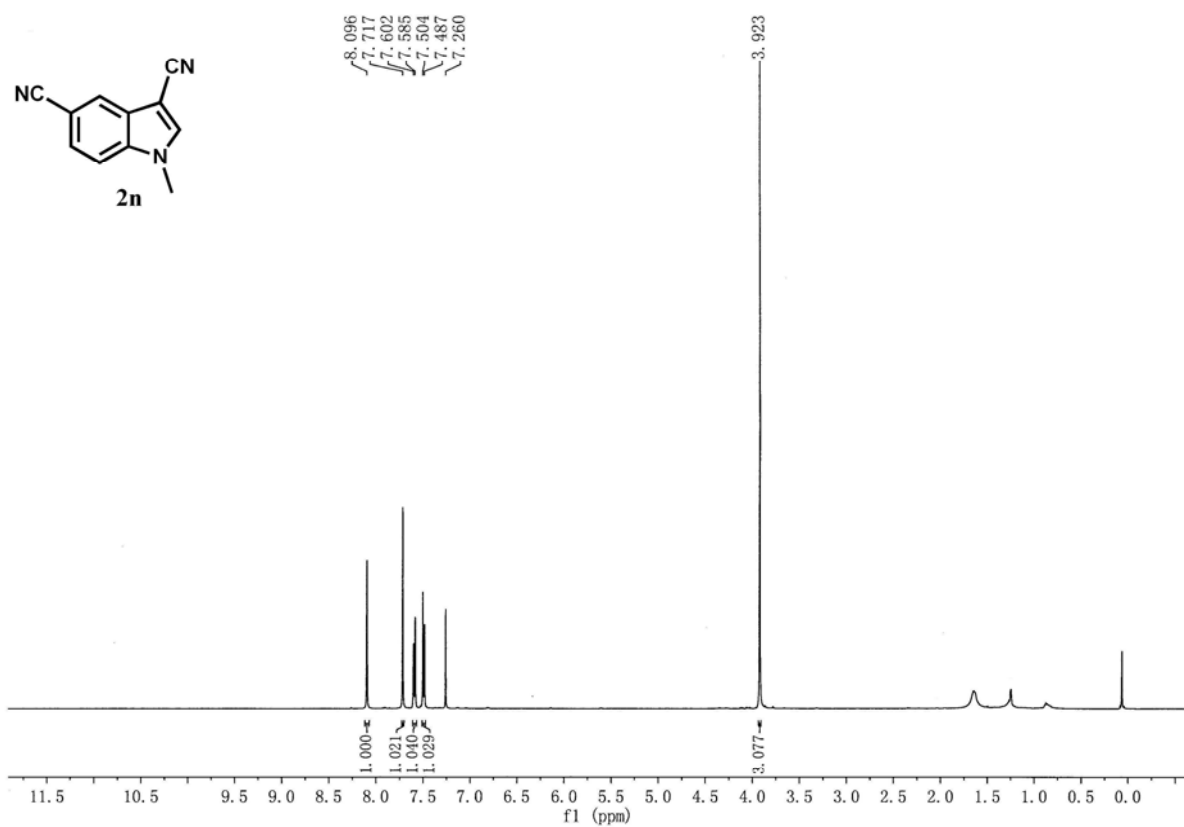
rxyl-75-8



S21

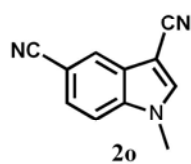


S22

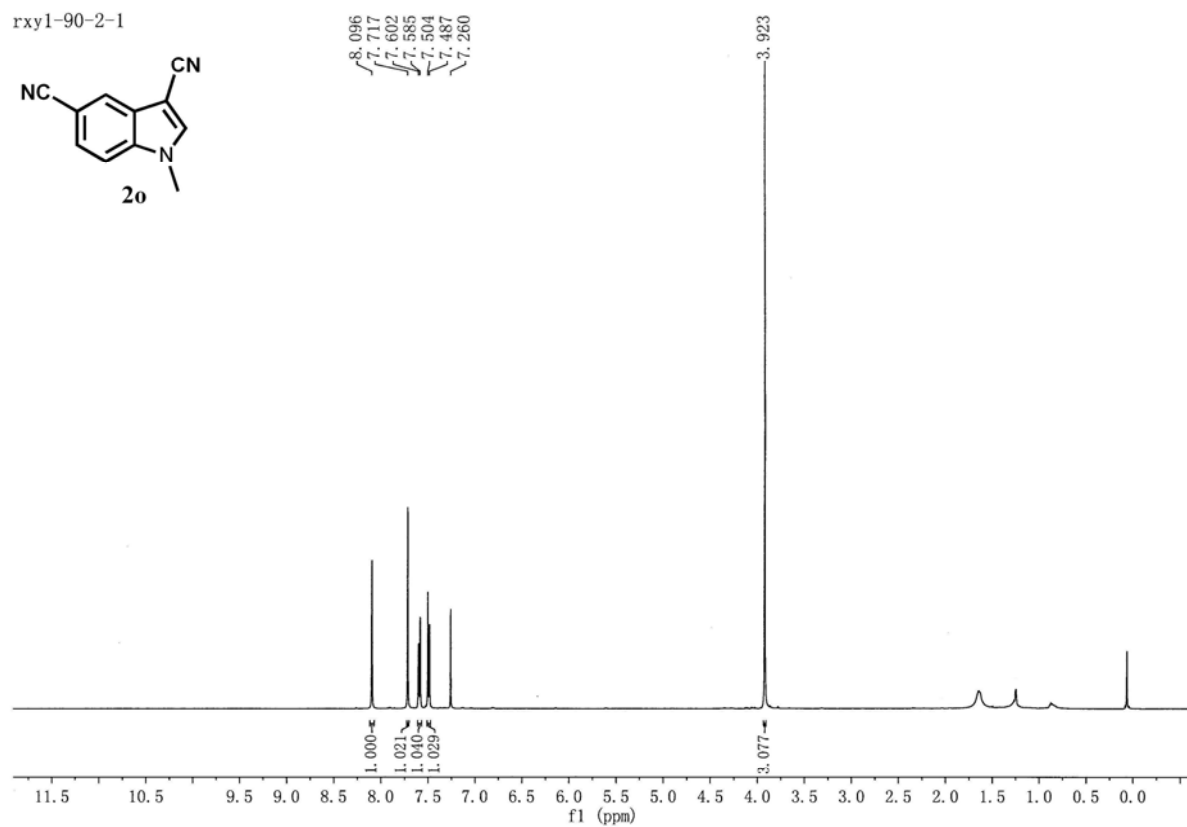


S23

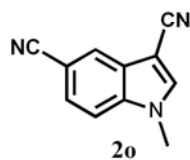
rxyl-90-2-1



8.096
7.717
7.602
7.585
7.504
7.487
7.260



rxyl-90-2-1



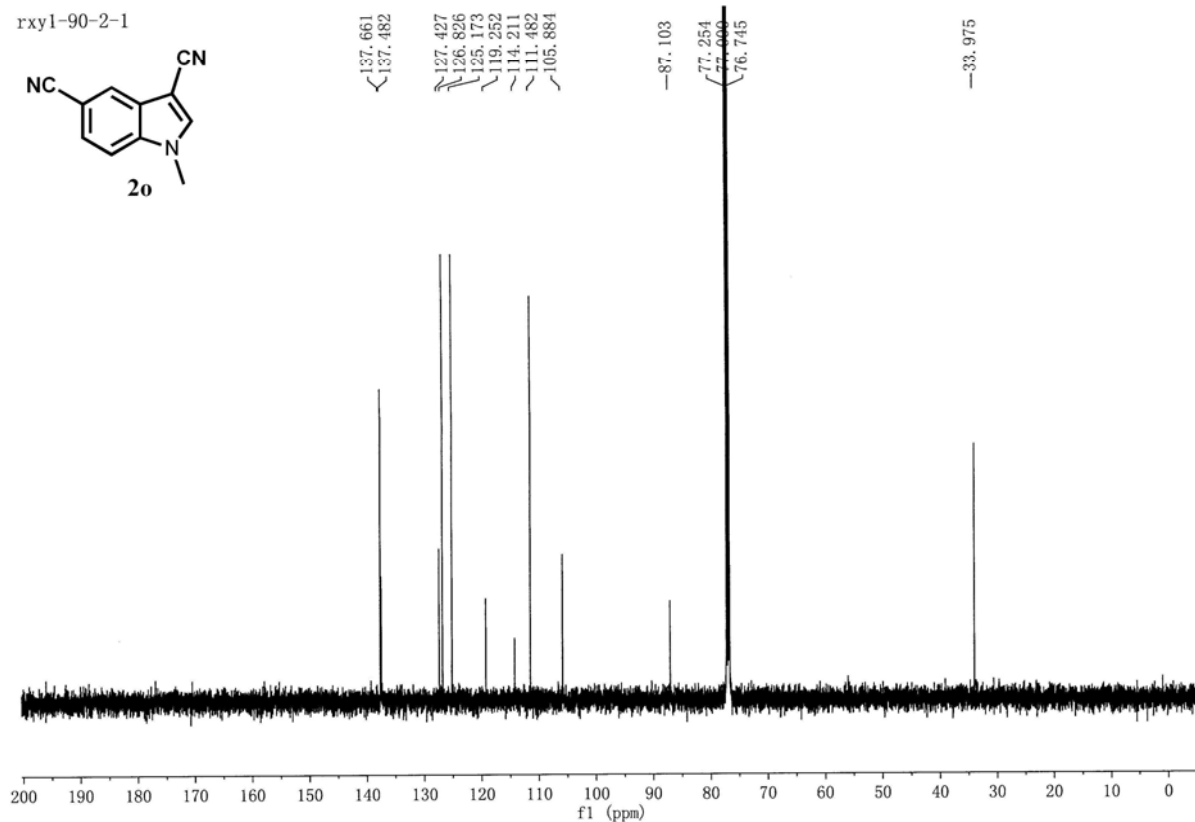
137.661
137.482

127.427
126.826
125.173
119.252
114.211
111.482
105.884

87.103

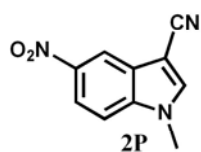
77.254
77.000
76.745

33.975



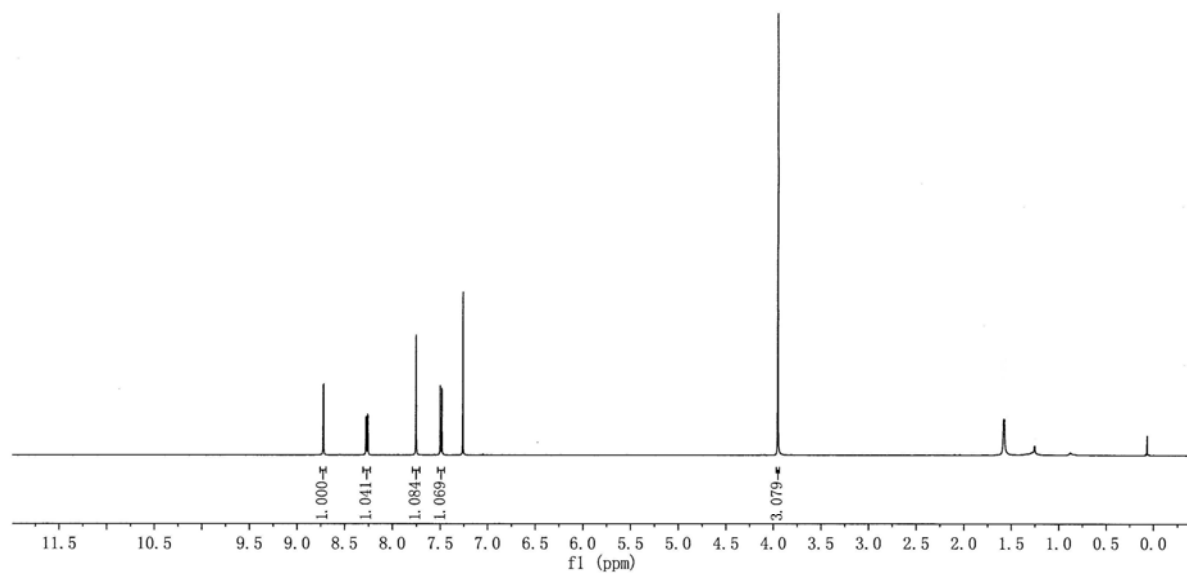
S24

rxyl-72-5

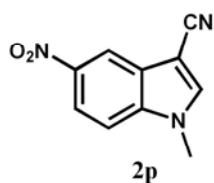


8.721
8.278
8.260
7.754
7.501
7.482
7.260

3.953



rxyl-72-5

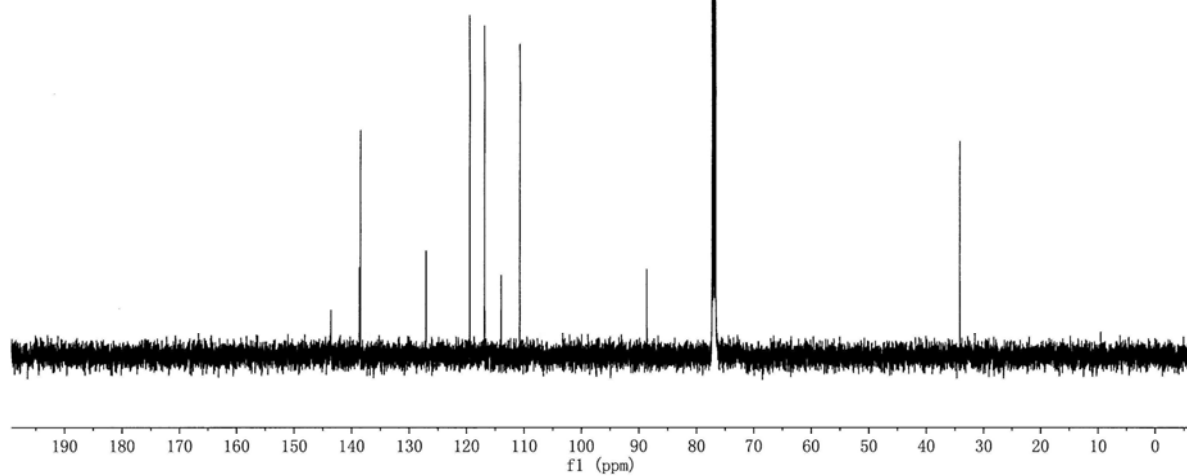


143.612
138.631
138.465
127.088
119.435
116.884
113.999
110.761

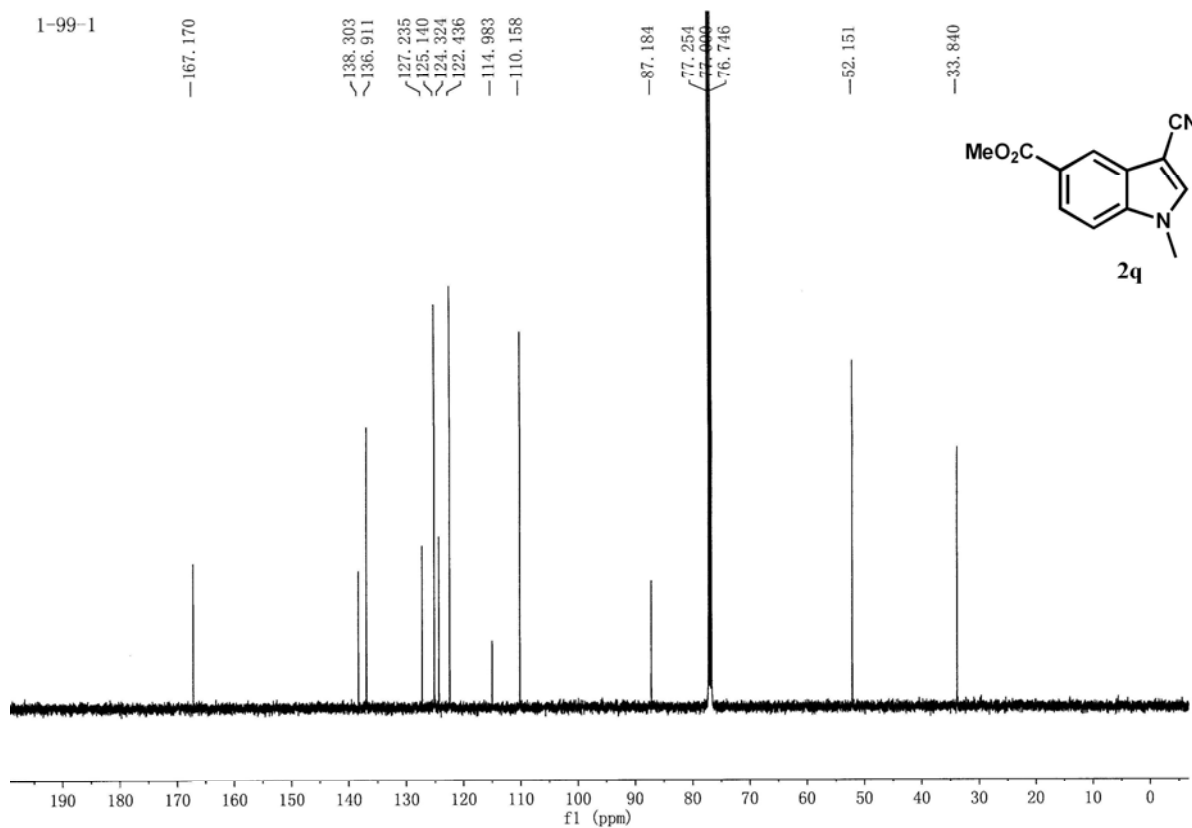
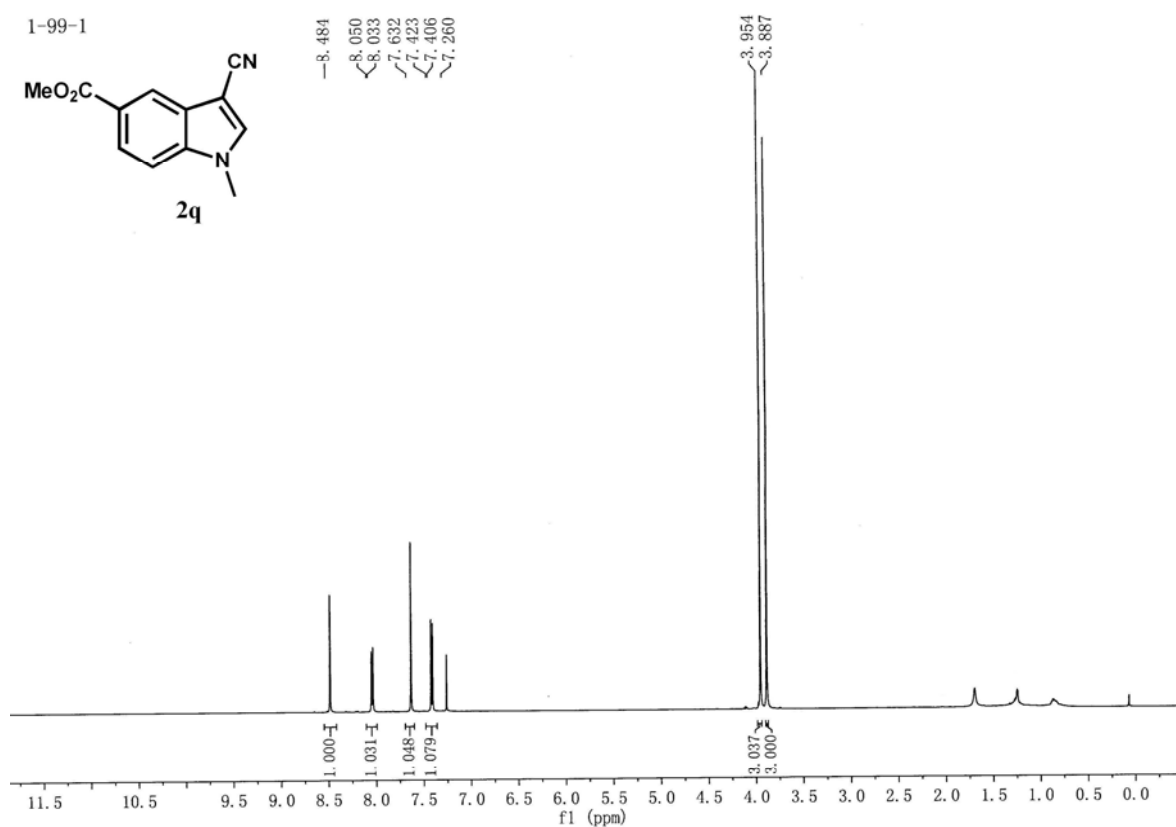
88.647

77.254
77.000
76.746

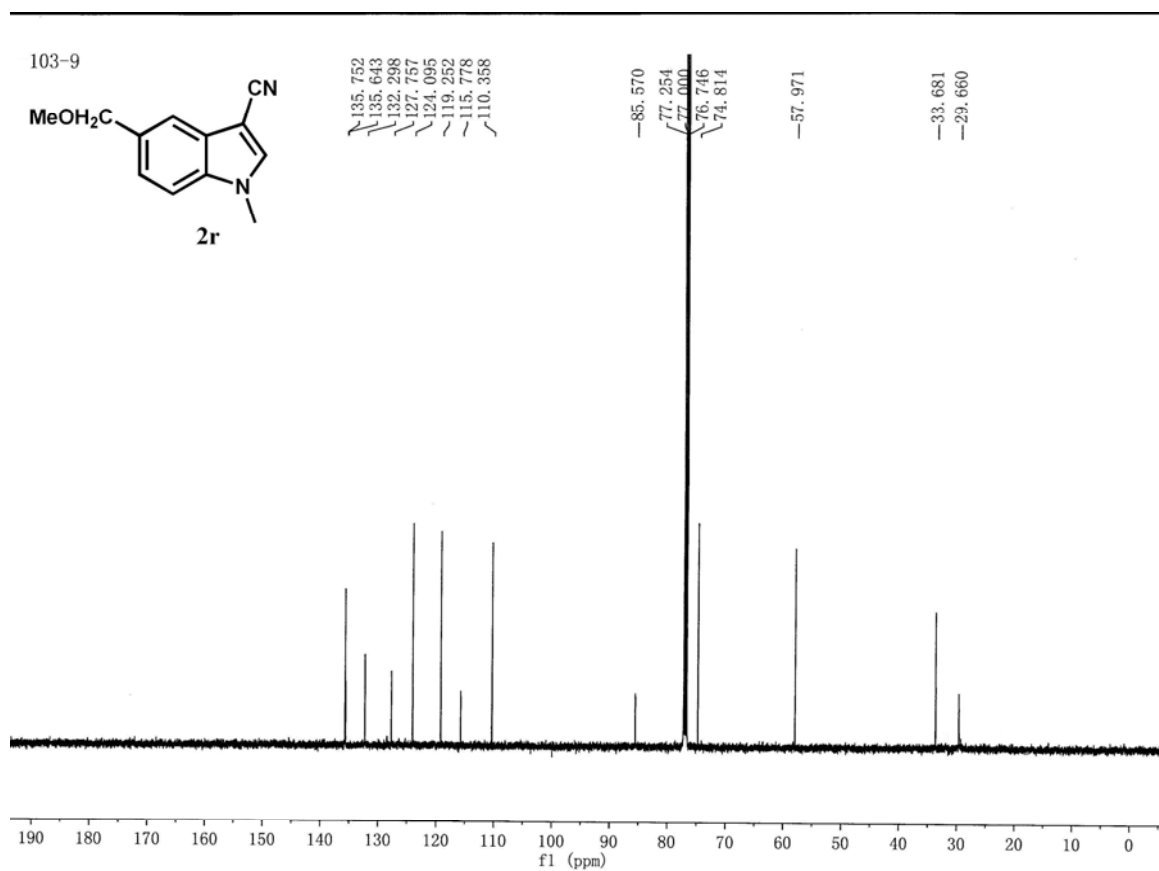
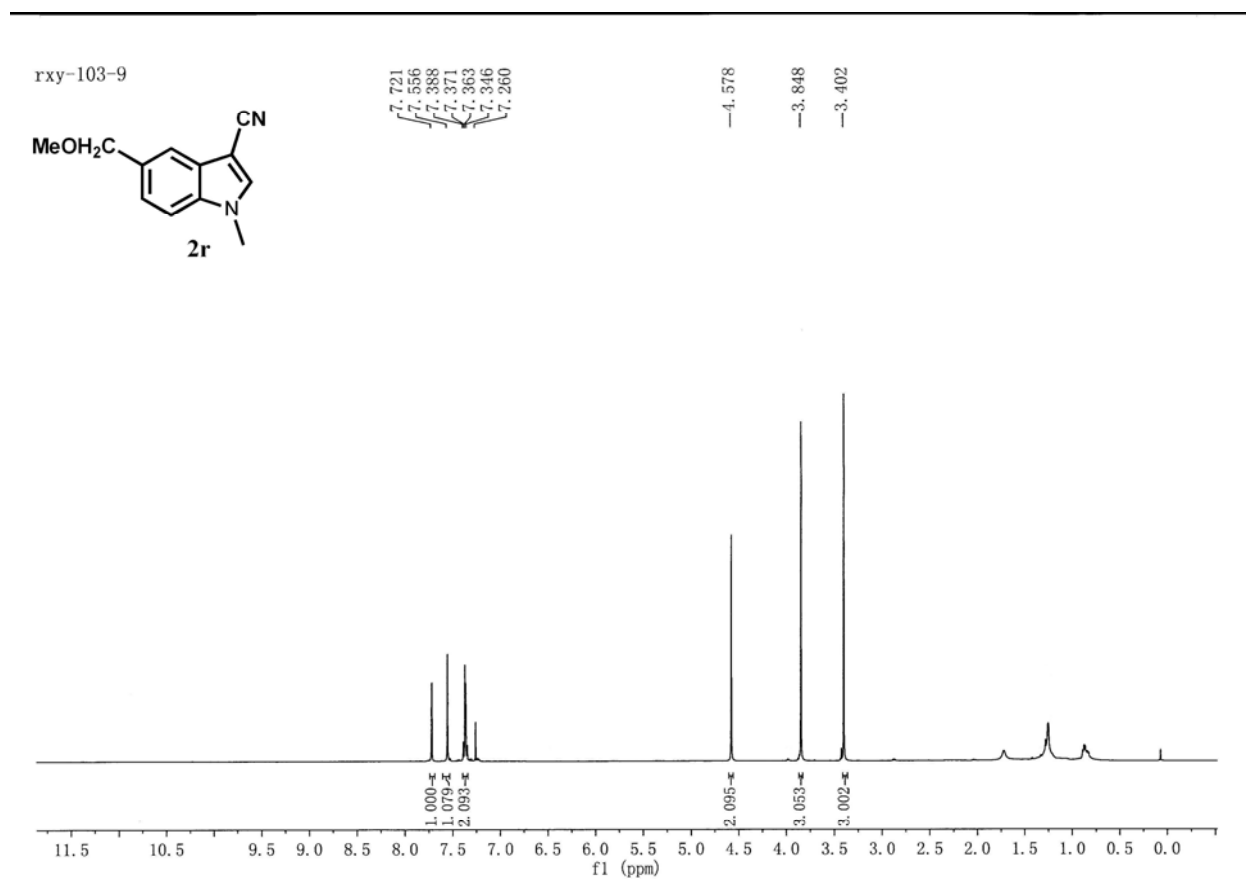
34.208



S25



S26



S27

