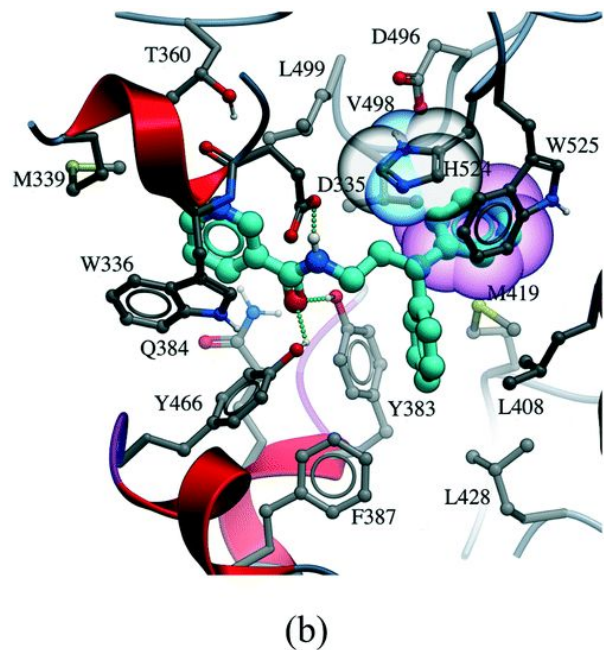
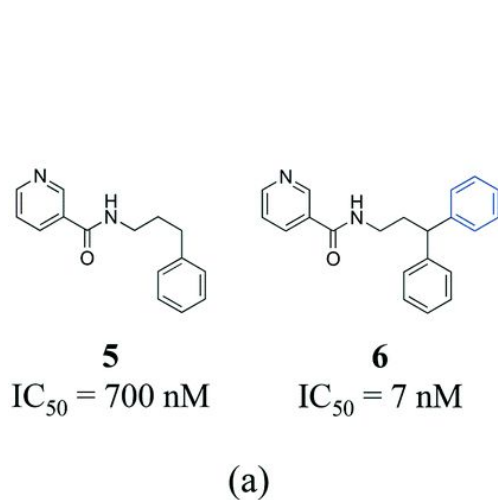


# AMIDD 2024 Lecture 8: Lead identification and optimization



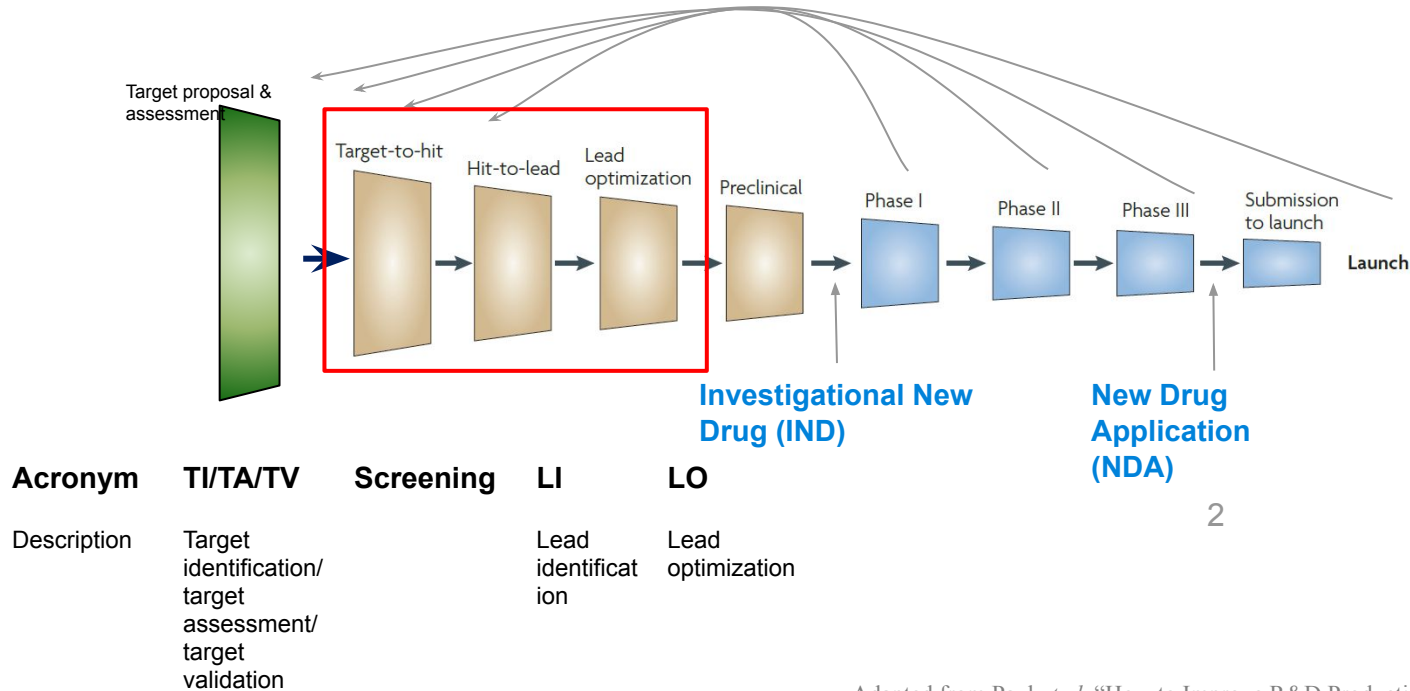
Freitas, R. F. de & Schapira, M. A systematic analysis of atomic protein–ligand interactions in the PDB. *Med. Chem. Commun.* 8, 1970–1981 (2017)

**Dr. Jitao David Zhang, Computational Biologist**

<sup>1</sup> *Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharma Research and Early Development, Roche Innovation Center Basel, F. Hoffmann-La Roche*

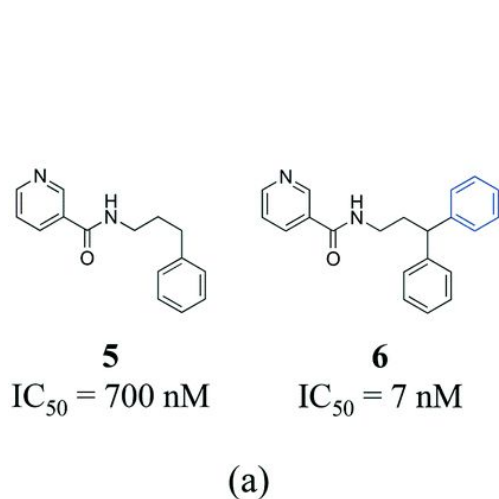
<sup>2</sup> *Department of Mathematics and Informatics, University of Basel*

# Recap: the linear view of drug discovery

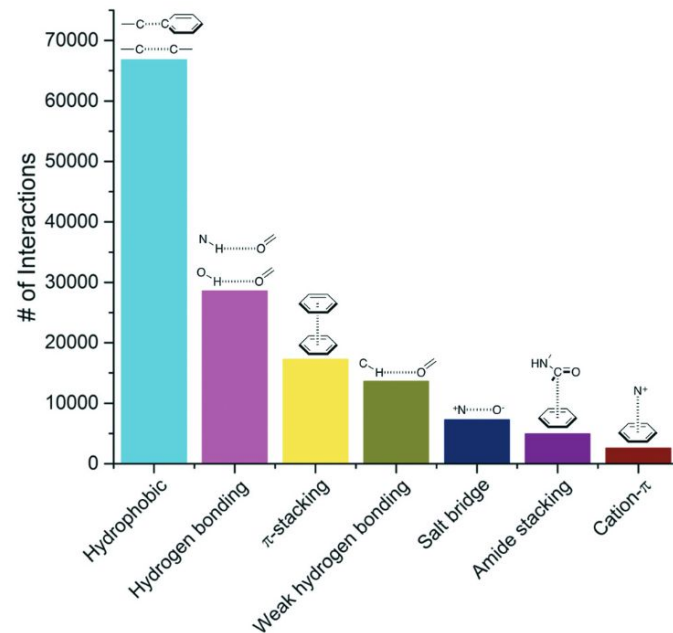
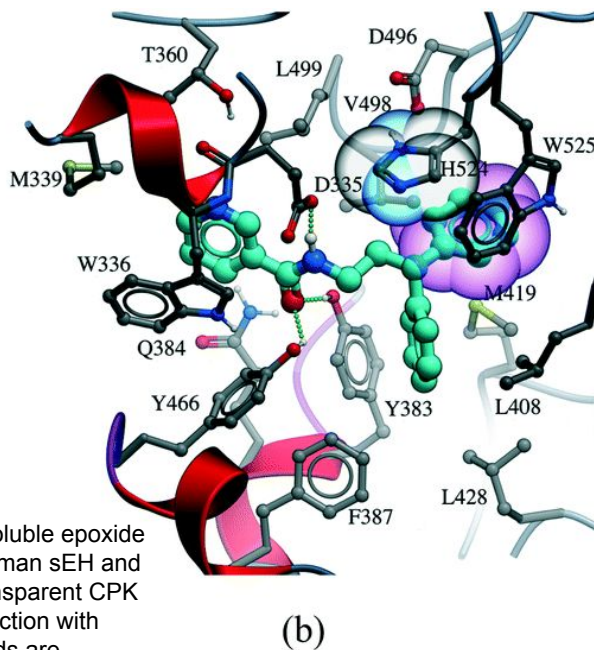


Adapted from Paul *et al.* "How to Improve R&D Productivity: The Pharmaceutical Industry's Grand Challenge." *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery*, 2010

# One goal of target-based drug discovery: to make a molecule that binds specifically and strongly to the target protein

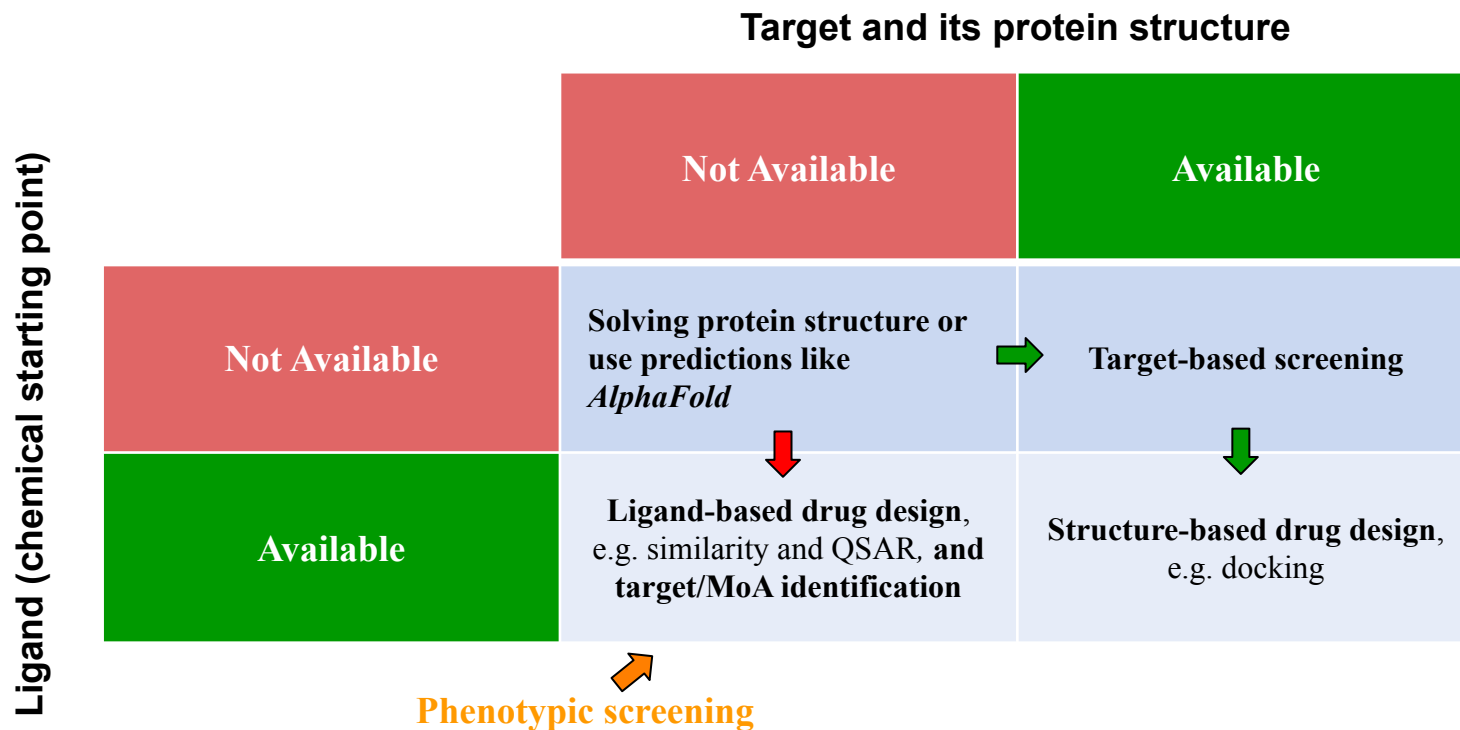


a) Chemical structure of two inhibitors of human soluble epoxide hydrolase (sEH); b) X-ray cocrystal structure of human sEH and 6 (cyan carbons, PDB: 311Y). The phenyl ring (transparent CPK magenta) is positioned to allow a  $\pi$ -stacking interaction with H524 (shown as transparent CPK). Hydrogen bonds are displayed in dotted green lines.



**Fig. 1** Frequency distribution of the most common non-covalent interactions observed in protein-ligands extracted from the PDB.

# Ligand-based and structure-based drug design

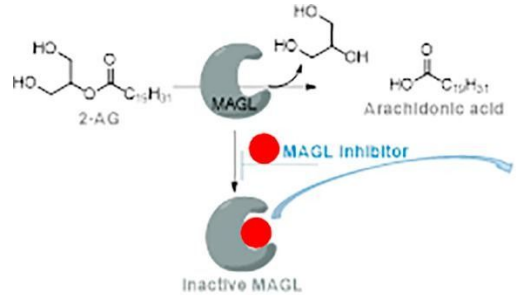


QSAR= quantitative structure activity relationship; MoA= mechanism of action, or mode of action

# Things you need to start a target-based drug discovery program

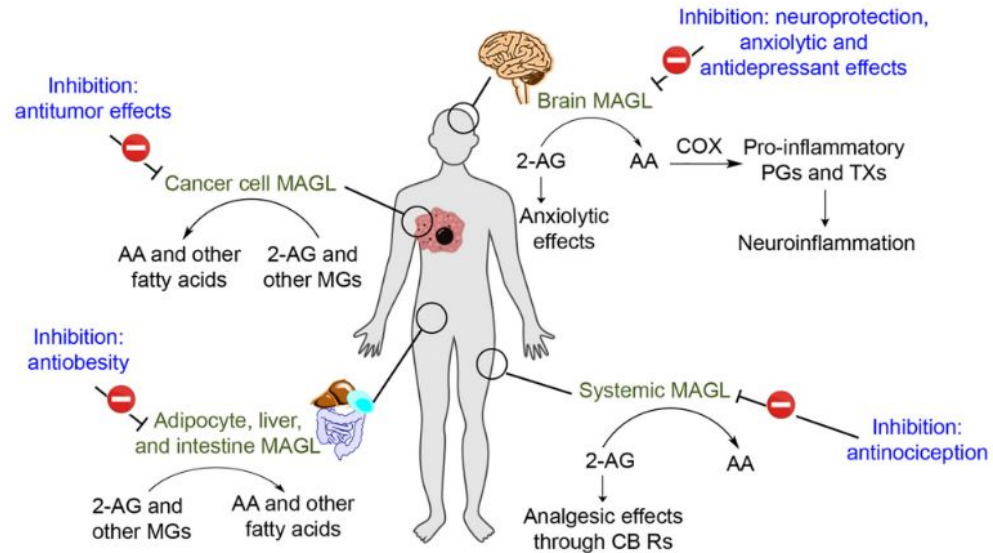
1. **Indication and patient profile**
2. **Protein target of interest**, e.g. evolutionary conservation, isoforms, expression profiles, structure, effect of modulation, *etc.*
3. **Modality**, shall we use small molecule, large molecule, antisense oligonucleotides or gene therapy? Shall we activate the target or inhibit it? ...
4. **Tool compounds and competitor information**, if available
5. **Target (ideal) profile of your drug**
6. **Material for the campaign**: enough amount of proteins, compounds, *etc.*

# Protein MAGL (MGLL) is a key protein linking metabolism and inflammation that may be therapeutically exploited



The MAGL protein, known as monoglyceride lipase, is encoded by the MGLL gene in human. MAGL is a key enzyme in the hydrolysis of the endocannabinoid 2-arachidonoylglycerol (2-AG). It converts 2-AG into arachidonic acid (AA) and glycerol.

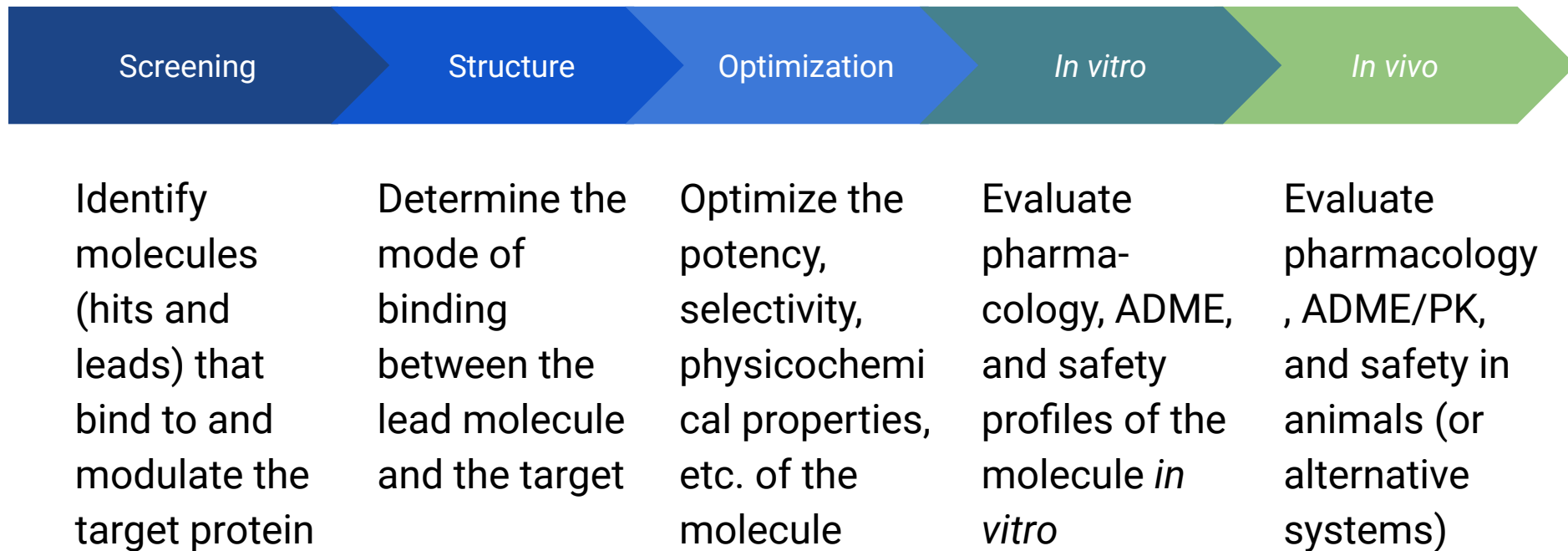
MAGL has been proposed as a potential target for many diseases. However, there has been no approved drugs targeting MAGL.



Figures above: [Gil-Ordóñez et al., Biochemical Pharmacology, 2018](#)

A drug candidate, BIA 10-2474, which targets a closely related protein, fatty acid amide hydrolase (FAAH), [caused serious adverse events in trial participants, leading to death of one man, in Rennes, France, 2016](#). The event has complicated the development of other drugs targeting the endocannabinoid system.

# Key steps in lead identification (LI) and lead optimization (LO)



# Example: Identification of a novel, reversible MAGL inhibitor with high potency and selectivity, and excellent absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME) properties

Screening

Structure

Optimization

*in vitro*

*in vivo*

Journal of  
**Medicinal  
Chemistry**

pubs.acs.org/jmc

Article

## Structure-Guided Discovery of *cis*-Hexahydro-pyrido-oxazinones as Reversible, Drug-like Monoacylglycerol Lipase Inhibitors

Bernd Kuhn,\* Martin Ritter, Benoit Hornsperger, Charles Bell, Buelent Kocer, Didier Rombach, Marius D. R. Lutz, Luca Gobbi, Martin Kuratli, Christian Bartelmus, Markus Bürkler, Raffael Koller, Paolo Tosatti, Iris Ruf, Melanie Guerard, Anto Pavlovic, Juliane Stephanus, Fionn O'Hara, Dennis Wetzl, Wiebke Saal, Martine Stihle, Doris Roth, Melanie Hug, Sylwia Huber, Dominik Heer, Carsten Kroll, Andreas Topp, Manfred Schneider, Jürg Gertsch, Sandra Glasmacher, Mario van der Stelt, Andrea Martella, Matthias Beat Wittwer, Ludovic Collin, Jörg Benz, Hans Richter, and Uwe Grether\*

Cite This: *J. Med. Chem.* 2024, 67, 18448–18464

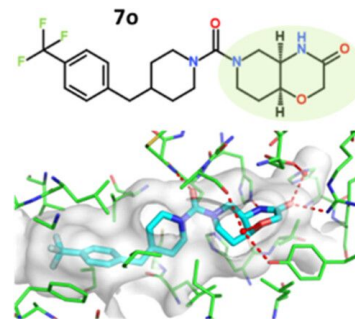
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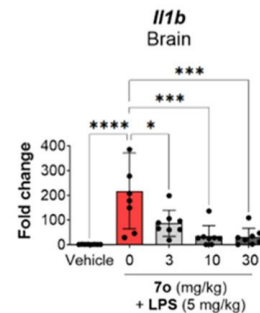
Metrics & More

Article Recommendations

Supporting Information



high MAGL potency  
excellent selectivity



drug-like ADMET properties  
*in vivo* efficacy

Kuhn, B. et al. [Structure-Guided Discovery of \*cis\*-Hexahydro-pyrido-oxazinones as Reversible, Drug-like Monoacylglycerol Lipase Inhibitors](#). *J. Med. Chem.* 67, 18448–18464 (2024).



# ChEMBL as information source of small molecules

## Nomenclature

*caffeine*  
1,3,7-trimethylxanthine  
methyltheobromine

## Bioactivity

*Affinity to human  
proteins and drug  
targets*

## Chemical data

*Formula: C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>10</sub>N<sub>4</sub>O<sub>2</sub>*  
*Charge: 0*  
*Mass: 194.19*

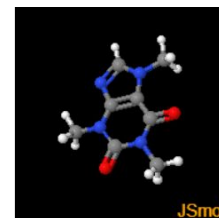
## Database Xrefs

*PubChem: CID2519*  
*BindingDB: 1849*

## Chemical Informatics

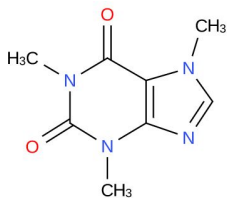
*InChI=1/C8H10N4O2/c1-10-4-9-6-5(10)7(13)  
12(3)8(14)11(6)2/h4H,1-3H3*  
*SMILES: CN1C(=O)N(C)c2ncn(C)c2C1=O*

## Visualisation



**A subset of available information from EBI ChEBI/ChEMBL,  
inspired by EBI's roadshow *Small Molecules in Bioinformatics***

# Representation of small molecules



<b>Molfile:</b>	<a href="#">View Raw</a> <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">Editor</a> <a href="#">Copy</a>
<b>Canonical SMILES:</b>	<chem>CN1C(=O)N(C)c2ncn(C)c2C1=O</chem>
<b>Standard InChI:</b>	InChI=1S/C8H10N4O2/c1-10-4-9-6-5(10)7(13)12(3)8(14)11(6)2/h4H,1-3H3
<b>Standard InChI Key:</b>	RYYVLZVUVIJVGH-UHFFFAOYSA-N

- Simplified Molecular-Input Line-Entry System (SMILES)
- IUPAC International Chemical Identifier (InChI)
- InChiKey: a 27-character, hash version of InChI
- Molfile: a type of [chemical table files](#)

CHEMBL113

SciTegic12231509382D

```

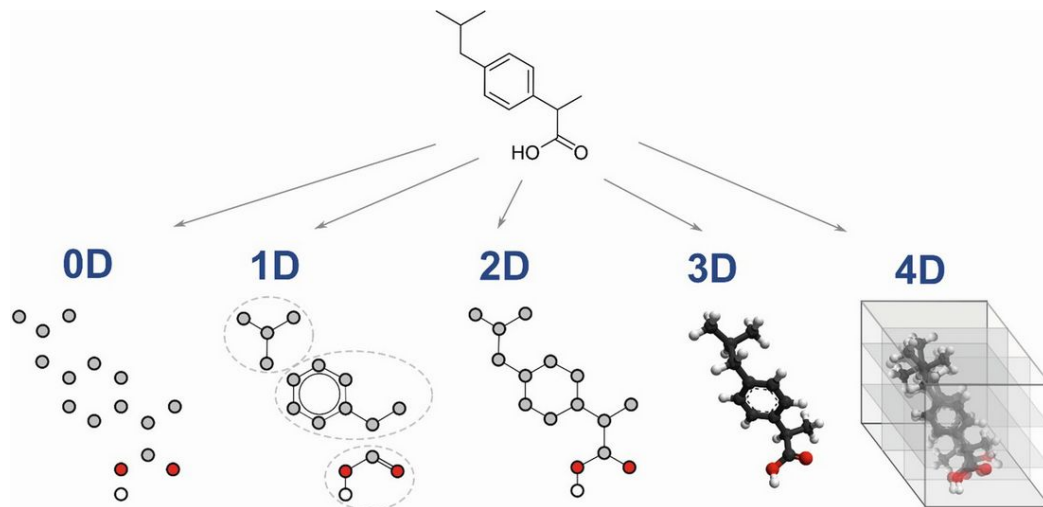
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-1.1875 -9.6542 0.0000 C 0 0
-1.1875 -8.9625 0.0000 C 0 0
-1.8125 -10.0292 0.0000 N 0 0
-2.4167 -8.9625 0.0000 N 0 0
-2.4167 -9.6542 0.0000 C 0 0
-1.8125 -8.6000 0.0000 C 0 0
-0.5000 -9.8917 0.0000 N 0 0
-0.5000 -8.7625 0.0000 N 0 0
-0.1125 -9.3042 0.0000 C 0 0
-3.0250 -10.0375 0.0000 O 0 0
-1.8125 -7.8917 0.0000 O 0 0
-1.8125 -10.7417 0.0000 C 0 0
-3.0250 -8.6000 0.0000 C 0 0
-0.2917 -8.0750 0.0000 C 0 0
2 1 2 0
3 1 1 0
4 5 1 0
5 3 1 0
6 2 1 0
7 1 1 0
8 2 1 0
9 7 2 0
10 5 2 0
11 6 2 0
12 3 1 0
13 4 1 0

```

# Molecular descriptors: numeric values that describe chemical molecules.

In contrast to symbolic representations, molecular descriptors enable **quantification of molecular properties**.

Molecular descriptors allows mathematical operations and statistical analysis that associate biophysical or biochemical properties with molecule structures.



-Atom count  
-Molecular weight  
-Sum of atomic properties

-Fragment counts, e.g. # of -OH  
-Fingerprints

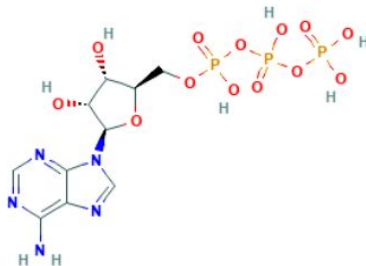
-Topological descriptors, e.g. the Wiener Index based on graph theory  
- ECFP

-Geometrical  
-Atomic coordinates  
-Energy grid

-Combination of atomic coordinates and sampling of possible conformations

# Selected commonly used molecular descriptors

**Molecular Weight (MW).**  
for example, adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the *energy molecule*, has a MW of 507.

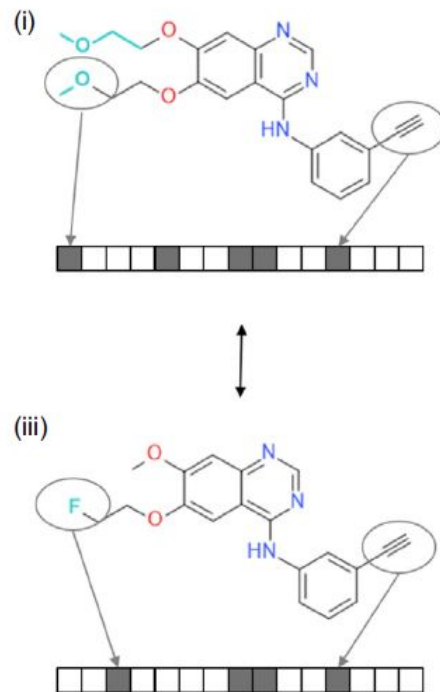


**logP** (partition coefficient) quantifies the hydrophilicity and hydrophobicity of a molecule. The calculated version (cLogP) exists as well.



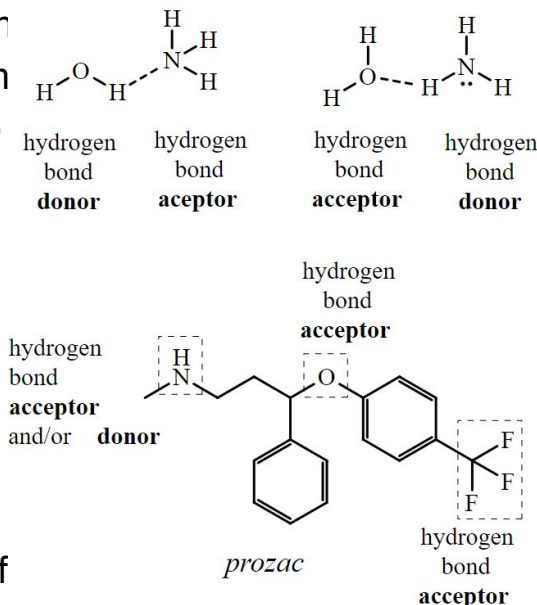
$$\log P_{\text{oct/wat}} = \log \left( \frac{[\text{solute}]_{\text{octanol}}^{\text{un-ionized}}}{[\text{solute}]_{\text{water}}^{\text{un-ionized}}} \right)$$

**Molecular fingerprints:** a set of techniques to represent molecules in a bit array.

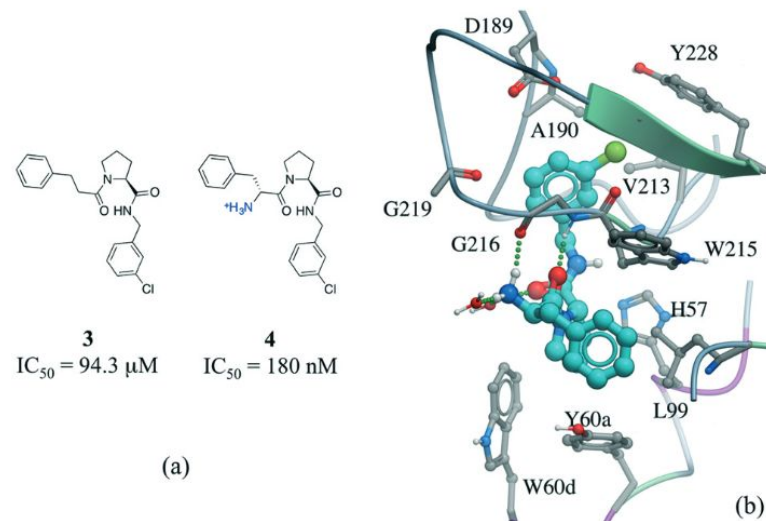


# Number of hydrogen bond acceptors and donors are important descriptors, too

A **hydrogen bond**: an electrostatic force of attraction between a hydrogen (H) atom which is covalently bonded to a more electronegative "donor" atom or group (Dn), and another electronegative atom bearing a lone pair of electrons—the hydrogen-bond acceptor.



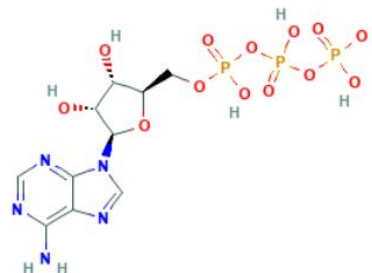
Hydrogen bonds (H-bonds) both influence the structure of the molecule and its binding to the target.



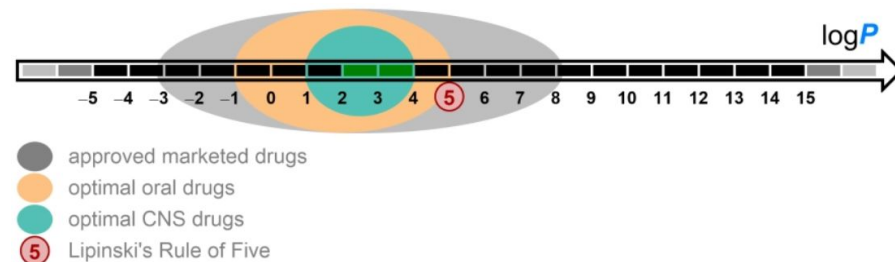
Effect of adding a hydrogen bond in a thrombin inhibitor: a) chemical structure of a pair of thrombin inhibitors; b) crystal structure of molecule 4 (cyan carbons) in complex with thrombin (PDB: 2ZC9). Hydrogen bonds are displayed in dotted green lines.

# Lipinski's Rule of Five of small-molecule drugs

- **HBD $\leq$ 5**: No more than **5 hydrogen-bond donors**, e.g. the total number of nitrogen–hydrogen and oxygen–hydrogen bonds.
- **HBA $\leq$ 10**: No more than **10 hydrogen-bond acceptors**, e.g. all nitrogen or oxygen atoms
- **MW $<$ 500**: A molecular weight less than **500 Daltons**, or 500 g/mol.
- **logP $\leq$ 5**: An octanol-water partition coefficient (**log P**) that does not exceed **5**. (10-based)

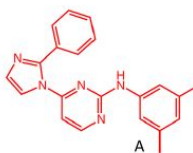
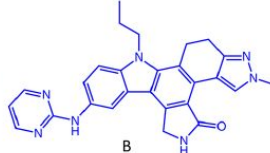
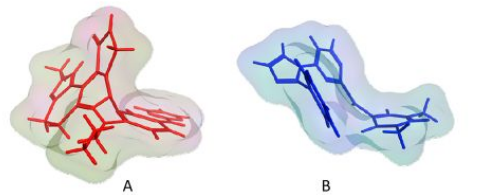

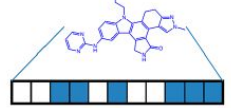
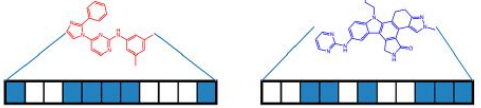



ATP (MW=507)



Source: [cheminfographic.com](http://cheminfographic.com)

# Molecular similarity and similarity measures

Chemical similarity		Mol. weight	LogP	Rotatable bonds	Aromatic rings	Heavy atoms
A		341.4	5.23	4	4	26
B		463.5	4.43	4	5	35
Molecular similarity						
2D similarity						
3D similarity						
Biological similarity		Vascular endothelial growth factor receptor 2		Tyrosine-protein kinase TIE-2		
A		active		inactive		
B		active		active		
Global similarity						
Local similarity						

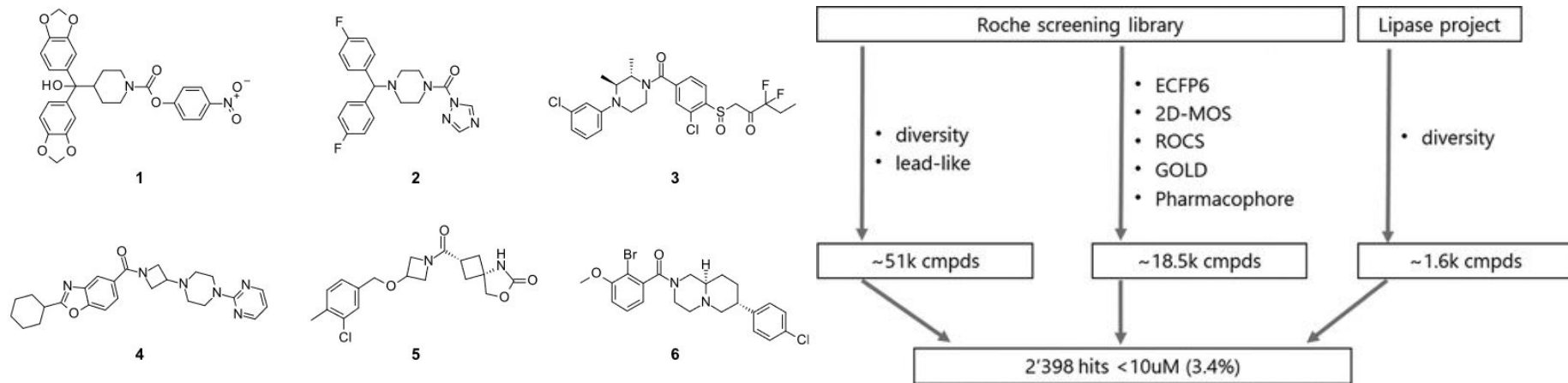
**Table 2 Formulas for the various similarity and distance metrics**

Distance metric	Formula for continuous variables <sup>a</sup>	Formula for dichotomous variables <sup>a</sup>
Manhattan distance	$D_{A,B} = \sum_{j=1}^n  x_{jA} - x_{jB} $	$D_{A,B} = a + b - 2c$
Euclidean distance	$D_{A,B} = \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jA} - x_{jB})^2 \right]^{1/2}$	$D_{A,B} = [a + b - 2c]^{1/2}$
Cosine coefficient	$S_{A,B} = \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n x_{jA} x_{jB} \right] / \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jA})^2 \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jB})^2 \right]^{1/2}$	$S_{A,B} = \frac{c}{[ab]^{1/2}}$
Dice coefficient	$S_{A,B} = \left[ 2 \sum_{j=1}^n x_{jA} x_{jB} \right] / \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jA})^2 + \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jB})^2 \right]$	$S_{A,B} = 2c/[a + b]$
Tanimoto coefficient	$S_{A,B} = \frac{\left[ \sum_{j=1}^n x_{jA} x_{jB} \right]}{\left[ \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jA})^2 + \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{jB})^2 - \sum_{j=1}^n x_{jA} x_{jB} \right]}$	$S_{A,B} = c/[a + b - c]$
Soergel distance <sup>b</sup>	$D_{A,B} = \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n  x_{jA} - x_{jB}  \right] / \left[ \sum_{j=1}^n \max(x_{jA}, x_{jB}) \right]$	$D_{A,B} = 1 - \frac{c}{[a+b-c]}$

S denotes similarities, while D denotes distances. The two can be converted to each other by *similarity*=1/(1+*distance*).  $x_{jA}$  means the j-th feature of molecule A. a is the number of *on* bits in molecule A, b is number of *on* bits in molecule B, while c is the number of bits that are *on* in both molecules.

(Left) Maggiora, Gerald, Martin Vogt, Dagmar Stumpfe, und Jürgen Bajorath. „[Molecular Similarity in Medicinal Chemistry](#)“. *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* 57, Nr. 8 (24. April 2014): 3186–3204. (Right) Bajusz, Dávid, Anita Rácz, and Károly Héberger. 2015. “[Why Is Tanimoto Index an Appropriate Choice for Fingerprint-Based Similarity Calculations?](#)” *Journal of Cheminformatics* 7 (1): 20.

# Starting point: a library of compounds that may modulate the target



Left: selected published compounds targeting MAGL protein. Right: library assembly

ECFP6: extended connectivity fingerprints, diameter of bond distance 6, using compounds extracted from existing MAGL patents as references

2D-MOS: two-dimensional graph-based maximum overlapping spheres similarity search

ROCS: three-dimensional shape-based similarity search

GOLD: Docking program

Pharmacophore: molecular features that necessary for molecular recognition between ligand and target

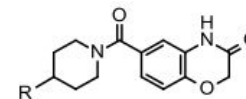



# Screening hit 7a and early optimizations

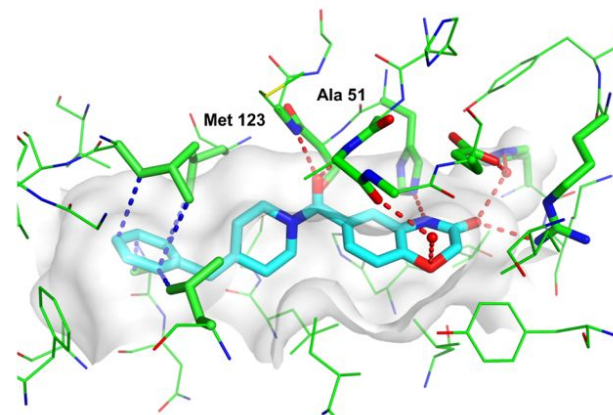
The hit 7a (benzoxazinone) was selected because of the high *ligand efficiency* (LE).

LE is defined as the binding energy ( $\Delta G$ ) divided by the number of non-hydrogen atoms. The binding energy is a function of  $IC_{50}$ : higher affinity  $\rightarrow$  higher the absolute value of the binding energy.

The co-structure of 7a and human MAGL protein was soon solved with X-ray crystallography (see right). The structure, when compared with the co-structures of published compounds and MAGL, helps to guide medicinal chemists' work to optimize the molecule.



Compound	R	MAGL inh. ( $IC_{50}$ , $\mu M$ ) <sup>a</sup>	MAGL $pIC_{50} \pm SD$ <sup>b</sup>	LE <sup>c</sup>	logD <sup>d</sup>	Solubility <sup>f</sup> [ $\mu g/mL$ ]
7a		0.075	$7.13 \pm 0.08$	0.38	3.2	1.1





















**Figure 3.** Co-crystal structure of human MAGL (green) with focused screening hit 7a (cyan, pdb code: 9F8A). Residues of the oxyanion hole (Ala51 and Met123) which are on top of the catalytic Ser122 are labeled. Hydrogen bonds between the ligand and the protein or water are shown as red, dashed lines. Dispersion interactions with short distances ( $<4.0$  Å) in the hydrophobic pocket on the left are highlighted as blue lines. Water molecules are removed except for the ones that form hydrogen bonds with the ligand.

# Further optimizations guided by structures, experiments, and machine learning predictions

Medicinal chemists, computer-aided drug design (CADD) experts, structural biologists and other colleagues worked together to build hypotheses about which changes may improve potency and ADME properties.

They synthesized new compounds, solved more structures, comparing structures and activities, thereby gaining insights in structure-activity relationship (SAR).

Compound	R	MAGL inh. (IC <sub>50</sub> , μM) <sup>a</sup>	MAGL pIC <sub>50</sub> ± SD <sup>b</sup>	LE <sup>c</sup>	logD <sup>d</sup>	Solubility <sup>f</sup> [μg/mL]
7a		0.075	7.13 ± 0.08	0.38	3.2	1.1
7b		0.062	7.24 ± 0.17	0.37	3.3	0.8
7c		0.032	7.54 ± 0.24	0.34	3.8	4.1
7d		0.051	7.31 ± 0.12	0.37	3.6	36
7e		0.046	7.35 ± 0.09	0.34	3.9	15
7f		0.0005	9.36 ± 0.15	0.40	3.8	<0.1
7g		0.0009	9.19 ± 0.35	0.37	3.8 <sup>e</sup>	<0.1
7h		0.037	7.51 ± 0.27	0.36	2.9	37
7i		0.003	8.59 ± 0.33	0.40	3.6 <sup>e</sup>	2
7j		0.021	7.86 ± 0.40	0.36	3.8	0.3

Compound	R	MAGL inh. (IC <sub>50</sub> , μM) <sup>a</sup>	MAGL pIC <sub>50</sub> ± SD <sup>b</sup>	LE <sup>c</sup>	logD <sup>d</sup>	Solubility <sup>f</sup> [μg/mL]
7c		0.032	7.54 ± 0.24	0.34	3.8	4.1
7k		2.5	5.62 ± 0.11	0.26	3.7 <sup>e</sup>	6.9
7l		0.965	6.04 ± 0.14	0.29	3.8 <sup>e</sup>	2.9
7m	 and enantiomer	0.370	6.46 ± 0.17	0.30	3.2	78
7n	 and enantiomer	0.065	7.22 ± 0.17	0.33	3.2	225
7o		0.032	7.55 ± 0.22	0.34	3.3	231
7p		2.2	5.65 ± 0.04	0.26	3.3	114
7q	 or enantiomer	0.569	6.30 ± 0.24	0.30	3.2	377

Some parameters, for instance logD values marked by superscripts e, are predicted by in-house machine-learning algorithms.

# The synthesis of the drug candidate and its physicochemical properties

Scheme 3. Asymmetric Synthesis of (4*aR*,8*aS*)-4*a*,5,6,7,8,8*a*-Hexahydro-4*H*-pyrido[4,3-*b*][1,4]oxazin-3-one 17*a* and Condensation toward Privileged HHPO 7*o*<sup>a</sup>

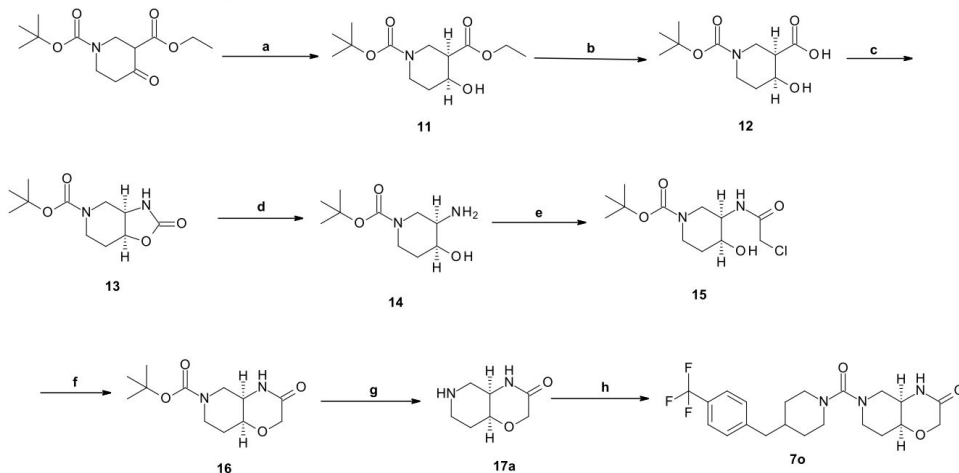


Table 3. Physicochemical Properties of HHPO 7*o*

MW [g/mol]	425.45
PSA [Å <sup>2</sup> ]	55
solubility <sup>a</sup> [μg/mL]	231
log <i>D</i> <sup>b</sup>	3.3
LIMBA log <i>D</i> <sub>brain</sub> <sup>c</sup>	1.8
PAMPA <i>P</i> <sub>eff</sub> [cm/s*10 <sup>-6</sup> ] <sup>c</sup>	12.8
chemical stability in aqueous buffer	stable at pH 1, 4, 6.5, 8, and 10 for 2 h at 37 °C

<sup>a</sup>Aqueous solubility at pH 6.5 in 0.05 M phosphate buffer. <sup>b</sup>pH 7.4.

<sup>c</sup>See the [Experimental Section](#).

- MW: Molecular Weight
- PSA: Polar Surface Area (drugs with PSA<90 Å<sup>2</sup> penetrates blood-brain barrier more easily).
- LIMBA: [lipid membrane binding assay](#). Low value→lower risk of non-specific binding in the brain.
- PAMPA: [Parallel artificial membrane permeability assay](#). High value→penetrates cell membrane.

# In vitro pharmacology, ADME, and safety profile

**Table 4. In Vitro Pharmacology Data of HHPO 7o**

human/mouse/rat/cyno MAGL inhibition IC <sub>50</sub> [nM] <sup>a</sup>	32/91/71/16
human/rat MAGL SPR K <sub>d</sub> [nM] <sup>b</sup>	45/64
human/rat MAGL SPR	2.5 × 10 <sup>5</sup> /2.6 × 10 <sup>5</sup>
k <sub>on</sub> [1/M/s]/k <sub>off</sub> [1/s]	7.5 × 10 <sup>-3</sup> /16.8 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>
off-target panel screen against 50 representative proteins at 10 μM <sup>c</sup>	inhibition <50% except for serotonin transporter (57%)
hydrolase selectivity in gel-based ABPP assay at 10 μM <sup>d</sup>	no off-targets

**Table 5. ADME and Rat PK Profile of MAGL Inhibitor 7o as well as Mouse PK Profile of the Racemic Mixture 7n**

human/mouse/rat clearance in microsomes [μL/min/mg protein] <sup>a</sup>	<10 <sup>b</sup> / <sup>b</sup> <10 <sup>b</sup> /11
human/mouse/rat clearance in hepatocytes [μL/min/10 × 10 <sup>6</sup> cells] <sup>c</sup>	1.9/8.9/4.0
human/mouse/rat plasma protein binding [%] <sup>d</sup>	4.3/4.7/3.2
human/mouse P-glycoprotein efflux ratio <sup>d</sup>	2.4/4.0
P <sub>app</sub> , AB inhibitor [nm/s]	176.3/243.9

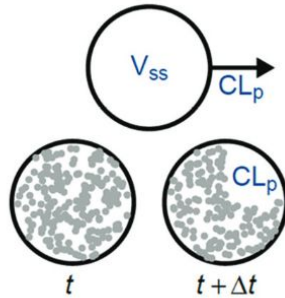
**Table 6. In Vitro Safety Profile of MAGL Inhibitor 7o**

CYP inhibition@10 μM (3A4/2C9/2D6) [%] <sup>a</sup>	-195/3/-12
GSH (human liver microsomes) adducts <sup>b</sup>	none detected
hERG IC <sub>50</sub> [μM] <sup>c</sup>	7.7
Ames/MNT/phototoxicity	all negative

Offline activity: using mandatory reading material and any resource (including Wiki and ChatGPT) to understand and explain following concepts: (1) SPR, (2) K<sub>d</sub>, (3) k<sub>on</sub> and k<sub>off</sub>, (4) microsomal clearance, (5) plasma protein binding, (6) GSH adducts, (7) hERG assay, (8) Ames test, (9) micronucleus test (MNT), and (10) phototoxicity.

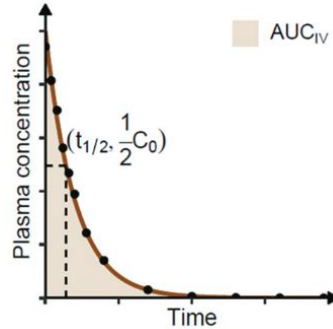
# In vivo PK profiles

b

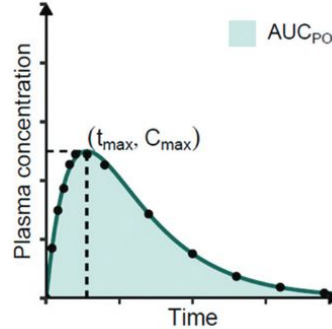


mouse PK profile<sup>e</sup>

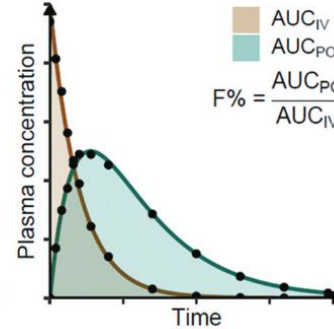
c



d



e

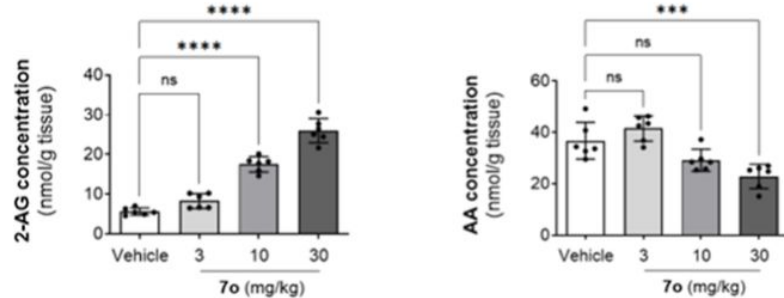


rat PK profile<sup>f</sup>

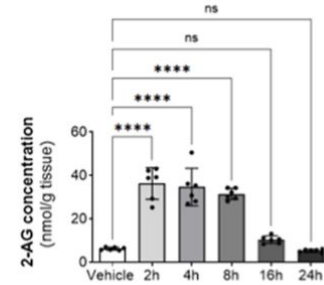
CL [mL/min/kg] (i.v.)	23
V <sub>ss</sub> [L/kg] (i.v.)	3.0
T <sub>1/2</sub> [h]	1.5 (i.v.)/2.9 (i.p.)
C <sub>max</sub> [ng/mL]	896 (p.o.)/12,200 (i.p.)
T <sub>max</sub> [h]	2.7 (p.o.)/1.5 (i.p.)
AUC <sub>last</sub> [h*ng/mL]	4560 (p.o.)/62,100 (i.p.)
F [%]	127 (p.o.)/368 (i.p.)
brain/plasma ratio (average)	1.7 (i.p.)
CSF/plasma ratio (average); K <sub>p,uu</sub>	0.0164 (i.p.); 0.35

CL [mL/min/kg] (i.v.)	4.6
V <sub>ss</sub> [L/kg] (i.v.)	1.3
T <sub>1/2</sub> [h]	5.1 (i.v.)/2.7 (i.p.)
C <sub>max</sub> [ng/mL]	1290 (p.o.)/12,200 (i.p.)
T <sub>max</sub> [h]	6.0 (p.o.)/0.25 (i.p.)
AUC <sub>last</sub> [h*ng/mL]	19,100 (p.o.)/40,200 (i.p.)
F [%]	115 (p.o.)/111 (i.p.)
brain/plasma ratio (average)	1.1 (i.p.)
CSF/plasma ratio (average); K <sub>p,uu</sub>	0.017 (i.p.); 0.53

# Compound 7a shows reasonable target engagement



D

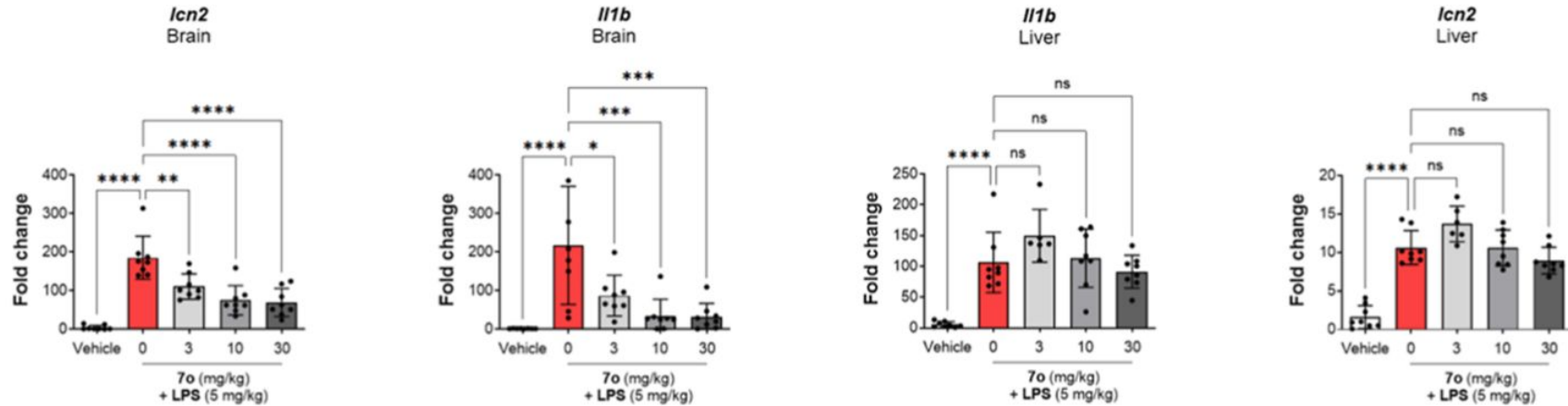


Dose (mg/kg)	Measured average plasma conc. (nM)	Calculated CSF conc. (nM)	Calculated % target occupancy
3	1901	31.2	49
10	7496	123	79
30	27765	455	93

Time (h)	Measured average plasma conc. (nM)	Calculated CSF conc. (nM)	Calculated % target occupancy
2	42040	689	96
4	38588	633	95
8	21089	346	92
16	2955	48	60
24	100	2	5

Left: sampling after 4h of varying doses. Right: one dose (30 mg/kg), varying time points

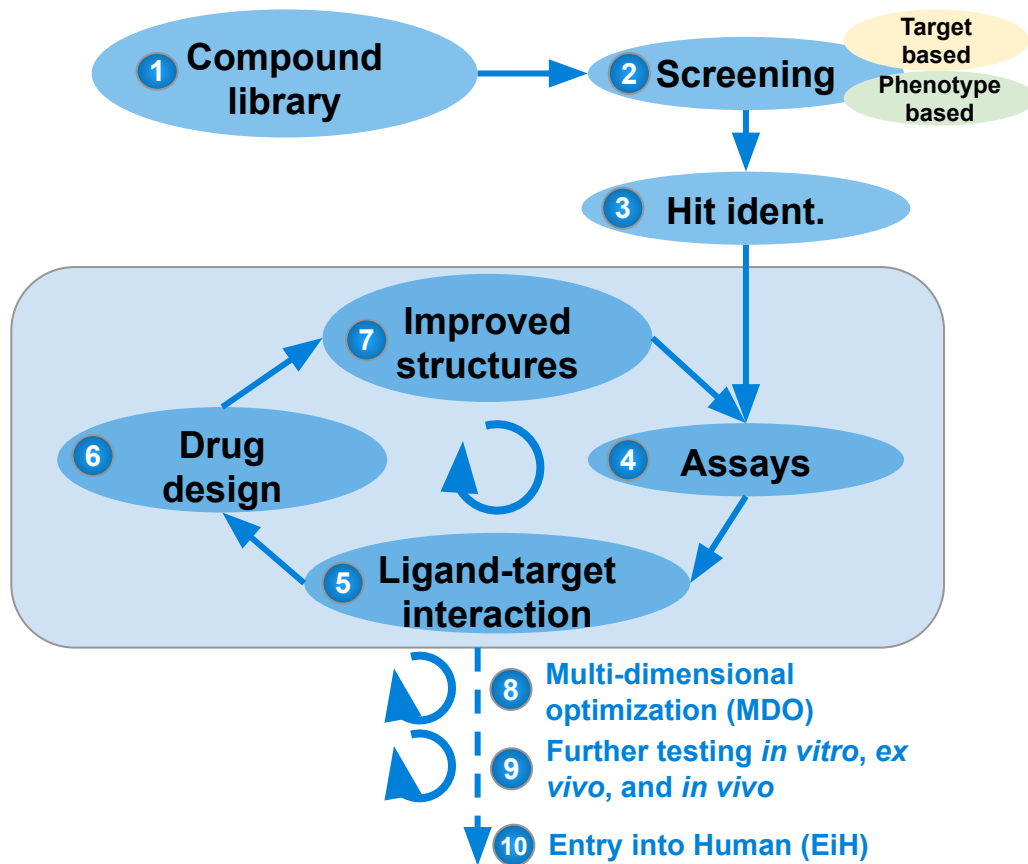
# Biomarker study confirms a brain-specific anti-inflammatory effect



Efficacy of the compound 7o in the LPS (lipopolysaccharide) model of neuroinflammation. Mice were dosed with vehicle, LPS, or LPS + 7o (3, 10, 30 mg/kg intraperitoneal). mRNA analyses of the *lcn2* gene (lipocalin-2) and the *Il1b* (interleukin 1-beta) demonstrated the anti-inflammatory properties of compound 7o specifically in the brain, not in liver.

# Workflow in a typical target-based drug-discovery program

1. Compound library construction (small molecules, large molecules, RNA therapeutics, or other modalities)
2. Screening compounds with **bioassays**, or **assays**, which determine potency of a chemical by its effect on biological entities: proteins, cells, *etc*;
3. Hit identification and clustering;
4. More assays, complementary to the assays used in the screening, maybe of lower throughput but more biologically relevant;
5. Analysis of ligand-target interactions, for instance by getting the co-structure of both protein (primary target, and off-targets if necessary) and the hit;
6. *Drug design*, namely to modify the structure of the drug candidate;
7. Analog synthesis and testing (back to step 4);
8. Multidimensional Optimization (MDO), with the goal to optimize potency, selectivity, safety, bioavailability, *etc*;
9. Further *in vitro*, *ex vivo*, and *in vivo* testing, and preclinical development;
10. Entry into human (Phase 0 or phase 1 clinical trial).

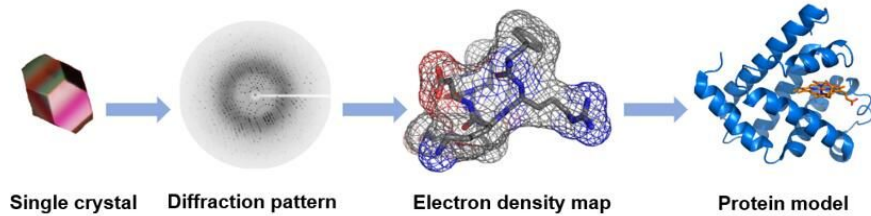




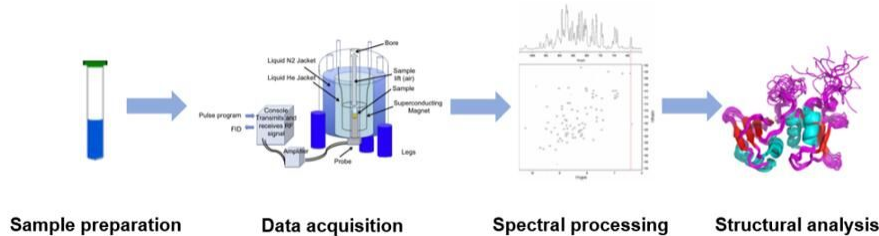
# Summary

1. Target-based drug discovery relies on screening, structure information, and iterative optimization to identify drug-like molecules.
2. Drug-like molecules are tested *in vitro* and *in vivo* to ensure their pharmacological, ADME, and safety profiles.
3. Chemoinformatics, computer-aided drug design, and machine learning play important roles in lead identification and optimization.

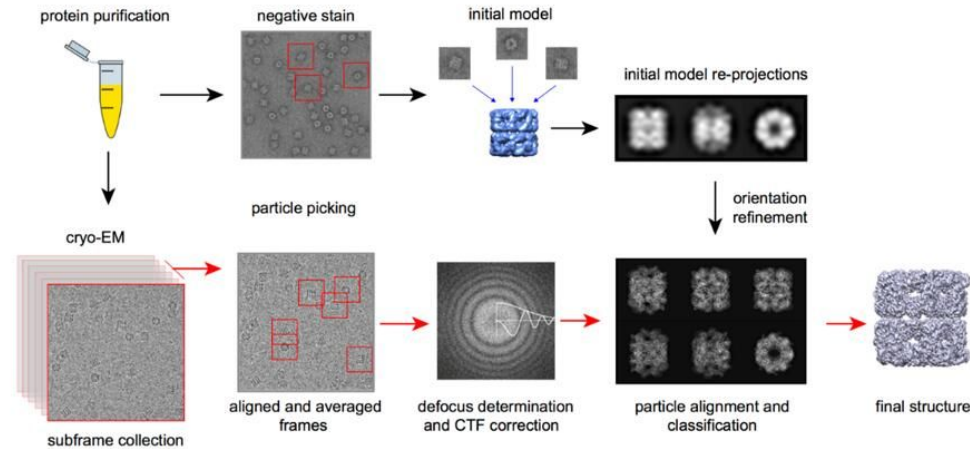
# X-ray, NMR, and CryoEM are major experimental approaches to determining protein structures



## X-ray crystallography



## Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR)

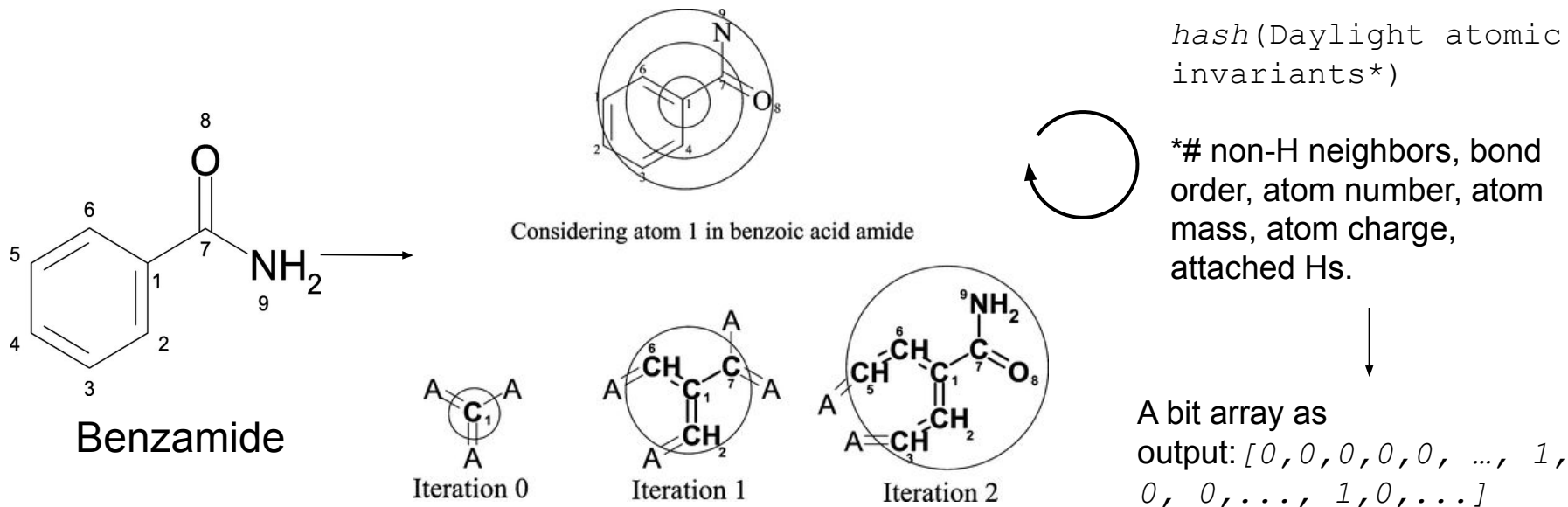


## Cryo-electron microscopy (CryoEM)

Figure sources:

[https://www.creative-biostructure.com/comparison-of-crystallography-nmr-and-em\\_6.htm](https://www.creative-biostructure.com/comparison-of-crystallography-nmr-and-em_6.htm)

# Extended-connectivity fingerprints (ECFPs) and Functional-class fingerprints (FCFPs) extract and compare (multi-)sets of subgraphs



Implemented in [RDKit](#) and other software. Publication and tutorials: (1) Rogers, David, and Mathew Hahn. "Extended-Connectivity Fingerprints." Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling (2010). (2) Tutorial by [Manish Kumar](#) and (3) Tutorial by [Leo Klärner](#).