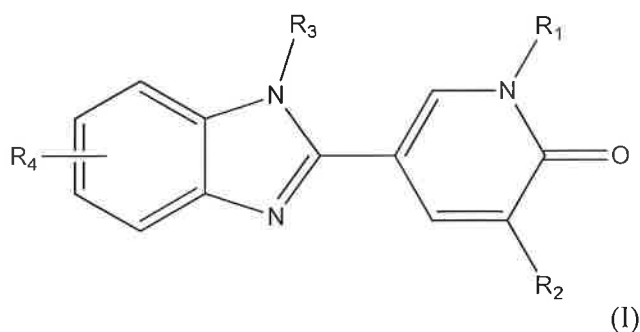


CLAIMS

1. A compound of formula (I), or a salt thereof:

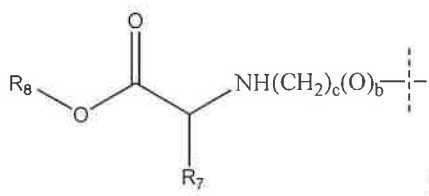


wherein

R_1 and R_2 are each independently hydrogen or methyl with the proviso that at least one of R_1 and R_2 is methyl;

R_3 is C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} alkoxy, cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, or $-CHR_5(CH_2)_aR_6$;

R_4 is attached at the 5 or 6 position of the benzimidazole and represents



R_5 is hydrogen, C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-3} alkoxy, or $-(CH_2)_dOR_9$;

R_6 is hydrogen, C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-3} alkoxy, $-(CH_2)_eOR_{10}$, hydroxyl, $-NR_{11}R_{12}$, halo, cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, aryl, or heteroaryl, wherein said C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-3} alkoxy, $-(CH_2)_eOR_{10}$, cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, aryl or heteroaryl may be optionally substituted with one or two substituents independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-3} alkoxy, halo, $-CH_2OH$, $-COOH$, and $-COCH_3$;

R_7 is hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, $-(CH_2)_g$ cycloalkyl, $-(CH_2)_h$ heterocycloalkyl, or $-CR_{13}R_{14}R_{15}$;

R_8 is hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, or $-CHR_{16}R_{17}$ wherein said C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with C_{1-3} alkoxy, and wherein R_{16} is hydrogen or C_{1-3} alkyl and R_{17} is cycloalkyl or heterocycloalkyl;

R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{14} , R_{15} , and R_{18} are each independently hydrogen or C_{1-3} alkyl;

R_{13} is hydrogen, hydroxyl, $-CH_2OR_{18}$, halo, $-COOH$, $-CONH_2$, 1H-imidazol-4-yl, $-SH$, $-SeH$, C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-3} alkoxy, phenyl, or 4-hydroxyphenyl wherein said C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkoxy may be optionally substituted with halo, hydroxyl, $-NHC(=NH_2)NH_2$, $-NH_2$, $-COOH$, $-CONH_2$, or $-SCH_3$;

a is 0, 1, 2 or 3;

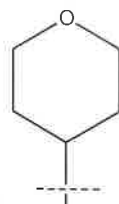
b is 0 or 1;

c is 1, 2 or 3 with the proviso that when b is 1, c is 2 or 3;

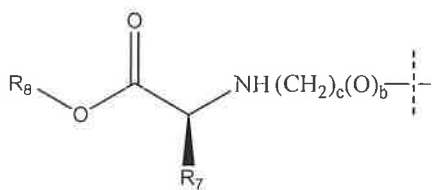
d and e are each independently 1 or 2; and

g and h are each independently 0, 1 or 2.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein R_1 and R_2 are each methyl.
3. A compound according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein R_3 represents a 5 or 6 membered heterocycloalkyl or the group $-\text{CHR}_5\text{R}_6$ wherein R_5 represents hydrogen or C_{1-3} alkyl and R_6 represents 5 or 6 membered heterocycloalkyl, wherein said heterocycloalkyl may be optionally substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or $-\text{COCH}_3$.



4. A compound according to claim 3, wherein R_6 is:
5. A compound according to claim 3 or 4, wherein R_5 is hydrogen.
6. A compound according to claim 1 or 2, wherein R_3 is $-\text{CHR}_5(\text{CH}_2)_a\text{R}_6$, R_5 is $-(\text{CH}_2)_d\text{OR}_9$, a is 0 and R_6 is $-(\text{CH}_2)_e\text{OR}_{10}$.
7. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 6, wherein b is 0 and c is 1.
8. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein R_4 represents:

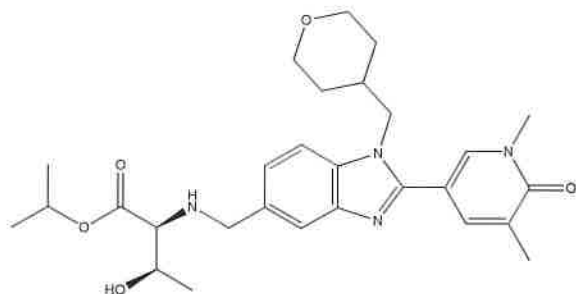


9. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein R_7 is hydrogen, methyl, isopropyl, *sec*-butyl, isobutyl, $-\text{CH}_2$ -phenyl, $-\text{CH}_2$ -4-hydroxyphenyl, $-\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$, $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)\text{OH}$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{SH}$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{SeH}$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{SCH}_3$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{COOH}$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{COOH}$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{CONH}_2$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{CONH}_2$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_4\text{NH}_2$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_3\text{NHC}(=\text{NH}_2)\text{NH}_2$, or $-\text{CH}_2$ -1*H*-imidazol-4-yl.
10. A compound according to claim 9, wherein R_7 is $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)\text{OH}$.
11. A compound according to claim 8, wherein R_8 is isopropyl, isobutyl or cyclopentyl.
12. A compound according to claim 1, selected from the group consisting of:
 - tert-butyl (2*S*,3*R*)-2- $\{[(1-\{[(3*R*)-1\text{-acetylpiperidin-3-yl]methyl}\}-2-(1,5\text{-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1*H*-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl]amino\}-3\text{-hydroxybutanoate};$
 - tert-butyl (2*S*,3*R*)-2- $\{[2-(1,5\text{-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl})-1-(\text{oxan-4-ylmethyl})-1*H*-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl]methyl\}amino\}-3\text{-hydroxybutanoate};$
 - 2-methylpropyl (2*S*)-2- $\{[2-(1,5\text{-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl})-1-(\text{oxan-4-ylmethyl})-1*H*-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy\}ethyl\}amino\}-3\text{-hydroxybutanoate};$
 - 2-methylpropyl (2*S*,3*R*)-2- $\{[2-(1,5\text{-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl})-1-[(3*S*)-\text{oxan-3-ylmethyl}]-1*H*-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]methyl\}amino\}-3\text{-hydroxybutanoate};$
 - tert-butyl (2*S*,3*R*)-2- $\{[(1-\{[(3*R*)-1\text{-acetylpiperidin-3-yl]methyl}\}-2-(1,5\text{-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-$

dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl]amino}-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(1-{{(3R)-1-acetylpiperidin-3-yl)methyl}}-2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl]amino}-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 2-methylpropyl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-3-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 cyclopentyl (2S)-2-[(2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]propanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S)-2-[(2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(1-{{(3R)-1-acetylpiperidin-3-yl)methyl}}-2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl]amino}-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-[(3R)-oxan-3-ylmethyl]-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 cyclobutyl (2S,3R)-2-{{(1-{{(3R)-1-acetylpiperidin-3-yl)methyl}}-2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl]amino}-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S)-2-{{(1-{{(3R)-1-acetylpiperidin-3-yl)methyl}}-2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl]amino}-3-methylbutanoate;
 cyclopentyl (2S)-2-[(2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]-3-methoxypropanoate;
 2,2-dimethylpropyl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-[(3R)-oxan-3-ylmethyl]-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 cyclobutyl (2S,3R)-2-[(2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 cyclopentyl (2S)-2-[(2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]propanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-3-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(1-{{(3S)-1-acetylpiperidin-3-yl)methyl}}-2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl]amino}-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-[(3R)-oxan-3-ylmethyl]-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 propan-2-yl (2S,3R)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-[(3R)-oxan-3-ylmethyl]-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate;
 cyclobutyl (2R,3S)-2-{{(2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-[(3R)-oxan-3-ylmethyl]-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-6-yl)methyl}amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate; and

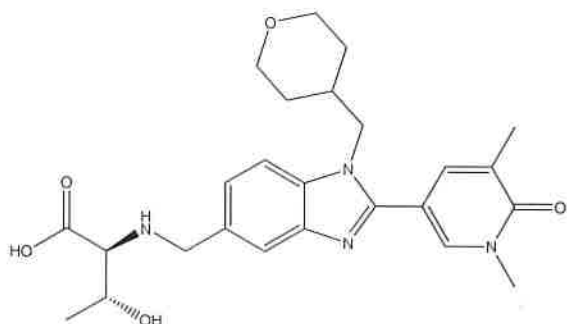
(3S)-oxolan-3-yl (2S,3R)-2-[(2-{[2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-(oxan-4-ylmethyl)-1H-1,3-benzodiazol-5-yl]oxy}ethyl)amino]-3-hydroxybutanoate, or a salt thereof.

13. A compound according to claim 1, which is (2S,3R)-isopropyl 2-(((2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-((tetrahydro-2H-pyran-4-yl)methyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazol-5-yl)methyl)amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate, of formula:



or a salt thereof.

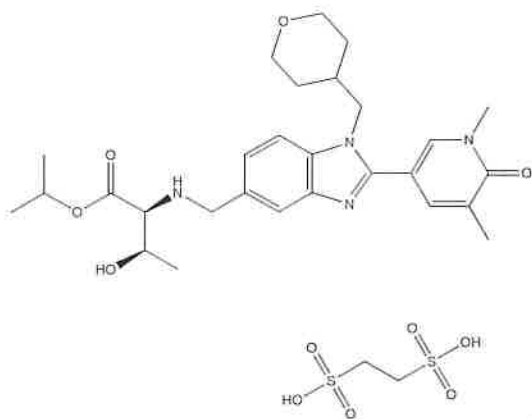
14. A compound according to claim 1, which is (2S,3R)-2-(((2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-((tetrahydro-2H-pyran-4-yl)methyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazol-5-yl)methyl)amino)-3-hydroxybutanoic acid, of formula:



or a salt thereof.

15. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 14, which is in the form of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

16. A compound according to claim 1, which is the 1,2-ethanedisulphonic acid salt of (2S,3R)-isopropyl 2-(((2-(1,5-dimethyl-6-oxo-1,6-dihydropyridin-3-yl)-1-((tetrahydro-2H-pyran-4-yl)methyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazol-5-yl)methyl)amino)-3-hydroxybutanoate, of formula:



17. A compound according to claim 16, which is in substantially crystalline form and characterised by having significant X-ray powder diffraction (XRPD) peaks at 2θ values, $\pm 0.1^\circ$ 2θ experimental error, of 5.4, 8.8, 9.9, 11.6, 13.8, 16.9, 18.0, 16.6, 19.1, 19.4, 19.8, 20.4, 20.9, 21.3, 22.0, 22.4, 22.9, 23.4, 24.9, and 25.1 degrees.
18. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 17, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.
19. A compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 17 for use in therapy.
20. A compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 17 for use in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.
21. Use of a compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 17 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.