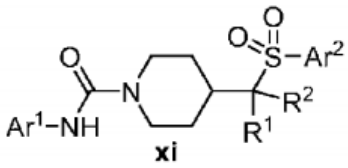
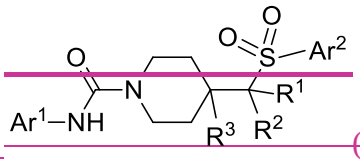
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for preparing a compound ~~having~~ of formula ~~(I)~~xi:



xi

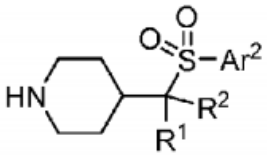


~~(I)~~

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, ~~wherein~~

the method comprising:

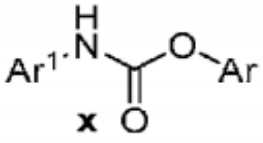
reacting a compound of formula ix



ix

or a salt thereof

with a compound of formula x



x

to produce the compound of formula xi, wherein:

Ar is aryl;

Ar^1 is a 5- to 6-membered heteroaryl having at least one nitrogen atom ring member~~,~~; and ~~which~~ is optionally substituted with from 1-3 R^a;

Ar^2 is a 5- to 10-membered aryl or heteroaryl, which is optionally substituted with from 1-5 R^b;

R^1 and R^2 are each independently a member selected from ~~the group consisting of~~ H, F, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 deuteroalkyl, and C_1-C_4 haloalkyl; or optionally R^1 and R^2 can be combined to form a C_3-~~to~~ C_5 carbocyclic ring which is optionally substituted with one or two F;

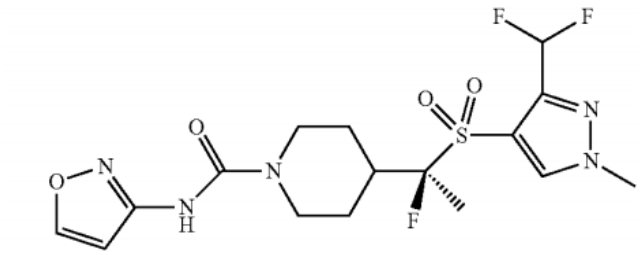
~~R^3 is a member selected from the group consisting of H, F, OH and C_1-C_4 alkyl;~~

each R^a is independently selected from the group consisting of halo, CN, hydroxyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy, ~~—~~COR^{a1}, ~~—~~CO_2R^{a1}, ~~—~~SO_2R^{a1}, ~~—~~$SO_2NR^{a1}R^{a2}$, and ~~—~~$CONR^{a1}R^{a2}$, wherein each R^{a1} and R^{a2} is

independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_4 alkyl or optionally R^{a1} and R^{a2} when attached to a nitrogen atom are combined to form a 4- to 6- membered ring; or optionally, two R^a substituents on adjacent ring members are combined to form a 5- or 6-membered ring having 0, 1 or 2 ring members selected from O, N and S; ~~and~~

each R^b is independently selected from the group consisting of halo, CN, hydroxyl, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 deuteroalkyl, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, —~~-~~$NR^{b1}R^{b2}$, —~~-~~COR^{b1}, —~~-~~CO_2R^{b1}, —~~-~~SO_2R^{b1}, —~~-~~$SO_2NR^{b1}R^{b2}$, —~~-~~$CONR^{b1}R^{b2}$, and a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl which is optionally substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl, and wherein each R^{b1} and R^{b2} is independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_4 alkyl or optionally R^{b1} and R^{b2} when attached to a nitrogen atom are combined to form a 4- to 6- membered ring; or optionally, two R^b substituents on adjacent ring members are combined to form a 5- or 6-membered ring having 0, 1 or 2 ring members selected from O, N and S.

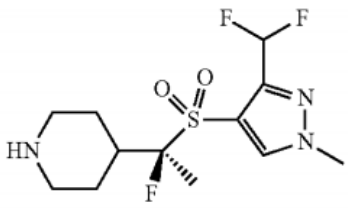
2. A method for preparing a compound having the formula:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

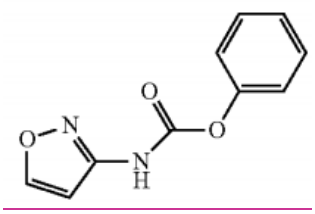
the method comprising:

reacting a compound

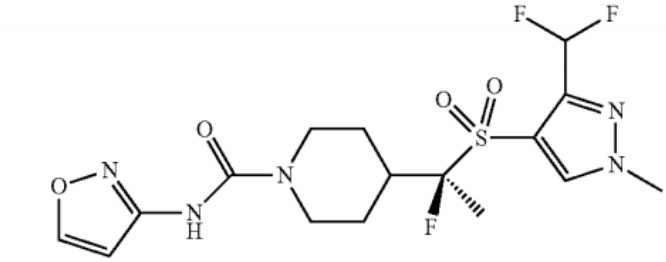


or a salt thereof,

with a compound



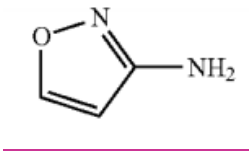
to produce the compound



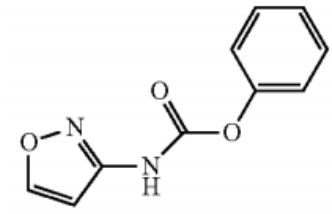
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with phenyl chloroformate to produce the compound



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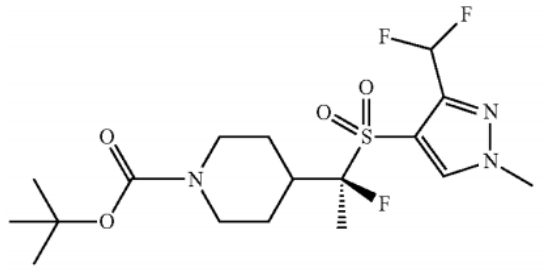
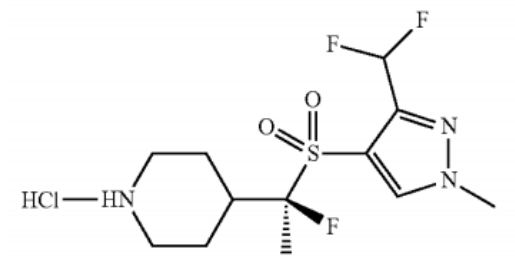
4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with HCl to produce the compound



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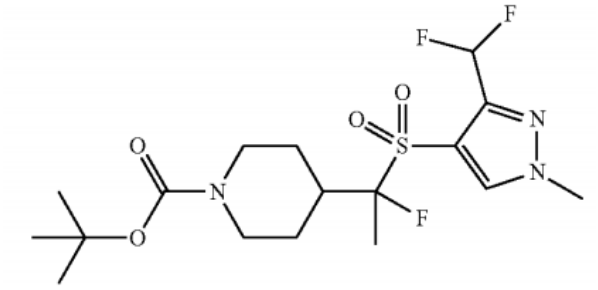
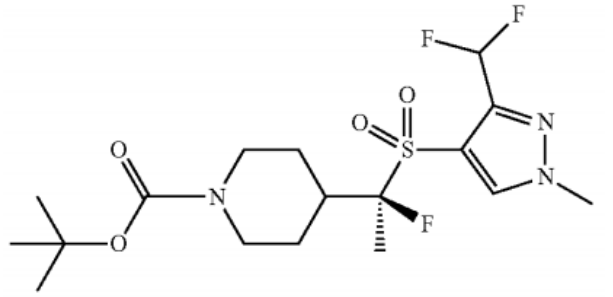
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

performing a chiral separation of a compound



to isolate the compound



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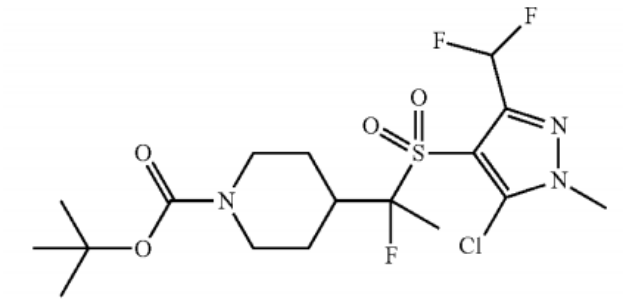
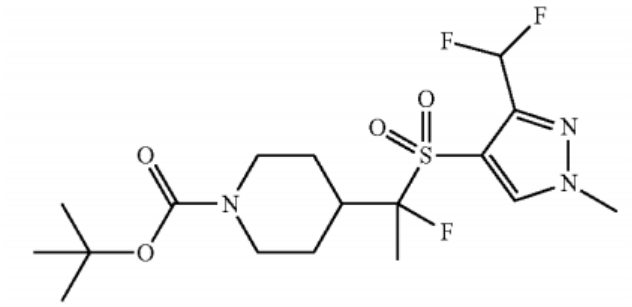
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with n-Butyllithium to produce the compound



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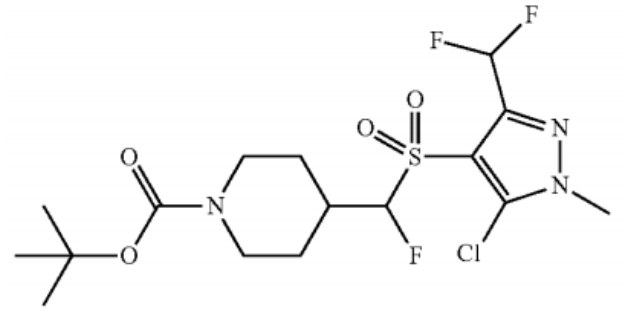
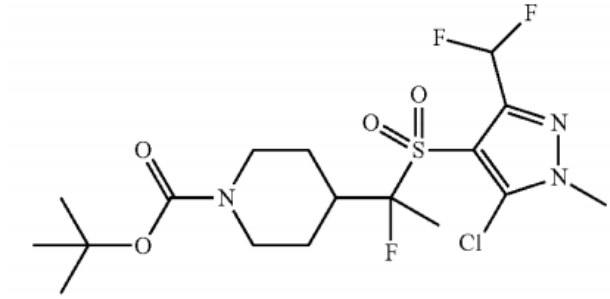
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with iodomethane to produce the compound



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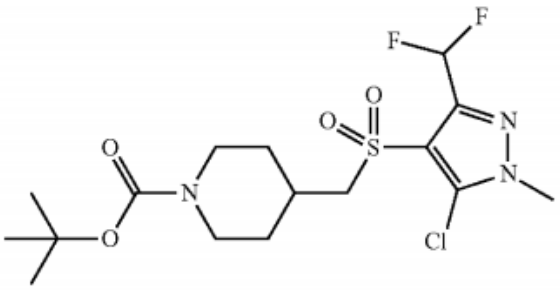
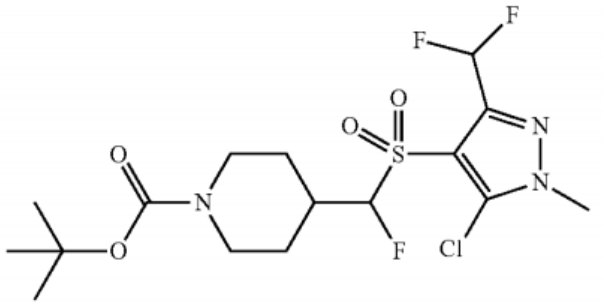
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with lithium diisopropylamide (LDA) followed by N-Fluorobenzenesulfonimide (NFSI) to produce the compound



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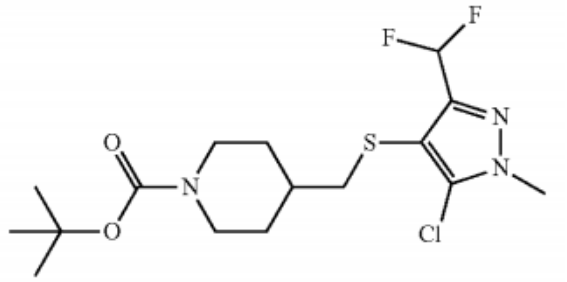
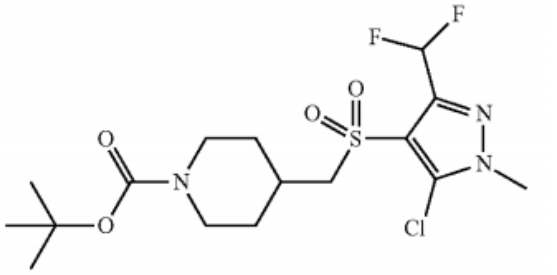
9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with sodium periodate to produce the compound



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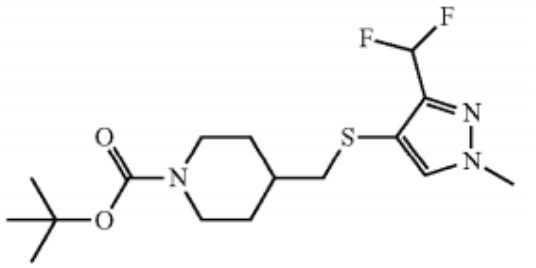
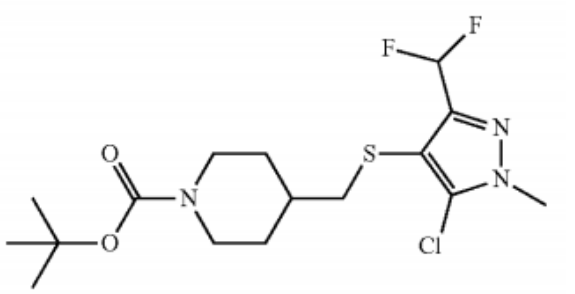
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with N-butyllithium and perchloroethane to produce the compound



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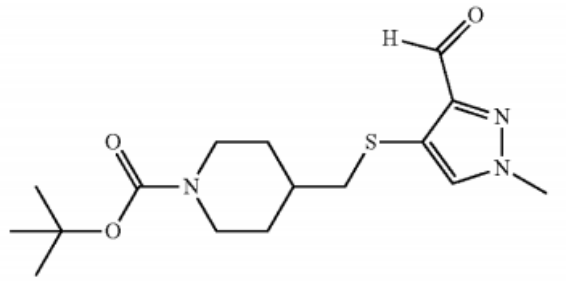
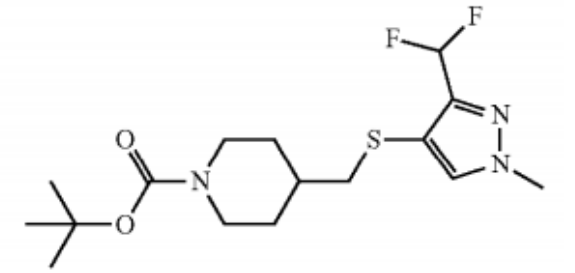
11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with diethylaminosulfur trifluoride (DAST) to produce the compound



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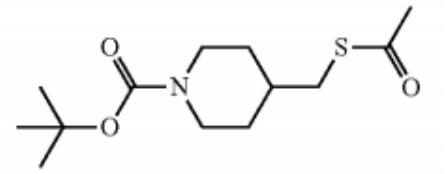
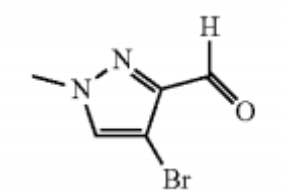
12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

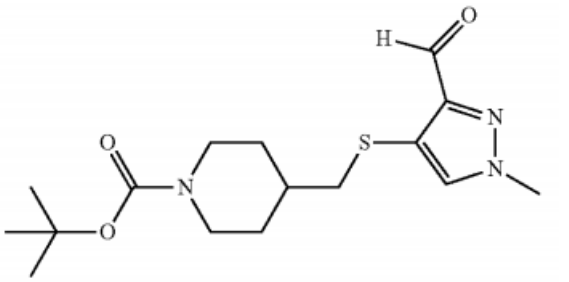
reacting a compound



with a compound



to produce the compound



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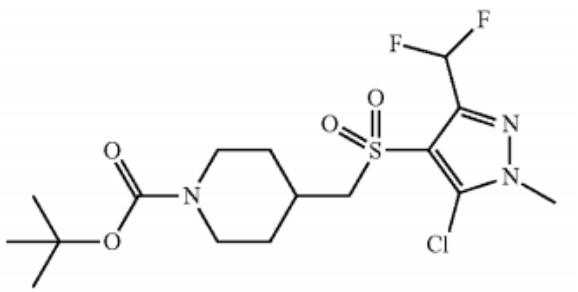
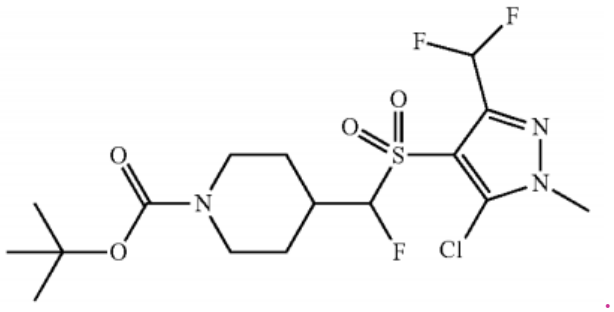
13. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

reacting a compound



with lithium diisopropylamide (LDA) followed by N-Fluorobenzenesulfonimide (NFSI) to produce a compound



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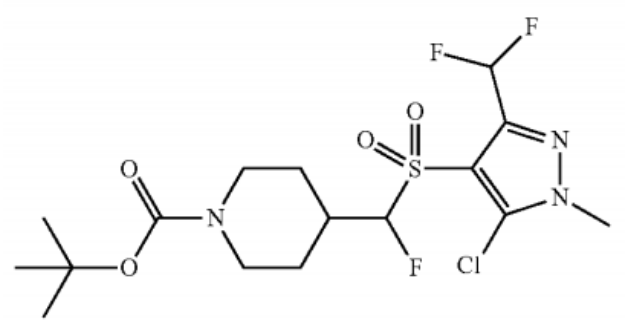
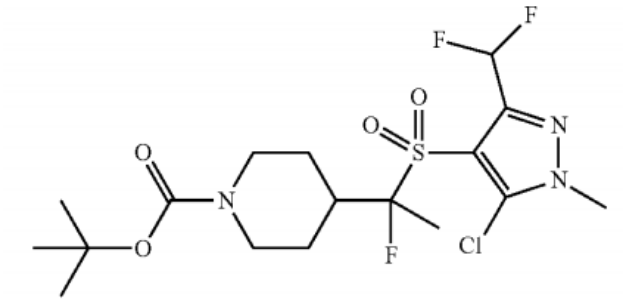
reacting the compound

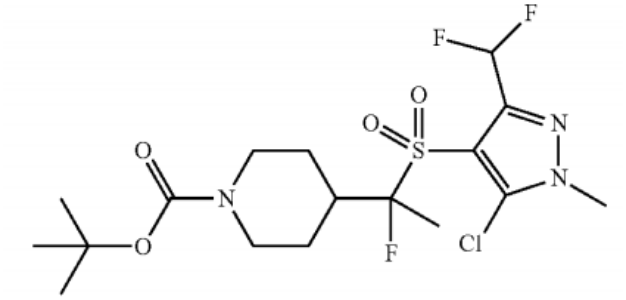


with iodomethane to produce a compound

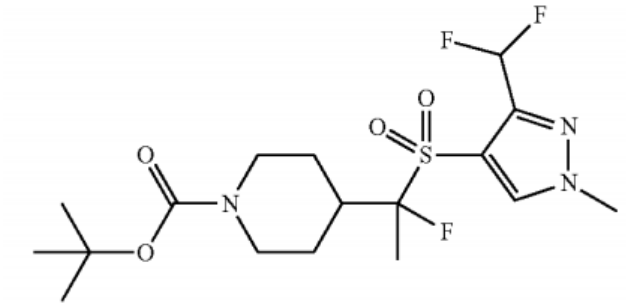


;

reacting the compound



with n-Butyllithium to produce a compound



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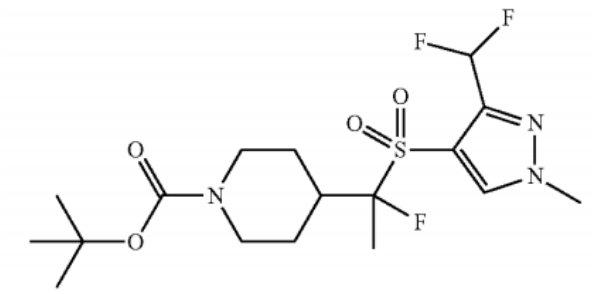
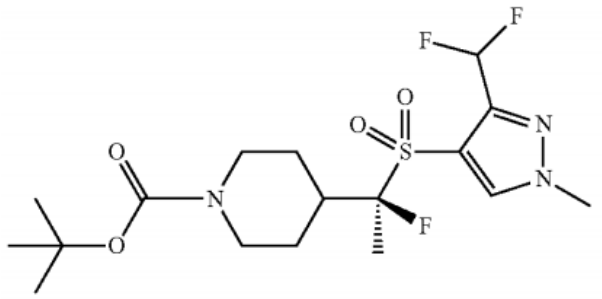
performing a chiral separation of the compound

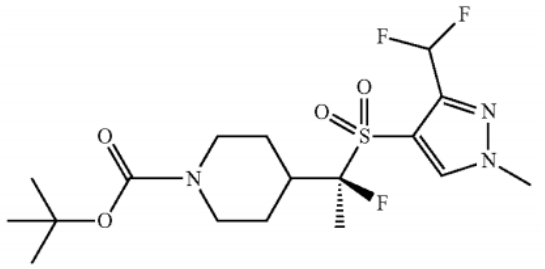


to isolate a compound

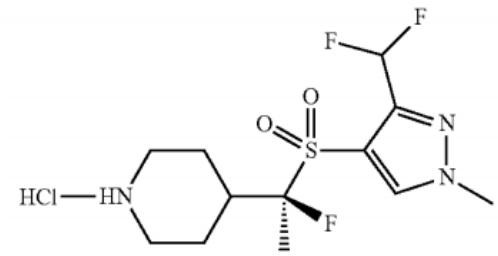


; and

reacting the compound



with HCl to produce a compound



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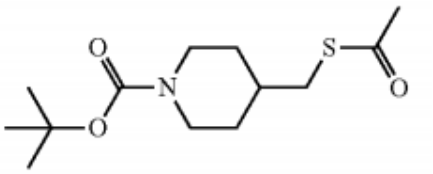
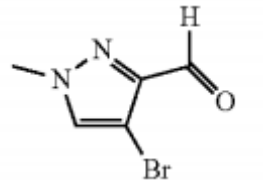
14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

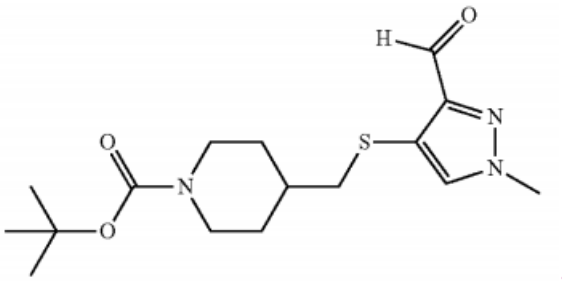
reacting a compound



with a compound

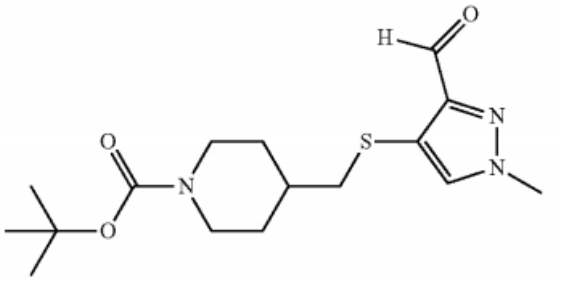


to produce a compound

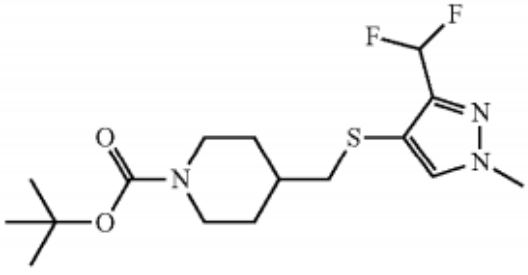


;

reacting the compound

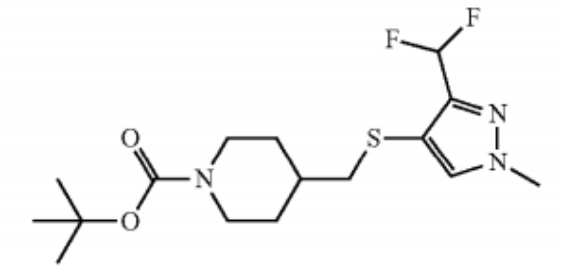


with diethylaminosulfur trifluoride (DAST) to produce a compound

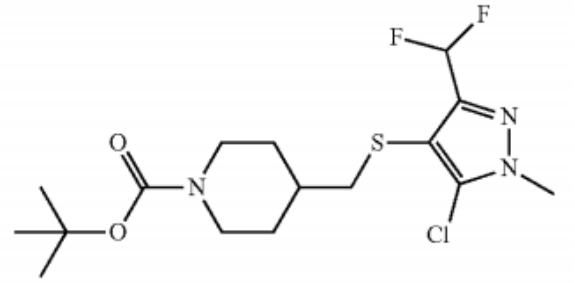


;

reacting the compound

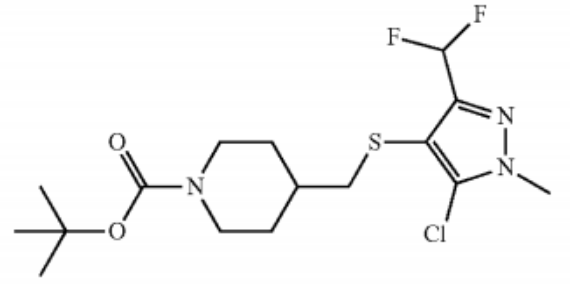


with N-butyllithium and perchloroethane to produce the compound

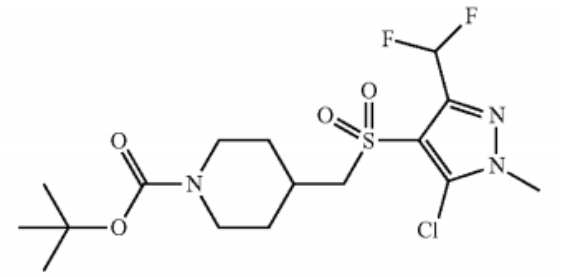


; and

reacting the compound



with sodium periodate to produce the compound



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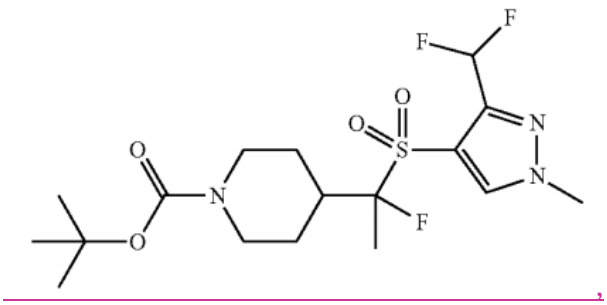
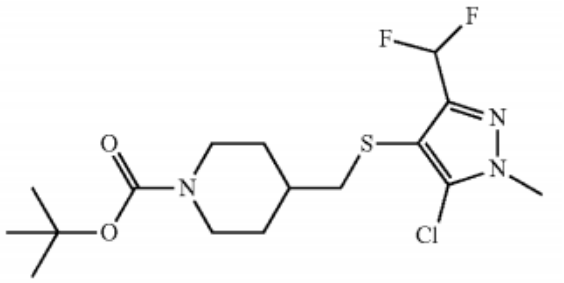
15. A method for preparing a compound having the formula:



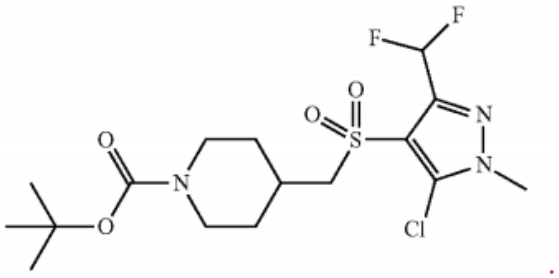
,

the method comprising:

reacting a compound

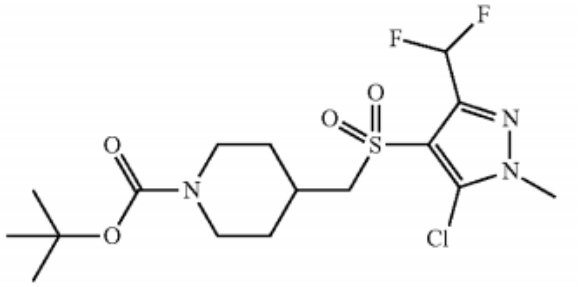


with sodium periodate to produce a compound

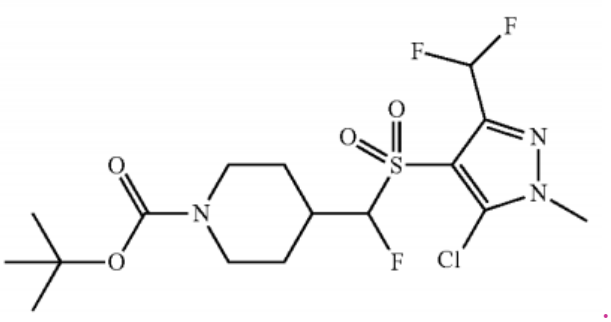


;

reacting the compound

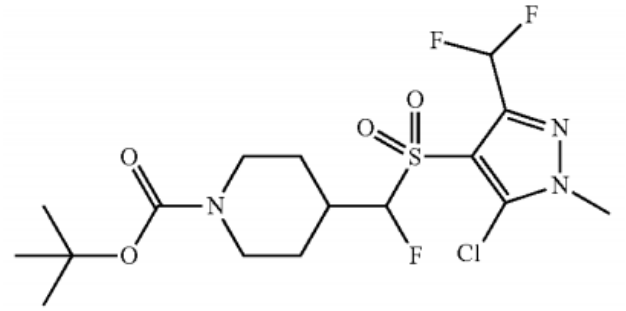


with lithium diisopropylamide (LDA) followed by N-Fluorobenzenesulfonimide (NFSI) to produce a compound

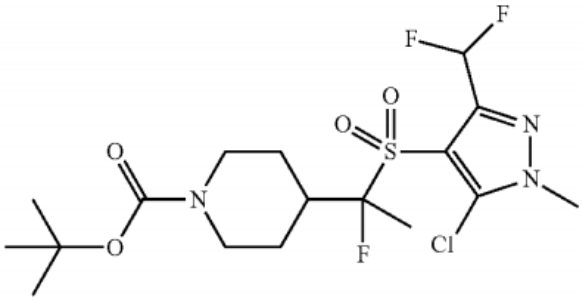


;

reacting the compound

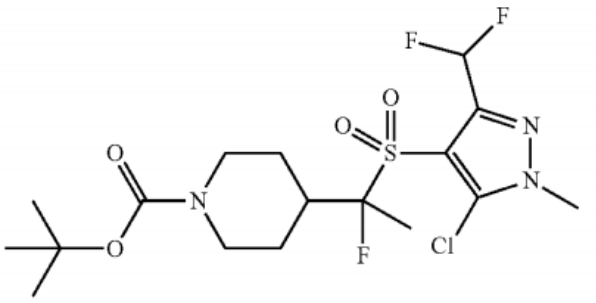


with iodomethane to produce a compound

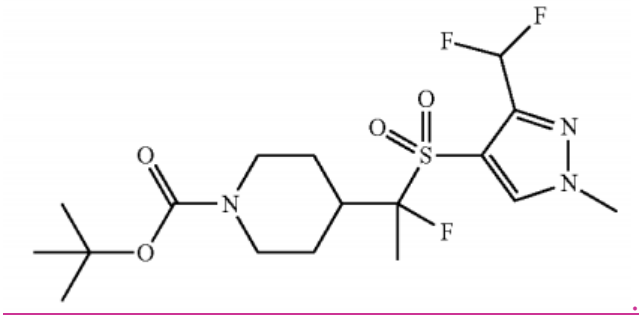


; and

reacting the compound



with n-Butyllithium to produce the compound



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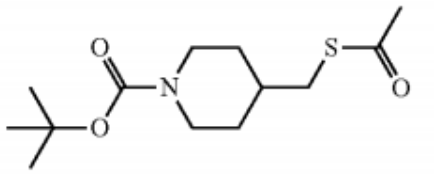
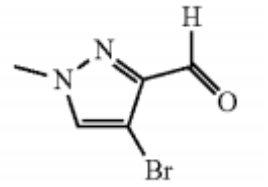
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

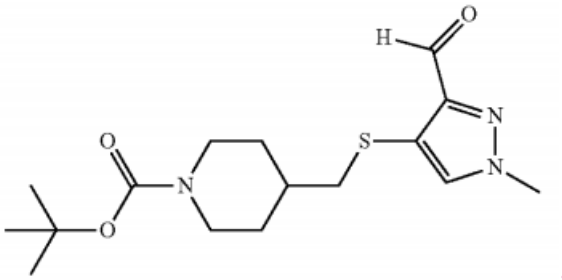
reacting a compound



with a compound

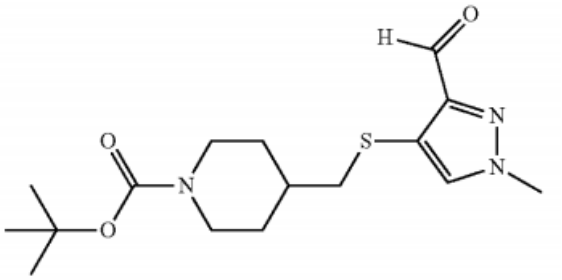


to produce a compound

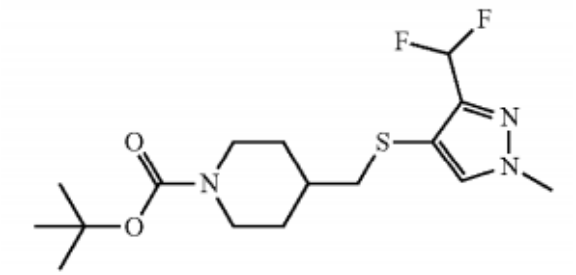


;

reacting the compound

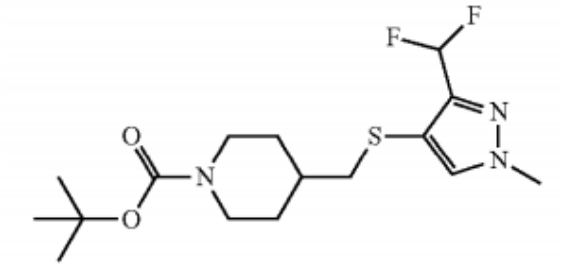


with diethylaminosulfur trifluoride (DAST) to produce a compound

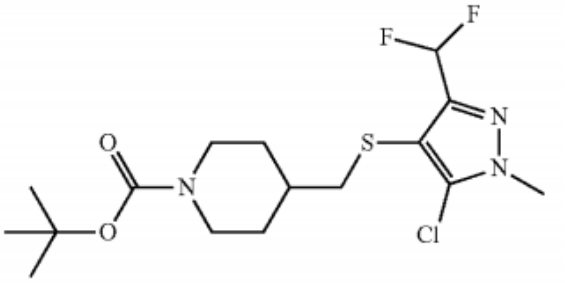


; and

reacting the compound

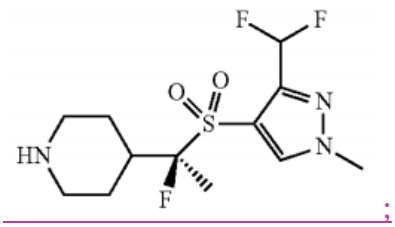


with N-butyllithium and perchloroethane to produce the compound



.

17. A compound or a salt thereof selected from the group consisting of:



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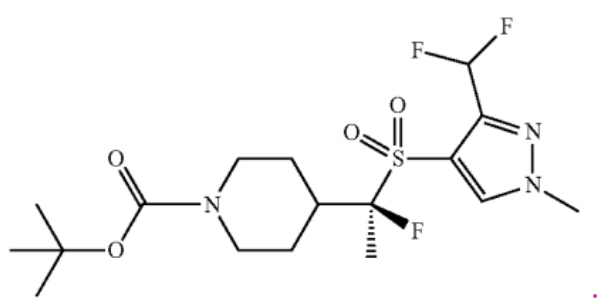
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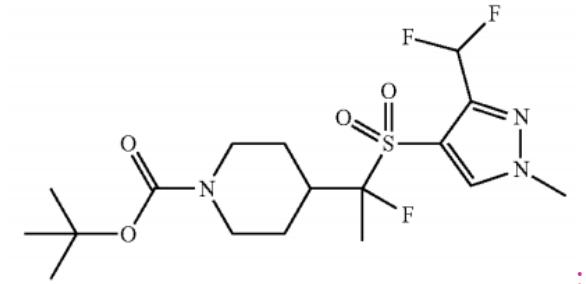
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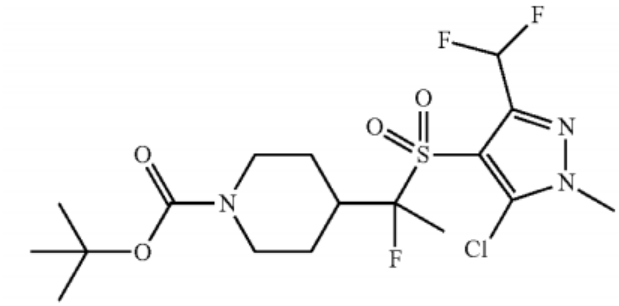
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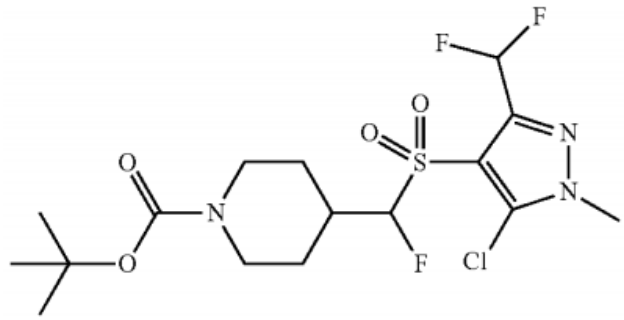
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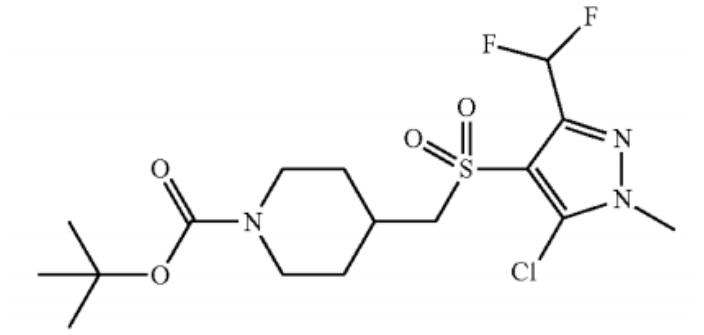

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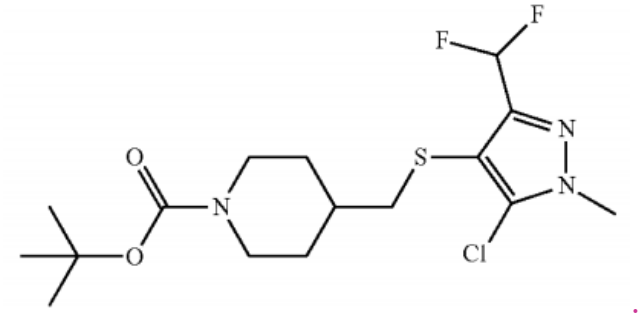

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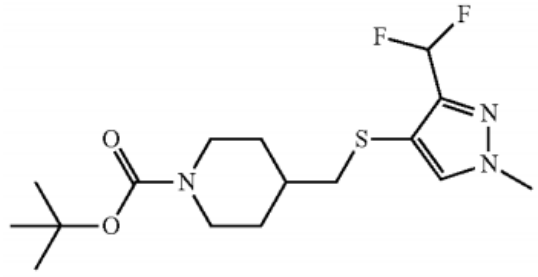
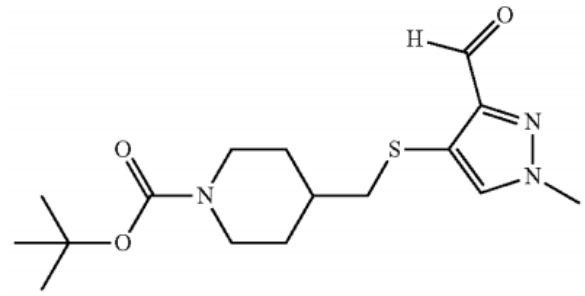
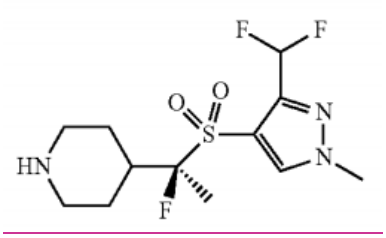


; and



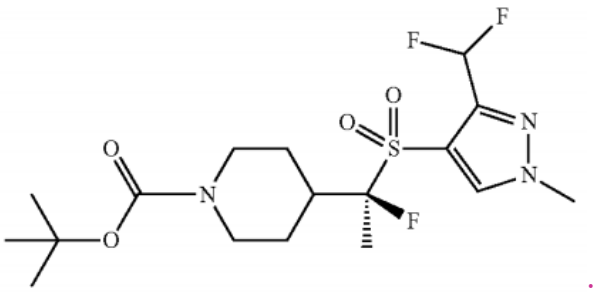
or a salt thereof.

18. The compound of claim 17, which is



or a salt thereof.

19. The compound of claim 17, which is selected from the group consisting of:



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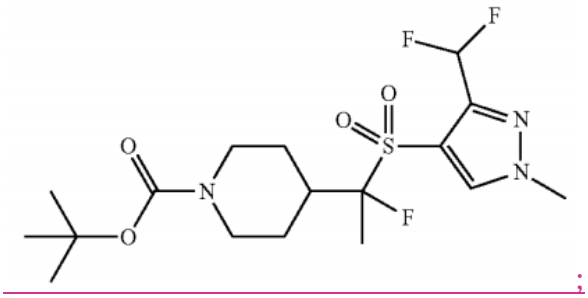

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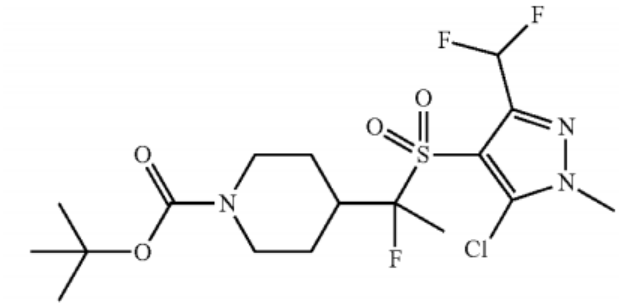

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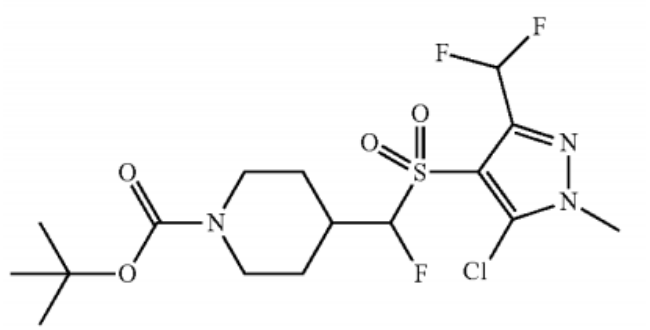

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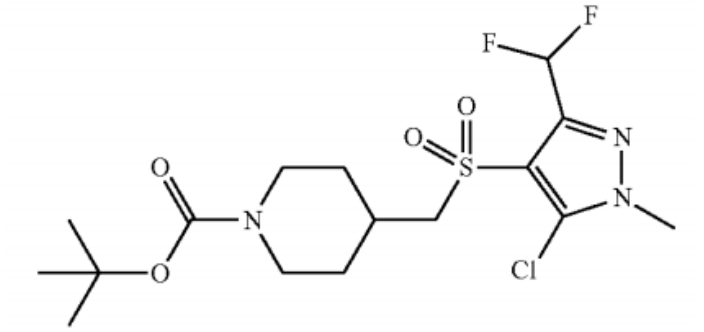

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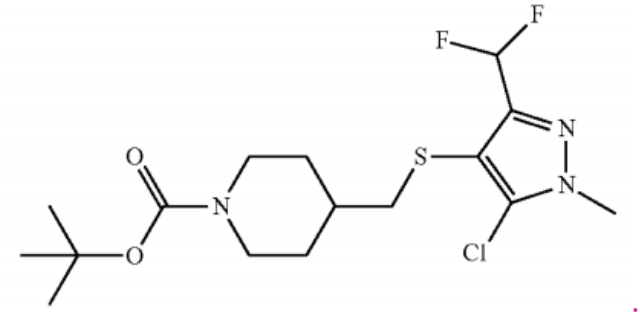

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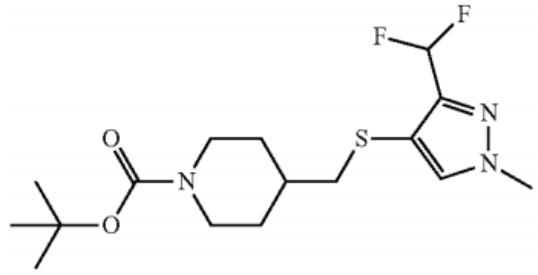
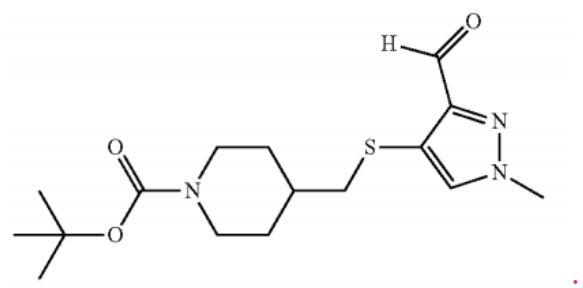


; and



;

or a salt thereof.

~~2. A compound of claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein Ar^1 is selected from the group consisting of pyridyl, pyridazinyl, oxazolyl, isoxazolyl, 1,2,3-thiadiazolyl, isothiazolyl, and thiazolyl, each of which is optionally substituted with from 1 to 2 R^a.~~

~~3. A compound of claim 1, wherein Ar^2 is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, pyridyl and pyrazolyl, each of which is optionally substituted with from 1 to 3 R^b.~~

~~4. A compound of claim 3, wherein R^b is selected from the group consisting of halo, CN, C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy.~~

~~5. A compound of claim 1, wherein R^1 is selected from the group consisting of H, F and CH_3.~~

~~6. A compound of claim 1, wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of H, F and CH_3.~~

~~7. A compound of claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^2 taken together with the carbon atom to which each is attached form a cyclopropane or cyclobutane ring.~~

~~8. A compound of claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^2 are not the same and at least one of R^1 and R^2 is selected from F and CH_3.~~

~~9. A compound of claim 8, wherein the carbon atom bearing R^1 and R^2 has a R configuration.~~

~~10. A compound of claim 1, wherein R^3 is H or F.~~

11. A compound of claim **1**, wherein Ar^1 is 4-pyridinyl and Ar^2 is phenyl, optionally substituted with from 1 to 3 R^b.

12. A compound of claim **11**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is F.

13. A compound of claim **11**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is CH_3.

14. A compound of claim **11**, wherein R^3 is H, R^1 is CH_3 and R^2 is F.

15. A compound of claim **14**, wherein the carbon atom bearing R^1 and R^2 has a stereochemical R-configuration.

16. A compound of claim **1**, wherein Ar^1 is 4-pyridazinyl and Ar^2 is phenyl, optionally substituted with from 1 to 3 R^b.

17. A compound of claim **16**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is F.

18. A compound of claim **16**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is CH_3.

19. A compound of claim **16**, wherein R^3 is H, R^1 is CH_3 and R^2 is F.

20. A compound of claim **19**, wherein the carbon atom bearing R^1 and R^2 has a stereochemical R-configuration.

21. A compound of claim **1**, wherein Ar^1 is selected from the group consisting of 1,2,3-thiadiazol-5-yl, isothiazol-5-yl, and thiazol-5-yl, each of which is optionally substituted with one R^a.

22. A compound of claim **21**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is F.

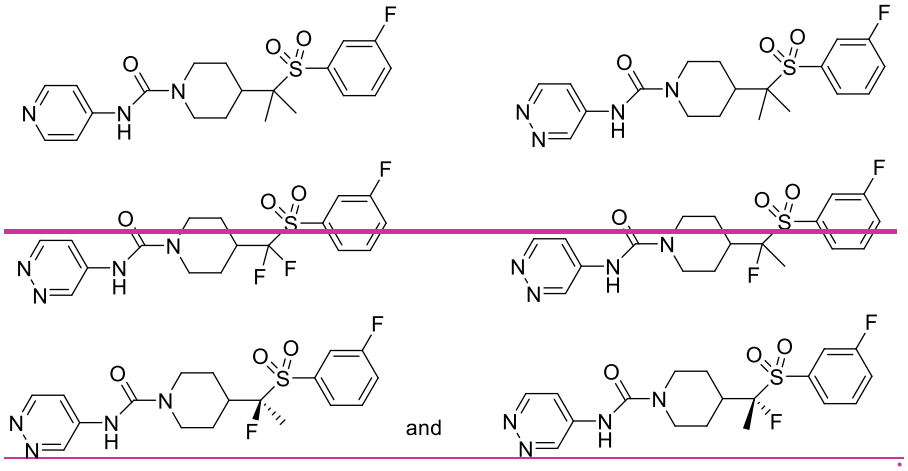
23. A compound of claim **21**, wherein R^3 is H, and each of R^1 and R^2 is CH_3.

24. A compound of claim **21**, wherein R^3 is H, R^1 is CH_3 and R^2 is F.

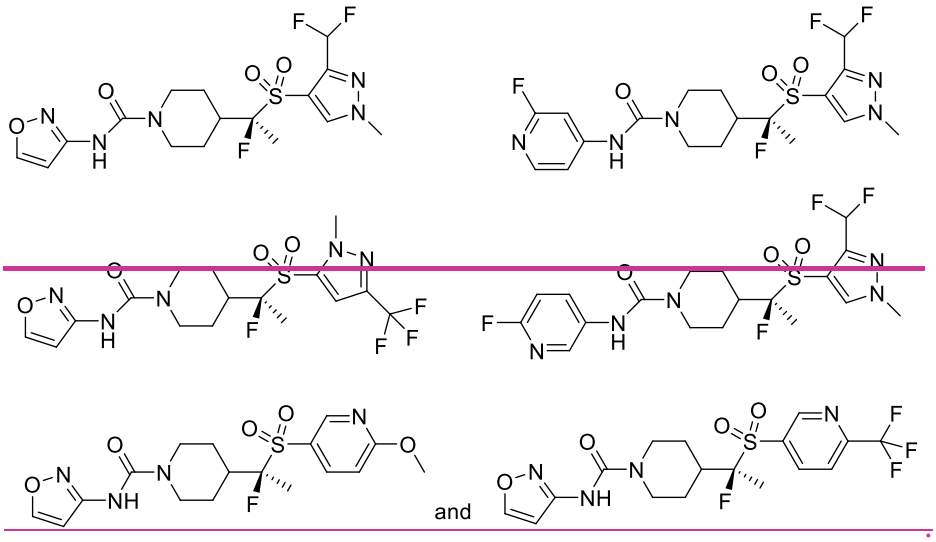
25. A compound of claim **24**, wherein the carbon atom bearing R^1 and R^2 has a stereochemical R-configuration.

26. A compound of claim **1**, selected from Table 2 and having an activity level of ++ or +++.

27. A compound of claim **1**, selected from the group consisting of



28. A compound of claim **1**, selected from the group consisting of



29. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of any one of claims **1**–**28** and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

30. A method of treating dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), or a cardiac disorder having a pathophysiological feature of DCM, such as disorders with systolic dysfunction or a reduction in systolic reserve, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of any of claims **1**–**28**.

31. A method of treating a disease or disorder selected from the group consisting of systolic dysfunction, diastolic dysfunction, HFrEF, HFpEF, chronic heart failure and acute heart failure, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of any of claims **1**-**28**, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

32. A method in accordance with claim **31**, wherein said compound is administered in an IV formulation for the treatment of acute heart failure.

33. A method of treating a disease or disorder characterized by left ventricular systolic dysfunction or symptoms or reduced exercise capacity due to systolic dysfunction; in conjunction with therapies aimed at treating heart failure, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of any of claims **1**-**28**, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

34. A method of treating dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), or a cardiac disorder having a pathophysiological feature associated with DCM, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of any of claims **1**-**28**, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, combined with therapies that retard the progression of heart failure by down-regulating neurohormonal stimulation of the heart and attempt to prevent cardiac remodeling (e.g., ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), β-blockers, aldosterone receptor antagonists, or neural endopeptidase inhibitors); therapies that improve cardiac function by stimulating cardiac contractility (e.g., positive inotropic agents, such as the β-adrenergic agonist dobutamine or the phosphodiesterase inhibitor milrinone); and therapies that reduce cardiac preload (e.g., diuretics, such as furosemide) or afterload (vasodilators of any class, including but not limited to calcium channel blockers, phosphodiesterase inhibitors, endothelin receptor antagonists, renin inhibitors, or smooth muscle myosin modulators).

35. A method of claim **34**, wherein said compound is administered in combination with a beta-blocker.