Chemoenzymatic Total Synthesis of (+)-Oxycodone from Phenethyl Acetate

Mary Ann A. Endoma-Arias
Mariia Makarova
Helen E. Dela Paz
Tomas Hudlicky*

Chemistry Department and Centre for Biotechnology, Brock University, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way St. Catharines, Ontario, L2S 3A1, Canada
thudlicky@brocku.ca

Published as part of the 50 Years SYNTHESIS – Golden Anniversary issue

Received: 29.10.2018
Accepted: 31.10.2018
Published online: 20.11.2018
DOI: 10.1055/s-0037-1611335; Art ID: ss-2018-z0729-fa

License terms: Open Access

Abstract The stereoselective total synthesis of unnatural (+)-oxycodone from phenethyl acetate is described. Absolute stereochemistry was established via microbial dihydroxylation of phenethyl acetate with the recombinant strain JM109 (pDTG601A) to the corresponding cis-cyclohexadienediol whose configuration provides for the absolute stereochemistry of the ring C of (+)-oxycodone. Intramolecular Heck cyclization was employed to establish the quaternary carbon at C-13, along with the dibenzodihydrofuran functionality. The C-14 hydroxyl was installed via SmI2-mediated radical cyclization. The synthesis of (+)-oxycodone was completed in a total of 13 steps and an overall yield of 1.5%. Experimental and spectral data are provided for all new compounds.

Key words enzymatic dihydroxylation, total synthesis, oxycodone, Parker’s hydroamination, pinacol-type coupling

The semi-synthetic opioid (–)-oxycodone (1) (Figure 1), although found also in nature, is a potent analgesic that is clinically prescribed for pain management. It is taken by mouth and is available mixed with acetaminophen in immediate release tablet form, which contains oxycodone HCl (5 mg) and acetaminophen (325 mg) (Percocet®), as a single ingredient medication oxycodone HCl (60 mg and 80 mg) or as film coated, extended release tablet OxyContin®. The commercial route for the preparation of oxycodone is a two-step process from thebaine through the oxidation of the diene moiety with a peroxy acid to form an enone followed by hydrogenation. Thebaine is a minor constituent of opium and thus this fact limits the production of oxycodone. However, thebaine, as well as oripavine, are now also available from genetically modified poppies that produce much higher percentages of these alkaloids. These compounds are now supplied by Tasmanian Alkaloids, Inc. During the past 70 years, since the milestone synthesis of morphine by Gates, there have been more than 30 total syntheses of morphine and related alkaloids and the academic effort continues unabated. Even the most efficient synthesis reported by Rice may not be suitable for scale-up in the industrial preparation of morphinans. Although the development of a truly practical total synthesis of any morphinan or an opiate-derived agent on a commercial scale seems like a distant dream we have attempted to design a method for the synthesis of oxycodone from readily available starting materials. A de novo preparation of oxycodone or any other medicinal opiate-derived agents for medicinal use may serve as an insurance against any future unforeseen events that may limit the supply of natural sources because of climate or political instabilities in the opium-producing regions. To date, there is only one published total synthesis of oxycodone. Fukuyama and co-workers accomplished the total synthesis of (–)-oxycodone (1) from 2-bromoisoavallin in 24 steps in an overall yield of 0.016%. The key steps in their synthesis featured a direct intramolecular arylation of an aryl bromide, an oxidative deaertomatization reaction, an intramolecular Michael addition, and a Hofmann rearrangement. Absolute stereochemistry was incorporated into the starting material by the use of Evans’ oxazolidinone as a chiral auxiliary.
Biographical sketches

Mary Ann A. Endoma-Arias was born in 1969 in Rizal, Philippines. After completing her BSc (1990), cum laude, at the University of the Philippines Diliman, in Quezon City, Philippines, she started her PhD studies at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, VA, under the supervision of Professor Tomas Hudlicky, in 1992. She moved with Professor Hudlicky in 1995 to the University of Florida, in Gainesville, FL, where she completed her PhD in 1997. Upon completion of her PhD, she returned to the University of the Philippines where she rose to the rank of Associate Professor. Her main interest during her research career in the Philippines focused on the synthesis and conjugation of compounds with medicinal properties to liposomes and hydrophilic polymers for targeted delivery. During this time she continued to work closely with the Hudlicky Research Group. Since 2010 she has been working with the Research group of Professor Hudlicky at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON, Canada as a Research Associate. In 2015 she emigrated to Canada with her husband and children. Her main research interest is the total synthesis of morphine and related alkaloids. To date, she has published 30 papers and 5 patents.

Maria Makarova was born in 1990 in Samara, Russia. She completed her B.Sc. in 2013 at Samara State University, Samara, Russia. In January 2014 she started her M.Sc. studies at Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada under the supervision of Professor Tomas Hudlicky. During her second year of M.Sc. she transferred to the Ph.D. program. Her Ph.D. research has been focused on the chemoenzymatic approach towards synthesis of morphine alkaloids. Her defense is scheduled on November 30, 2018.

Helen E. Dela Paz was born in 1975 in Rizal, Philippines. She obtained her B.Sc. in Food Technology at the University of the Philippines Diliman, in Quezon City, Philippines. She was given the opportunity to apply her knowledge of microbiology to fermentation technology. Thus, in 2001, she was offered a research position in the laboratories of Dr. Tomas Hudlicky at the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA. While at UF, she was introduced to the utility of a fermentor in the large scale microbial oxidation of aromatic compounds towards the production of value-added metabolites. After almost two years of work, she returned to the Philippines and took a job as a Science teacher. In 2014, she returned to the Hudlicky Research Group at Brock University to work as a Researcher and join her sister who has been working there. Her research interest focuses on the production of known diene diols from aromatic compounds, and the identification of new ones. She has published a few papers related to biocatalysis and its application to organic synthesis.

Tomas Hudlicky was born in 1949 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, where he received his elementary and middle school education. After several years of working as a process chemist apprentice and in other odd jobs in pharmaceutical chemistry, it became apparent that higher education opportunities were closed to him. In 1968, he emigrated to the U.S. with his parents and sister. Hudlicky’s educational experience continued at Blacksburg High School, from which he dropped out in the spring of 1969. Accepted as a probational student at Virginia Tech the following autumn, he received his B.S. in chemistry in 1973, and went on to pursue graduate studies at Rice University under the direction of Professor Ernest Wenkert in the field of indole alkaloid total synthesis, earning his Ph.D. in 1977. He then spent a year at the University of Geneva working under the late Professor Wolfgang Oppolzer on the synthesis of isococamine. In 1978, he joined the faculty at the Illinois Institute of Technology as an Assistant Professor, and began the first phase of his research career in the field of general methods of synthesis for triquinane terpenes and other natural products containing five-membered rings by [4+1] cycloadditions, pyrrole, and dioxetane annihilation methodologies. He returned to his alma mater, Virginia Tech, in 1982, and rose to the rank of Professor in 1988. One year later, at the 20-year class reunion of the Blacksburg High School class of 1969, he received his High School Diploma. The next phase of his research involved the investigation of cis-cyclohexadienediols in enantioselective synthesis. In 1995, he moved to University of Florida in Gainesville. In 2003, Dr. Hudlicky accepted an offer from Brock University where he currently holds a position as Canada Research Chair. His current research interests include the development of enantioselective synthetic methods, bacterial dioxygenase-mediated degradation of aromatics, design and synthesis of fluorinated inhalation anesthetic agents, synthesis of morphine and Amaryllidaceae alkaloids, and design of unnatural oligosaccharide conjugates with new molecular properties. His hobbies are skiing, hockey, martial arts, and music.
Scheme 1 outlines our retrosynthesis of (+)-oxycodone. Disconnection of ring D leads to styrene 2. In the forward sense, Parker’s hydroamination can be utilized to construct the C-9 stereogenic center. The tosylamide group necessary for the cyclization reaction is derived from acetate 3, which is envisioned to be prepared from the keto acetal 4 following a deprotection of acetal and a Sml₂-mediated pinacol-type coupling reaction. The key intermediate 4 can be obtained from alkene 5 via dihydroxylation followed by selective mesylation of the less hindered hydroxyl group and the elimination of the mesylate to reveal the ketone functionality in 4. Alkene 5 can be obtained in two steps from alcohol 7 via a sequence of steps that involves a Mitsunobu coupling with an iodophenol acetal to furnish aryl ether 7. The absolute stereochemistry in 7 is incorporated via microbial dihydroxylation with toluene dioxygenase, overexpressed in E. coli JM109 (pDTG601A), in the whole-cell fermentation of phenethyl acetate (JM109 (pDTG601A), in the whole-cell fermentation of o-acetylated cyclohexadiene diol 7 (obtained in 5 g L⁻¹ yield), 15 which was subjected to a selective reduction of the less hindered hydroxyl group followed by DBU-catalyzed elimination of the resulting mesylate (63% yield over two steps). With the attainment of 4, deprotection of the acetal followed by a pinacol-type coupling of the intermediate keto aldehyde using Sml₂ was conducted to afford diol 3, tentatively assigned as the cis-isomer (65% yield over two steps). 18 Protection of diol 3 with a carbonate group to afford 12 (80% yield) allowed for the introduction of the tosylamide functionality via methanalysis of the acetate followed by Mitsunobu coupling of the resulting alcohol with N-methyl p-toluenesulfonyl amide. The carbonate moiety in the crude tosylamide was hydrolyzed to afford diol 13 (67% yield over three steps). It would have been desirable to isolate the intermediate tosylamide carbonate but the difficulty in the separation of residual N-methyl p-toluenesulfonyl amide from the desired product rendered this process impractical. The less hindered hydroxyl of 13 was converted to the corresponding mesylate and subjected to DBU-catalyzed elimination affording alkene 2 (70% yield over two steps), which was the precursor for the key Parker’s hydrogenation step to complete the ring system of oxycodone. Thus, treatment of 2 with Li in liquid ammonia as reported by Parker 19 in the total synthesis of hydrocodone afforded the oxycodol ether 14 (76% yield). 20 Deprotection of the TBS group in 14 followed by oxidation of the alcohol to ketone afforded ent-oxycodone [ent-(1)] (59% yield over two steps).

In conclusion, a short chemoenzymatic synthesis of ent-oxycodone has been accomplished in 13 steps from phenethyl acetate. Further improvements in this short synthesis will address installation of the N-methyltosylamide side chain earlier in the synthesis thus eliminating the need to use a carbonate protecting group during the synthetic sequence. In particular, the acetate functionality in 5 will be converted to the tosylamide. Furthermore, an Sml₂-mediated nitrone-keto coupling is being investigated to afford an amino alcohol instead of diol intermediate for subsequent cyclization to the pendant acetate side chain. These
improvements, as well as the 2nd generation synthesis of the natural enantiomer, are currently being investigated and will be reported in due course.

Inoculum was obtained from viable cells stored at −78 °C in cryovials. They were grown in suitable media as previously described. 15b Substrate was fed in 5 mL increments over the course of 3 h with metabolic improvements, as well as the 2nd generation synthesis of the natural enantiomer, are currently being investigated and will be reported in due course.

68.5, 63.1, 33.3, 21.1.

IR (CHCl3): 3392, 2955, 2925, 1735, 1383, 1366, 1238, 1037, 803 cm⁻¹. 1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl3): δ = 5.90 (ddd, J = 9.3, 3.4 Hz, 1 H), 5.75–5.70 (m, 1 H), 4.30–4.14 (m, 3 H), 4.09 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 1 H), 2.97 (s, 2 H), 2.57–2.48 (m, 2 H), 2.01 (s, 3 H). 

HRMS (EI): m/z = 198.120, 107.91, 75.

MS (EI): m/z calc for C8H8O3: 198.0889; found: 198.0889.

HRMS (EI): m/z calc for C10H14O4: 225–232

Inoculum was obtained from viable cells stored at −78 °C in cryovials. They were grown in suitable media as previously described. 15b Substrate was fed in 5 mL increments over the course of 3 h with metabolic improvements, as well as the 2nd generation synthesis of the natural enantiomer, are currently being investigated and will be reported in due course.

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on silica gel using 2:1 EtOAc/hexanes as eluent to afford 9 as an oil; yield: 128 mg (85%); [α]_{D}^{20} = –65.9 (c = 1.0, CHCl₃) [Lit.¹⁷ [α]_{D}^{20} = –53.0 (c = 0.2, CHCl₃)]; R_{f} = 0.25 (hexanes/EtOAc 1:2).

¹¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃); δ = 5.63 (1 J = 3.7 Hz, 1 H), 4.37–4.26 (m, 1 H), 4.22–4.12 (m, 1 H), 4.03 (d, J = 3.8 Hz, 1 H), 3.79–3.71 (m, 1 H), 2.57–2.33 (m, 3 H), 2.23–2.05 (m, 3 H), 2.04 (s, 3 H), 1.75–1.62 (m, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃); δ = 171.4, 133.6, 126.7, 69.5, 68.6, 63.3, 33.9, 24.9, 24.1, 20.9.

2-[[5(S,6S,9aR)-5-[[tert-Butyldimethylsilyl]oxy]-6-[[2-(dime-thoxyethyl)]-2-iodo-6-methoxyphenoxycyclohex-1-en-1-yl]ethyl Acetate (6)]

To a stirred solution of alcohol 9 (3.1 g, 10.0 mmol) and 3-[[2-(dime-thoxyethyl)]-2-iodo-6-methoxyphenol¹⁵ (10): 3.7 g, 10.9 mmol) at –10 °C in THF (40 mL) was added nBu₃P (3.5 mL, 14.0 mmol), followed by TMAD (2.3 g, 13.0 mmol). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm up to r.t. and stirred for 16 h at r.t. The solvent was removed by rotary evaporation and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel using hexanes/EtOAc as eluent (4:1 to 2:1) to afford the product 6 as an oil; yield: 5.2 g (83%); [α]_{D}^{20} = +48.4 (c = 1.2, CHCl₃); R_{f} = 0.58 (2:1 hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (film): 2930, 2855, 1738, 1642, 1472, 1249, 1078, 776 cm⁻¹.

³¹P NMR (121 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 67.2 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1 H), 6.64 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1 H), 4.57 (dd, J = 3.3, 7.8 Hz, 1 H), 4.50 (dd, J = 3.6, 3.6 Hz, 1 H), 3.90–3.98 (m, 2 H), 3.80 (s, 3 H), 3.37 (s, 3 H), 3.33 (d, J = 3.3 Hz, 1 H), 3.25 (s, 3 H), 2.84–2.90 (m, 2 H), 2.22–2.30 (m, 2 H), 2.03 (td, J = 3.3, 13.2 Hz, 1 H), 1.78 (dt, J = 4.2, 13.2 Hz, 1 H), 0.85 (s, 9 H), 0.08 (s, 3 H), 0.06 (s, 3 H).

HRMS (EI⁺): m/z (%) = 483 (30), 451 (25), 359 (50), 289 (100), 259 (30), 167 (50), 149 (60), 121 (40).

HRMS (EI⁺): m/z calcd for C₂₇H₄₁IO₇Si: 540.2755; found: 540.2734.

2-[[5(S,6S,9aR)-6-[[tert-Butyldimethylsilyl]oxy]-1-[[2-(dime-thoxyethyl)]-4-methoxy-9-oxo-5a,6,7,8,9,9a-hexahydropen-thranzo[b,d][furan-9a-yl]ethyl Acetate (4)]

To a stirred solution of diol 11 (1.41 g, 2.61 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (37 mL) at 0 °C was added NEt₃ (724 µL, 5.22 mmol) followed by MsCl (303 µL, 3.91 mmol). The resulting solution was stirred at 0 °C for 30 min, and then diluted with CH₂Cl₂/aq NaHCO₃ (20 mL/30 mL). The layers were separated and the aqueous layer was further extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (2 × 15 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried (MgSO₄), filtered, and concentrated to afford a residue that was used without purification in the next step. To the crude mesylate (obtained from the previous step) dissolved in toluene (20 mL) was added DIBU (5 mL). The mixture was heated to reflux for 5 h. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool to r.t. after which it was diluted with EtOAc/sat. aq NH₄Cl (20 mL/20 mL). The layers were separated and the aqueous layer was further extracted with EtOAc (2 × 20 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried (MgSO₄), filtered, and concentrated to afford a residue that was chromatographed on silica gel using hexanes/EtOAc as eluent (2:1) to afford the product 4 as an oil; yield: 850 mg (63% over 2 steps); [α]_{D}^{20} = –60.2 (c = 17.9, CHCl₃); R_{f} = 0.44 (2:1 hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (film): 2952, 2857, 1739, 1713, 1625, 1506, 1233, 1075, 836 cm⁻¹.

¹¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃); δ = 6.78 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1 H), 6.74 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1 H), 4.81 (dd, J = 2.4, 3.0 Hz, 1 H), 4.43 (t, J = 5.4 Hz, 1 H), 4.18 (t, J = 3.3 Hz, 1 H), 4.01–4.05 (m, 1 H), 3.82–3.89 (m, 1 H), 3.85 (s, 3 H), 3.27 (s, 6 H), 2.65 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 2 H), 2.29–2.50 (m, 2 H), 2.24–2.29 (m, 1 H), 2.03–2.15 (m, 1 H), 1.93 (s, 3 H), 1.77–1.86 (m, 1 H), 0.85 (s, 9 H), 0.08 (s, 3 H), 0.06 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃); δ = 207.8, 170.7, 148.9, 142.9, 127.1, 126.0, 123.0, 112.8, 104.7, 91.7, 67.1, 61.0, 59.2, 55.9, 53.4, 53.1, 34.3, 33.2, 25.5, 24.8, 20.8, 17.9, –4.9, –5.1.

MS (EI⁺): m/z (%) = 522 (20), 490 (100), 430 (40), 373 (50), 341 (95), 313 (50), 199 (73), 111 (38).

HRMS (EI⁺): m/z calcd for C₂₇H₄₁IO₇Si: 522.2649; found: 522.2622.
reaction mixture was diluted with EtOAc/sat. aq NaHCO₃ (10 mL/5 mL). The layers were separated and the aqueous phase was further extracted with EtOAc (2 × 10 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried (MgSO₄), filtered, and concentrated to afford a residue that was used as crude in the next step. To the crude keto acetal (obtained from the previous step) dissolved in THF (3 mL) at –78 °C was added SmI₂ (249 mg, 1.20 mmol). The mixture was stirred at –78 °C for 30 min. The cooling bath was removed and the mixture was diluted with EtOAc/sat. aq NaHCO₃ (10 mL/5 mL). The layers were separated and the aqueous phase was further extracted with EtOAc (2 × 10 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried (MgSO₄), filtered, and concentrated to afford a residue that was used as crude in the next step. To the crude alcohol (obtained from the previous step) and N-methyl p-toluenesulfonyl amide (20 mg, 0.11 mmol) followed by TMAD (23 mg, 0.13 mmol). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm up to r.t. and stirred for 16 h at r.t. The solvent was removed by rotary evaporation to afford a residue that was used without purification in the next step. To the crude tosylamide carbonate (obtained from the previous step) dissolved in MeOH (2 mL) was added aq 3 N NaOH (0.5 mL). The resulting cloudy solution was stirred at r.t. for 30 min. The solvent was removed by rotary evaporation and the residue was diluted with EtOAc/H₂O (10 mL/5 mL). The aqueous layer was further extracted with EtOAc (2 × 10 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried (MgSO₄), filtered, and concentrated to afford a residue that was chromatographed on silica gel using hexanes/EtOAc (1:1) as eluent to afford the product 2 as an oil; yield: 42 mg (67% yield over 3 steps); [α]D²⁰ +18.4 (c = 1.1, CHCl₃); Rf = 0.50 (1:1 hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (film): 3435, 2952, 2930, 2854, 1736, 1713, 1624, 1527, 1507 cm⁻¹.

11C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 170.0, 145.8, 142.4, 130.0, 124.8, 119.8, 113.7, 91.6, 74.5, 69.4, 61.8, 56.4, 48.9, 33.9, 33.8, 31.7, 25.7, 22.7, 20.9, 18.0, –50.52.

MS (EI+): m/z (%) = 361 (90), 343 (100), 315 (60), 305 (95), 287 (40), 249 (80).

HRMS (EI+): m/z calcd for C₂₉H₂₃O₂Si: 478.2387; found: 478.2391.

2-[(5aS,8aR,8a1R,11S,11aS)-11-[[tert-Butyldimethylsilyloxy]-2-methoxy-7-oxo-5a,8a1,9,10,11,11a-hexahydro-5H-furo[2',3',4':5,6]-phenanthro[8a,9-d][1,3]dioxol-8a-1'-yethyl]-N4-dimethylbenzenesulfonamide (12)

To a stirred solution of diol 3 (100 mg, 0.21 mmol) in toluene (3 mL) was added carbonyldiimidazole (102 mg, 0.63 mmol). The resulting mixture was heated to 80 °C for 3 h, then allowed to cool down to r.t. The solvent was removed by rotary evaporation and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel using hexanes/EtOAc (2:1) as eluent to afford the carbonate 12 as an oil; yield: 75 mg (71%); [α]D²⁰ +51.6 (c = 1.0, CH₂Cl₂); Rf = 0.65 (1:1 hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (film): 3436, 2953, 2931, 2856, 1806, 1738, 1637, 1235, 1067 cm⁻¹.

1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 6.79 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1 H), 6.69 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1 H), 4.67 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 1 H), 4.06–4.12 (m, 1 H), 3.86 (s, 3 H), 3.69–3.73 (m, 1 H), 3.39–3.43 (m, 1 H), 3.42 (dd, J = 8.1, 13.5 Hz, 1 H), 2.95 (dd, J = 8.1, 15.3 Hz, 1 H), 2.14–2.19 (m, 1 H), 2.00–2.11 (m, 1 H), 1.88 (s, 3 H), 1.69–1.84 (m, 2 H), 1.33–1.43 (m, 1 H), 0.90 (s, 9 H), 0.14 (s, 3 H), 0.05 (s, 3 H).

11C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 170.6, 145.5, 144.5, 127.4, 120.4, 120.3, 115.8, 96.7, 86.2, 82.4, 74.1, 60.3, 56.3, 50.0, 36.0, 33.0, 30.9, 26.4, 25.8, 25.6, 20.7, 18.0, –46.5, –50.

MS (EI+): m/z (%) = 447 (70), 419 (35), 387 (40), 343 (100), 313 (40), 269 (35), 117 (25).

HRMS (EI+): m/z calcd for C₃₁H₂₃O₂Si: 504.2179; found: 504.2172.
chromatographed on silica gel using hexanes/EtOAc (2:1) as eluent to afford the product 2 as a viscous oil; yield: 101 mg (70% over 2 steps); \([\alpha]_D^{20}+59.98\) (c = 0.3, CHCl₃); \(R_f = 0.6\) (2:1, hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (neat): 3511, 2952, 2927, 2854, 1742, 1631, 1598, 1505, 1333, 1328, 1292, 1157, 1115 cm\(^{-1}\).

MS (EI+): \(m/z\) 46.9, 35.2, 34.4, 33.0, 25.9, 25.2, 21.6, 18.2, –4.5, –4.9.

\(\mu\)M (CDCl₃): \(\delta\) = 7.65, 6.69 (d, \(J = 8.2\) Hz, 1 H), 5.62 (d, \(J = 3.6\) Hz, 1 H), 3.87 (s, 3 H), 3.53 (dd, \(J = 10.9, 6.1\) Hz, 1 H), 3.04–2.96 (m, 2 H), 2.62 (s, 3 H), 2.40 (s, 3 H), 2.18–2.03 (m, 1 H), 2.02–1.89 (m, 1 H), 1.80–1.59 (m, 2 H), 1.52–1.40 (m, 2 H), 0.90 (s, 9 H), 0.13 (s, 3 H), 0.04 (s, 3 H).

Support Information
Supporting information for this article is available online at https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0037-1611335. Included are spectral data for compounds 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, ent-1, 16.

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(3) https://www.rexall.ca/articles/view/894/Percocet.

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(b) Banwell, M. G.; Buckler, J. N.; Yan, Q.; Lan, P.
(c) Lewis, S. E.; Kenwright, S. J.; Abou-Shehada, S.; Wharry, S.; Moody, T. S.; Reed, J. W.; Gibson, D. T.
(d) Novak, B. H.; Hudlicky, T.; Trauner, D.


(18) Oxidation of the diol 3 to afford a keto alcohol followed by NaBH₄ reduction afforded an epimeric diol. Attempts to form the acetone of this supposed trans-isomer failed. The diol 3 was smoothly converted to the acetone. Unpublished observations.


(20) The outcome of the hydroamination was dependent on the condition of the reaction. Initial experiments resulted in the formation of an undesirable side product 15 (isolated as 16) from the reduction of the cinnamyl alcohol moiety (Scheme 3). The formation of this product was eliminated by reversing the order of addition of reagents. Thus, Li was added last in the reaction and in several portions (see experimental section). The same phenomenon has been observed originally by Birch²⁴ and later by Hall²⁵ in their studies with dissolving metal reduction of cinnamyl alcohols.

N-(2-[(3S,3aS,3a1R,9aR)-3-[(tert-Butyldimethylsilyl)oxy]-9a-hydroxy-5-methoxy-1,3,3a,8,9a-hexahydrophenanthro[4,5-bcd][furan-3a1(2H)-yl]ethyl]-N,4-dimethylbenzenesulfonamide (16)

Mp 67–68 °C (MeOH); [α]D²⁰ +2.0 (c = 0.2, CHCl₃); R f = 0.5 (2:1 hexanes/EtOAc).

IR (film): 3500, 2925, 2854, 1735, 1600, 1461, 1338, 1257, 1160, 830 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.57 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2 H), 7.27 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2 H), 6.76 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1 H), 6.63 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1 H), 4.55 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1 H), 3.97 (s, 3 H), 3.60 (m, 1 H), 3.34–3.38 (m, 1 H), 2.84–2.97 (m, 2 H), 2.71 (s, 3 H), 2.65–2.72 (m, 1 H), 2.43 (s, 3 H), 2.12–2.21 (m, 2 H), 1.86–1.96 (m, 1 H), 1.40–1.81 (m, 4 H), 0.91 (s, 9 H), 0.14 (s, 3 H), 0.07 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 143.1, 142.7, 135.0, 131.4, 129.6, 127.3, 125.4, 120.3, 114.3, 93.9, 77.2, 72.8, 71.5, 56.7, 49.7, 47.2, 35.2, 33.0, 31.8, 25.8, 25.0, 24.3, 21.5, 18.0, −4.8, −5.2.

MS (EI⁺): m/z (%) = 587 (10), 530 (20), 512 (25), 439 (25), 403 (20), 345 (40), 343 (70), 327 (50), 315 (45), 198 (100), 183 (30), 97 (25).

HRMS (EI⁺): m/z calc for C₃₅H₄₆O₈Si: 587.2737; found: 587.2726.