

Synthesis of diverse pyrazole-4-sulfonyl chlorides starting from 2-(benzylthio)malonaldehyde

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Received: 3 May 2015 / Accepted: 25 August 2015
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Abstract A series of pyrazole-4-sulfonyl chlorides was obtained by a convenient 2-step method starting from synthetically available 2-(benzylthio)malonaldehyde. The method can be applied for the effective multi-gram synthesis of diverse pyrazole-containing sulfonyl chlorides which are mostly not available by other methods.

Keywords Heterocycles · Pyrazole · Sulfonyl chlorides · Sulfonamides · Oxidation · Chlorination · Cyclization · Hydrazines

Introduction

Sulfonyl chlorides are an important class of building blocks widely used in medicinal and combinatorial chemistry [1]. The main application of sulfonyl chlorides is for the preparation of sulfonamides—compounds exhibiting a broad spectrum of biological activities [2,3]. The significant number of bioactive compounds were prepared from the corresponding heteroaromatic sulfonyl chlorides. Antiviral

agent Tipranavir, antiglaucoma agent Brinzolamide, fungicide Amisulbrom, and herbicide Pyroxsulam (Fig. 1) are examples of recently approved substances whose syntheses started from heterocyclic sulfonyl chlorides [4–7].

Nowadays, among the various synthetic approaches to sulfonyl chlorides [8–10], the most popular are electrophilic substitution by chlorosulfonic acid [11–13] or Sandmeyer-type chlorosulfonation [14–17]. However, these methods require harsh conditions, which lead to polymerization and/or complex mixtures in many instances. These facts limit the range for using these methods especially in the case of electron-rich heterocycles which are sensitive to both reactions with electrophilic reagents and diazotation where the mentioned side processes are often strongly pronounced.

An alternative method for the preparation of sulfonyl chlorides is the oxidative chlorination of sulfur-containing compounds, such as thiols and sulfides [18–22], thioacetates [23,24], thiocarbamates [25,26], and thioethers [27–29] using mostly aqueous chlorine. Nevertheless, these approaches are rarely used in the synthesis of heterocyclic sulfonyl chlorides since the introduction of sulfur-containing substituents in a particular position of the heterocyclic ring often cannot be easily performed.

This problem can be solved using appropriate sulfur-containing building blocks, such as derivatives of 2-mercapto malonaldehyde of general structure **1** (Scheme 1), to be used as substrates for the corresponding heterocyclization.

Compounds **1** are 1,3-dielectrophiles and can be involved in heterocyclizations with different binucleophiles followed by their transformation to their corresponding sulfonyl chlorides by oxidative chlorination under mild conditions [25–29].

In this report, we present the successful application of intermediates **1** for the synthesis of different pyrazole-4-sulfonyl chlorides.

Electronic supplementary material The online version of this article (doi:10.1007/s11030-015-9633-z) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

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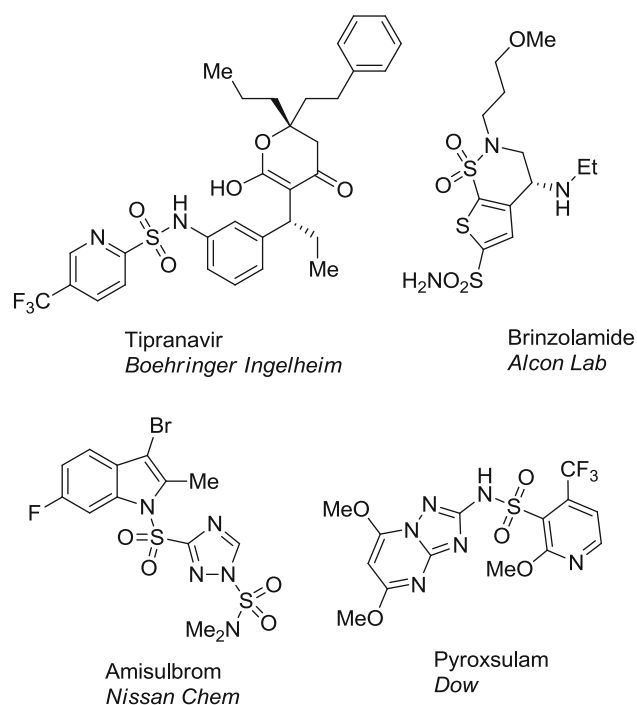


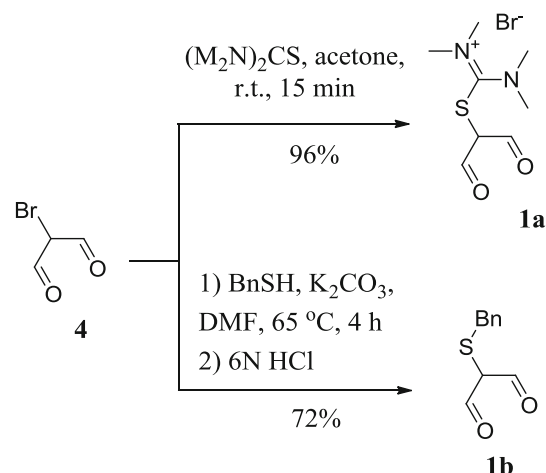
Fig. 1 Examples of sulfonamides used as drugs and pesticides

Results and discussions

First, we considered two possible reagents of formula **1**: the isothiuronium salt **1a** [26] and hitherto unknown 2-benzylthio malonaldehyde **1b** (Scheme 2).

Both dialdehydes **1a,b** were obtained starting from 2-bromo malonoaldehyde **4** by treatment with *N,N'*-tetramethyl thiourea and benzyl mercaptane, respectively. The synthesis of compound **1b** requires heating in DMF in the presence of K_2CO_3 at 65 °C for 4 hours while compound **1a** is easily formed in acetone as it precipitates at r.t. (Scheme 2). Using these 2 methods, compounds **1a,b** can be obtained in 105 and 138 gram scale, respectively.

In order to compare **1a,b** as precursors to the desired sulfonyl chlorides, we studied the synthetic approach to 4-pyrazolyl sulfonyl chlorides **7a,b** using dialdehydes **1a,b** (Scheme 3). The reaction of **1a** with aryl hydrazines **3a,b** took place under reflux in EtOH in the presence of catalytic amounts of hydrochloric acid giving *N,N*-



Scheme 2 Synthesis of compounds **1a,b**

dimethylthiocarbomates **6a,b**. Thiobenzyl dialdehyde **1b** also underwent a similar heterocyclization to afford the corresponding pyrazoles **8a,b** under reflux in methanol. Both thiocarbamate-containing pyrazoles **6a,b** and thiobenzyl-containing pyrazoles **8a,b** can be transformed to sulfonyl chlorides **7a,b** by chlorination under mild conditions (CH_2Cl_2/H_2O , 0–10 °C).

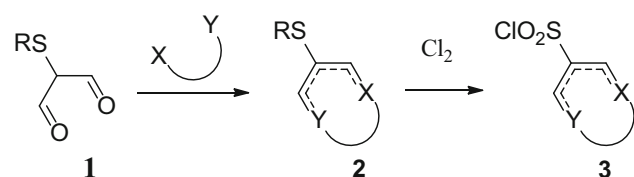
We focused on using compound **1b** as a valuable stable intermediate since compound **1a**, and most of isothiuronium salts, gradually decompose during storing and should be used immediately after the preparation.

A library of 1-substituted pyrazolyl-4-sulfonyl chlorides **7c–i** was readily obtained in two steps through the corresponding benzyl thioethers **8c–i**. Our new process proved to be robust all the way to multi-gram scale, easy to carry out and highly efficient affording products in high yields.

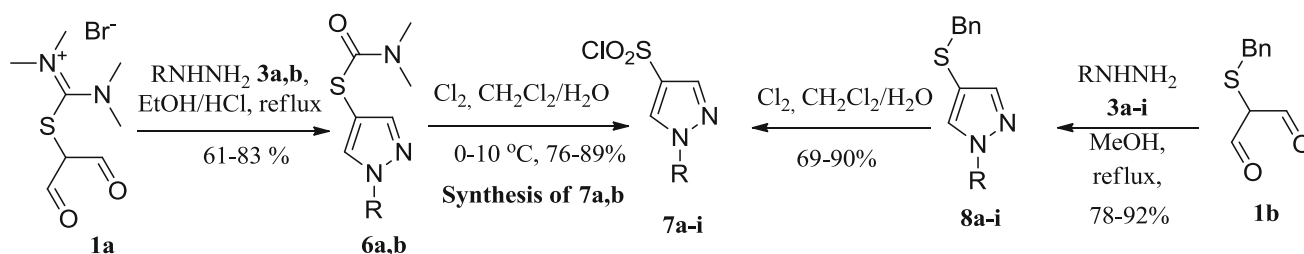
Among the target substances, **7c–i** are compounds that are difficult to obtain by direct chlorosulfonation of the corresponding 1-substituted pyrazoles.

For instance, compounds **7d,e** containing donor aromatic rings are sensitive to electrophilic substitution under common chlorosulfonation conditions. At the same time, mild chlorination conditions of the corresponding intermediates **8d,e** (Cl_2 , CH_2Cl_2/H_2O , r.t.) did not afford the expected chlorinated aromatic ring. Nevertheless, the formation of sulfonyl chloride and simultaneous selective chlorination of the benzene ring can be carried out in the presence of sulfuric acid as demonstrated in the synthesis of compound **9** from benzyl thioether **7d** (Scheme 4).

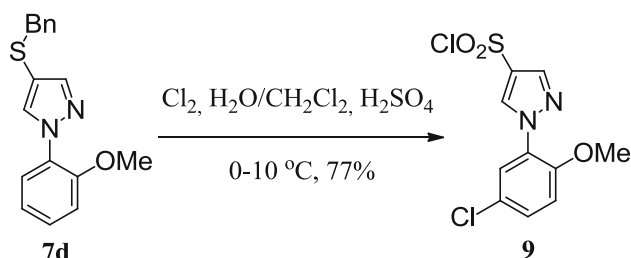
We also applied intermediate **1b** for the multi-gram scale synthesis of isoxazole-4-sulfonyl chloride **11** through the corresponding benzyl thioether **10** (Scheme 5). Good yields were observed on both steps using our methodology while any attempt to synthesize the same compound by direct chlorosulfonation failed.



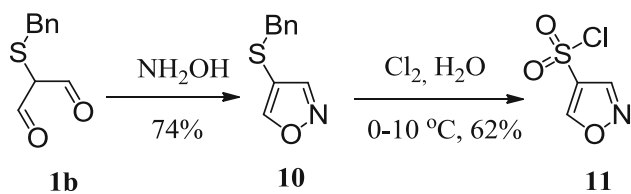
Scheme 1 Synthetic approach to heterocyclic sulfonyl chlorides of general structure **3** starting from 2-(benzylthio)malonaldehyde **1**



Scheme 3 Synthetic routes to sulfonyl chlorides **7a-i** starting from dialdehyde **1a** (left side) and **1b** (right side, see also **Table 1**)

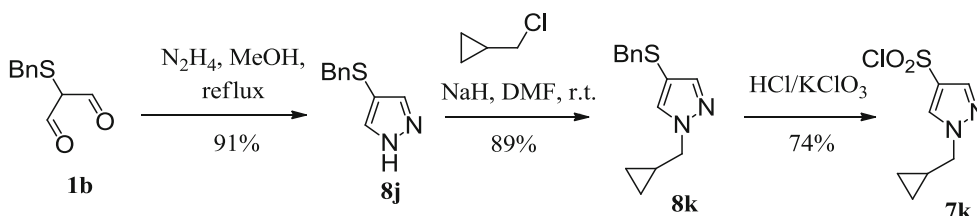


Scheme 4 Synthesis of compound **9**

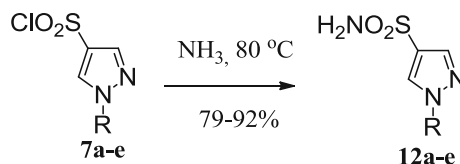


Scheme 5 Synthesis of isoxazole-4-sulfonyl chloride **11**

In order to introduce diverse substituents in the first position of the pyrazole ring, we studied the alkylation of N-unsubstituted pyrazole **8j** which can be synthesized by reacting reagent **1b** with hydrazine hydrate (Scheme 6). The introduction of N-substitution starting from **8j** is particularly important in cases where the corresponding alkyl hydrazines are not accessible. Thus, compound **8k** can be easily obtained from pyrazole **8j** and used for the synthesis of sulfonyl chloride **7k**. It should be mentioned that for the last stage, chlorine had to be generated in situ from HCl/KClO₃ since the cyclopropyl ring is often unstable under harsh chlorination conditions.



Scheme 6 Synthetic approach to sulfonyl chloride **7k**



Scheme 7 Synthesis of sulfonamides **12a-e** (for list of substituents see **Table 1**)

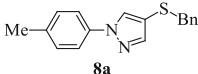
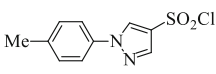
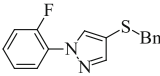
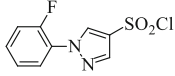
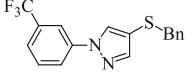
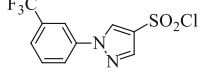
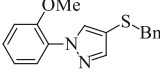
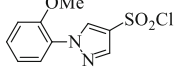
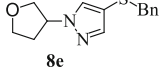
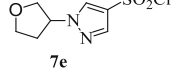
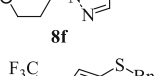
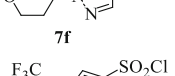
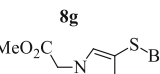
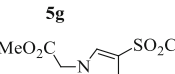
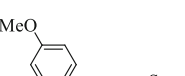
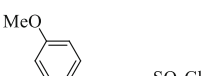
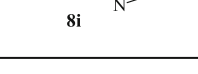
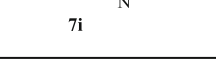
Sulfonyl chlorides **7a-e** were reacted with ammonia affording the corresponding sulfonamides **12a-e** in high yields (Scheme 7).

Conclusions

In summary, we developed a new robust two-step methodology for the preparation of diverse pyrazoles containing sulfonyl chlorides based on (2-benzylthio)malonaldehyde. The method is based on the application of (2-benzylthio)malonaldehyde—hitherto unknown stable reagent which can be easily obtained in multi-gram scale starting from 2-bromo malonoaldehyde. Our method includes the heterocyclization of (2-benzylthio)malonaldehyde with hydrazines followed by oxidative chlorination which selectively transforms the thiobenzyl group into a sulfonyl chloride. Both steps proceed under mild conditions and high yields.

Our new method offers a new route to the direct chlorosulfonation of pyrazoles which usually require harsh conditions. Moreover, it was used in the synthesis of isoxazole-4-sulfonyl chloride which can scarcely be obtained by other methods. Sulfonyl chlorides are key building blocks in drug discovery for the formation of new sulfonamides and, in our case, bearing diverse N-substituted pyrazoles.

Table 1 Synthesis of sulfonyl chlorides **7a–i** starting from dialdehyde **1b**

Entry	Substituent R	Product 8	Yield of 8 (%)	Product 7	Yield of 7 (%)
1	<i>p</i> -MeC ₆ H ₄	 8a	91	 7a	90
2	<i>o</i> -F-C ₆ H ₄	 8b	79	 7b	78
3	<i>m</i> -CF ₃ -C ₆ H ₄	 8c	84	 7c	76
4	<i>o</i> -MeO-C ₆ H ₄	 8d	84	 7d	77
5	Tetrahydrofuran-3-yl	 8e	91	 7e	74
6	Tetrahydropyran-4-yl	 8f	86	 7f	71
7	CF ₃ CH ₂	 8g	92	 5g	82
8	MeO ₂ CCH ₂	 8h	78	 7h	69
9	<i>p</i> -MeO-C ₆ H ₄ CH ₂	 8i	84	 7i	73

Experimental part

General

Solvents were purified according to standard procedures. Starting materials were purchased from Acros, Merck, Fluka, and Enamine. Melting points are uncorrected. NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker Avance DRX at 500 MHz (¹H), 126 MHz (¹³C), and 470 MHz (¹⁹F) at 25 °C. TMS (for ¹H and ¹³C NMR) and CCl₃F (for ¹⁹F NMR) were used as internal standards. Mass spectra were recorded on an Agilent 1100 LCMSD SL instrument by chemical ionization (CI). The progress of reactions was monitored by TLC-plates (silica gel 60 F254, Merck). All starting materials were of the highest commercial quality and were used without further purification.

NMR abbreviations: s = singlet, br. s = broad singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, m = multiplet.

2-(1,3-Dioxopropan-2-yl)-1,1,3,3-tetramethylisothiuronium bromide **1a**

To a solution of 2-bromomalonaldehyde (75.5 g, 0.5 mol) in acetone (1000 mL) 1,1,3,3-tetramethylthiourea (66 g, 0.5 mol) was added at 25 °C under vigorous stirring. During the addition, the formation of precipitate was observed. Stirring was continued for 2 h at r.t., the precipitate was filtered and washed with acetone to give 105 g (74 %) of compound **1a**.

NMR spectra and properties coincide with the literature data [26].

2-(Benzylthio)malonaldehyde **1b**

A mixture of K_2CO_3 (145 g, 1.05 mol), 2-bromomalonaldehyde (151 g, 1 mol) and phenylmethanethiol (117.8 g, 0.95 mol) in DMF (1500 mL) was stirred at 55 °C for 4 h. The solution was cooled to r.t. and the resulting precipitate was filtered, washed with water (1500 mL) and then with CH_2Cl_2 (3×500 mL). The water layer was treated with 6N HCl (~200 mL) until reaching pH = 1. The precipitate obtained was filtered, washed with water and methyl *t*-butyl ether (MTBE), and dried in vacuum giving pure titled compound. Yield: 138 g (71 %). Light gray solid, mp 131–132 °C.

IR (KBr): ν = 861, 884, 1004, 1028, 1175, 1229, 1313, 1355, 1424, 1452, 1552, 1653, 1707, 3061 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6): δ = 3.91 (2H, s, CH_2), 7.18–7.30 (5H, m, Ph), 8.60 (2H, br. s, 2CH) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6): δ = 36.7, 113.3, 127.2, 128.6, 129.2, 138.9, 181.2 (br.) ppm.

m/z (CI): 190 (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. for: $C_{20}H_{18}F_3NO_6$ (425.36): C, 56.47; H, 4.27; N, 3.29. Found C, 56.58; H, 4.20; N, 3.27.

General procedure for synthesis of pyrazol-4-yl N,N-dimethylcarbamothioates 6a and 6b

A mixture of compound **1a** (14.1 g, 0.05 mol), corresponding hydrazine hydrochloride (0.05 mol) and catalytic conc. HCl (0.2 mL) was refluxed in EtOH (200 mL) under stirring for 2 h, then cooled to r.t. and concentrated in vacuum. Water (300 mL) was added and the resulting precipitate was filtered, washed with water (3 × 50 mL), and dried in vacuum giving corresponding products **6a,b** which were used for the next step without purification.

S-1-*p*-Tolyl-1*H*-pyrazol-4-yl *N,N*-dimethylcarbamothioate **6a** was obtained using our general procedure starting from 1-*p*-tolylhydrazine hydrochloride (7.9 g, 0.05 mol). Yield: 10.8 g (83 %). Light gray solid, mp 94–95 °C.

IR (KBr): ν = 980, 1032, 1101, 1151, 1192, 1261, 1325, 1367, 1405, 1430, 1523, 1658, 2923, 3038, 3110 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 2.39 (3H, s, CH_3), 3.05 (3H, s, CH_3N), 3.11 (3H, s, CH_3N), 7.25 (2H, d, J = 8.0 Hz, Ar), 7.57 (2H, d, J = 8.0 Hz, Ar), 7.73 (1H, s, Ar), 8.01 (1H, s, Ar) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6): δ = 20.9, 37.1, 106.3, 118.8, 130.4, 133.2, 136.6, 137.6, 146.0, 165.3 ppm.

m/z (CI): 262 (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. for $C_{13}H_{15}N_3OS$ (261.34): C, 59.74; H, 5.79; N, 16.08. Found: C, 59.61; H, 5.87; N, 16.07.

4-(Benzylthio)-1-*p*-tolyl-1*H*-pyrazole **8a** was obtained using our general procedure starting from 1-*p*-tolylhydrazine hydrochloride (7.9 g, 0.05 mol) and did not require any purification after isolation. Yield: 12.7 g (91 %).

Colorless solid, mp 69–70 °C.

IR (KBr): ν = 701, 776, 814, 860, 951, 1333, 1374, 1452, 1528, 3031, 3115 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 2.38 (3H, s, CH_3), 3.85 (2H, s, CH_2), 7.23 (5H, m, Ar), 7.44 (2H, d, J = 7.5 Hz, Ar), 7.51 (1H, s, Ar), 7.57 (1H, s, Ar) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 20.6, 41.5, 111.4, 118.6, 126.8, 128.0, 128.8, 129.6, 130.5, 136.3, 137.1, 137.9, 144.5

m/z (CI): 281 (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. for $C_{20}H_{18}F_3NO_6$ (425.36): C, 56.47; H, 4.27; N, 3.29. Found C, 56.38; H, 4.33; N, 3.27.

General procedure for the preparation of sulfochlorides 7a–i and 11

Chlorine gas was bubbled into a vigorously stirred solution of corresponding *N,N*-dimethylcarbamothioate **6** (0.02 mol) [Method 1] or benzyl thioether **8** (0.02 mol) [Method 2] in CH_2Cl_2 (200 mL) and water (70 mL) at 0–10 °C. When the reaction completed (no absorption of chlorine and temperature decrease) (also based by TLC monitoring), the organic layer was separated, dried under Na_2SO_4 , concentrated in vacuum and the residue was purified by an appropriate method.

1-*p*-Tolyl-1*H*-pyrazole-4-sulfonyl chloride **7a** was obtained by general procedure by Method 1 starting from compound **6a** (5.2 g, 0.02 mol) and did not require any purification after work-up. Yield: 4.6 g (89 %).

Also compound **7a** was obtained by Method 2 starting from compound **8a** (8.5 g, 0.02 mol) and did not require any purification after work-up. Yield: 4.5 g (90 %).

Light yellow solid, mp 95–96 °C.

IR (CH_2Cl_2): ν = 981, 1029, 1144, 1187, 1378, 1396, 1523 3141 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 2.45 (3H, s, CH_3), 7.34 (2H, d, J = 7.9 Hz, Ar), 7.95 (2H, d, J = 7.9 Hz, Ar), 8.16 (1H, s, Ar), 8.49 (1H, s, Ar) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 20.8, 119.0, 126.5, 130.3, 132.0, 136.3, 137.6, 138.9 ppm.

m/z (CI): 239 [SO_3H] (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. for $C_{10}H_9ClN_2O_2S$ (256.71): C, 46.79; H, 3.53; N, 10.91. Found: C, 46.82; H, 3.41; N, 11.02.

4-(Benzylthio)-1-(cyclopropylmethyl)-1H-pyrazole **8k**

To a solution of DMF (50 mL) 60 % NaH (1.0 g, 25 mmol) was added under vigorous stirring. Then a solution of pyrazole **6j** (3.8 g, 20 mmol) in DMF (15 mL) was added dropwise under r.t. After stirring for 30 min (complete hydrogen release), (bromomethyl)cyclopropane (4.05 g, 30 mmol) was added dropwise. The mixture was left stirring overnight. The resulting precipitate (NaBr) was filtered and the filtrate concentrated in vacuum. The resulting residue was purified by column chromatography (EtOAc/Hex, 1:1 R_f = 0.7). Yield: 4.34 g (89 %). Light yellow oil.

IR (ATR): 765, 931, 977, 1023, 1070, 1172, 1236, 1431, 1452, 1494, 1513, 2966, 3027 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 0.30 (2H, m, *c*-Pr), 0.61 (2H, m, *c*-Pr), 1.18 (1H, m, *c*-Pr), 3.78 (2H, s, CH_2), 3.88 (2H, d, J = 6.5 Hz, CH_2N), 7.13 (2H, m, Ar), 7.18 (1H, s, Ar), 7.25 (3H, m, Ar), 7.36 (1H, s, Ar) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 3.6, 10.6, 41.7, 55.6, 108.7, 126.6, 127.9, 128.7, 132.6, 138.2, 143.1 ppm.

m/z (CI): 245 (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. For $C_{14}H_{16}N_2S$ (244.36): C, 68.81; H, 6.60; N, 11.46. Found: C, 68.73; H, 6.64; N, 11.40.

1-(Cyclopropylmethyl)-1H-pyrazole-4-sulfonyl chloride **7k**

To a solution of compound **8k** (4.9 g, 0.02 mol) in 35 % HCl (50 mL), $KClO_3$ (2.7 g, 0.022 mol) was added in several portions under vigorous stirring keeping the temperature between 5–10 °C using an ice-water bath (highly exothermic reaction). After 30 min of the addition of $KClO_3$, the reaction mixture was extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 \times 50 mL), the combined organic layers were dried over Na_2SO_4 , concentrated in vacuum and the residue was purified by column chromatography (EtOAc/Hex, 1:1, R_f = 0.8). Yield: 3.26 g (74 %). Colorless liquid.

IR (ATR) 803, 932, 980, 1026, 1110, 1161, 1369, 1393, 1513, 3010, 3133 cm^{-1} .

1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 0.45 (2H, m, *c*-Pr), 0.77 (2H, m, *c*-Pr), 1.32 (1H, m, *c*-Pr), 4.06 (2H, d, J = 7.0 Hz, CH_2), 7.98 (1H, s, Ar), 8.19 (1H, s, Ar) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 3.9, 10.0, 57.6, 125.9, 130.8, 137.9 ppm.

m/z (CI): 203 [SO_3H] (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. For $C_7H_9ClN_2O_2S$ (220.68): C, 38.10; H, 4.11; N, 12.69; Cl, 16.07. Found: C, 38.01; H, 4.17; N, 12.58; Cl, 16.00.

General procedure for the preparation of sulfonamides **12a–e**

Sulfonyl chloride **7a–e** (10 mmol) was added in portions to an aqueous solution of ammonia (20 %, 50 mL) under stirring at 40 °C. The mixture was then stirred at 80 °C for 2 h, cooled, concentrated in vacuum, and treated with water (25 mL). The resulting precipitate was filtered, washed with water (3 \times 20 mL), and dried in vacuum giving pure products **12a–e**.

1-(*p*-Tolyl)-1H-pyrazole-4-sulfonamide **12a** was obtained using our general procedure starting from compound **7a** (2.56 g, 10 mmol). Yield: 2.18 g (92 %). Colorless solid, mp 189–191 °C.

IR (KBr) 918, 955, 988, 1136, 1182, 1329, 1351, 1393, 1530, 3040, 3123, 3240, 3328 cm^{-1}

1H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6): δ = 2.39 (3H, s), 7.32 (2H, d, J = 8.0 Hz), 7.39 (2H, br. s), 7.76 (2H, d J = 8.0 Hz), 8.00 (1H, s), 8.87 (1H, s) ppm.

^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6): δ = 20.6, 119.1, 128.0, 128.7, 130.1, 136.7, 137.0 138.6 ppm.

m/z (CI): 238 (M+1, 100 %).

Anal. Calcd. For $C_{10}H_{11}N_3O_2S$ (237.28): C, 50.62; H, 4.67; N, 17.71. Found: C, 50.49; H, 4.77; N, 17.60.

See Supporting Information for all the experimental data as well as copies of 1H and ^{13}C NMR.

Acknowledgments We express our appreciation to Dr. S. I. Vdovenko and O. A. Fedorenko (Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry and Petrochemistry, National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine) for measuring the IR-spectra.

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