Fe(III)-Catalyzed synthesis of steroidal imidazoheterocycles as potent antiproliferative agents

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1. General Information:

NMR spectra were acquired on Bruker Avance 600, 500, 300 spectrometers at room temperature; the chemical shifts δ were measured in ppm relative to the solvent (¹H: CDCl₃, δ = 7.27 ppm; ¹³C: CDCl₃, δ = 77.00 ppm). Splitting patterns are designated as s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet; dd, double doublet; ddd, double double doublet. The coupling constants (J) are in Hertz. High-resolution and accurate mass spectra were obtained on Bruker microTOF-QTM ESI-TOF (Electrospray Ionization/Time of Flight) and Thermo Scientific* LTQ Orbitrap mass spectrometers. Melting points (mp) are uncorrected and were measured on a Boetius capillary melting point apparatus. Analytical thin layer chromatography (TLC) was carried out on silica gel plates (silica gel 60 F254 aluminum supported plates); the visualization was accomplished with an UV lamp (365 nm) and using chemical staining with [Ce(SO₄)₂/H₂SO₄]. Column chromatography was performed on silica gel 60 (230-400 mesh, Merck). 2-Aminopyridines, 2-aminobenzothiazole, and steroids were commercially available and were used without purification. Iron salt (>97%, Lot SZBA0890 and >99.99%, Lot # MKBL0105V) was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. All reactions were carried out using freshly distilled and dry solvents. All reactions involving moisture sensitive reactants were executed using oven dried glassware.

2. Experimental procedures:

Typical experimental procedure for the synthesized compounds (3aa-3cb):



A mixture of 2-aminopyridine (0.24 mmol, 22.5 mg) (1a), pregnenolone acetate (2a) (0.2 mol, 71.7 mg) was taken in an oven dried reaction tube. Then 1,2-dichlorobenzene (2 mL) was added to it and stirred at room temperature for few seconds. Then zinc iodide (0.10 mmol, 7 mg) and iron(III) chloride (0.20 mmol, 6 mg) was added to it and stirred at 110 °C for 18 hours. After completion of the reaction (TLC) it was cooled to room temperature and extracted with dichloromethane. The organic phase was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. The crude residue was

obtained after evaporating the solvent in vacuum and was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using a mixture petroleum ether and ethyl acetate (60:40) as an eluting solvent to afford the pure product (**3aa**) (69 mg, 81%) as a yellow solid.

3. Characterization data for the synthesized products:



17β-(Imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3aa**): Yield 69 mg (81%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 156-158 °C; R_f = 0.06 (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.06 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.58 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.37 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.11 (dd, *J* = 6.8, 9.0 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.72 (dd, *J* = 6.8, 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar),

5.42 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.71 - 4.53 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.88 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.43 – 2.07 (m, 5H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 2.00 – 1.06 (m, 14H), 1.03 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.57 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 148.5, 144.8, 139.9, 125.2, 123.7, 122.6, 117.3, 111.7, 109.6, 74.0, 56.4, 50.9, 50.4, 44.0, 38.2, 38.1, 37.2, 36.8, 32.5, 32.1, 27.9, 26.6, 24.8, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4, 13.2; IR (KBr): 2942, 2903, 1731, 1375, 1364, 1248, 1032, 756, 736 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₈H₃₇N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 433.2850, found 433.2843.



17β-(8'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3ba**):

Yield 68 mg (77%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 94-95 °C; $R_f = 0.63$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 1:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.93 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.35 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.89 (d, J = 5.9 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.62 (dd, J = 5.9, 6.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.44 – 5.39 (m, 1H, 6-CH),

4.74 – 4.52 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.95 (t, J = 9.9 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.60 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.43 – 2.25 (m, 2H), 2.21 – 1.96 (m, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.96 – 1.74 (m, 3H), 1.73 – 1.50 (m, 4H), 1.49 – 1.16 (m, 6H), 1.16 – 0.96 (m, 1H), 1.04 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.56 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.5, 147.6, 144.9, 139.9, 126.9, 123.1, 122.7, 122.6, 111.7, 109.8, 74.0, 56.3, 50.8, 50.3, 43.9, 38.2, 37.8, 37.1, 36.8, 32.5, 32.0, 27.8, 27.0, 24.8, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4, 17.2, 13.2; IR (KBr): 2945, 2908, 2871, 2361, 1730, 1438, 1364, 1248, 1032, 907, 732 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₉H₃₉N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 447.3006, found 447.3004.



 17β -(7'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3ca**):

Yield 65 mg (73%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 124-126 °C; $R_f = 0.18$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 1:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.93 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.35 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.28 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.56 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.44 – 5.39 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.74 – 4.41 (m,

1H, 3 α -CH), 2.86 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17 α -CH), 2.41 – 2.23 (m, 3H), 2.38 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.20 –

1.99 (m, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 2.00 – 1.70 (m, 5H), 1.70 – 1.48 (m, 4H), 1.46 – 1.32 (m, 3H), 1.32 – 1.05 (m, 1H), 1.03 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.55 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 147.9, 145.2, 139.9, 134.8, 124.5, 122.6, 115.6, 114.4, 108.9, 74.1, 56.4, 50.8, 50.4, 44.0, 38.2, 38.1, 37.2, 36.8, 32.5, 32.1, 27.9, 26.6, 24.7, 21.5, 21.4, 20.9, 19.4, 13.2; IR (KBr): 3422, 2964, 2941, 2905, 1732, 1374, 1366, 1249, 1034, 731 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₉H₃₉N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 447.3006, found 447.2991.



 17β -(6'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3da**):

Yield 33 mg (38%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 91-93 °C; $R_f = 0.15$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 1:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.84 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.47 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.28 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.95 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.44 – 5.39 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.77 – 4.47 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.85 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.52 – 2.23 (m, 2H), 2.30 (s,

3H, CH₃), 2.23 – 1.98 (m, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 2.00 – 1.74 (m, 4H), 1.75 – 1.48 (m, 4H), 1.48 – 1.08 (m, 6H), 1.03 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.55 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.5, 148.1, 143.9, 139.9, 126.7, 123.0, 122.6, 121.1, 116.5, 109.3, 74.1, 56.4, 50.9, 50.4, 44.0, 38.2, 38.1, 37.1, 36.8, 32.4, 32.0, 27.9, 26.5, 24.7, 21.4, 20.9, 19.4, 18.2, 13.2; IR (KBr): 3423, 2964, 2945, 1732, 1247, 1031, 907, 800, 731, 439 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₉H₃₉N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 447.3006, found 447.3009.



 17β -(5'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3ea**):

Yield 40 mg (9%, 1.0 mmol); yellow solid; mp 81-83 °C; $R_f = 0.22$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 1:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.51 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.24 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.16 – 7.03 (dd, J = 6.8, 9.0 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.58 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.45 – 5.41 (m, 1H, 6-CH),

4.72 – 4.57 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.92 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.72 – 2.43 (m, 3H), 2.58 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.42 – 2.29 (m, 2H), 2.29 – 1.96 (m, 4H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.95 – 1.74 (m, 3H), 1.73 – 1.49 (m, 3H), 1.48 – 1.35 (m, 4H), 1.04 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.60 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.5, 139.7, 122.4, 114.1, 106.7, 73.9, 56.2, 50.2, 44.0, 38.1, 37.8, 37.0, 36.7, 32.3, 31.9, 30.9, 29.6, 27.7, 26.5, 24.6, 21.4, 20.7, 19.3, 18.7, 13.1 (several signals were not observed); IR (KBr): 3423, 2928, 2851, 1732, 1458, 1365, 1249, 1034, 781, 551, 427 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₉H₃₉N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 447.3006, found 447.3012.



 17β -(7'-Methoxyimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5ene (**3fa**):

Yield 64 mg (70%, 0.2 mmol); brown solid; mp 171-172 °C; $R_f = 0.45$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.83 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.16 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.86 (d, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.43-6.41 (m, 1H, Ar), 5.39 (d, J = 5.2 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 4.65-4.56 (m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 3.81 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.79 (t, J

= 9.6 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.35-2.30 (m, 2H), 2.07-2.02 (m, 8H), 1.89-1.84 (m, 2H), 1.80-1.74 (m, 1H), 1.65-1.55 (m, 3H), 1.52-1.50 (m, 1H), 1.43-1.31 (m, 3H), 1.26-1.19 (m, 2H), 1.01 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.54(s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 157.4, 147.9, 146.2, 139.9, 125.6, 122.6, 108.2, 106.6, 94.6, 74.1, 56.3, 55.5, 50.8, 50.3, 43.9, 38.2, 38.1, 37.1, 36.8, 32.4, 32.0, 27.9, 26.4, 24.7, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4, 13.2; Anal. Calcd for C₂₉H₃₈N₂O₃: C, 75.29; H, 8.28; N, 6.06%; Found: C, 75.13; H, 8.31; N, 6.11%.



 17β -(8'-Bromo-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3ga**):

Yield 65 mg (64%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.45$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.03-8.01 (m, 1H, Ar), 7.43 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.35-7.33 (m, 1H, Ar), 6.58 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.39 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 4.64-4.58 (m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 2.95 (t, J = 10.0 Hz, 1H, 17 α -CH),

2.35-2.30 (m, 2H), 2.10-2.03 (m, 5H), 1.90-1.86 (m, 3H), 1.74 (s, 2H), 1.63-1.53 (m, 4H), 1.46-1.38 (m, 2H), 1.28-1.24 (m, 4H), 1.01 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.53 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 149.5, 142.7, 139.9, 126.1, 124.6, 122.6, 115.2, 111.7, 111.2, 74.1, 56.3, 50.8, 50.3, 44.1, 38.2, 37.8, 37.1, 36.8, 32.5, 32.0, 27.9, 26.9, 24.8, 21.5, 20.9, 19.5, 13.3; Anal. Calcd for C₂₈H₃₅BrN₂O₂: C, 65.75; H, 6.90; N, 5.48%; Found: C, 65.93; H, 6.86; N, 5.40%.



 17β -(6'-Chloro-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3ha**):

Yield 81 mg (87%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 130-132 °C; $R_f = 0.15$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.11 (d, J = 1.9 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.51 (d, J = 9.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.35 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.07 (dd, J = 1.9, 9.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.46 – 5.36 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.71 – 4.56 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.86 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.43 – 2.24

(m, 2H), 2.24 - 1.97 (m, 4H), 2.04 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.96 - 1.74 (m, 4H), 1.73 - 1.49 (m, 3H), 1.48 - 1.33 (m, 3H), 1.31 - 1.14 (m, 3H), 1.02 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.54 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); 13 C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 149.7, 143.2, 139.9, 125.1, 123.0, 122.5, 119.9, 117.5, 110.1, 74.1, 56.3, 50.8, 50.4, 44.2, 38.2, 38.1, 37.2, 36.8, 32.4, 32.0, 27.9, 26.5, 24.7, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4,

13.2; IR (KBr): 2964, 2941, 2905, 1732, 1703, 1520, 1500, 1374, 1249, 1068, 1037, 801, 793, 731, 706 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₈H₃₆ClN₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 467.2460, found 467.2452.



17β-(6'-Bromo-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-acetoxy-androst-5-ene (*3ia*):

Yield 73 mg (72%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; $R_f = 0.25$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.22 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.50 (d, J = 9.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.35 (s, 1H), 7.20 (dd, J = 1.5, 9.5 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.46 – 5.36 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.72 – 4.55 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.87 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.47 – 2.15 (m, 4H), 2.14 –

1.97 (m, 2H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.97 – 1.73 (m, 5H), 1.72 – 1.49 (m, 5H), 1.11 – 0.85 (m, 3H), 1.04 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.55 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 170.5, 139.7, 127.1, 125.1, 117.6, 109.8, 56.2, 54.8, 50.6, 50.1, 49.9, 44.0, 38.1, 38.0, 37.9, 37.0, 36.7, 32.3, 31.9, 29.7, 27.7, 26.3, 24.6, 24.5, 21.4, 20.7, 19.3, 13.1; IR (KBr): 2942, 2904, 1729, 1701, 1509, 1499, 1373, 1247, 1031, 907, 798, 732 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₈H₃₆BrN₂O₂ [M+H]+ 511.1955, found 511.1950.



 17β -(6'-Iodo-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3***ja*):

Yield 82 mg (74%, 0.2 mmol); yellow solid; mp 168-170 °C; R_f = 0.20 (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.33 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.40 (d, *J* = 9.4 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.30 (d, *J* = 9.4 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.28 (s, 1H, Ar), 5.46 – 5.36 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.71 – 4.55 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.86 (t, *J* = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.43 – 2.26 (m, 2H), 2.23 –

1.99 (m, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.98 – 1.72 (m, 4H), 1.70 – 1.47 (m, 4H), 1.30 – 1.15 (m, 3H), 1.12 – 0.96 (m, 3H), 1.03 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.54 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 170.5, 150.3, 140.6, 139.7, 123.7, 123.0, 122.4, 121.8, 118.7, 111.5, 73.9, 56.2, 50.6, 50.1, 44.0, 38.1, 37.7, 37.0, 36.7, 32.3, 31.9, 27.7, 26.6, 24.6, 21.4, 20.7, 19.3, 13.1; IR (KBr): 2942, 2903, 1727, 1493, 1373, 1365, 1332, 1248, 1030, 917, 797, 754, 733, 671 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₈H₃₆IN₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 559.1816, found 559.1818.



17β-(6',8'-Dichloro-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-acetoxyandrost-5-ene (**3ka**):

Yield 35 mg (7%, 1.0 mmol); yellow solid; $R_f = 0.66$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.06 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.42 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.21 (s, 1H, Ar), 5.47 – 5.38 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.75 – 4.59 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.94 (t, *J* = 9.9 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.42 – 2.21 (m, 2H), 2.20 – 2.00 (m, 2H), 2.06 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.99

- 1.74 (m, 3H), 1.73 - 1.49 (m, 7H), 1.48 - 1.33 (m, 3H), 1.32 - 1.16 (m, 2H), 1.04 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.55 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 170.5, 150.4, 140.6, 139.7, 123.7,

123.0, 122.4, 121.8, 118.7, 111.5, 73.9, 56.2, 50.6, 50.1, 44.0, 38.1, 37.7, 37.0, 36.7, 32.3, 31.9, 27.7, 26.6, 24.6, 21.4, 20.7, 19.3, 13.1; IR (KBr): 3343, 2945, 2904, 1727, 1516, 1374, 1249, 1030, 933, 819, 754 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for $C_{28}H_{35}Cl_2N_2O_2$ [M+H]⁺ 501.2070, found 501.2059.



³ 17β-(Methyl imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine-6'-carboxylate)-3βacetoxy-androst-5-ene (**3la**):

Yield 142 mg (29%, 1.0 mmol); yellow solid; mp 229-231°C; $R_f = 0.16$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.32 (s, 1H, Ar), 8.09 (d, J = 7.1 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.48 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.34 (d, J = 7.1 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.47 – 5.39 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.75 – 4.44 (m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 3.95 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.90 (t,

J = 9.8 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.41 – 2.30 (m, 2H), 2.27 – 1.93 (m, 4H), 2.04 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.91 – 1.77 (m, 3H), 1.73 – 1.50 (m, 4H), 1.49 – 1.34 (m, 3H), 1.33 – 1.13 (m, 3H), 1.02 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.55 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 166.0, 151.3, 143.7, 139.9, 125.0, 124.6, 122.5, 119.8, 111.3, 111.1, 74.0, 56.3, 52.5, 50.9, 50.3, 44.2, 38.2, 38.0, 37.1, 36.8, 32.4, 32.0, 27.8, 26.4, 24.7, 21.5, 20.8, 19.4, 13.2; IR (KBr): 2964, 2941, 2900, 1722, 1436, 1332, 1240, 1088, 1040, 761, 743 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for $C_{30}H_{39}N_2O_4$ [M+H]⁺ 491.2904, found 491.2895.



 17β -(6'-Trifluoromethyl-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3 β -acetoxyandrost-5-ene (**3ma**):

Yield 82 mg (82%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.55$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.42 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.63 (d, J = 9.6 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.44 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.24-7.21 (m, 1H, Ar), 5.38 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 4.64-4.56 (m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 2.86 (t, J = 10.0 Hz, 1H, 17 α -CH), 2.32-2.29 (m, 2H), 2.16-2.01 (m, 6H), 1.95-1.92 (m, 1H), 1.88-1.80 (m, 3H),

1.65-1.49 (m, 4H), 1.40-1.36 (m, 3H), 1.28-1.11 (m, 3H), 1.00 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.51 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C {¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 150.7, 144.5, 139.8, 124.2 (q, $J_{C-F} = 6.0$ Hz), 122.5, 119.6, 117.7, 116.1 (q, $J_{C-F} = 34.0$ Hz), 112.6 (q, $J_{C-F} = 288.0$ Hz), 110.9, 74.0, 56.3, 50.8, 50.2, 44.2, 38.2, 38.0, 37.1, 36.8, 32.4, 32.0, 27.8, 26.4, 24.7, 21.5, 20.8, 19.4, 13.2; Anal. Calcd for C₂₉H₃₅F₃N₂O₂: C, 69.58; H, 7.05; N, 5.60%; Found: C, 69.41; H, 7.09; N, 5.51%.

 17β -(Benzo[d]imidazo[2',1'-b]thiazole)- 3β -acetoxy-androst-5-ene (3na):

Yield 87 mg (18%, 1.0 mmol); yellow solid; $R_f = 0.50$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 3:1); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.68 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.55 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.46 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.41 (dd, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.30 (dd, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.49 – 5.38 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 4.75 – 4.45 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.81 (t, J = 9.9 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH),

2.46 – 2.19 (m, 2H), 2.18 – 1.96 (m, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H, 3-OCOCH₃), 1.95 – 1.74 (m, 3H), 1.73 – 1.49 (m, 6H), 1.48 – 1.35 (m, 2H), 1.14 – 0.95 (m, 1H), 1.04 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.94 – 0.72 (m, 2H), 0.59 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.3, 149.8, 139.7, 132.3, 130.1, 126.3, 125.9, 124.2, 122.4, 112.3, 108.2, 73.9, 56.0, 51.0, 50.2, 43.7, 38.1, 38.0, 37.0, 36.7, 32.3, 31.9, 29.6, 27.7, 26.2, 24.5, 21.4, 20.8, 19.3, 13.0; IR (KBr): 2939, 2851, 1729, 1542, 1490, 1465, 1439, 1246, 1028, 748, 425 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₃₀H₃₇N₂O₂S [M+H]⁺ 489.2570, found 489.2559.

17β-(Imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-hydroxy-androst-5-ene (*3ab*):



Yield 55 mg (71%, 0.2 mmol); light yellow gummy mass; $R_f = 0.45$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.05-8.03 (m, 1H, Ar), 7.55 (d, J = 9.2 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.35 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.11-7.06 (m, 1H, Ar), 6.72-6.68 (m, 1H, Ar), 5.37-5.36 (m, 1H, 6-CH), 3.54-3.52 (m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 2.86 (t, J = 10.0 Hz, 1H, 17 α -CH), 2.33-2.25 (m, 2H), 2.16-2.06 (m, 2H), 1.97-1.93 (m, 1H), 1.88-1.74 (m, 5H), 1.60-1.38 (m, 7H), 1.28-1.22 (m, 2H), 1.00 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.54

(s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ${}^{13}C{}^{1}H$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 148.4, 144.8, 141.0, 125.2, 123.7, 121.7, 117.2, 111.7, 109.6, 71.9, 56.4, 50.9, 50.4, 44.1, 42.4, 38.1, 37.4, 36.8, 32.5, 32.1, 31.8, 26.6, 24.8, 20.9, 19.5, 13.2; Anal. Calcd for C₂₆H₃₄N₂O: C, 79.96; H, 8.77; N, 7.17%; Found: C, 79.76; H, 8.81; N, 7.11%.



17β-(8'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-hydroxy-androst-5-ene (*3bb*):

Yield 54 mg (68%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.45$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.91 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.33 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.87 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.61 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.37 (d, J = 5.2 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 3.57-3.49

(m, 1H, 3 α -CH), 2.93 (t, J = 10.0 Hz, 1H, 17 α -CH), 2.58 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.33-2.23 (m, 2H), 2.14-1.98 (m, 4H), 1.88-1.77 (m, 5H), 1.65-1.47 (m, 5H), 1.45-1.35 (m, 3H), 1.00 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.54 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.8, 145.1, 141.0, 127.0, 123.1, 122.6, 121.7, 111.7, 109.8, 71.9, 56.4, 50.9, 50.4, 43.9, 42.4, 37.9, 37.4, 36.7, 32.5, 32.1, 31.8, 27.1, 24.8, 21.0, 19.5, 17.3, 13.2; Anal. Calcd for C₂₇H₃₆N₂O: C, 80.15; H, 8.97; N, 6.92%; Found: C, 80.27; H, 8.95; N, 6.99%.



17β-(7'-Methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3β-hydroxy-androst-5-ene (*3cb*):

Yield 55 mg (69%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.50$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.91 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.38 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.26 (s, 1H, Ar), 6.55 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.35 (s, 1H, 6-CH), 3.56-3.49 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.84 (t, J = 10.4 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.35 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.29-2.22 (m,

2H), 2.08-1.98 (m, 5H), 1.86-1.79 (m, 3H), 1.62-1.47 (m, 5H), 1.41-1.37 (m, 2H), 1.26-1.21 (m, 2H), 0.98 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.52 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ${}^{13}C{}^{1H}$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.9, 145.2, 141.0, 135.0, 124.5, 121.6, 115.6, 114.5, 109.0, 71.8, 56.4, 50.9, 50.4, 44.0, 42.4, 38.2, 37.4, 36.7, 32.4, 32.0, 31.7, 26.7, 24.7, 21.4, 20.9, 19.5, 13.2; Anal. Calcd for C₂₇H₃₆N₂O: C, 80.15; H, 8.97; N, 6.92%; Found: C, 79.97; H, 9.00; N, 6.87%.



 17β -(3'-Iodo-8'-methylimidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3 β -acetoxyandrost-5-ene (**4ba**):

Yield 101 mg (89%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; R_f = 0.50 (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.97 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.93 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.73 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.40 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 4.63-4.58 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 2.93 (t, *J* = 9.6 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.58 (s,

3H, CH₃), 2.34-2.32 (m, 2H), 2.08-1.93 (m, 5H), 1.87-1.84 (m, 3H), 1.65-1.28 (m, 10H), 1.18-1.14 (m, 1H), 1.03-1.01 (m, 4H), 0.72 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); $^{13}C{^{1}H}$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 150.4, 147.8, 139.8, 127.3, 124.0, 123.1, 122.7, 112.3, 74.1, 56.7, 50.4, 49.8, 46.2, 38.9, 38.2, 37.1, 36.8, 32.3, 32.1, 27.9, 26.9, 25.0, 21.5, 21.0, 19.5, 16.7, 13.5; Anal. Calcd for C₂₉H₃₇IN₂O₂: C, 60.84; H, 6.51; N, 4.89%; Found: C, 60.63; H, 6.55; N, 4.95%.



17β-(8'-Methyl-3'-phenylselanyl-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3βacetoxy-androst-5-ene (*5ba*):

Yield 86 mg (72%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.50$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.05 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.15-7.11 (m, 3H, Ar), 6.99-6.97 (m, 3H, Ar), 6.65 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.40 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H, 6-CH),

4.64-4.57 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 3.21 (t, J = 9.6 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.69-2.59 (m, 4H), 2.33-2.32 (m, 2H), 2.07-1.98 (m, 5H), 1.86-1.80 (m, 3H), 1.62-1.22 (m, 11H), 1.00 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.76 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 154.3, 147.7, 139.8, 131.7, 129.4, 128.0, 127.2, 126.3, 124.1, 123.1, 122.7, 112.1, 105.5, 74.0, 56.7, 50.3, 49.5, 45.4, 38.2, 38.0,

37.1, 36.8, 32.3, 32.1, 27.8, 27.1, 25.0, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4, 17.0, 13.5; ⁷⁷Se NMR (76 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 194.5; Anal. Calcd for C₃₅H₄₂N₂O₂Se: C, 69.87; H, 7.04; N, 4.66%; Found: C, 70.01; H, 7.00; N, 4.77%.



17β-(8'-Methyl-3'-phenylethynyl-imidazo[1',2'-a]pyridine)-3βacetoxy-androst-5-ene (**6ba**):

Yield 91 mg (84%, 0.2 mmol); brown gummy mass; $R_f = 0.50$ (petroleum ether – EtOAc, 2:1); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.16 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H, Ar), 7.54-7.52 (m, 2H, Ar), 7.40-7.34 (m, 3H, Ar), 6.98 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H, Ar), 6.77 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H, Ar), 5.40 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H, 6-CH), 4.63-4.58 (m, 1H, 3α-CH), 3.15 (t,

J = 10.0 Hz, 1H, 17α-CH), 2.80-2.71 (m, 1H), 2.61 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.34-2.31 (m, 2H), 2.11-2.03 (m, 6H), 1.88-1.85 (m, 4H), 1.69-1.53 (m, 4H), 1.47-1.30 (m, 4H), 1.20-1.16 (m, 1H) 1.01 (s, 3H, 19-CH₃), 0.70 (s, 3H, 18-CH₃); ${}^{13}C{}^{1}H{}$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 152.2, 145.0, 139.8, 130.9, 128.6, 128.2, 127.2, 124.1, 123.4, 122.7, 112.3, 107.0, 100.4, 78.8, 74.1, 56.5, 50.8, 50.3, 46.2, 38.3, 38.2, 37.1, 36.8, 32.4, 32.1, 27.8, 25.7, 25.1, 21.5, 20.9, 19.4, 17.1, 13.5 Anal. Calcd for C₃₇H₄₂N₂O₂: C, 81.28; H, 7.74; N, 5.12%; Found: C, 81.11; H, 7.76; N, 5.03%.

4. Biology:^{1,2}

In vitro ligand screening. Initial screening of the ligands was performed by using HTS (high throughput screening) approach. The 96-well plate was filled by ligand solutions in 50 mM potassium-phosphate buffer (pH 7.4), containing 0.2% CHAPS and 0.3 M NaCl (final ligand concentration was 80 uM). After adding protein solution (final concentration 1 uM) difference spectrum (350-500 nm) was measured (protein+ligand vs. protein+DMSO) using SpectraMax i3 spectrophotofluorometer («Molecular Devices», USA). Compounds for which typical spectral response (type I or II) was detected were picked for further experiments.

Estimation of K_d. Affinity of the ligands was analyzed using spectrophotometric titration in 50 mM potassium-phosphate buffer (pH 7.4), containing 0.2% CHAPS and 0.3 M NaCl with final CYP concentration 1 μ M. Ligand solution (stock solutions with concentrations from 10⁻⁴ to 10⁻² M) was added to the experimental cuvette and equal volume of the solvent (DMSO) to the control cuvette. For the determination of dissociation constant of enzyme-ligand complex (K_d) equation for the Tight binding was used. Titration data were approximated with the following equation by Levenberg-Marquart algorithm:

$$A = A_{\max} \cdot \frac{[L]_t + [R]_0 + K_d - \sqrt{([L]_t + [R]_0 + K_d)^2 - 4[R]_0[L]_t}}{2[R]_0}$$

where

A – amplitude of the spectral change at [L] ligand concentration;

 A_{max} – amplitude of the spectral change at [L] ligand concentration at saturation ligand concentration;

[L]_t – total ligand concentration;

 $[R]_0$ – total protein concentration.



Figure S1. Difference spectra, obtained during spectrophotometric titration of human recombinant CYP7A1 and CYP17A1 by compounds **3ia** and **3la**, respectively.³

Cell lines and evaluation of antiproliferative activity. The human prostate cancer cell line 22Rv1, human breast cancer cell line MCF-7, and human ovarian cancer cell line SKOV3 were purchased from the ATCC collection. 22Rv1 cells were cultured in standard RPMI-1640 medium (Gibco) supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum (FCS) (HyClone), RPMI-1640 Vitamins (PanEco) and 0.1 mg/ml sodium pyruvate (Santa Cruz) at 37 °C, 5% CO₂ and 80–85% humidity (NuAir CO₂ incubator). SKOV3 and MCF-7 cells were cultured in standard (4.5 g/L glucose) DMEM medium (Gibco) supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum (FCS) (HyClone), and 0.1 mg/ml sodium pyruvate. The cell growth was evaluated by the modified MTT (3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl]-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide) (Applichem) test ¹ as described in ².

 $^{^3}$ Other compounds were not active enough against Cytochrome P450 enzymes for determination of $K_{\rm d}$

22Rv1 cells were seeded at a density of 10^5 cells per well in 24-well plates (Corning) in 900 μ L of the medium, MCF-7 and SKOV3 cells - at a density of $4*10^4$ and $5*10^4$ cells per well, respectively.

The synthesized compounds were dissolved in DMSO (Applichem) to 10 mM before experiments and then were diluted in the medium to the required concentrations. The tested compounds with different concentrations in 100 μ L of the medium were added 24 h after the seeding, and the cells were grown for 72 h. After incubation with the compounds, the medium was removed, and the MTT reagent dissolved in the medium was added to the final concentration of 0.2 mg/ml to each well and incubated for 3 h. The cell supernatants were removed and the MTT formazan purple crystals were dissolved in 100% DMSO (350 μ L per well). Then the plates were gently shaken and the absorbance was measured at 540 nm with a MultiScan reader (ThermoFisher). The viability of the cells was assessed after subtraction of the blank value (the absorbance in the well w/o cells) from all wells. Dose-response curves were analyzed by regression analysis using sigmoidal curves (Log(concentration) vs normalized absorbance). The half maximal inhibitory concentrations (IC₅₀) were determined with GraphPad Prism.

Statistical tests. Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel and GraphPad Prism. Each biology experiment was repeated three times and results were expressed as mean + S.D. (standard deviation value). Student's t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in comparisons. P value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

5. References:

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2. Y. A. Volkova, Y. S. Antonov, A. V. Komkov, A. M. Scherbakov, A. S. Shashkov, L. G. Menchikov, E. I. Chernoburova and I. V. Zavarzin, *RSC Adv.*, 2016, **6**, 42863.

6. NMR spectra for the synthesized products





















S19













1H of VBSS-148-27











S26

13C of VBSS-148-





13C of VBSS-148-C1-7

S31

1.00

1.01

3.12

3.10 4.09

3.02

1.08

1.03

S39

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1H of VBSS-148-app-3

13C of vbSS-148-app-3

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77Se of VBSS-148-app-5

-194.55

5ba H CH₃

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