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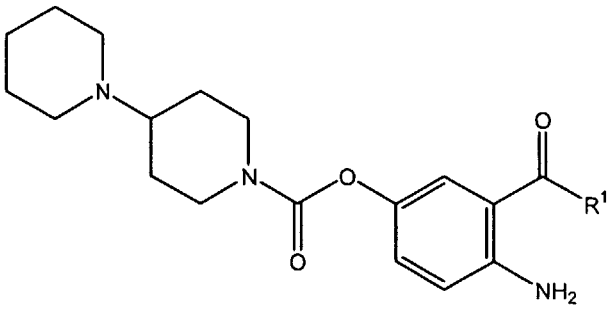
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(I)

(57) Abstract: Novel compounds are provided having formula (I) and salts thereof, where R^1 is hydrogen, an alkyl, aralkyl, hydroxymethyl, carboxymethyl, acyloxymethyl or trialkylsilyl group, or a group $-CH_2NR^3R^4$ where N is a linking nitrogen atom and where (a) R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from hydrogen and alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl and alkoxyalkyl groups; (b) R^3 is hydrogen or an alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl or alkoxyalkyl group, and R^4 is $-COR^5$ where R^5 is hydrogen or an alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl or alkoxyalkyl group; or (c) R^3 and R^4 taken together with the linking nitrogen atom form a saturated 3- to 7-member heterocyclic group. These compounds are useful intermediates in a process to prepare camptothecin derivatives including the anti-cancer drug irinotecan.

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