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Core-structure-inspired asymmetric addition reactions: enantioselective synthesis of dihydrobenzoxazinone- and dihydroquinazolinone-based anti-HIV agents

Shen Li and Jun-An Ma*

Dihydrobenzoxazinones and dihydroquinazolinones are the core units present in many anti-HIV agents, such as Efavirenz, DPC 961, DPC 963, and DPC 083. All these molecules contain trifluoromethyl moiety at the quaternary stereogenic carbon center with S configuration. Enantioselective addition of carbon nucleophiles to ketones or cyclic ketimines could serve as a key step to access these molecules. This tutorial review provides an overview of significant advances in the synthesis of dihydrobenzoxazinone- and dihydroquinazolinone-based anti-HIV agents and relative analogues, with the emphasis of asymmetric addition reactions for the establishment of the CF$_3$-containing quaternary carbon centers.

Key learning points
(1) Dihydrobenzoxazinones and dihydroquinazolinones are the core units present in anti-HIV agents Efavirenz, DPC 961, DPC 963, and DPC 083.
(2) Advances in the asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz are reviewed.
(3) Advances in the asymmetric synthesis of DPC 961 and DPC 963 are reviewed.
(4) Advances in the asymmetric synthesis of DPC 083 are reviewed.
(5) Asymmetric syntheses of the analogues of Efavirenz, DPC 961 and DPC 083 are described.

1. Introduction
Dihydrobenzoxazinones and dihydroquinazolinones are the core units present in lots of bioactive molecules with high therapeutic potential for the treatment of many diseases.$^{1-4}$ The importance of these structures is fully demonstrated by a series of potent non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, such as Efavirenz, DPC 961, DPC 963, and DPC 083 (Scheme 1).$^{5-8}$ Dihydrobenzoxazinone-based Efavirenz is now one of the widely prescribed drugs used in combination therapy for first-line treatment of HIV.$^9$ Dihydroquinazolinones-based DPC 961, DPC 963, and DPC 083 are second-generation NNRTI candidates with enhanced potency compared to Efavirenz.$^{10}$ All these compounds contain the trifluoromethyl moiety at the quaternary stereogenic carbon center with S configuration. Biological evaluation revealed that the $R$ enantiomer was inactive in the in vitro reverse transcriptase inhibition assay. Therefore, the establishment of the CF$_3$-containing quaternary carbon center in the dihydrobenzoxazinone and dihydroquinazolinone scaffolds in
an enantioselective manner presents the main challenge for the preparation of these anti-HIV agents.

Retrosynthetic analysis reveals that the enantioselective addition of carbon nucleophiles to ketones or cyclic ketimines could serve as a key step to access these molecules. This concept was first proved to be feasible by Merck’s elegant work on the asymmetric preparation of NNRTI candidates in 1995. Since then, over the past 20 years, great efforts have been made in the asymmetric synthesis of these anti-HIV agents through the asymmetric addition reactions by using stoichiometric quantities of chiral auxiliaries and reagents, or catalytic amount of chiral catalysts. Moreover, the established methods benefit for the exploration of new NNRTIs based on dihydrobenzoxazinone and dihydroquinazolinone units. This tutorial review aims at providing an overview of significant advances in the synthesis of dihydrobenzoxazinone- and dihydroquinazolinone-based anti-HIV agents and relative analogues, with the emphasis of asymmetric addition reactions for the establishment of the CF-containing quaternary carbon centers. It is our hope that the achievements summarized in this review would encourage chemists both in academy and in pharmaceutical industry to direct their efforts towards not only improvement the efficiency of established processes, but also development of new anti-HIV agents.

2. Enantioselective Synthesis of Efavirenz

2.1. Stoichiometric Asymmetric Transformations

In 1995, the Merck research laboratories reported a practical procedure for the asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz. The key step in this process is an enantioselective 1,2-addition of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to trifluoroethanone in the presence of ephedrine-based chiral auxiliary (Scheme 2a).

Upon strict control of reagent stoichiometry and reaction conditions, the addition reaction could be complete within minutes to provide chiral tertiary alcohol with 98% ee. After a simple recrystallization, the optically pure adduct (> 99.5% ee) was obtained in 93% yield. Further transformation of through a sequential cyclization / deprotection (or deprotection / cyclization) process (via the intermediate or 6) gave rise to the formation of Efavirenz (Scheme 2b).

The major drawback of the above process is its requirement of at least 2 equivalents of cyclopropylacetylene, 2 equivalents of chiral controller, and 4 equivalents of n-butyllithium to generate 1 equivalent of the adduct. By using a stoichiometric amount of acetylene and a stoichiometric amount of ephedrine derivative, only 50% conversion of trifluoroethanone was observed. Li-NMR and C-NMR analyses revealed that a stable aggregate was formed as a C-symmetrical cubic tetramer at ambient temperature (Scheme 2c). Subsequent asymmetric addition of to trifluoroethanone at low temperature resulted in the formation of another tetramer. The in situ IR-monitoring of this reaction progress demonstrated that the aggregate was much less reactive compared with 7, and inhibited the subsequent 1,2-addition.

To eliminate this limitation, one more portion of lithium acetylide is prerequisite for the regeneration of the reactive aggregate. However, some drop of the enantioselectivity indicated that there is a practical limit on the number of recyclable possible.

Obviously, there is still room to improve the asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz in view of two points: (1) the established enantioselective 1,2-addition of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to trifluoroethanone required the use of excess amounts of...
Scheme 2 Procedure for the asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz developed by Merck research laboratories. (a) Enantioselective 1,2-addition of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to trifluoroethanone 1 in the presence of chiral ephedrine derivative 3. (b) Conversion of the adduct 4 into Efavirenz. (c) Proposed addition mechanism and multiple cycles.

nucleophile as well as chiral controller, and (2) a protection/deprotection sequence could not be excluded. It would be more straightforward and efficient for the synthesis of Efavirenz if the asymmetric addition could be done in the presence of a protecting group-free substrate by using stoichiometric amounts of acetylene and chiral reagent. In 1999, Tan and co-workers at Merck successfully developed a zinc-mediated enantioselective alkylation of unprotected trifluoroethanone 9 (Scheme 3). The complexation of diethylzinc with chiral ephedrine derivative 3 and achiral 2,2,2-trifluoroethanol led to the formation of zinc alkoxide, which was treated with chloromagnesium cyclopropylacetylide 10, followed by the addition of trifluoroethanone 9 to afford the chiral tertiary alcohol 6 in 95.3% isolated yield with up to 99.2% ee. Notably, this addition reaction could be conducted under milder conditions without the need of the cumbersome protection/deprotection sequence, and the amounts of acetylene and chiral controller could be reduced from 2.2 equivalents to 1.2 and 1.45 equivalents, respectively. Thus, this efficient process was considered as an important cornerstone in the synthesis of Efavirenz.

Multifunctional amino alcohols were shown to be an interesting class of ligands in the enantioselective alkylation reactions of aldehydes and ketones. Based on the previous reports, Jiang and co-worker evaluated their own developed C2-symmetric amino alcohol 11 as the chiral promoter in asymmetric 1,2-addition of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to trifluoroethanone 1 (Scheme 4). Interestingly, one equivalent of 11 was sufficient to promote the desired 1,2-addition, giving the key intermediate 4 towards Efavirenz in 80% yield with excellent enantioselectivity (99% ee).

Scheme 3 Chiral zinc-mediated Enantioselective alkylation of unprotected trifluoroethanone 9.

Scheme 4 Asymmetric alkylation of trifluoroethanone 1 with chiral C2-symmetric amino alcohol 11.
2.2. Catalytic Asymmetric Addition Reactions

Compared to stoichiometric asymmetric transformations, catalytic asymmetric routes are competitive and even superior synthetic methods. Over the past few years, some efforts have been made toward the realization of catalytic enantioselective alkynylation of aryl trifluoroethanones\(^{21-25}\) and several protocols for the catalytic enantioselective synthesis of Efavirenz have emerged in the literatures. For example, the enantiomerically enriched intermediate 6 has been employed as a chiral amino alcohol ligand for the catalytic asymmetric alkynylation of the starting substrate 9. This elegant process, defined as the asymmetric autocatalysis,\(^{26}\) was first used by Carreira and co-workers in 2011 for the synthesis of Efavirenz (Scheme 5).\(^{27}\) By using substoichiometric amount of the adduct 6 (18 mol%) as an achiral autocatalyst, the authors documented that the asymmetric addition of zinc acetylide to trifluoroethanone 9 could be performed with substoichiometric quantities of diethylzinc and the ligand (\(1R,2S\))-N-pyrrolidinylnorephedrine 3 to afford the expected adduct 6 in 79% yield and 99.6% ee. It is worthy to note that in the absence of ephedrine additive the product was formed as a racemate. Thus, the autocatalytic effect in this procedure is rather special, requiring a second chiral ligand as the external chiral component. Following this attractive process, the manufacturing cost of Efavirenz might be substantially reduced in comparison to that of the existing stoichiometric process.

Recently, Dai and co-workers at Lonza provided an alternative approach for the catalytic asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz.\(^{28}\) In the presence of chiral amino alcohol 13, the addition reaction of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to trifluoroethanone 12 proceeded smoothly to give the desired tertiary alkynol 14 in 78% yield with 46% ee (Scheme 6). The alcohol 14 was then reacted with chlorosulfonyl isocyanate to afford the carbamate 15, which underwent a copper-catalyzed Ullman-type cyclization to establish the dihydrobenzoxazine core structure of Efavirenz. Inspired by this process, Seeberger and co-workers described a three-step flow synthesis of rac-Efavirenz, which represented to be the shortest route until now.\(^{29}\)

From the viewpoint of synthetic organofluorine chemistry, the chiral tertiary alcohol motif in Efavirenz could also be constructed by an enantioselective trifluoromethylation of alkynylketone. Such strategy was put into practice by Shibata and co-workers in 2011.\(^{30}\) In the presence of a catalytic amount of cinchonidine derivative 17 and Me$_3$NF, the organocatalytic asymmetric trifluoromethylation of alkynylketone 16 with Me$_3$SiCF$_3$ proceeded smoothly to afford chiral tertiary alcohol 19 in 88% yield, albeit with a moderate enantioselectivity of
50% ee (Scheme 7). Further optimization of the catalyst structure led to a superior cinchonidine-based catalyst bearing two alkoxy groups and a bulkier benzyl group, which markedly improved the enantiocontrol in the asymmetric trifluoromethylation step to 80% ee with a yield of 74%. With the chiral tertiary alcohol in hand, the asymmetric synthesis of Efavirenz was completed in a two-step process: chemoselective reduction of the nitro group in furnished the corresponding aniline, which underwent ring-closure using Merck’s procedure to afford Efavirenz. This metal-free synthetic route to Efavirenz would be an important complement to the previous manufacturing processes based on the organometallic asymmetric addition reactions.

3. Asymmetric Synthesis of DPC 961 and DPC 963

3.1 Diastereoselective 1,4-Addition Reactions

In 2000, Magnus and co-workers at DuPont described a chiral auxiliary-directed diastereoselective 1,4-addition reaction for the synthesis of CF$_3$-substituted chiral dihydroquinazolinone units, which enabled the preparation of DPC 961 in a highly stereoselective manner. This procedure was started from the reaction of the hydrate hydrochloride keto-aniline with (R)-(+)-α-methylbenzyl isocyanate to afford the hemiaminal bearing a chiral auxiliary (Scheme 8). Subsequent treatment of with thionyl chloride generated CF$_3$-substituted 2(3H)-quinazolinone, which was directly trapped by an excess of chloromagnesium cyclopropylacetylide to give dihydroquinazolinone in 95% conversion with the diastereomeric excess (de) around 92%. Recrystallization from methanol gave the single diastereomer of 23 in 85% isolated yield. By the exposure of 23 to wet 2,2,2-trifluoroacetic acid or warm formic acid, DPC 961 was obtained in good yield. Although the 2(3H)-quinazolinone 22 was too reactive to isolate, the existence of such intermediate was fully characterized by $^{19}$F-NMR, $^{13}$C-NMR, and in situ IR analyses.

3.2 Enantioselective 1,2-Addition Reactions

It is surprising that extension of the above-mentioned 1,4-addition as the synthetic route to DPC 963 led to an unexpected 1,2-addition reaction, therefore, an alternative approach to access DPC 963 was required. Inspired by the fundamental work on the preparation of the first NNRTI candidate at Merck research laboratories, an enantioselective addition of lithium cyclopropylacetylide to the cyclic ketimine was developed and applied to the synthesis of DPC 963 by Nugent and co-workers at DuPont (Scheme 9). The asymmetric addition was carried out by using lithium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide (LiHMDS) as the strong base and a readily available chiral amino alcohol as the chiral ligand. The optimal outcome in terms of yield and enantioselectivity was associated with a 3:1 ratio of chiral amino alcohol 25 to ketimine 24. Under these conditions, the desired product DPC 963 was obtained with 94% ee. Further improvement in the enantioselectivity was achieved through a single recrystallization. NMR spectroscopic investigation and DFT (density functional theory) calculations by Collum and co-workers revealed the reaction could proceed via the external attack of lithium cyclopropylacetylide on a mixed tetramer containing chiral ligand 25 and ketimine 24 (3:1).

In pursuit of a more practical process for the asymmetric synthesis of dihydroquinazolinone-based anti-HIV agents, Jiang and co-workers examined the asymmetric alkylation of cyclic ketimine with acetylene in the presence of chiral zinc complex. The use of amino alcohol 27 as the chiral ligand, in combination with Zn(OTf)$_2$ and trimethylamine,
could promote the addition to furnish the precursor 28 of DPC 961 in high yield with excellent enantioselectivity (Scheme 10). A comparable result of 96% yield with over 99% ee was obtained when the reaction was carried out on a 100-gram scale. Other advantages of this reaction included the requirement of only 1.1 equivalents of nucleophile and chiral ligand, the mild reaction conditions, and the readily available of the chiral amino alcohol 27. Moreover, the chiral ligand could be recovered and recycled at least for three times without loss of yield and enantioselectivity.

**Scheme 10 Synthesis of DPC 961 via asymmetric alkylation of ketimine 26 mediated by chiral zinc complex.**

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### 4. Enantioselective Synthesis of DPC 083

#### 4.1 Catalytic Asymmetric Mannich Reactions

DPC 083 was first obtained by reduction of DPC 961 with lithium aluminum hydride and provided superior coverage of wild type and mutant HIV variants relative to Efavirenz, therefore, a catalytic enantioselective process for the direct synthesis of DPC 083 was highly desired.

The enantioselective Mannich reaction of ketamines is considered as one of the most powerful transformations to access chiral tertiary amines and related units. In 2008, Jiang and co-workers developed a new process for the asymmetric synthesis of DPC 083. The key step for the construction of the dihydroquinazolinone structure bearing a chiral quaternary carbon center was an organocatalytic asymmetric Mannich reaction (Scheme 11). Under the catalysis of a chiral diamine-Broensted acid salt, the cyclic ketimine 29 reacted with cyclopropyl methyl ketone 30 to afford the valuable intermediate 32 towards DPC 083 in 95% yield with 75% ee. Attempts to improve the enantioselectivity by recrystallization led to an interesting self-discrimination. Two enantiomers with opposite configuration formed a heterochiral dimer through multiple hydrogen bonds and precipitated from ethanol, whereas the enantiomerically pure adduct 32 (> 99.9% ee) could be obtained from mother liquor in a yield of 67%. With compound 32 in hand, the synthesis of DPC 083 was completed in three steps. Removal of the protecting group and reduction afforded the intermediates 33 and 34 in nearly quantitative yields. The essential trans C=C double bond in DPC 083 was generated by a sequential dehydration.

**Scheme 11 Synthesis of DPC 083 via organocatalytic asymmetric Mannich reaction.**

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The nitro-Mannich reaction, also known as the aza-Henry reaction, provides another opportunity to access the dihydroquinazolinone core units. In 2011, Wang and co-workers nicely demonstrated that the nitro-Mannich reaction between cyclic ketimine 26 and (2-nitroethyl)cyclopropane 35 could serve as a key step for the asymmetric preparation of DPC 083 (Scheme 12). Under the catalysis of a chiral quinine thiourea, the nitro-Mannich reaction enabled the construction of chiral dihydroquinazolinone 37 in 91% yield with a 3:2 diastereomeric ratio. The major isomer (90% ee) had a higher ee value than that of the minor one (70% ee). Separation of the two diastereoisomers by column chromatography was feasible, and both of them could be converted into DPC 083 by the identical process. Reduction of the nitro group in 37 gave the corresponding amine 38, which underwent a sequential methylation/reductive aminiation to afford the N-dimethylation product 39. Treatment of 39 with 3-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (m-CPBA) followed by an in situ Cope elimination gave rise to the formation of 41 with the trans C=C double bond exclusively. The final target DPC 083 was obtained after removal of the PMB group from 41. No racemination was observed during the transformation of the major isomer. However, an unexpected
enhancement of enantioselectivity was observed for the minor isomer as the end product DPC 083 was obtained with 95% ee.

Another efficient and practical process for the asymmetric synthesis of DPC 083 was developed by Ma and co-workers by means of an organocatalytic enantioselective decarbonylative Mannich reaction of β-ketoacids. In the presence of a saccharide-derived amino thiourea catalyst the decarbonylative Mannich reaction between cyclic ketimine and cyclopropyl-3-oxopropanoic acid proceeded smoothly to give the dihydroquinazolinolone-based adduct in nearly quantitative yield with 90% ee (Scheme 13). Further improvement of the ee value to 96% ee was achieved after a single recrystallization. It is worthy to note that the presence of an N-PMB group at the ketimine proved to be essential for achieving high level of asymmetric induction, which means that the protection/deprotection steps have to be involved in the preparation of DPC 083. Starting from , reduction of the carbonyl group gave the alcohol as a 71:29 mixture of diastereomers in 98% yield. Direct dehydration of the diastereomeric mixture and subsequent removal of the PMB group afforded the desired product DPC 083 in 53% yield with 96% ee.

Shortly after, Ma and co-workers expanded the decarbonylative Mannich protocol to the reaction of less reactive malonic acid half oxyesters with cyclic ketimines. The same bifunctional organocatalyst once again proved to be efficient to promote the decarbonylative Mannich reaction between ketimine and 3-oxo-phenoxypropanoic acid , delivering the chiral dihydroquinazolinolone in 97% yield with 97% ee (Scheme 14). The asymmetric synthesis of DPC 083 was completed within 5 steps by using as the starting material. Reduction of the phenol ester group in yielded a primary alcohol in 85% yield. Subsequently, oxidation of the alcohol motif to the corresponding aldehyde, followed by an 1,2-addition with
cyclopropyl magnesium bromide gave the intermediate 45 with a diastereomeric ratio of 1:1. With 45 in hand, DPC 083 was obtained based on the previous procedure.

4.2 Catalytic Asymmetric Strecker Reactions

The asymmetric Strecker reaction between ketimines and cyanide is one of the most important reactions to enable the construction of chiral quaternary carbon center, and its corresponding adducts can be readily converted into chiral nitrogen-containing compounds. In 2012, Ma and co-workers introduced an organocatalytic enantioselective Strecker reaction of cyclic ketimine 26 as a key step for the asymmetric synthesis of DPC 083. With only 1 mol% of the cinchona alkaloid-based thiourea 50, the Strecker adduct 51 from ketimine 26 and trimethylsilylformonitrile (TMSCN) was obtained in 99% yield with 96% ee (Scheme 15). Reduction of the cyano group in 51 gave the aldehyde intermediate 52. A Wittig reaction was carried out to establish the C=C double bond formation, however, giving the cis-isomer of 41 as the major product. Subsequent attempt on the isomerization of 41 was successful to deliver (Z)-41 in 70% yield. Finally, removal of the PMB protecting group to afford the desired DPC 083 was achieved. During these transformations, no racemization of the quaternary stereogenic center occurred.

Conjugated diynes are potentially intriguing building blocks as they exist in an array of compounds with diverse biological activities. Installation of conjugated diynes within dihydroquinazolinone units may provide a library of NNRTI candidates with improved drug potency. In 2012, Ma and co-workers developed a zinc-mediated enantioselective addition of terminal 1,3-dyne 53 to cyclic ketimine 26 (Scheme 16). In the presence of catalytic amount of chiral additive 54, a series of dihydroquinazolinone-based chiral compounds bearing a quaternary carbon center and a conjugated diyne motif were obtained in 86-98% yields and 70-96% ee. For most of the products, further improvement in the enantiopurity could be achieved by simple recrystallization. As a DPC 961 analogue, the compound 56 was obtained by deprotection of the addition product 55 in 68% yield with 94% ee. Reduction of 56 with lithium aluminium hydride gave an enyne 57 with E conformation exclusively, which featured a very similar structure to DPC 083.

5. Enantioselective Synthesis of Relative Analogues

5.1 Enantioselective Diynylation Reactions

It was reported that the drug resistance to Efavirenz occurred in a small fraction of the patient population. Toward this end, in pursuit of new NNRTIs with better resistance profile is still particularly demanding.

Conjugated diynes are potentially intriguing building blocks as they exist in an array of compounds with diverse biological activities. Installation of conjugated diynes within dihydroquinazolinone units may provide a library of NNRTI candidates with improved drug potency. In 2012, Ma and co-workers developed a zinc-mediated enantioselective addition of terminal 1,3-dyne 53 to cyclic ketimine 26 (Scheme 16). In the presence of catalytic amount of chiral additive 54, a series of dihydroquinazolinone-based chiral compounds bearing a quaternary carbon center and a conjugated diyne motif were obtained in 86-98% yields and 70-96% ee. For most of the products, further improvement in the enantiopurity could be achieved by simple recrystallization. As a DPC 961 analogue, the compound 56 was obtained by deprotection of the addition product 55 in 68% yield with 94% ee. Reduction of 56 with lithium aluminium hydride gave an enyne 57 with E conformation exclusively, which featured a very similar structure to DPC 083.

Recently, Ma and co-workers conducted a short synthesis of the Efavirenz enyne analogue. The key step in this process was a lithium-mediated enantioselective 1,2-addition of enynes (e.g. 60) to ketones in the presence of catalytic amount of chiral binaphthol 58 (Scheme 17a). This reaction was suitable for various nonfluorinated ketones, giving a broad variety of chiral tertiary propargylic alcohols in 80-96% yields with 70-94% ee. However, the extension of this protocol to trifluoroethanone 59 led to a dramatic drop in the stereocontrol, giving the desired chiral tertiary alcohol 61 in 80% yield, albeit with 10% ee (Scheme 17b). Reduction of the nitro group in 61
gave the corresponding aniline 62, which then reacted with 4-nitrophenyl chloroformate to afford the dihydrobenzoxazinone 63, an analogue of the anti-HIV drug Efavirenz.

Scheme 17 (a) Asymmetric enynylation of ketones and (b) preparation of the Efavirenz analogue.

6. Concluding Remarks

With the established asymmetric processes of chiral auxiliaries, thousands of kilograms of efavirenz, DPC 961, and DPC 083 have been prepared in the clinical, launch and sales quantities. What’s more, recent advances in catalytic enantioselective synthesis of these anti-HIV drugs will provide new and attractive tools to reach ever higher stereoselectivities. This should stimulate further developments of the large-scale industrial production. On the other hand, considering the drug-resistant virus strains, continuous efforts should be made toward the exploration of new dihydrobenzoxazinone- and dihydroquinazolinone-based NNRTI candidates with diverse functional groups.

Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>BPO</td>
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<tr>
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<td>m-CPBA</td>
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Notes and references