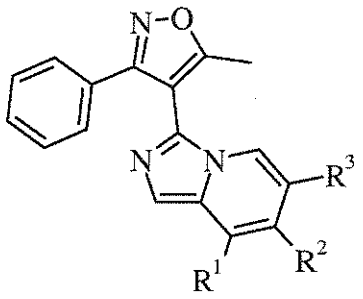
ARYL-ISOXAZOL-4-YL-IMIDAZO[1,5-A]PYRIDINE DERIVATIVES

The present invention is concerned with aryl-isoxazolo-4-yl-imidazo [1,5-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I:



I

wherein:

R^1 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, lower alkyl, benzyloxy or –O-(CH_2)-(CO)-5 or 6 membered heteroaryl optionally substituted by aryl and lower alkyl;

R^2 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^3 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^a is hydroxy, lower alkoxy, NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl, cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl;

as well as pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salts thereof.

It has been found that this class of compounds show high affinity and selectivity for GABA A α5 receptor binding sites and might be useful as cognitive enhancer or for the treatment of cognitive disorders like Alzheimer's disease.

Receptors for the major inhibitory neurotransmitter, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), are divided into two main classes: (1) GABA A receptors, which are members of the ligand-gated ion channel superfamily and (2) GABA B receptors, which are members of the G-protein linked receptor family. The GABA A receptor complex which is a

membrane-bound heteropentameric protein polymer is composed principally of α, β and γ subunits.

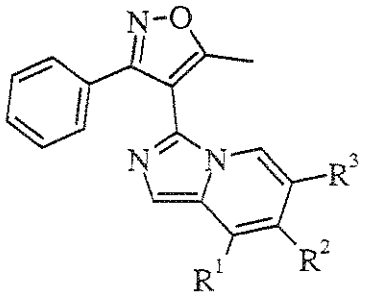
Presently a total number of 21 subunits of the GABA A receptor have been cloned and sequenced. Three types of subunits (α, β and γ) are required for the construction of recombinant GABA A receptors which most closely mimic the biochemical, electrophysiological and pharmacological functions of native GABA A receptors obtained from mammalian brain cells. There is strong evidence that the benzodiazepine binding site lies between the α and γ subunits. Among the recombinant GABA A receptors, α1β2γ2 mimics many effects of the classical type-I BzR subtypes, whereas α2β2γ2, α3β2γ2 and α5β2γ2 ion channels are termed type-II BzR.

It has been shown by McNamara and Skelton in *Psychobiology, 21:101-108* that the benzodiazepine receptor inverse agonist β-CCM enhance spatial learning in the Morris watermaze. However, β-CCM and other conventional benzodiazepine receptor inverse agonists are proconvulsant or convulsant which prevents their use as cognition enhancing agents in humans. In addition, these compounds are non-selective within the GABA A receptor subunits, whereas a GABA A α5 receptor partial or full inverse agonist which is relatively free of activity at GABA A α1 and/or α2 and/or α3 receptor binding sites can be used to provide a medicament which is useful for enhancing cognition with reduced or without proconvulsant activity. It is also possible to use GABA A α5 inverse agonists which are not free of activity at GABA A α1 and/or α2 and/or α3 receptor binding sites but which are functionally selective for α5 containing subunits. However, inverse agonists which are selective for GABA A α5 subunits and are relatively free of activity at GABA A α1, α2 and α3 receptor binding sites are preferred.

Objects of the present invention are compounds of formula I and pharmaceutically acceptable salts, the preparation of the above mentioned compounds, medicaments containing them and their manufacture as well as the use of the above mentioned compounds in the control or prevention of illnesses, especially of illnesses and disorders of the kind referred to earlier or in the manufacture of corresponding medicaments.

The most preferred indication in accordance with the present invention is Alzheimer's disease.

According to a first aspect, there is provided Aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I:



I

wherein:

R^1 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, lower alkyl, benzyloxy or –O-(CH_2)-(CO)-5 or 6 membered heteroaryl optionally substituted by aryl and lower alkyl;

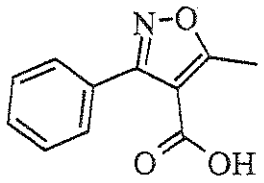
R^2 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^3 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^a is hydroxy, lower alkoxy or NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl, cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl;

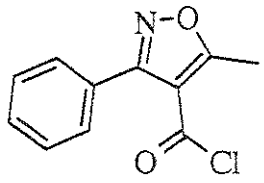
as well as pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salts thereof.

According to a second aspect, there is provided a process for preparation of compounds of formula I as defined in the first aspect, which process comprises reacting a compound of formula II



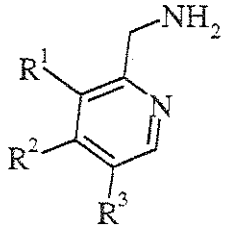
II

with thionyl chloride to give a compound of formula III



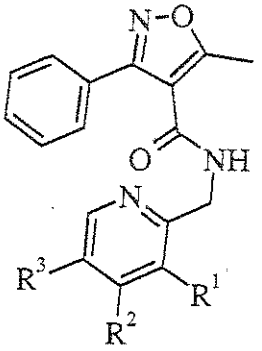
III

which can then be reacted with a compound of formula IV



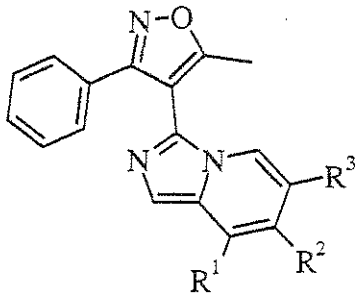
IV

to give a compound of formula V



V

which can then be reacted with a dehydrating reagent in a suitable solvent to give a compound of formula I



I

wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as described above,

and, if desired, converting a compound of formula I into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

According to a third aspect, there is provided a compound of formula I as defined above, whenever prepared by a process as defined above or by an equivalent method.

According to a fourth aspect, there is provided a medicament containing one or more compounds of formula I as defined above and pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.

According to a fifth aspect, there is provided the use of a compound of formula I as defined above for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of cognitive enhancer or cognitive disorders.

According to a sixth aspect, there is provided the use of a compound of formula I as defined above for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

The following definitions of the general terms used in the present description apply irrespective of whether the terms in question appear alone or in combination.

As used herein, the term "lower alkyl" denotes a straight- or branched-chain alkyl group containing from 1-7, preferably from 1 - 4 carbon atoms, for example, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, i-butyl, t-butyl and the like.

The term "lower alkoxy" denotes a lower alkyl group as defined hereinabove, which is linked via an oxygen atom. Examples of lower alkoxy groups are methoxy and ethoxy.

The term "aryl" denotes an unsaturated carbon ring, for example a phenyl, benzyl or naphthyl group. A preferred aryl group is phenyl.

The term "halogen" denotes chlorine, iodine, fluorine and bromine.

The term "cycloalkyl" denotes a cyclic alkyl ring, having from 3 to 7 carbon ring atoms, for example, cyclopropyl, cyclopentyl or cyclohexyl.

The term "heterocycloalkyl "denotes a saturated 5 or 6 membered ring containing from one to three heteroatoms, such as N, O or S atoms. Examples of such heterocycloalkyl groups are morpholinyl or tetrahydropyranyl as well as those groups which are specifically illustrated by the examples hereinafter.

The term "heteroaryl "denotes an aromatic 5 or 6 membered ring containing from one to three heteroatoms, such as N, O or S atoms. Examples of such aromatic heteroaryl groups are pyridinyl, triazolyl, isoxazolyl, furanyl, thiophenyl, imidazolyl, oxazolyl or pyrazinyl.

The term "pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salts" embraces salts with inorganic and organic acids, such as hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, citric acid, formic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, acetic acid, succinic acid, tartaric acid, methane-sulfonic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid and the like.

Preferred are compounds, which have a binding activity (hKi) of lower than 100 nM and are selective for GABA A α5 subunits and are relatively free of activity at GABA A α1, α2 and α3 receptor binding sites.

As mentioned hereinabove, the compounds of the invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

R^1 is hydrogen, halogen (preferably Cl and Br), hydroxy, lower alkyl (preferably methyl), benzyloxy or –O-(CH_2)-(CO)-5 or 6 membered heteroaryl (preferably

izoxazolyl) optionally substituted by aryl (preferably phenyl) and lower alkyl (preferably methyl);

R^2 is hydrogen, lower alkyl (preferably methyl or ethyl), or -(CO)-R^a;

R^3 is hydrogen, halogen (preferably Cl or Br), cyano, lower alkyl (preferably methyl or ethyl), or -(CO)-R^a;

R^a is hydroxy, lower alkoxy (preferably methoxy or ethoxy), NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl (preferably cyclopropyl), 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl (preferably morpholinyl or tetrahydropyranyl) or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl (preferably cyclopropyl), cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl (preferably morpholinyl or tetrahydropyranyl) or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl (preferably pyridinyl or furanyl);

as well as pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salts thereof.

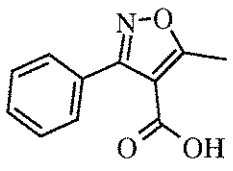
In a certain embodiment of the compounds of formula I of the invention R^3 is hydrogen, for example the following compound

3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine.

In a certain embodiment of the compounds of formula I of the invention R^3 is -(CO)-R^a, in which R^a is lower alkoxy or NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl, cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl, for example the following compounds: 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carbonitrile and 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid methyl ester.

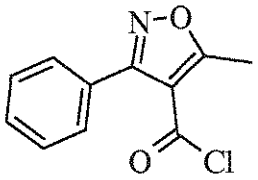
The present compounds of formula I and their pharmaceutically acceptable salts may be prepared by methods known in the art, for example, by processes described below, which process comprises

reacting a compound of formula



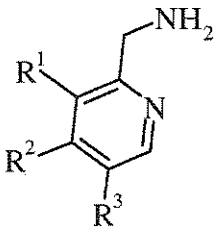
II

with thionyl chloride to give a compound of formula



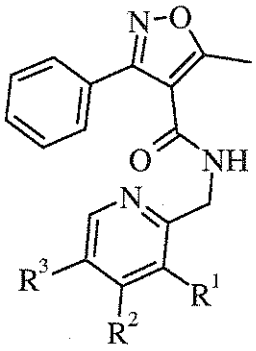
III

which can then be reacted with a compound of formula IV



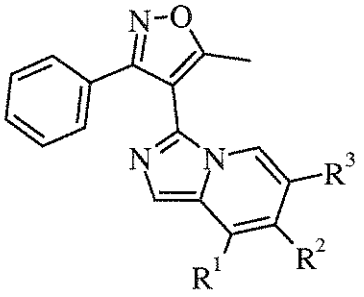
IV

to give a compound of formula V



V

which can then be reacted with a dehydrating reagent such as phosphorous oxychloride in a suitable solvent, such as dichloroethane, to give a compound of formula I



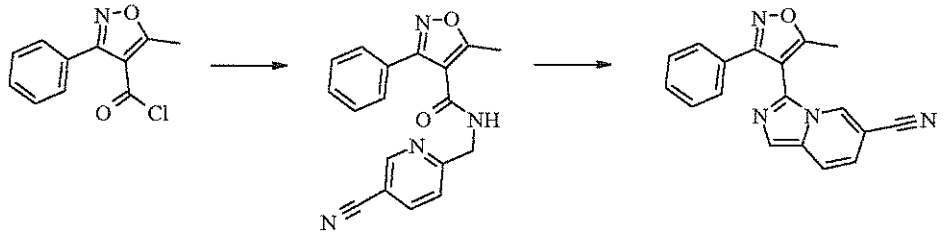
I

wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as described above,

and, if desired, converting a compound of formula I into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

The following schemes describe the processes for preparation of compounds of formula I in more detail.

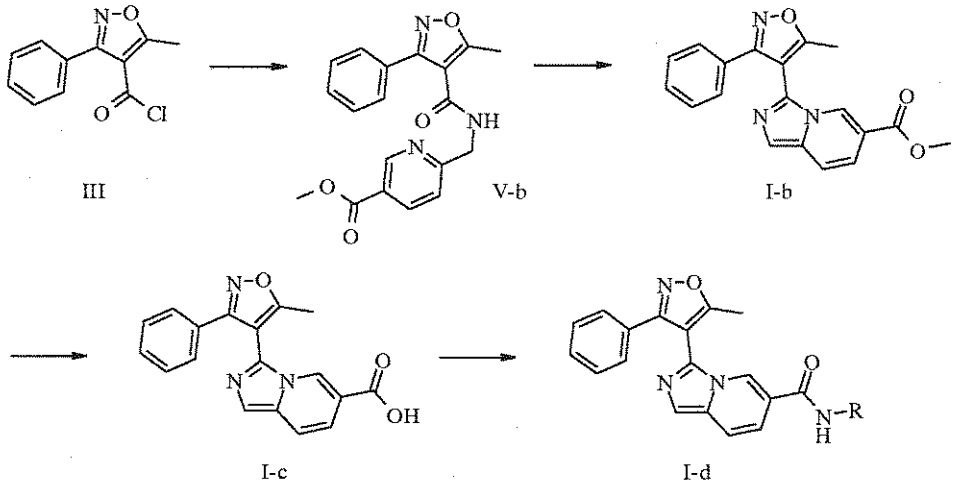
Scheme 1



III V-a I-a

The 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride III is treated with 6-aminomethyl-nicotinonitrile hydrochloride salt IV (not shown in scheme I) in a mixture of ethyl acetate and water at 0 °C to give the intermediate amide V-a which can then be heated under reflux with phosphorus oxychloride in dichloroethane to give compound of formula I-a.

Scheme 2



III V-b I-b

I-c I-d

Alternatively, the 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride III can be treated with 6-aminomethyl-nicotinic acid methyl ester IV (not shown in scheme 2) in a mixture of ethyl acetate and water at 0 °C to give the intermediate amide V-b which can then be heated under reflux with phosphorus oxychloride in dichloroethane to give compound of formula I-b. The ester can then be saponified with lithium hydroxide in methanol, THF, water mixture to give the acid of formula I-c which can be activated following standard procedures by 1-ethyl-3-(3'-dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide, 1-hydroxybenzotriazole, triethylamine and then reacted with an amine (RNH_2) of choice to give compounds of formula I-d.

As mentioned earlier, the compounds of formula I and their pharmaceutically usable salts possess valuable pharmacological properties. It has been found that the

compounds of the present invention are ligands for GABA A receptors containing the α5 subunit and are therefore useful in the therapy where cognition enhancement is required.

The compounds were investigated in accordance with the test given hereinafter.

Membrane preparation and binding assay

The affinity of compounds at GABA A receptor subtypes was measured by competition for [3H]flumazenil (85 Ci/mmol; Roche) binding to HEK293 cells expressing rat (stably transfected) or human (transiently transfected) receptors of composition α1β3γ2, α2β3γ2, α3β3γ2 and α5β3γ2.

Cell pellets were suspended in Krebs-tris buffer (4.8 mM KCl, 1.2 mM CaCl2, 1.2 mM $MgCl_2$, 120 mM NaCl, 15 mM Tris; pH 7.5; binding assay buffer), homogenized by polytron for ca. 20 sec on ice and centrifuged for 60 min at 4 °C (50000 g; Sorvall, rotor: SM24 = 20000 rpm). The cell pellets were resuspended in Krebs-tris buffer and homogenized by polytron for ca. 15 sec on ice. Protein was measured (Bradford method, Bio-Rad) and aliquots of 1 mL were prepared and stored at –80 °C.

Radioligand binding assays were carried out in a volume of 200 mL (96-well plates) which contained 100 mL of cell memebranes, [3H]flumazenil at a concentration of 1 nM for α1, α2, α3 subunits and 0.5 nM for α5 subunits and the test compound in the range of $10\text{-}10^{-3}$ x 10^{-6} M. Nonspecific binding was defined by 10^{-5} M diazepam and typically represented less than 5% of the total binding. Assays were incubated to equilibrium for 1 hour at 4 °C and harvested onto GF/C uni-filters (Packard) by filtration using a Packard harvester and washing with ice-cold wash buffer (50 mM Tris; pH 7.5). After drying, filter-retained radioactivity was detected by liquid scintillation counting. Ki values were calculated using Excel-Fit (Microsoft) and are the means of two determinations.

The compounds of the accompanying examples were tested in the above described assay, and the preferred compounds were found to possess a Ki value for displacement of [3H]flumazenil from α5 subunits of the rat GABA A receptor of 100 nM or less. In a preferred embodiment the compounds of the invention are binding selective for the α5 subunit relative to the α1, α2 and α3 subunit. The compound of example 1, namely 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine shows a Ki[nM] hα5 value of 77.9 nM.

The compounds of formula I as well as their pharmaceutically usable acid addition salts can be used as medicaments, e.g. in the form of pharmaceutical preparations. The pharmaceutical preparations can be administered orally, e.g. in the form of tablets, coated tablets, dragées, hard and soft gelatine capsules, solutions, emulsions or suspensions. The administration can, however, also be effected rectally, e.g. in the form of suppositories, or parenterally, e.g. in the form of injection solutions.

The compounds of formula I and their pharmaceutically usable acid addition salts can be processed with pharmaceutically inert, inorganic or organic excipients for the production of tablets, coated tablets, dragées and hard gelatine capsules. Lactose, corn starch or derivatives thereof, talc, stearic acid or its salts etc can be used as such excipients e.g. for tablets, dragées and hard gelatine capsules. Suitable excipients for soft gelatine capsules are e.g. vegetable oils, waxes, fats, semisolid and liquid polyols etc.

Suitable excipients for the manufacture of solutions and syrups are e.g. water, polyols, saccharose, invert sugar, glucose etc.

Suitable excipients for injection solutions are e.g. water, alcohols, polyols, glycerol, vegetable oils etc.

Suitable excipients for suppositories are e.g. natural or hardened oils, waxes, fats, semi-liquid or liquid polyols etc.

Moreover, the pharmaceutical preparations can contain preservatives, solubilizers, stabilizers, wetting agents, emulsifiers, sweeteners, colorants, flavorants, salts for varying the osmotic pressure, buffers, masking agents or antioxidants. They can also contain still other therapeutically valuable substances.

The dosage can vary within wide limits and will, of course, be fitted to the individual requirements in each particular case. In general, in the case of oral administration a daily dosage of about 10 to 1000 mg per person of a compound of general formula I should be appropriate, although the above upper limit can also be exceeded when necessary.

The following examples illustrate the present invention without limiting it. All temperatures are given in degrees Celsius.

Example A

Tablets of the following composition are manufactured in the usual manner:

	mg/tablet
Active substance	5
Lactose	45
Corn starch	15
Microcrystalline cellulose	34
Magnesium stearate	1
Tablet weight	100

Example B

Capsules of the following composition are manufactured:

	mg/capsule
Active substance	10
Lactose	155
Corn starch	30
Talc	5
Capsule fill weight	200

The active substance, lactose and corn starch are firstly mixed in a mixer and then in a comminuting machine. The mixture is returned to the mixer, the talc is added thereto and mixed thoroughly. The mixture is filled by machine into hard gelatine capsules.

Example C

Suppositories of the following composition are manufactured:

	mg/supp.
Active substance	15
Suppository mass	1285
Total	1300

The suppository mass is melted in a glass or steel vessel, mixed thoroughly and cooled to 45 °C. Thereupon, the finely powdered active substance is added thereto and

stirred until it has dispersed completely. The mixture is poured into suppository moulds of suitable size, left to cool, the suppositories are then removed from the moulds and packed individually in wax paper or metal foil.

The following examples 1 – 5 are provided for illustration of the invention. They should not be considered as limiting the scope of the invention, but merely as being representative thereof.

Example 1

3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine

a) 5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid (pyridin-2-ylmethyl)-amide

A mixture of 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid (4.06 g, 20 mmol, commercially available) and thionyl chloride (5 mL) was heated under reflux for 3 h. Evaporation of all volatiles afforded 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride (4.4 g, 93%) as yellow oil, which was used without further purification in the next reaction. To a mixture of an aqueous solution of 2-picolylamine (0.182 g, 1.68 mmol) in water (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (4 mL) were added sodium hydrogen carbonate (362 mg, 4.2 mmol) in one portion. Then 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride (0.31 g, 1.4 mmol) in ethyl acetate (2 mL) was added dropwise with vigorous stirring under ice-bath cooling keeping the temperature at 0 °C. After addition, the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18 h. The resulting solution was then diluted with ethyl acetate. The organic layer was separated, and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate. The combined extracts were then washed with brine, dried over sodium sulphate, and concentrated to afford the title compound (0.38 g, 93%) as a white solid. MS: m/e: 294.1 $[M+H]^+$.

b) 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine

To a solution of 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid (pyridin-2-ylmethyl)-amide (0.293 g, 1 mmol) in dichloroethane (5 mL) was added phosphorus oxychloride (0.47 mL, 5 mmol) via a syringe and the resulting mixture heated under reflux overnight. After cooling to room temperature, the mixture was diluted with dichloromethane. Cold saturated sodium bicarbonate (15 mL) was then added slowly and the mixture was vigorously stirred for 15 min. The organic layer was separated and the aqueous was extracted with dichloromethane. The combined extracts were washed with water, dried over sodium sulphate, and evaporated. Purification by preparative HPLC on reversed

phase [0.1% aq. ammonia (25%)] afforded the title compound (0.13 g, 47%) as an orange solid. MS: m/e: 276.1 $[M+H]^+$.

Example 2

3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carbonitrile

a) 5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid (5-cyano-pyridin-2-ylmethyl)-amide

As described for example 1a, 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride (0.266g, 1.2 mmol) was converted, by using 6-aminomethyl-nicotinonitrile hydrochloride salt (0.17 g, 1 mmol) instead of 2-picolylamine, to the title compound (296 mg, 93%) which was obtained as a white solid. MS: m/e: 319.0 $[M+H]^+$.

a) 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carbonitrile

As described for example 1b, 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid (5-cyano-pyridin-2-ylmethyl)-amide (0.12 g, 0.377 mmol) was converted to the title compound (60 m g, 44%) which was obtained as a light-yellow solid. MS: m/e: 301.3 $[M+H]^+$.

Example 3

3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid methyl ester

a) 6-{[(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carbonyl)-amino]-methyl}-nicotinic acid methyl ester

As described for example 1a, 5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carboxylic acid chloride (0.5 g, 2.26 mmol) was converted, using 6-aminomethyl-nicotinic acid methyl ester (313 mg, 1.88 mmol) (*J. Med. Chem.* 2002, *45*, 5005-5022), instead of 2-picolylamine, to the title compound (0.56 g, 85 %) which was obtained as a white solid. MS: m/e: 352.0 $[M+H]^+$.

b) 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid methyl ester

As described for example 1b, 6-{[(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazole-4-carbonyl)-amino]-methyl}-nicotinic acid methyl ester (0.56 g, 1.6 mmol) was converted to the title compound (0.266 g, 50 %) which was obtained as a yellow solid. MS: m/e: 334.3 $[M+H]^+$.

Example 4

3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid cyclopropylmethyl-amide

a) 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid

To a suspension of 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid methyl ester (0.25 g, 0.75 mmol) in water (6 mL) and methanol (3 mL) was added lithium hydroxide monohydrate (0.21 g, 5 mmol) in one portion. The reaction mixture was stirred for 4.5 h at room temperature. After evaporation (removal of methanol), the remaining mixture was extracted with diethyl ether. Then the aqueous layer was acidified to pH~5 with aqueous HCl (2N). The light yellow precipitate was collected by filtration and washed with water to afford the title compound (0.2 g, 83 %) as light yellow solid. MS: m/e: 320.1 $[M+H]^+$.

b) 3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid cyclopropylmethyl-amide

A solution containing 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid (58 mg, 0.18 mmol), 1-ethyl-3-(3'-dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide (52 mg, 0.27 mmol), 1-hydroxybenzotriazole (24 mg, 0.18 mmol), triethylamine (60 µL, 0.45 mmol) and cyclopropyl methylamine (20 mg, 0.27 mmol) in DMF (1 mL) was stirred at room temperature overnight. Purification by preparative HPLC on reversed phase (0.1% aqueous ammonia (25%) afforded the title compound (34 mg, 50 %) as a light yellow solid. MS: m/e: 373.3 $[M+H]^+$.

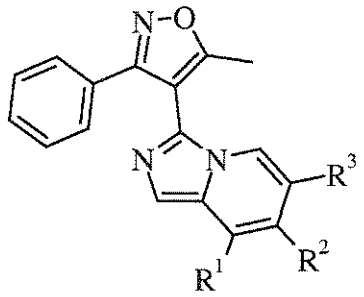
Example 5

3-(5-Methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid (tetrahydro-pyran-4-yl)-amide

As described for example 4b, 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid (58 mg, 0.18 mmol), was converted, using tetrahydropyran-4-ylamine (28 mg, 0.27 mmol) instead of cyclopropyl methylamine, to the title compound (40 mg, 55%) which was obtained as a light yellow solid. MS: m/e (ESI): 403.3 $[M+H]^+$.

Claims

1. Aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I:



I

wherein:

R^1 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, lower alkyl, benzyloxy or –O-(CH_2)-(CO)-5 or 6 membered heteroaryl optionally substituted by aryl and lower alkyl;

R^2 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^3 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, lower alkyl, or -(CO)-R^a;

R^a is hydroxy, lower alkoxy or NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl, cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl;

as well as pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salts thereof.

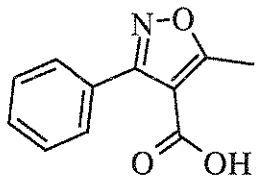
2. The aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I according to claim 1, wherein R^3 is hydrogen.

3. The aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I according to claim 2, wherein it is: 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine.

4. The aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I according to claim 1, wherein R^3 is -(CO)-R^a, in which R^a is lower alkoxy or NR'R", wherein R' and R" are each independently hydrogen, cycloalkyl, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or lower alkyl optionally substituted by cycloalkyl, cyano, 5 or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl or 5 or 6-membered heteroaryl.

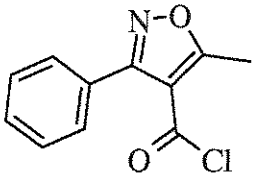
5. The aryl-isoxazol-4-yl-imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine derivatives of formula I according to claim 4, wherein it is: 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carbonitrile and 3-(5-methyl-3-phenyl-isoxazol-4-yl)-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine-6-carboxylic acid methyl ester.

6. A process for preparation of compounds of formula I as defined in claim 1, which process comprises reacting a compound of formula II



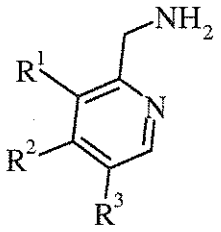
II

with thionyl chloride to give a compound of formula III



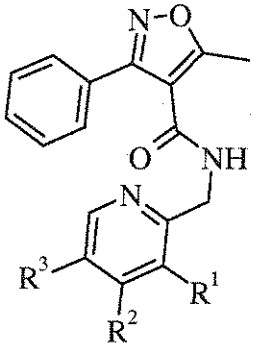
III

which can then be reacted with a compound of formula IV



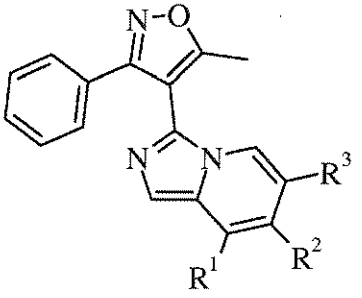
IV

to give a compound of formula V



V

which can then be reacted with a dehydrating reagent in a suitable solvent to give a compound of formula I



I

wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as described above,

and, if desired, converting a compound of formula I into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

7. The process according to claim 6, wherein the dehydrating reagent is phosphorous and the solvent is oxychloride dichloroethane.

8. A compound of formula I according to any one of claims 1 to 5, whenever prepared by a process as claimed in any one of claim 6 or 7 or by an equivalent method.

9. A medicament containing one or more compounds of formula I in accordance with any one of claims 1 to 5 and pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.

10. A medicament according to claim 9 for the treatment of diseases related to the GABA A α5 subunit selected from cognitive enhancer or cognitive disorders.

11. A medicament according to claim 10 for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

12. The use of a compound of formula I according to any one of claims 1 to 5 for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of cognitive enhancer or cognitive disorders.

13. The use of a compound of formula I according to any one of claims 1 to 5 for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.