Supporting Information

Facile synthesis and evaluation of tryptamine-piperazine-2,5dione conjugates as anticancer agents

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General Information

¹H and ¹³C NMR were recorded on Bruker AVANCE III 400MHz instrument with TMS as internal standard. ¹H NMR data are reported as follows: chemical shift in ppm (δ), multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t= triplet, m = multiplet), coupling constant (Hz), relative intensity. ¹³C NMR data are reported as follows: chemical shift in ppm (δ). HPLC-MS analyses were performed on a Shimadzu-2020 LC-MS instrument using the following conditions: Shim-pack VPODS C18 column (reverse phase, 150 x 2.0mm); 80% acetonitrile and 20% water over 10.0 min; flow rate of 0.4 mL/min; UV photodiode array detection from 200 to 300nm. The products were purified by Biotage IsoleraTM Spektra Systems and Hexane/EtOAc solvent systems. All reagents and solvents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification.

Microwave Irradiation Experiments

All microwave irradiation experiments were carried out in a Biotage® Initiator Classic microwave apparatus with continuous irradiation power from 0 to 400W with utilization of the standard absorbance level of 250W maximum power (external surface sensor for temperature monitoring). The reactions were carried out in 5 mL glass tubes, sealed with microwave cavity. The reaction was irradiated at a required ceiling temperature using maximum power for the stipulated time. Then it was cooled to 50 °C with gas jet cooling.

General procedures for compound 6.

A solution of benzaldehyde (1.00 mmol) and propiolic acid (1.00 mmol) in MeOH (2 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 5 min in a 10 mL microwave vial. Then, tryptamine (1.0 mL) and benzyl isonitrile (1.00 mmol) were added separately. The mixture was stirred overnight and monitored by TLC. When the reaction was completed, the solvent was removed under a nitrogen stream. The residue was dissolved in MeCN (3.0 mL), and then K₂CO₃ (2.0 mmol) was added, sealed and heated in microwave at 120 °C for 10 min. After the microwave vial was cooled to room temperature, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and then diluted with EtOAc (15.0 mL) and washed with brine. The organic layer was dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and concentrated. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography using a gradient of ethyl acetate/hexane (20-80%) to afford the relative targeted products **6a-j**.

Measurement of cell viability and proliferation

Human pancreatic cancer cell lines AsPC-1 and SW1990 were cultured under standard culture conditions at 37 °C and 5% CO₂ atmosphere in the specific medium (McCOY'S 5A and DMEM) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, 100 UI/mL penicillin and 100 mg/L streptomycin. The short-term effects of compounds **6a-j** on cell growth were measured with the MTT assay. Briefly, AsPC-1 and SW1990 cancer cells were seeded into 96-well plates (3,000 cells/well) and incubated overnight at 37 °C, then treated with 0, 1, 5, 10, 20, 40 and 50 μ mol/L test compound for 48 h. Next, 20 μ L MTT solution (5 mg/mL) was added into each well and incubated for another 4 h followed by media removal and solubilization in 200 μ L DMSO. The absorbance value was determined at 570 nm using a microplate reader (Bio-Tek, Winooski, VT, USA). The long-term effects of compound **6h** on cell growth were assessed with a clone formation assay. Cells were cultured at a density of 200 cells per well in 6-well plates for 36 h. Then, different concentrations of compound **6h** (0, 5, 10 and 20 μ mol/L) were added. Cells were cultured for approximately 14 d until the cells grew

visible colonies. The medium was discarded, and the colonies were stained with crystal violet (C0121, Beyotime) for 15 min at room temperature. After carefully washing with PBS, the stained colonies in each well were photographed and the number of colonies with more than 50 cells was counted manually.

Materials and methods

Cell lines: The human cancer cell lines were purchased from Cobioer (Nanjing, China). Human pancreatic cancer cell lines AsPC-1, PANC-1, SW1990, HPDE and HPAC were culture in Roswell Park Memorial Institute (RPMI)-1640 medium. The MHCC97H, MHCC97L, MDA-MB-231, SW620 and Cal27 were culture in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM). The MCF-7 was culture in Minimum Eagle's Medium (MEM). The MCF-7 and HCT116 were culture in MEM and MCCoy's 5A medium, respectively. All cell medium containing 10% fetal bovine serum and 1% PenStrep (100 U/ml Penicilium and 100 μ g/ml Streptomycin). Human cancer cell lines was cultured at 37 °C in a humidified incubator supplied with 5% CO₂.

Reagents, antibodies, and standard assays: The compound **6h** was synthesized in our laboratory. All antibody were purchased from Cell Signaling (Beverly, MA). They include p-ERK, ERK, p-AKT, AKT, PARP and β -actin. Gemcitabine, erlotinib and cisplatin were purchased from Selleck (Shanghai, China). Cell viability was determined by MTT assay. For cell growth assays, 0.5% crystal violet was dissolved in 1% SDS after staining, and then measured at 570 nm (OD570) with a plate reader. **Statistical analysis:** Statistical analyses were performed by unpaired Student's t test for two group comparisons and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for multi-group comparisons at a significance level of p< 0.05. Data were presented as means ± SD from three or more independent experiments.



Supplementary Figures and Figure Legends

Supplementary Figure S1. The effect of compound 6 on cell viability in different cancer cell lines. The hepatoma carcinoma cell, breast cancer, head and neck squamous cell carcinoma and colon cancer cells were treated with 20 μM compound **6**, respectively, cell viability was determined by MTT assays (A-D).



Supplementary Figure S2. The effect of compound 6 on cell viability in normal pancreatic ductal epithelial cell line. HPDE cell was treated with a range concentration 6h for 48 hours.



Supplementary Figure S3. The effect of pancreatic cancer clinical drugs on cell viability in pancreatic cancer cell line. AsPC-1 and SW1990 cells were treated with different concentration gemcitabine, erlotinib and cisplatin for 48 h, respectively (A-C).

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-benzyl-3-methylene-6-phenylpiperazine-2,5-dione,



Compound **6a**, white solid, yield 92%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.13 (s, 1H, NH), 7.55 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.36 – 7.33 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.27 (s, 1H, ArH), 7.25 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.21–7.17 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.12 – 7.08 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.98 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.94–6.92 (m, 2H, ArH), 5.90 (s, 1H, CH), 5.17 (d, J = 15.8 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.94 (s, 2H, CH₂Ph), 4.61–4.57 (m, 1H, CH₂=), 4.29–4.23 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.19–2.97 (m, 3H,

CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 164.0, 159.0, 136.3, 135.4, 129.2 (2C), 129.1, 128.7 (3C), 127.4, 127.2 (2C), 126.8, 126.4, 122.3 (2C), 122.0, 119.6, 118.6, 112.5, 111.4 (2C), 104.6, 65.5, 47.0, 46.8, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₈H₂₆N₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 436.20250, found 436.20212.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-benzyl-6-(4-fluorophenyl)-3-methylenepiperazine-2,5dione, Compound **6b**, white solid, yield 88%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.14 (s,



1H, NH), 7.55 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.35 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.25 (s, 1H, ArH), 7.23–7.18 (m, 5H, ArH), 7.12– 7.09 (m, 1H, ArH), 7.06–7.02 (m, 2H, ArH), 6.99 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.94 – 6.92 (m, 2H, ArH), 5.91 (s, 1H, CH), 5.18 (d, J =16.2 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.95 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.88 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.61 (d, J = 16.5 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.29 – 4.22 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.18 – 2.97 (m, 3H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz,

CDCl₃) 163.8, 158.8, 136.4, 136.1, 135.3, 132.1, 128.8 (2C), 128.6, 128.5, 127.5, 127.1, 126.4, 122.3 (2C), 122.0, 119.6, 118.5, 116.3, 116.1 (2C), 112.4, 111.4, 104.9, 64.8, 47.0, 46.7, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₈H₂₅FN₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 454.19308, found 454.19339.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-benzyl-6-(4-chlorophenyl)-3-methylenepiperazine-2,5dione, Compound **6c**, white solid, yield 64%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.09 (s, 1H, NH), 7.55 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.35–7.31(m, 4H, ArH), 7.25–7.21 (m, 4H,



ArH), 7.16 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.12 – 7.09 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.99 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.94–6.92 (m, 2H, ArH), 5.90 (s, 1H, CH), 5.14 (d, J = 15.7 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.95 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.85 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.61 (d, J = 15.7 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.30 – 4.23 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.17 – 3.12 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.08–2.98 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 163.5, 158.8, 136.4, 136.1, 135.2, 134.8, 129.4 (2C),

128.8, 128.1 (2C), 127.5 (2C), 127.1 (2C), 126.4, 122.4, 122.0, 119.7, 118.5 (2C), 112.4, 111.4, 105.0, 64.9, 47.1, 46.8, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{28}H_{25}CIN_3O_2^+$ (M+H)⁺ 470.16353, found 470.16422.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-benzyl-6-(4-bromophenyl)-3-methylenepiperazine-2,5dione, Compound **6d**, white solid, yield 85%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.10 (s,



1H, NH), 7.48 – 7.46 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.36 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.26–7.19 (m, 5H, ArH), 7.13–7.09 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.99–6.94 (m, 3H, ArH), 5.90 (s, 1H, CH), 5.15 (s, 1H, CH₂=), 4.95 (m, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.83 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.61 – 4.57 (m, 1H, CH₂=), 4.29 – 4.25 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.17– 3.12 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.08 – 2.99 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 163.4, 158.8, 136.3, 136.0, 135.4,

135.2, 132.3, 128.8 (2C), 128.4 (2C), 127.5 (2C), 127.1, 126.4, 123.3, 122.4, 122.0, 119.7 (2C), 118.5, 112.4, 111.4, 105.0, 65.0, 47.1, 46.8, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₈H₂₅BrN₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 514.11301, found 514.11298.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-benzyl-3-methylene-6-(p-tolyl)piperazine-2,5-dione,

Compound **6e**, white solid, yield 88%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.15 (s, 1H, NH), 7.55 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.34 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.25 (s, 1H, ArH), 7.20 – 7.08 (m, 7H, ArH), 6.98 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.91–6.81 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.75 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.58 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.90 (s, 1H, CH), 5.10 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.87 (s, 2H, CH₂Ph), 4.60 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.28–4.22 (m, 1H, 8



CH₂CH₂), 3.20 - 3.06 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂), 3.03-2.97 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 164.2, 158.8, 139.2, 138.0, 136.4, 136.2, 133.1, 130.3 (2C), 129.9, 127.2, 126.6, 122.3, 122.1, 122.0, 119.6, 118.5, 114.5, 114.3, 113.5, 112.5, 111.4 (2C), 104.4, 65.2, 46.8, 46.4, 23.3, 21.1. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₉H₂₈N₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 450.21815, found 450.21674.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-(3-fluorobenzyl)-3-methylene-6-phenylpiperazine-2,5dione, Compound **6f**, white solid, yield 90%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.08 (s,



1H, NH), 7.56 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.41 – 7.36 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.26–7.22 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.21–7.09 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.01 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.92 – 6.88 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.73 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.58 (d, J = 11.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.91 (s, 1H, CH), 5.11 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.89 (d, J = 9.2 Hz, 2H, CH₂Ph), 4.61 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.31–4.25 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.21 – 2.98 (m, 3H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100

MHz, CDCl₃) 164.0, 158.8, 138.0, 137.9, 136.3, 136.1, 130.4, 130.3, 129.3, 129.2, 127.2, 126.6, 122.3, 122.1, 122.0, 119.6, 118.5, 114.6, 114.3, 113.4, 113.2, 112.5, 111.4, 104.5, 65.5, 46.8, 46.4, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{28}H_{25}FN_3O_2^+$ (M+H)⁺ 454.19308, found 454.19302.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-(3-fluorobenzyl)-6-(4-fluorophenyl)-3-



methylenepiperazine-2,5-dione, Compound **6g**, white solid, yield 68%. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.15 (s, 1H, NH), 7.55 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.36 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.25–7.16 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.13–7.09 (m, 1H, ArH), 7.06–6.99 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.92 – 6.89 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.73 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.60 – 6.57 (m, 1H, ArH), 5.91 (s, 1H, CH), 5.08 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.87 (d, *J* = 21.3 Hz, 2H, CH₂Ph), 4.60 (d, J = 16.1 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.29–4.25 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.19–3.14 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.10–3.00 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 163.8, 158.7, 137.8 (2C), 136.4, 136.0, 131.9 (2C), 130.4, 128.5, 127.1, 122.4, 122.1, 119.7, 118.4, 116.4, 116.2, 114.7, 114.4, 113.4, 113.2, 112.3, 111.5, 104.8, 64.8, 46.7, 46.5, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{28}H_{24}F_2N_3O_2^+$ (M+H)⁺ 472.18366, found 472.18335.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-6-(4-bromophenyl)-4-(3-fluorobenzyl)-3-

methylenepiperazine-2,5-dione, Compound 6h, white solid, yield 75%. ¹H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.08 (s, 1H, NH), 7.54 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.49 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.37 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.23 – 7.17 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.13–7.08 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.00 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.94–6.90 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.73 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.60 (d, J = 9.4 Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.91 (s, 1H, CH), 5.04 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.90 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.80 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.64 (d, J = 16.0

Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.32–4.25(m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.22 - 3.14 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.11 - 2.99 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 163.5, 158.7, 137.8 (2C), 136.4, 135.9, 135.1, 132.4 (2C), 130.5 (2C), 128.3, 127.1, 123.4, 122.4 (2C), 122.0, 119.7, 118.5, 114.7, 113.3, 112.4, 111.5, 104.9, 64.9, 46.8, 46.5, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₈H₂₄BrFN₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 532.10359, found 532.10333.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-6-(4-chlorophenyl)-4-(3-fluorobenzyl)-3-

methylenepiperazine-2,5-dione, Compound 6i, white solid, yield 62%. ¹H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.15 (s, 1H, NH), 7.54 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.37 – 7.31 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.25 – 7.19 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.16–7.09 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.99 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.93– 6.89 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.73 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.60 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.92 (s, 1H, CH), 5.05 (d, J = 16.0Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.90 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.82 (s, 1H, CH₂Ph), 4.62 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 4.31 – 4.24 (m, 10 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.22 - 3.14 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.09 - 2.98 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 163.6, 158.7, 137.8, 136.4, 135.9, 135.3, 134.6, 130.4 (2C), 129.4, 128.0, 127.1 (2C), 122.4, 122.0, 119.7, 118.4, 114.7, 114.5, 113.5, 113.3, 112.3, 111.5, 104.9, 64.9, 46.8, 46.5, 23.3. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₈H₂₄ClFN₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺488.15411, found 488.15320.

1-(2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl)-4-cyclohexyl-3-methylene-6-phenylpiperazine-2,5-dione,



Compound **6j**, white solid, yield 63%.¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.11 (s, 1H, NH), 7.48 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.37 (d, J = 3.7 Hz, 5H, ArH), 7.26 (s, 2H, ArH), 7.21 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.12 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.96 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H, CH), 5.91 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 5.46 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H, CH₂=), 3.80 - 3.72 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂), 3.64- 3.55 (m, 1H, C₆H₁₁), 3.22 - 3.11 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₂), 3.01 - 2.93 (m, 1H,

CH₂CH₂), 1.52 – 1.41 (m, 4H, C₆H₁₁), 1. 81 – 1.11 (m, 2H, C₆H₁₁), 0.94 – 0.83 (m, 1H, C₆H₁₁), 0.77 – 0.67 (m, 1H, C₆H₁₁), 0.49 – 0.39 (m, 1H, C₆H₁₁), 0.29 – 0.20 (m, 1H, C₆H₁₁). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 168.2, 165.3, 150.4, 136.5, 134.8, 128.9 (2C), 127.9 (2C), 127.2 (2C), 122.5, 121.9, 119.7, 118.7, 112.3, 111.3 (2C), 74.3, 48.3, 41.3, 32.5, 31.8, 29.7, 25.0, 24.8, 23.9. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C₂₇H₃₀N₃O₂⁺ (M+H)⁺ 428.23380, found 428.23352.

Compound 6a











Compound **6b**



-163.78 -158.82 -158.82 -158.82 -158.82 -158.82 -135.71 -125.27 -125.27 -125.49 -125.44 -126.44 -126.4



Compound 6c







Compound 6d





Compound 6e













Compound 6f





Compound 6g









Compound 6h







Compound 6i









10 0 -10 -20 -30 -40 -50 -60 -70 -80 -90 -100 -120 -140 -160 -180 -200 f1 (ppm)

Compound 6j

























6j 10-2 #917 RT: 6.44 AV: 1 NL: 2.14E8 T: FTMS + p ESI Full ms [100.0000-1000.0000] 428.23352 ¹⁰⁰∃ 95 90 85 80 75 70 65 60 55 50 45 40 Relative Abundance 35 450.21512 30 25 20 15-10 5 0 0 336.25089 0 330 340 432.22818 387.19312 473.29099 482.20502 470 480 490 502.24689 517.17267 528.15826 500 510 520 530 387.139312 381.15961 400.20227 409.17511 418.22198 444.22806 456.22809 380 390 400 410 420 430 440 450 460 m/z 366.22531 360 370

6i