

Advanced Pyrrolidine-Carbamate Self-Immolative Spacer with Tertiary Amine Handle Induces Superfast Cyclative Drug Release

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Amine-carbamate self-immolative (SI) spacers represent practical and versatile tools in targeted prodrugs, but their slow degradation mechanism limits drug activation at the site of disease. We engineered a pyrrolidine-carbamate SI spacer with a tertiary amine handle which strongly accelerates the spacer cyclization to give a bicyclic urea and the free hydroxy groups

Introduction

The selective delivery of drugs to the site of disease represents a widely pursued research goal, aimed at improving the efficacy and tolerability of pharmacological interventions. In this context, the covalent conjugation of pharmaceutical ingredients to antibodies (resulting in Antibody-Drug Conjugates, ADCs) represents one of the most validated technologies.[1] Historically, ADCs have been developed to release cytotoxic agents at the tumour site and kill cancer cells selectively, sparing healthy tissues. More recently, the ADC technology was adapted to various classes of pharmaceutical agents, including antibacterial,^[2] anti-inflammatory,^[3] and pro-inflammatory drugs.[4] In addition to antibodies, the covalent drug conjugation to different carriers (e.g. albumin,^[5] peptides,^[6] small ligands,^[7] polymers,^[8] etc.) is pushing the boundaries of targeted medicine. In most of these constructs, therapeutic effects are only displayed when the drug is effectively disconnected from the carrier. In this mechanism of action, a key role is played by the so-called self-immolative (SI) spacers, i. e. synthetic devices designed to undergo spontaneous disassembly in response to specific stimuli.^[9] In particular, different types of activation

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of either cytotoxic (Camptothecin) or immunostimulatory (Resiquimod) drugs. *In silico* conformational analysis and p*K*^a calculations suggest a plausible mechanism for the superior efficacy of the advanced SI spacer compared to state-of-art analogues.

signals (see "Trigger Activation" in Figure 1) typically lead to the liberation of a reactive functional group in the SI spacer. The latter initiates a variety of intramolecular reactions (mainly electronic cascade in aromatic and π -extended systems^[10] or cyclization of nucleophilic groups)^[11] that terminate with the release of thermodynamically-stable end-products (see "SI spacer Degradation" in Figure 1 ^[12] In the prodrug context, not only SI spacers facilitate the drug disconnection from the carrier and its release in a pharmaceutically-active form, but they also act as chemical adaptors for the whole prodrug assembly.^[13] Several conjugation strategies have been proposed to function-

Figure 1. Schematic drug release mechanism of a generic covalent drug conjugate, consisting in the initial trigger activation and subsequent degradation of a self-immolative (SI) spacer. The molecular structure and degradation mechanism of three cyclizing amine-carbamate SI spacers (i. e. benchmark ethylenediamine-carbamate **Sp1**, pyrrolidine-carbamate **Sp2**[19] and its engineered derivative **Sp3**, described in this work) is shown: secondary amine cyclization leads to carbamate cleavage, to give the drug's free hydroxy group (**1**) and cyclic urea **2** (mono-cyclic urea for **Sp1**, bicyclic urea for $Sp2/3$; R = Me for $Sp1/2$, R = (CH_2) , NMe₂ for $Sp3$). SI spacer cyclization rates increase in the order **Sp1***<***Sp2***<***Sp3**.

alize a variety of bioactive molecules, including amines, $[14]$ phenols,^[15] primary^[16] and secondary^[17] alcohols. In particular, the use of carbamate bonds is a practical and versatile strategy to connect a variety of hydroxy payloads to specific triggers and the ethylenediamine-carbamate spacer (**Sp1**, Figure 1) has long represented a standard in drug conjugates and other stimuli-responsive systems.^[18]

Our group has recently investigated the structural modification of **Sp1**. In 2020, we reported that the pyrrolidine-carbamate SI spacer **Sp2** (Figure 1) undergoes cyclative cleavage and releases OH-bearing drugs (**1**) and cyclic urea **2** at higher rates than **Sp1**. The incorporation of **Sp1** and **Sp2** into proteaseactivable anticancer prodrugs provided experimental evidence that a fast SI spacer degradation augments the anticancer effects *in vitro*.^[19] In light of these data, we speculated that a rapid SI spacer degradation may be particularly important for the prodrug efficacy *in vivo.* Indeed, even if the trigger activation (Figure 1) occurs efficiently and selectively at the site of interest, a long timespan between this initial stimulus and the final drug release prolongs the drug survival in a modified and inactive form. This delayed activation would facilitate the drug migration from the site of disease, its excretion or, at worst, its activation in healthy organs.

We describe herein an advanced SI spacer (**Sp3** in Figure 1) in which a tertiary amine handle enables much faster cyclative drug release compared to previously described spacers of the same class. Thanks to this rapid carbamate cleavage, this accelerated spacer degradation holds promises for improved delivery of therapeutic agents.

Results and Discussion

We undertook the structural optimization of the pyrrolidinecarbamate SI spacer **Sp2**, aimed at decreasing the carbamate half-life $(t_{1/2})$ for a faster hydroxy cargo release. The molecular structures of the synthesized SI spacers are reported in Figure 2 (all synthetic procedures are reported in the Supporting Information). Here, the **Sp2** pyrrolidine ring was replaced by either a piperidine (in **Sp4**) or an isoxazolidine (in **Sp5**) cycle. In particular, **Sp4** was designed to assess the impact of the cyclic amine ring size on the SI spacer degradation.^[20] On the other hand, the use of an isoxazolidine ring in **Sp5** aimed at evaluating the contribution of the " α -effect" to the spacer reactivity.[21] While **Sp4** was prepared starting from racemic 2 piperidinecarbaldehyde, the synthesis of **Sp5** was inspired by Bode's route to 5-oxaproline.^[22] Moreover, as we recently observed the inhibitory effects on the spacer cyclization given by a phosphate monoester group, $[23]$ we devised the SI spacer modification with a basic handle. Since at physiological pH (approximately 7.4) the pyrrolidine is mostly present as protonated species, a second amine handle may force the pyrrolidine deprotonation, thus lowering its pK_a value and increasing its nucleophilic character.^[24] To this end, SI spacers **Sp3** and **Sp6/8** were endowed with a tertiary amine handle connected either at the carbamate N atom (in **Sp3** and **Sp7**) or at the pyrrolidine ring (in **Sp6** and **Sp8**). While the former

Figure 2. Molecular structure and drug release activity of II-generation cyclizing SI spacers (**Sp3/8**), connected to the tertiary hydroxy group of Camptothecin (CPT). Experimental procedures for the SI spacer-CPT module synthesis and release studies are included in the Supporting Information.

spacers were rapidly obtained by reductive amination of Boc-lprolinal, the latter were prepared by multistep synthesis, starting from oxygenated proline derivatives, such as 4-oxo-lproline and hydroxyproline. Firstly, the exocyclic secondary amine of SI spacers **Sp3/8** was conjugated to the tertiary hydroxy group of the anticancer drug Camptothecin (CPT) via carbamate bond. As described recently,^[19,23] the final spacerdrug modules **Sp3/8-CPT** (Figure 2) were isolated as trifluoroacetate salts. These compounds were dissolved in a DMSO/ phosphate buffer (pH 7.5) mixture and incubated at 37°C, followed by aliquot collection at different time points and CPT release analysis by HPLC. The percentage of intact carbamate calculated from peak integrals was plotted versus time, and the spacer cyclization rates were estimated in terms of carbamate half-life $(t_{1/2})$. The results of this first screening are summarized in Figure 2.

Notably, replacement of the native pyrrolidine ring with a piperidine (**Sp4**) and an isoxazolidine (**Sp5**) led to a complete inhibition of the cyclative carbamate cleavage.^[25] On the other hand, the SI spacer derivatization with a tertiary amine led to some interesting results in terms of CPT release efficacy. In particular, carbamate **Sp6-CPT** released CPT with lower rates than reference **Sp2-CPT** ($t_{1/2}$ = 5.5 and 3.6 h, respectively), while the reactivity of SI spacers **Sp7** ($t_{1/2}$ =3.3 h) and **Sp8** ($t_{1/2}$ =3.2 h) was slightly improved, but very similar to the one of native **Sp2**. To our delight, carbamate **Sp3-CPT** showed a half-life of 0.9 h, i.e. four times shorter than reference compound Sp2-CPT.^[26] All in all, these data indicate that the cyclative cleavage of pyrrolidine-carbamate SI spacers can be accelerated by a tertiary amine handle, provided that the latter is in close proximity to the electrophilic carbamate bond. Indeed, the tertiary amine installation in a remote position from the carbamate (e.g. in **Sp6** and **Sp8**) showed no significant impact on the CPT release rates compared to reference **Sp2**. The importance of the amine handle proximity is even more evident by considering the better CPT release performance of **Sp3** (where a C-2 alkyl chain connects the carbamate N atom to the tertiary amino group) compared to **Sp7** (bearing a C-3 alkyl chain).

With the aim at confirming the superior efficacy of the new SI spacer **Sp3**, we investigated its ability to release a different payload, namely the immunostimulatory drug Resiquimod (R848). This imidazoquinoline (IMD) is a potent agonist of Tolllike receptors (TLR) 7 and 8, intracellular proteins expressed by several types of immune cells and involved in the host defence from viral infections.^[27]

By mimicking single-strand RNA fragments, IMDs induce TLR homodimerization and activate downstream pro-inflammatory pathways. Due to these pharmaceutical effects, tumour-targeted IMD prodrugs are being increasingly investigated to selectively activate the immune system at the site of disease, thus improving the outcomes of immunotherapy regimens. $[4,28]$ As previously done with CPT, SI spacers **Sp1**, **Sp2** and **Sp3** were connected to the tertiary hydroxy group of R848 via carbamate bond. The resulting **Sp1/3-R848** adducts were dissolved in a DMSO/phosphate buffer (pH 7.5) mixture and incubated at 37°C, following drug release analysis as described above. As shown by the HPLC traces and the chart in Figure 3, R848 carbamates proved generally more stable than the analogous CPT constructs. In particular, the native pyrrolidine spacer **Sp2** showed a very slow carbamate cleavage, with a half-life of 40 h calculated for the **Sp2-R848** construct. As expected, the drug release activity shown by **Sp2** was superior than the benchmark ethylenediamine-carbamate spacer **Sp1**, which released only traces of drug after eight-hour incubation. As observed with the CPT adducts, the tertiary amine-bearing spacer **Sp3** showed the highest drug release activity of the series, as the half-life of **Sp3- R848** carbamate $(t_{1/2} = 7.6 \text{ h})$ resulted approximately five times shorter than that of the **Sp2**-bearing analogue. In this experiment, LC-MS analysis of the **Sp3-R848** adduct upon eight-hour incubation confirmed the formation of bicyclic urea **2** during **Sp3** degradation (see Figure S1 in the Supporting Information). These CPT and R848 release data confirmed the superior performance of the advanced **Sp3** spacer compared to both **Sp2** and, even more dramatically, **Sp1** references. Channel Guess of the state of the state

To qualitatively investigate the structural basis for the **Sp3** spacer exceptional reactivity, we performed conformational analyses by computational methods of both **Sp2** and **Sp3** structures, connected to a generic alcohol (*tert*-butanol, "*t*Bu") through a carbamate bond. In particular, Monte Carlo/Energy Minimization (MC/EM) conformational searches^[29] were performed at the molecular mechanics level (OPLS3 force field)^[30] on carbamates **Sp2-***t***Bu** and **Sp3-***t***Bu** in their main ionization state at pH 7.5, corresponding to positively-charged amino groups (i. e. protonated pyrrolidine in **Sp2-***t***Bu**, protonated

Figure 3. Drug release activity of SI spacers **Sp1/3**, connected to the tertiary hydroxy group of Resiquimod (R848). HPLC traces relative to the stability analysis of carbamates **Sp1/3-R848** at *t*=0, 8 h are shown (peak of free R848 is highlighted in red) together with stability curves. r.t.: retention time, Abs.: UV absorbance. Experimental procedures for the SI spacer-R848 carbamate synthesis and release studies are included in the Supporting Information.

pyrrolidine and tertiary amine in **Sp3-***t***Bu**). Representative minimum-energy conformations selected from the molecular mechanics calculations were optimized at the DFT B3LYP/6- 31G* level of theory.[31] Solution phase energies of the obtained stationary points were computed at the same level of theory by single-point energy calculations including the water/PBF solvent model.^[31] Finally, pK_a values of the protonated species were calculated on DFT minimum energy structures displaying the lowest solution phase energies. According to these calculations, carbamate **Sp2-***t***Bu** adopts a preferential conformation (referred to as "Sp2-*t*Bu *anti*" in Figure 4A) in which the pyrrolidinium ion engages the carbonyl sp²-hybridized O atom in a hydrogen bond, forming a seven-membered ring. On the other hand, a similar intramolecular interaction of the pyrrolidinium ion with sp3 -hybridized O atom leads to the "Sp2-*t*Bu *syn*" conformation, 2.74 kcal/mol higher in energy than the "a*nti"* counterpart.

"*Anti*" rotamers in carbamates are typically favored over the "syn" counterparts by 1.0–1.5 kcal/mol,^[32] and the 2.74 kcal/mol increased stability of "Sp2-*t*Bu *anti*" versus "Sp2-*t*Bu *syn*" indicates that rotational equilibrium of amine-carbamate modules can be dramatically influenced by intramolecular H bonding. Concerning **Sp3-***t***Bu**, two simultaneous H bonds can be formed by two donors (i.e. pyrrolidinium and trialkyl ammonium ions), which can individually engage either O atoms (Figure 4A). In contrast to the **Sp2-***t***Bu** data, the preferred **Sp3** *t***Bu** conformation features the pyrrolidinium ion engaging the sp³-hybridized O atom, whereas the sp²-hybridized O atom binds the trialkyl ammonium ion. This "Sp3-*t*Bu *syn*" conforma-

Figure 4. A) Molecular structures of representative conformations for **Sp2/3** *t***Bu**, optimized at the DFT B3LYP/6-31G* level. Relative energy differences are calculated from the corresponding solution phase energies (water PBF). Calculated pK_a values for N-H⁺ protons are reported (orange). Additional conformations of **Sp2/3-***t***Bu** are shown in Figure S2 in the Supporting Information). B) Plausible mechanism of carbamate cyclative cleavage carried out by SI spacer **Sp3**.

tion is favored by 1.16 kcal/mol over the "Sp3-*t*Bu *anti*" counterpart, in which the pyrrolidinium and trialkyl ammonium ions engage the sp^2 - and sp^3 -hybridized O atoms, respectively (Figure 4, for additional conformations of **Sp2-***t***Bu** and **Sp3-***t***Bu**, see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information). Interestingly, the two pyrrolidinium protons in the "Sp3-*t*Bu *syn*" conformation proved more acidic (calculated $pK_a=8.9$, 8.4) than the trialkyl ammonium species (pK_a =11.0).

These *in silico* data suggest a possible explanation for the observed SI spacer reactivity. Firstly, at the onset of SI spacer degradation, it is reasonable to assume that the nucleophilic attack of the uncharged pyrrolidine N atom to the carbonyl group occurs with a N-C-O bond angle >90°, following the well-known Bürgi-Dunitz trajectory.^[33] The three-dimensional analysis of the Sp-carbamate modules indicates that this geometry of attack is only accessible by the carbamate *syn* rotamers. Secondly, considering the perturbed pKa of the pyrrolidinium ion in the "Sp3-*t*Bu *syn*" structure, it is possible that the pyrrolidine nucleophilic attack in **Sp3** is also facilitated by a preferential proton dissociation in aqueous medium.

In summary, the tertiary amine proximity to the carbamate group may facilitate the SI spacer degradation at different stages of the cyclization reaction, following the mechanism proposed in Figure 4B. In particular, upon pyrrolidine deprotonation (Step 1, equilibrium governed by the pH of the aqueous medium), the intramolecular hydrogen bond between the trialkylammonium ion and the sp^2 -hybridized O atom in intermediate I may facilitate the pyrrolidine cyclization (Step 2) to give the tetrahedral intermediate II. Here, the basicity of the tertiary amine may favor the restoration of the sp²-hybridized C center (bicyclic urea formation) and the liberation of the hydroxy group (Step 3). This impact of neighbouring groups on bond cleavage kinetics is reminiscent of "catalytic triads" in the active site of hydrolytic enzymes, $[34]$ which have inspired the development of synthetic enzyme mimics.^[35] Similarly, a positively-charged lysine ɛ-amine group in an ADC construct was recently found to act as acid-catalyst, and exploited to induce modifications of acetal and succinimide labels connected to the antibody core.^[36]

Conclusions

The present work describes a highly reactive pyrrolidinecarbamate SI spacer (**Sp3**) in which a superfast carbamate cyclative cleavage is induced by the presence of a tertiary amine handle in close proximity to the carbamate bond. This advanced spacer showed better performance than **Sp2** in the release of both the cytotoxic agent CPT and immunostimulatory drug R848. *In silico* conformational analysis and pK_a calculations allowed us to propose a plausible rationale for the superior efficacy of the advanced SI spacer compared to reference **Sp2**. Considering the very slow R848 release observed with state-ofart SI spacers **Sp1** and **Sp2**, the new spacer **Sp3** may be pivotal for the design of cleavable R848 conjugates, alternative to previous strategies for IMD derivatization.^[37] Moreover, as we reported for the Sp2 reference,^[19,23] the Sp3 module can be easily installed into functional drug delivery systems. For instance, the **Sp3** connection to a *para*-aminobenzyl carbamate (PABC) spacer will access to protease-activable prodrugs, which represent the backbone of drug delivery technologies, including marketed ADCs.[38] In general, **Sp3** application in different types of stimuli-responsive materials can be envisioned as a valid alternative to current strategies for hydroxyl cargo delivery.^[13,16,17]

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

The data that support the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material of this article.

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Supporting Information

Advanced Pyrrolidine-Carbamate Self-Immolative Spacer with Tertiary Amine Handle Induces Superfast Cyclative Drug Release

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Supporting Information

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Supplementary Figures

Figure S1. HRMS spectrum and elemental composition report for bicyclic urea **2** (**Sp3** cyclization end-product) detected by LC-MS analysis of **Sp3-R848** upon incubation for 8 h in phosphate buffer.

Figure S2. Molecular structures of representative conformations for **Sp2/3-tBu**, optimized at the DFT B3LYP/6-31G* level. Relative energy differences are calculated from the corresponding solution phase energies (water PBF).

Materials and Methods

All manipulations requiring anhydrous conditions were carried out in flame-dried glassware, with magnetic stirring and under a nitrogen atmosphere. All commercially available reagents were used as received. Anhydrous solvents were purchased from commercial sources and withdrawn from the container by syringe, under a slight positive pressure of nitrogen. The reactions were monitored by analytical thin-layer chromatography (TLC) using silica gel 60 F254 pre-coated glass plates (0.25 mm thickness). Visualization was accomplished by irradiation with a UV lamp and/or staining with a ceric ammonium molybdate solution, 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine, concentrated $H₂SO₄$ or ninhydrin. Flash column chromatography was performed according to the method of Still and co-workers¹ using Chromagel 60 ACC (40-63 µm) silica gel. Proton chemical shifts are reported in ppm (*δ*) with the solvent reference relative to tetramethylsilane (TMS) employed as the internal standard (CDCl₃ δ = 7.26 ppm; CD₂Cl₂, δ = 5.32 ppm; d₆-DMSO, δ = 2.50 ppm; CD₃OD, δ = 3.33 ppm, d₈-THF δ = 3.58 ppm, 1.73 ppm). The following abbreviations are used to describe spin multiplicity: $s =$ singlet, $d =$ doublet, $t =$ triplet, $q =$ quartet, $m =$ multiplet, bs = broad signal, dd = doublet of doublet. Carbon NMR spectra were recorded on a spectrometer operating at 100.63 MHz, with complete proton decoupling. Carbon chemical shifts are reported in ppm (*δ*) relative to TMS with the respective solvent resonance as the internal standard $(CDCl₃, δ = 77.16$ ppm; $CD₂Cl₂, δ = 54.00$ ppm; $d₆$ -DMSO, δ = 39.51 ppm; $CD₃OD, δ = 49.05$ ppm; $d₈$ -THF *δ* = 67.57 ppm, 25.37 ppm). HPLC purifications were performed on Dionex Ultimate 3000 equipped with Dionex RS Variable Wavelenght Detector (column: Atlantis Prep T3 OBDTM 5 µm 19 x 100 mm; flow 10 ml/min unless stated otherwise). HPLC analysis of carbamate stability was performed on a Waters 515 HPLC pumps equipped with 996 photodiode array detector and Waters Atlantis T3 - 5 μm - 4.6 x 100 mm column (injection volume: 200 µL) and on a Jasco LC-4000 HPLC System equipped with MD-4010 photodiode array detector and Phenomenex Gemini-NX 5 μm - 4.6 x 150 mm column (injection volume: 20 µL). High-resolution mass spectrometry analysis (HRMS, 4 decimal places) were performed on a Q-TOF Synapt G2-Si instrument available at the MS facility of the Unitech COSPECT at the University of Milan. Low resolution mass spectra (MS, 1 and 2 decimal places) were recorded on a Thermo Scientific LCQ Fleet Ion Trap Mass Spectrometer (ESI source). Camptothecin carbonate **CPT-PNP**², Boc-Hyp-OMe,³ and **Sp2-CPT**⁴ were prepared following published procedures.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

Synthetic procedures

General Procedures

General procedure A for partial reduction of L-Proline esters. Ester (1 equiv.) was dissolved in dry CH_2Cl_2 (0.2 M), stirred under nitrogen atmosphere, and cooled at -78 °C with an acetone/dry ice bath. DIBAL-H (1 M in hexane, 1 equiv.) was slowly added to the solution and the mixture was stirred at -78 °C until starting material consumption was detected by TLC. Later on, MeOH was added at -78 °C (3 x 30 µL) and the solution was stirred for 5 minutes. The mixture was warmed to r.t. and transferred into a separatory funnel containing a sat. aqueous NH₄Cl solution (25 mL). The solution was extracted with $CH₂Cl₂$ (3 x 30 mL), dried and concentrated in vacuum. Unless stated otherwise, the resulting aldehyde was used in the following synthetic step without further purification.

General procedure B for reductive amination. Aldehyde (1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂/AcOH under nitrogen atmosphere. Primary amine (4 equiv.) and NaBH(OAc) $_3$ (5 equiv.) were added to the aldehyde solution and the reaction was stirred at r.t. overnight. The mixture was transferred into a separatory funnel and diluted with CH_2Cl_2 (10 mL). A 10% Na₂CO₃ solution (20 mL) was added and the stirring mixture was flushed with nitrogen. NaOH 2 M was then added until $pH -12$. The mixture was extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 x 25 mL). Collected organic phases were washed with brine (1 x 5 mL), dried and concentrated under vacuum.

General procedure C for Boc deprotection. To an ice-cold CH2Cl² solution of the *N*-Boc-protected compound, half volume of TFA was added added dropwise at 0 °C and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 1 h. The solvent was evaporated and then CH_2Cl_2 was added for two times to the residue followed by evaporation under vacuum, to afford the amine TFA salt.

Synthesis of Sp3-CPT

Scheme S1. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a) N,N-*dimethylethylenediamine, NaBH(OAc)₃, AcOH in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t., overnight; *b*) **CPT-PNP**, dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 3h;. *c*) **TFA/CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 45 min.**

Tert-butyl (S)-2-(((2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)amino)methyl)pyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (**3**)

Boc-(L)-Prolinal (186 µL, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂/AcOH (20 + 2 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with *N,N*-dimethylethylenediamine (95% wt, 438 µL, 4 mmol, 4 equiv.) following General Procedure B. The crude product was purified with column chromatography (gradient from 10% to 20% MeOH in CH2Cl2) to give amine **3** (232 mg, quant) as a colourless oil.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, MeOD) *δ* 3.89 (bs, 1H), 3.39-3.28 (m, 2H), 2.87-2.67 (m, 3H), 2.59 (m, 1H), 2.53- 2.41 (m, 2H), 2.27 (s, 6H), 2.04-1.77 (m, 4H), 1.47 (s, 9H) ppm; MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd. for [C₁₄H₂₉N₃O₂]⁺: 272.23 [*M*+H]⁺ , found: 272.29.

Sp3-CPT

To a solution of CPT-PNP (9 mg, 17 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ was added compound **3** (13.6 mg, 50 μmol, 3 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere followed by DIPEA (11.9 µL, 68 μmol, 4 equiv.). The reaction

was stirred at 25 °C for 2h. The crude product $[R_f = 0.40 (9.1 CH_2Cl_2/MeOH)]$ was dissolved in dry CH_2Cl_2 (600 µL, 0.05 M) and treated following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: $H₂O + 0.1%$ TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 0% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10.5), *t*R (product): 8.6 min). The purified product was lyophilized to give carbamate **Sp3-CPT** as a yellow solid (22 mg, 95%).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{30}H_{35}N_5O_5]^+$: 546.27 $[M+H]^+$, found: 546.48; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{30}H_{35}N_5O_5]$ ⁺: 546.2716 [M+H]⁺, found: 546.2722.

Synthesis of Sp4-CPT

Scheme S2. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a*) MeNH₂, NaBH(OAc)₃ in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t., overnight; b) **CPT-PNP**, dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 3h; c) TFA/CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 45 min.

Tert-butyl 2-((methylamino)methyl)piperidine-1-carboxylate (**5**)

$$
\begin{array}{|c|c|}\n\hline\n& H & C_{12}H_{24}N_2O_2 \\
\hline\nN & N \sim N \\
\hline\n\end{array}\n\quad \text{MW: } 228.34 \text{ g} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}
$$

1-*N*-*Boc*-2-piperidinecarbaldehyde (**4**) (racemate, 214 mg, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in $CH_2Cl_2/ACOH$ (20 + 2 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with methylamine (33% wt in absolute ethanol, 373.6 µL, 3 mmol, 3 equiv.) following General Procedure B. Amine **5** was obtained as a colourless oil (100 mg, 45%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, MeOD) *δ* 4.35 (m, 1H), 3.96 (m, 1H), 2.88-2.82 (m, 2H), 2.64 (dd, *J* = 12.5, 6.6 Hz, 1H), 2.39 (s, 3H), 1.70-1.56 (m, 6H), 1.46 (s, 9H) ppm.

Sp4-CPT

 $C_{28}H_{30}N_4O_5$ MW: 502.57 g · mol⁻¹ + TFA To a solution of CPT-PNP (20 mg, 40 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ was added compound 5 (36 mg, 155 μmol, 4 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere. The mixture was stirred at 20 °C overnight. The crude product $F_1 = 0.83$ (9:1 CH₂Cl₂/MeOH) mixture of diastereoisomers.] was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (800 µL, 0.05 M) and treated following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: H₂O + 0.1% TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 0% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10.5), t_R (product): 9.8 min). The product was isolated as a mixture of diastereoisomers and lyophilized to give **Sp4-CPT** as a yellow solid (22 mg, 89% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{28}H_{30}N_4O_5]^+$: 503.23 $[M+H]^+$, found: 503.37; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for [C₂₈H₃₀N₄O₅]⁺: 503.2294 [M+H]⁺, found: 503.2302.

Synthesis of Sp5-CPT

Scheme S3. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a*) 1 M DIBAL-H in Hexane, dry CH₂Cl₂, -78 °C, 2h; *b*) MeNH₂, NaBH(OAc)₃, dry CH₂Cl₂, overnight; *c*) **CPT-PNP**, dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 3h; *d*) TFA/CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 45 min.

Tert-butyl (S)-3-formylisoxazolidine-2-carboxylate (**7**)

 $C_9H_{15}NO_4$ MW: 201.22 g • mol⁻¹

Ethyl ester 6⁵ (150 mg, 611 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (0.2 M) and treated following General Procedure A. Crude product was purified by column chromatography (CH₂Cl₂/MeOH, MeOH gradient from 2% to 5%). Final aldehyde **7** was obtained as a colourless oil (56 mg, 46%).

R^f = 0.35 (1:1 EtOAc/Hex, stained with ninhydrin); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 9.61 (d, *J* = 1.4 Hz, 1H), 4.59 (dd, *J* = 9.1, 4.6 Hz, 1H), 4.07 (m, 1H), 3.78 (dd, *J* = 16.3, 9.1 Hz, 1H), 2.58-2.38 (m, 2H), 1.52 (s, 9H) ppm.

⁵ C.E. Murar, T. J. Harmand, J. W. Bode, *Bioorg. Med. Chem.* 2017, **25**, 4996.

O-acetyl-N-(((S)-2-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)isoxazolidin-3-yl)methyl)-N-methylhydroxylammonium (**8**)

 $C_{10}H_{20}N_2O_3$ MW: 216.28 g · mol⁻¹

Aldehyde **7** (56 mg, 278 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in a 10% mixture of AcOH in CH₂Cl₂ (556 μL in 5.56 mL CH2Cl2) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with methylamine (33% wt in absolute ethanol, 138 µL, 1.11 mmol, 4 equiv.) and a reducing agent following General Procedure B. The crude product was purified with column chromatography (gradient from 10 to 20% MeOH in CH₂Cl₂), to give amine **8** (22 mg, 30%) as an oil.

R^f = 0.38 (15% MeOH in CH2Cl2 + 0.2% TEA, stained with ninhydrin); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, MeOD) *δ* 4.53 (m, 1H), 4.12 (m, 1H), 3.69 (m, 1H), 3.10 (dd, *J* = 12.9, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 2.99 (dd, *J* = 12.9, 10.4 Hz , 1H), 2.71 (s, 3H), 2.54 (m, 1H), 1.99 (m, 1H), 1.51 (s, 9H) ppm.

Sp5-CPT

 $C_{26}H_{26}N_{4}O_{6}$ MW: 490.52 g • mol⁻¹ + TFA

To a solution of CPT-PNP (7 mg, 14 µmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ was added compound 8 (14 mg, 49 μmol, 3.5 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere followed by DIPEA (10 µL, 56 μmol, 4 equiv.). The reaction was stirred at 20 °C for 2 h. The crude product $[R_f = 0.24 (9:1 CH_2Cl_2/MeOH)$; MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for [C₃₁H₃₄N₄O₈]⁺: 591.24 [M+H]⁺; found: 590.20.] was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (800 µL, 0.05 M) and treated with TFA following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: H_2O + 0.1% TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 57% B (at min 10), *t*^R (product): 9.0 min). The purified product was lyophilized to give **Sp5-CPT** as a yellow solid (20 mg, 83% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{26}H_{26}N_4O_6]^+$: 513.17 [M+Na]⁺, found: 513.20; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd.. for [C₂₆H₂₆N₄O₆]⁺: 491.1931 [M+H]⁺, found: 491.1933, m/z calcd. for [C₂₆H₂₆N₄O₆]⁺: 513.1750 [M+Na]⁺, found: 513.1752.

Synthesis of Sp6-CPT

Scheme S4.REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a*) HNMe2, NaBH3CN, AcOH in THF, 40 °C, 3h; *b*) DIBAL-H, dry CH2Cl2, -80 °C, 2h; *c*) MeNH₂, NaBH(OAc)₃, AcOH in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 6h; *d*) CPT-PNP in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 3h; *e*) TFA/CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 45 min.

1-(tert-butyl) 2-methyl (2S,4S)-4-(dimethylamino)pyrrolidine-1,2-dicarboxylate (**10**):

To a stirred solution of ketone **9** (150 mg, 620 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry THF (4.5 mL) dimethylamine (2.0 M in MeOH, 1.24 mL, 2.48 mmol, 4 equiv.) and acetic acid (53 µL, 930 μmol, 1.5 equiv.) were added under nitrogen atmosphere. NaBH3CN (117 mg, 1.86 mmol, 3 equiv.) was added and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 2 h. THF was evaporated in vacuo. The crude solid was dissolved in ethyl acetate (50 mL) and transferred into a separatory funnel. A saturated aqueous sodium bicarbonate (20 mL) was added, followed by layer separation. The organic phase was then washed with brine (10 mL), dried and concentrated. The solid crude was purified with flash chromatography (gradient: from 1% to 4% MeOH in CH_2Cl_2) to obtain the final product as a yellow oil (156 mg, 93%).

R^f = 0.40 (9:1 CH2Cl2/MeOH); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, MeOD) *δ* 4.31 (m, 1H), 3.91 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 7.7 Hz, 1H), 3.82 (m, 1H), 3.77 (bs, 3H), 3.53 (m, 1H), 2.73-2.63 (m, 7H), 2.18 (m, 1H), 1.47 (s, 9H, rotamer A), 1.41 (s, 9H, rotamer B) ppm; MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{13}H_{24}N_2O_4]^+$: 273.18 $[M+H]^+$, found: 273.12.

Tert-butyl (2S,4S)-4-(dimethylamino)-2-formylpyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (**11**)

 $C_{12}H_{22}N_{2}O_{3}$ MW: 242.32 g · mol⁻¹ Ester **10** (114 mg, 420 µmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (3.5 mL, 0.12 M) and treated following General Procedure A. Crude product was purified by column chromatography (gradient: from 2% to 5% of MeOH in CH2Cl2). Final aldehyde **11** was obtained as a colourless oil (58 mg, 58%). $R_f = 0.55$ (9:1 CH₂Cl₂/MeOH); MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{12}H_{22}N_2O_3]^+$: 243.17 $[M+H]^+$, found: 243.14.

Tert-butyl (2S,4S)-4-(dimethylamino)-2-((methylamino)methyl) pyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (**12**)

Aldehyde **11** (58 mg, 240 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH2Cl2/AcOH (5 mL + 500 μL) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with methylamine (33% wt in absolute ethanol, 120 µL, 960 μmol, 4 equiv.) following General Procedure B. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: $H₂O + 0.1%$ AcOH; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 38% B (at min 12), t_R (product): 5.6 min). The purified product was lyophilized to give amine **12** as a yellow solid (53 mg, 86% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{13}H_{27}N_3O_2]^+$: 258.22 [M+H]⁺, found: 258.18.

Sp6-CPT

To a solution of **CPT-PNP** (6 mg, 13 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ was added compound **12** (10 mg, 39 μmol, 3 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere followed by DIPEA (9 µL, 52 μmol, 4 equiv.). The reaction was stirred at 20 °C for 2h. The crude product $[R_f = 0.40 (9:1 \text{ CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH})]$ was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (800 µL, 0.05 M) and treated following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: $H_2O + 0.1\%$ TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 0% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10.5), *t*^R (product): 8.9 min). The pure fractions lyophilized to give carbamate **Sp6-CPT** as a yellow solid (21 mg, 96% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{29}H_{33}N_5O_5]^+$: 532.26 $[M+H]^+$, found: 532.45; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for [C₂₉H₃₃N₅O₅]⁺: 532.2560 [M+H]⁺, found: 532.2563, *m/z* calcd. for [C₂₉H₃₃N₅O₅]⁺: 554.2379 [M +Na]⁺ , found: 554.2380.

Synthesis of Sp7-CPT

Scheme S5. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a)* N,N-dimethyl-1,3-propanediamine, NaBH(OAc)₃, AcOH in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t., overnight; *b*) **CPT-PNP** in dry CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 3h;. *c*) TFA/ CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 45 min.

Tert-butyl 2-(((3-(dimethylamino)propyl)amino)methyl)pyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (**13**)

Boc-(L)-Prolinal (187 μL, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in a 10% AcOH solution in CH₂Cl₂ (20 mL + 2 mL AcOH) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated following General Procedure B with *N*,*N*-dimethyl-1,3-propanediamine (500 µL, 4 mmol, 4 equiv.). The product was obtained as a colourless oil (260 mg, 91%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, MeOD) *δ* 3.89 (bs, 1H), 3.36 (m, 1H), 2.79 (dd, *J* = 11.7, 4.9 Hz, 1H), 2.67-2.60 (m, 2H), 2.55 (dd, *J* = 7.6, 11.7 Hz, 1H), 2.39-2.34 (m, 2H), 2.25 (s, 6H), 2.02-1.79 (m, 5H), 1.74-1.66 (m, 2H), 1.47 (s, 9H) ppm.

N,N-dimethylpropanediamine-CPT module (**Sp7-CPT**)

To a solution of CPT-PNP (7 mg, 14 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ was added amine **13** (12 mg, 41 μmol, 3 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere followed by DIPEA (10 µL, 56 μmol, 4 equiv.). The reaction was stirred at 20 °C for 2h. The crude product $[R_f = 0.24 (9:1 CH_2Cl_2/MeOH)$; MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{36}H_{45}N_5O_7]^+$: 660.34 $[M+H]^+$, found: 660.32; m/z calcd. for $[C_{36}H_{45}N_5O_7]^+$: 682.32 $[M+Na]^+$, found: 682.33.] was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (800 µL, 0.05 M) and treated following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC [eluent A: $H_2O + 0.1\%$ TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10.5), t_R (product): 8.6 min]. The purified product was lyophilized to give **Sp7-CPT** as a yellow solid (20 mg, 90% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{31}H_{37}N_5O_5]^{\text{+}}$: 560.29 $[M+H]^{\text{+}}$, found: 560.41; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for [C31H37N5O5] + : 560.2873 [*M*+H]⁺ , found: 560.2870.

Synthesis of Sp8-CPT

Scheme S6. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a)* allyl bromide, KHMDS, THF, 0 °C to r.t., overnight; *b*) OsO⁴ (2% mol), NMO∙H2O, THF/H2O (2:1), 0 °C to r.t., overnight; *c*) NaIO4, THF/H2O (2:1), r.t., 1h; *d*) NaBH4, MeOH, 0 °C to r.t., 2.5h; *e*) DIBAL-H, CH2Cl2, -78 °C, 1.5h; *f*) MeNH2, NaBH(OAc)3, CH2Cl2, AcOH, r.t., 60h; *g*) **CPT-PNP**, DIPEA, CH2Cl2, r.t., 3h; *h*) DMP, CH2Cl2, 0 °C to r.t., 1 h; *i*) MeNH₂, NaBH(OAc)₃, CH₂Cl₂, AcOH, r.t., overnight; *j*) TFA/ CH₂Cl₂ 1:2, 0 °C to r.t., 1h.

Boc-Hyp(All)-OMe (**15**)

To a stirred solution of Boc-Hyp-OMe **1[4](#page-9-1)**³ (491 mg, 2.00 mmol, 1 equiv.) in dry THF (8 mL) cooled to 0 °C under nitrogen atmosphere was added a 0.5 M solution of KHMDS in toluene (4.8 mL, 2.40 mmol, 1.2 equiv.). The mixture was stirred for 5 min at 0 °C, then allyl bromide (208 μL, 2.40 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) was added at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was stirred overnight at r.t. and then water (5 mL) was added

and THF was evaporated in vacuo. The aqueous layer was extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 x 30 mL). The combined organic layer was dried, and concentrated. The crude product was purified through flash chromatography (8:2, Hex/AcOEt), to give ether **15** as a colorless oil (374 mg, 65%).

 $R_f = 0.34$ (8:2, Hex/AcOEt stained with ceric ammonium molybdate solution); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 5.86 (m, 1H), 5.30-5.14 (m, 2H), 4.37 (m, 1H), 4.10 (m, 1H), 4.02-3.91 (m, 2H), 3.72 (s, 3H, rotamer A), 3.71 (s, 3H, rotamer B), 3.68-3.45 (m, 2H), 2.39-2.03 (m, 2H), 1.47-1.40 (m, 9H) ppm; MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{14}H_{23}NO_5]^{\dagger}$: 308.15 [M+Na]⁺, found: 308.07.

Boc-Hyp(2-oxoethoxy)-OMe (**16**)

 $C_{13}H_{21}NO_6$ MW: 287.31 a • mol⁻¹

To an ice-cold solution of terminal alkene **15** (200 mg, 700 μmol, 1 equiv.) and 4-methylmorpholine *N*oxide monohydrate (194 mg, 1.44 mmol, 2 equiv.) in a 2:1 THF/H₂O mixture (4.5 mL), OsO₄ (2.5 wt% solution in *t*-BuOH, 176 μL, 14 μmol, 0.02 equiv.) was added. The mixture was stirred for 3 h at 0 °C and then allowed to warm to r.t. and stirred overnight. Solid sodium hydrogen sulfite was added and the mixture as stirred for 1 h at r.t. The mixture was filtered through a pad of silica and rinsed with THF. Volatiles removal led to the crude 1,2-diol intermediate as a yellow oil (288 mg), which was used in the following step without purification. The diol was dissolved in a 2:1 THF/H₂O solution (6.9 mL) and sodium periodate (305 mg, 1.43 mmol, 2 equiv.) was added. The mixture was stirred at r.t. for 1 h. Water (4 mL) was added and THF was evaporated in vacuo. The aqueous layer was extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 x 30 mL). The combined organic layers were dried, filtered and concentrated in vacuo, to give aldehyde **16** as a yellow oil (207 mg, quant), which was rapidly used in the following step.

 R_f = 0.36 (8:2, AcOEt/Hex stained with ceric ammonium molybdate solution).

Boc-Hyp(2-hydroxyethoxy)-OMe (**17**)

Aldehyde **16** (206 mg, 0.72 mmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in dry MeOH (7.2 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere and cooled to 0 °C. NaBH₄ (41 mg, 1.08 mmol, 1.5 equiv.) was added at 0 °C and then the reaction mixture was allowed to warm to r.t. The reaction mixture was stirred at r.t. for 2.5 h. After concentrating the solvent, 5 mL of a sat. aq. NaHCO $_3$ solution were added and the aqueous layer was

then extracted with CH₂C_{l2} (3 x 30 mL). The combined organic layers were dried (Na₂SO₄), filtered and concentrated in vacuo. The crude product was purified through flash column chromatography (3% of MeOH in CH2Cl2), to give alcohol **17** as a colorless oil (176 mg, 85%).

 R_f = 0.40 (95:5, CH₂Cl₂/MeOH stained with KMnO₄ and conc. H₂SO₄); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) *δ* 4.39 (m, 1H), 4.17-4.06 (m, 2H), 3.74-3.70 (m, 4H), 3.69-3.45 (m, 5H), 2.47-2.03 (m, 2H), 1.47-1.41 (m, 9H) ppm; MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{13}H_{23}NO_6]^+$: 312.14 $[M+Na]^+$, found: 312.19.

Boc-Hyp(2-hydroxyethoxy)-CHO (**18**)

 $C_{12}H_{21}NO_5$ MW. 259.30 g · mol⁻¹

A solution of methylester 17 (109 mg, 380 μmol, 1 equiv.) in dry CH₂Cl₂ (3.8 mL) and a solution of DIBAL-H (1 M in toluene, 1 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere were separately cooled to -78 °C in an acetone/dryice bath. Portions of the cold DIBAL-H solution (10 x 80 μL, 790 μmol, 2.1 equiv.) were rapidly transferred to the stirring **17** solution. The mixture was then stirred at -78 $^{\circ}$ C for 1.5 h, followed by addition of CH₂Cl₂ (30 mL) at -78 °C. The mixture was then warmed to 0 °C (ice-water bath), followed by sequential addition of water (32 μL), 15% aq. NaOH (32 μL) and again water (79 μL). The resulting emulsion was warmed to r.t. and stirred for 15 min. After the addition of $Na₂SO₄$, the mixture was stirred for additional 15 min. The mixture was then filtered and concentrated, to give aldehyde **18** as a yellow oil (86 mg, 88%), which was immediately used in the following step, without purification.

 R_f = 0.43 (95:5, $CH_2Cl_2/MeOH$ stained with 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine).

Boc-Hyp(2-hydroxyethoxy)-CPT (**20**)

Aldehyde **18** (86 mg, 330 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH2Cl² (6.5 mL) containing AcOH (28 µL, 1.5 equiv.) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with methylamine (33% wt in absolute ethanol, 165 µL,

1.33 mmol, 4 equiv.) following General Procedure B. The crude product was purified with flash chromatography (10% MeOH in CH_2Cl_2 + 1% TEA) to obtain secondary amine **19** (49 mg, 200 µmol). The latter was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (4 mL), followed by addition of CPT-PNP (122 mg, 240 μmol, 1.2 equiv.) and DIPEA (138 μL, 800 μmol, 4 equiv.). The mixture was stirred at r.t. for 3 h. After solvent removal, the crude product (200 mg) was purified through flash chromatography (gradient: from 1% to 10% MeOH in CH2Cl2), to give carbamate **20** as a yellow solid (107 mg, 84%).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{34}H_{40}N_4O_9]^+$: 671.27 [M+Na]⁺, found: 671.52.

Boc-Sp8-CPT (**21**)

 $C_{36}H_{45}N_5O_8$ MW: 675.78 g · mol⁻¹

Alcohol 20 (19 mg, 29 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (3 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere and cooled to 0 °C. After the addition of a 0.3 M DMP solution in CH_2Cl_2 (308 µL, 92 µmol, 3 equiv.) at 0 °C, the mixture was warmed to r.t. and stirred for 1 h. After the addition of MeOH (200 μL) at 0 °C and removal of the solvent, the residue was dissolved in a 10% MeOH solution in CH_2Cl_2 and filtered over a pad of silica (rinsed with 10% MeOH solution in CH_2Cl_2). The crude product was dissolved in of CH_2Cl_2 (1 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere and treated with AcOH (4 µL, 1.5 equiv.) and dimethylamine (2 M in THF, 97 µL, 190 μmol, 4 equiv.) following General Procedure B. The crude product was filtered over a pad of silica and eluted with a 9:1 $CH_2Cl_2/MeOH$ mixture (50 mL) and later with a 9:1 $CH_2Cl_2/MeOH$ mixture + 1% TEA (50 mL). After solvent removal, the crude mixture was purified by HPLC (eluent A: H₂O + 0.1% AcOH, eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 15% B at min 0.5 to 70% B at min 9, t_R (product): 6.5 min). The pure fractions were lyophilized to give **21** as a yellow solid (14 mg, 65% over two steps).

MS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{36}H_{46}N_5O_8]^+$: 676.33 [M+H]⁺, found: 676.39.

Sp8-CPT

21 (5 mg, 7 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (250 μL, 0.03 M) and treated with TFA following General Procedure C. The crude product was then purified by HPLC (eluent A: $H_2O + 0.1\%$ TFA, eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 15% B at min 1 to 60% B at min 10.5, t_R (product): 7.2 min). The pure fractions were lyophilized to give carbamate **Sp8-CPT** as a yellow solid (4 mg, 71%).

HRMS (ESI): m/z calcd. for $[C_{31}H_{38}N_5O_6]^+$: 576.2817 [M+H]⁺, found: 576.2831.

Synthesis of Sp1-R848, Sp2-R848, Sp3-R848

Scheme S7. REAGENTS AND CONDITIONS: *a)* Boc2O, TEA, THF, 0 °C to r.t. 72 h; *c)* (*N*-Boc)-*N,N'*-dimethylethylenediamine, DIPEA, CH2Cl2, r.t. 2.5 h; *d)* TFA/ CH2Cl2, r.t. 1 h; *e)* Boc-Pro-NHMe, DIPEA, CH2Cl2, r.t. 1h 45'; *f)* TFA/ CH2Cl2, r.t. 1 h; *g)* **3**, DIPEA, CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 1h 45'; [2] TFA/ CH₂Cl₂, r.t. 1 h.

Boc-R848

MW: 414.51 g · mol⁻¹

R848 (Fluorochem, 83 mg, 260 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in THF (3 ml). Boc₂O (288 mg, 1.32 mmol, 5 equiv.) and TEA (183 μL, 1.32 mmol, 5 equiv.) were added at 0 °C and the reaction was stirred at r.t. for 72 h. The crude material was purified by flash chromatography (eluent 3% MeOH in CH_2Cl_2), to give Boc-R848 as a white foam (95 mg, 88%).

R^f = 0.45 (95:5 CH2Cl2/MeOH); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 8.19 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 8.12 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.58 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.45 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 4.91 (bs, 2H), 4.78 (bs, 2H), 3.67 (q, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 3.20 (s, 1H), 1.59 (s, 9H), 1.32 (bs, 6H), 1.26 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 150.8, 150.6, 144.8, 144.0, 135.4, 129.9, 127.5, 124.4, 119.8, 116.5, 81.4, 71.5, 66.7, 65.0, 56.5, 28.3, 27.9, 14.9 ppm.

R848-PNP

R848 *N*-Boc (30 mg, 72 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) and cooled to 0 °C. DMAP (53 mg, 434 μmol, 6 equiv.) and 4-nitrophenyl chloroformate (44 mg, 217 μmol, 3 equiv.) were added. After 1 h, a white precipitated is observed. The mixture was stirred at r.t. for 4 h. The solution was then diluted with CH₂CI₂ and concentrated, and the crude product was purified through flash chromatography (eluent 6:4 AcOEt/Hex + 0.1% AcOH) affording carbonate **R848-PNP** (17 mg, 40%, residual 4-nitrophenol was detected by NMR analysis of the collected fractions).

R^f = 0.78 (8:2 AcOEt:Hex 1% AcOH); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD2Cl2) *δ* 8.40 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.21 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 8.19 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 8.10 (d, 4-nitrophenol), 7.78-7.66 (m, 2H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (d, 4-nitrophenol), 5.00 (bs, 2H), 4.87 (bs, 2H), 3.64 (q, *J* = 7.00 Hz, 2H), 2.06 (s, AcOH), 1.38

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

 $(s, 9H)$, 1.33 (bs, 6H), 1.22 (t, $J = 7.00$ Hz, 3H) ppm; MS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{29}H_{33}N_5O_8]^+$: 580.24 [M+H]⁺, found: 580.44; m/z calcd. for [C₂₉H₃₃N₅O₈]⁺: 602.22 [M+Na]⁺, found: 602.53.

Boc-Sp1-R848 (**22**)

 $C_{32}H_{48}N_6O_7$ MW: 628.77 g • mol⁻¹

Carbonate R848-PNP (8 mg, 14.3 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (1.0 ml) and (*N*-Boc)-*N,N'*-dimethylethylenediamine^{[4](#page-9-2)} (12 mg, 63 μmol, 4.4 equiv.) and DIPEA (5.5 μL, 31.5 μmol, 2.2 equiv.) were added. The reaction was stirred at r.t. for 2.5 h and the crude material was purified by flash chromatography (7:3 AcOEt:Hex + 0.1% AcOH), to give carbamate **22** as a yellow oil (6 mg, 68%).

 $R_f = 0.27$ (7:3 AcOEt:Hex 1% AcOH); MS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{32}H_{48}N_6O_7]^+$: 629.37 $[M+H]^+$, found: 629.15; *m/z* calcd. for [C32H48N6O7] + : 651.35 [*M*+Na]⁺ , found: 651.25.

Sp1-R848

Carbamate 22 (6 mg, 9.7 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (324 μL) and treated with TFA following General Procedure C. After solvent removal, the crude material was purified by HPLC [eluent A: H₂O + 0.1% TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10), t_R (product): 6.9 min]. The pure product was then lyophilized to give **Sp1-R848** as a colorless solid (3 mg, 83%).

MS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{22}H_{32}N_6O_3]$ ⁺: 429.26 $[M+H]^+$, found: 429.35; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for [C₂₂H₃₂N₆O₃]⁺: 429.2614 [M+H]⁺, found: 429.2615.

Boc-Sp2-R848 (**23**)

 $C_{34}H_{50}N_6O_7$ MW: 654.81 g · mol⁻¹

Carbonate R848-PNP (14 mg, 24.2 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (1.7 ml). Secondary amine Boc-Pro-NHMe^{[4](#page-9-2)} (23 mg, 105.8 μmol, 4.4 equiv.) and DIPEA (9.3 μL, 96.6 μmol, 2.2 equiv.) were added and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 1.5 h. Solvent was removed and the crude material was purified by flash chromatography (eluent 1% MeOH in CH₂Cl₂), to give carbamate 23 (19 mg, quant).

 $R_f = 0.72$ (9:1 AcOEt:Hex); MS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{34}H_{50}N_6O_7]^+$: 655.38 $[M+H]^+$, found: 655.37; m/z calcd. for $[C_{34}H_{50}N_6O_7]^{\text{+}}$: 677.36 $[M+Na]^{\text{+}}$, found: 677.39.

Sp2-R848

Carbamate 23 (16 mg, 24.2 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (783 μL) and treated following General Procedure C. After solvent removal, the crude material was purified by HPLC [eluent A: H₂O + 0.1% TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 60% B (at min 10), t_R (product): 7 min]. The pure product was then lyophilized to give **Sp2-R848** as a colorless solid (18 mg, quant.).

MS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{24}H_{34}N_6O_3]$ ⁺: 455.28 $[M+H]^+$, found: 455.29; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for [C₂₄H₃₅N₆O₃]⁺: 455.2771 [M+H]⁺, found: 455.2776.

Sp3-R848

Carbonate R848-PNP (8 mg, 14 μmol, 1 equiv.) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (1 ml), cooled to 0 °C. Amine **3** (5 mg, 42 μmol, 3 equiv.) and DIPEA (7 μL, 42 μmol, 3 equiv.) were added. The reaction was stirred at rt for 24 h. The crude material was purified by flash chromatography (eluent 5% MeOH in CH_2Cl_2) and the resulting carbamate was dissolved in CH_2Cl_2 (200 µL) and treated with TFA following General Procedure C. After solvent removal, the crude material was purified by HPLC [eluent A: $H_2O + 0.1\%$ TFA; eluent B: MeCN, ramp from 10% B (at min 1) to 50% B (at min 9), t_R (product): 8.2 min]. The pure product was then lyophilized to give **Sp3-R848** as a white solid (3 mg, 31%).

HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd. for $[C_{27}H_{41}N_7O_3]$ ⁺: 512.3349 [M+H]⁺, found: 512.3352.

Carbamate Cleavage Studies

Experimental Procedure for Sp-CPT Modules

Stock solutions of lyophilized SI spacer-CPT modules (concentration: 10 mM in DMSO) were diluted 1:10 (final concentration: 1 mM) with 25 mM phosphate buffer (pH 7.4). Immediately after preparation, the mixtures were incubated at 37 °C. Aliquots were collected at different time points and diluted 1:4 (final concentration: 250 μM) with a blocking buffer $(8:2 H₂O/CH₃CN + 0.2% TFA)$.

The diluted aliquots were injected into an analytical HPLC-PDA system (see Materials and Methods), using the following parameters:

Areas under the curve (AUC) of the detected peaks were measured using software associated to the HPLC systems. The rate of free OH release from the starting carbamate were obtained by calculating the relative ratios of AUC values corresponding to the amine-bearing prodrug and the free payload. Data were plotted versus time and half-lives ($t_{1/2}$) were calculated by non-linear fitting (exponential, one-phase decay) using GraphPad Prism software.

Experimental Procedure for Sp-R848 modules

Stock solutions of lyophilized SI spacer-R848 modules were diluted with further DMSO and 25 mM phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) according to the following scheme:

Immediately after preparation, the mixtures were incubated at 37 °C and aliquots were collected at different time points and diluted 1:5 (final concentration: 200 μ M) with a blocking buffer (8:2 H₂O/CH₃CN + 0.2% TFA).

The diluted aliquots were injected into an analytical HPLC-PDA system, using the following parameters:

Areas under the curve (AUC) of the detected peaks were measured using software associated to the HPLC systems. The rate of free OH release from the starting carbamate were obtained by calculating the relative ratios of AUC values corresponding to the amine-bearing prodrug and the free payload. Data were plotted versus time and half-lives ($t_{1/2}$) were calculated by non-linear fitting (exponential, one-phase decay) using GraphPad Prism software.

Computational Studies

All calculations were run using the Schroödinger suite of programs through the Maestro graphical interface. ⁶ The following steps were implemented to identify relevant minimum-energy conformations of the model carbamates in their main ionization state at pH 7.5 (i.e. protonated pyrrolidine in **Sp2-tBu**, protonated pyrrolidine and tertiary amine in **Sp3-tBu**).

Molecular Mechanics calculations. Monte Carlo/energy minimization (MC/EM) conformational searches⁷ of carbamates **Sp2-tBu** and **Sp3-tBu** were performed within the framework of MacroModel version 11.1,⁸ using the OPLS3 force field⁹ and the implicit water GB/SA solvation model,¹⁰ to generate starting geometries for subsequent DFT calculations. The exocyclic dihedral angles of each compound were randomly varied with the usage-directed Monte Carlo conformational search. For each search, at least 1000 starting structures for each variable torsion angle were generated and minimized until the gradient was <0.05 kJÅ⁻¹mol⁻¹ using the truncated Newton–Raphson algorithm.¹¹ Duplicate conformations and those with energy >5 kcalmol⁻¹ above the global minimum were discarded.

DFT calculations. Representative minimum-energy geometries obtained from the MC/EM conformational search were fully optimized with DFT calculations at the B3LYP/6-31G* level of theory using the Jaguar version 9.1.¹² Default convergence criteria were employed. Calculations of vibrational frequencies were carried out to ensure that stationary points were true minima on the potential energy surface. Solution phase energies of the obtained stationary points were computed at the same level of theory by singlepoint energy calculations including the water PBF solvent model (Poisson-Boltzmann Solvation Model in Jaguar).^{[12](#page-32-1)} Representative DFT minimum energy structures displaying relative solution energy differences within 3 kcal/mol of the global minimum are shown in Figure S2 (the *syn 2* conformation of **Sp3-tBu** found at 4.13 kcal/mol is included for completeness). The values of the dihedral angles that distinguish these structures are reported in Table S1. p*K*^a values of the protonated species were calculated on the lowest energy *anti* and *syn* structure pairs by the Jaguar p*K*^a prediction module.

⁶ Maestro, release 2016-1, Schrödinger, LLC, New York, NY, 2016.

⁷ G. Chang, W. C. Guida, W. C. Still, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1989, **111**, 4379.

⁸ MacroModel, version 11.1, Schrödinger, LLC, New York, NY, 2016.

⁹ K. Roos, C. Wu, W. Damm, M. Reboul, J.M. Stevenson, C. Lu, M.K. Dahlgren, S. Mondal, W. Chen, L. Wang, R. Abel, R.A. Friesner, E.D. Harder, *J. Chem. Theory Comput.* 2019, **15**, 1863.

¹⁰ W. C. Still, A. Tempczyk, R. C. Hawley, T. Hendrickson, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 1990, **112**, 6127.

¹¹ J. W. Ponder, F. M. Richards, *J. Comput. Chem.* 1987, **8**, 1016.

¹² Jaguar, version 9.1, release 14, Schrödinger, LLC, New York, NY, 2016.

Table S1. Dihedral angles of the pyrrolidine-carbamate chain in representative DFT-optimized conformations of **Sp2/3 tBu**. Relative energy differences are calculated from the corresponding solution phase energies (spE).

Appendix

HPLC Data – Sp-CPT Modules

- **Sp2-CPT** 1 mM
- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

• **Sp3-CPT** 1 mM

- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

- **Sp4-CPT** 1 mM
- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

• **Sp5-CPT** 1 mM

- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

- **Sp6-CPT** 1 mM
- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

- **Sp7-CPT** 1 mM
- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

• **Sp8-CPT** 1 mM

- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

HPLC Data – Sp-R848 Modules

- **Sp1-R848** 1 mM
- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

• **Sp2-R848** 1 mM

- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

• **Sp3-R848** 1 mM

- 25 mM phosphate buffer + 10 % DMSO
- pH 7.4, T: 37 °C

NMR Spectra

Tert-butyl (S)-2-(((2-(dimethylamino)ethyl)amino)methyl)pyrrolidine-1-carboxylate

(**3**)

Tert-butyl 2-((methylamino)methyl)piperidine-1-carboxylate (**5**)

Tert-butyl (S)-3-formylisoxazolidine-2-carboxylate (**7**)

O-acetyl-N-(((S)-2-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)isoxazolidin-3-yl)methyl)-N-methylhydroxylammonium (**8**)

1-(tert-butyl) 2-methyl (2S,4S)-4-(dimethylamino)pyrrolidine-1,2-dicarboxylate (**10**):

Tert-butyl 2-(((3-(dimethylamino)propyl)amino)methyl)pyrrolidine-1-carboxylate (**13**)

Boc-Hyp(All)-OMe (**15**)

Boc-Hyp(2-hydroxyethoxy)-OMe (**17**)

S42

Boc-R848

R848-PNP

