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Supporting Information

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A Prototypical Small-Molecule Modulator Uncouples Mitochondria in Response to Endogenous Hydrogen Peroxide Production

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Supplementary material:

A prototypical small molecule modulator uncouples mitochondria in response to endogenous hydrogen peroxide production.

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Synthesis of aldehyde 5 and phosphonium salt 8.

Supplementary Scheme 1 (a) The synthesis of aldehyde **5** from carboxylic acid **9**: the acid **9** was converted into ester **10** and the phenol protected as MOM ether **11**; reduction to the alcohol **12**, followed by Swern oxidation then gave aldehyde **5**. (b) The synthesis of phosphonium salt **8** from α , α '-*para*-dibromoxylene **13**.



Ethyl 3-(4'-hydroxyphenyl)propionate 10

Thionyl chloride (10.54 mL, 144.4 mmol) was added dropwise to a stirring solution of 3-(4'-hydroxyphenyl)propionic acid **9** (8.00 g, 48.1 mmol) in EtOH (150 mL). The solution was stirred at reflux for 4.5 h. After cooling to RT, the solution was concentrated under reduced pressure to give a crude orange oil. Column chromatography [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (9:1) to (3:2)] yielded ethyl ester **10** as an oil that solidified on standing (9.30 g, 99%). R_f [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (7:3)]: 0.47. Mp: 42-43 °C. v_{max} (ATR): 3364 (OH), 2998 (CH), 2981 (CH), 2962 (CH), 2942 (CH), 2904 (CH), 2870 (CH), 1701 (C=O), 1611 (Ar), 1596 (Ar) cm⁻¹. $\delta_{\rm H}$ (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.04 (2H, d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, H-2' and H-6'), 6.74 (2H, d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, H-3' and H-5'), 6.02 (1H, broad s, OH), 4.13 (2H, q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 2.87 (2H, t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2 × H-3), 2.59 (2H, t, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2 × H-2), 1.23 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₃). $\delta_{\rm C}$ (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 173.75 (C), 154.24 (C), 132.23 (C), 129.38 (CH), 115.33 (CH), 60.72 (CH₂), 36.32 (CH₂), 30.10 (CH₂), 14.15 (CH₃). LRMS (EI⁺): 194 (M⁺⁺, 33%), 149 (M⁺⁺ - EtO⁺, 9), 120 (M⁺⁺ - EtOH and -CO₂, 78), 107 (HOC₆H₄CH₂⁺, 100), 83 (68). HRMS: 194.0945. C₁₁H₁₄O₃ requires M⁺⁺, 194.0943. ¹H NMR data agree with literature.^{S1}

Ethyl 3-(4'-methoxymethoxyphenyl)propionate 11

A stirring solution of ethyl ester **10** (27.00 g, 139 mmol) and *N*, *N*-diisopropylethylamine (31.5 mL, 181 mmol) in anhydrous DCM (400 mL) was degassed with argon for 30 min. Bromomethyl methyl ether (16.5 mL, 90%, 181 mmol) was added dropwise and the resulting solution stirred at reflux overnight under argon. After cooling to RT, the mixture was washed with aqueous HCl (1 M, 150 mL), H₂O (2 × 150 mL), dried over MgSO₄ and concentrated under reduced pressure. Column chromatography [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (19:1) to (65:35)] yielded ethyl ester **11** as an oil (31.12 g, 94%). R_f [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (4:1)]: 0.49. v_{max} (ATR): 2982 (CH), 2955 (CH), 2936 (CH), 2826 (CH), 1732 (C=O), 1613 (Ar), 1586 (Ar) cm⁻¹. $\delta_{\rm H}$ (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.11 (2H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H-2' and H-6'), 6.94 (2H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H-3' and H-5'), 5.13 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 4.11 (2H, q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 3.45 (3H, s, OMe), 2.88 (2H, t, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2 × H-3), 2.57 (2H, t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2 × H-2), 1.22 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₂CH₃). $\delta_{\rm C}$ (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 172.87 (C), 155.72 (C), 133.98 (C), 129.29 (CH), 116.30 (CH), 94.49 (CH₂), 60.33 (CH₂), 55.85 (CH₃), 36.15 (CH₂), 30.17 (CH₂), 14.21 (CH₃). LRMS (EI⁺): 238 (M⁺⁺, 51%), 45 (CH₃OCH₂⁺, 100). HRMS: 238.1209. C₁₃H₁₈O₄ requires M⁺⁺, 238.1205. Compound reported in literature without characterisation data.⁸²

3-(4'-Methoxymethoxyphenyl)propan-1-ol 12

A stirring solution of ethyl ester **11** (8.73 g, 36.6 mmol) in anhydrous Et₂O (140 mL) was cooled to 0 °C under argon and LiAlH₄ (4.17 g, 109.8 mmol) was added portionwise. The solution was stirred at 0 °C under argon for 45 min before being allowed to warm to RT overnight. H₂O (25 mL) was added dropwise to quench. H₂O (20 mL) and Et₂O (100 mL) were added to dilute and the mixture stirred until the precipitate settled. The organic layer was filtered through a pad of celite and washed through with Et₂O. Organics were dried over MgSO₄ and concentrated under reduced pressure to yield alcohol **12** as an oil (6.05 g, 84%). v_{max} (ATR): 3347 (OH), 2994 (CH), 2937 (CH), 2902 (CH), 2861 (CH), 2827 (CH), 2785 (CH), 1612 (Ar), 1585 (Ar) cm⁻¹. $\delta_{\rm H}$ (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.08 (2H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H-2' and H-6'), 6.94 (2H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H-3' and H-5'), 5.11 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 3.59 (2H, broad t, *J* = 5.9 Hz, 2 × H-1), 3.44 (3H, s, OMe), 3.00 (1H, broad s, OH), 2.61 (2H, t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2 × H-3), 1.86-1.77 (2H, m, 2 × H-2). $\delta_{\rm C}$ (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 155.31 (C), 135.36 (C), 129.33 (CH), 116.23 (CH), 94.50 (CH₂), 61.81 (CH₂), 55.84 (CH₃), 34.34 (CH₂), 31.17 (CH₂). LRMS (CI⁺): 197 [(M + H)⁺, 46%], 165 [(M + H)⁺ – MeOH, 100]. HRMS: 197.1179. C₁₁H₁₇O₃ requires (M + H)⁺, 197.1178. ¹H and ¹³C NMR are in agreement with literature, excluding the misreported ¹³C NMR peak at 192.25 ppm (corresponds to peak the CH at 129.33 ppm above).²⁴

3-(4'-Methoxymethoxyphenyl)propionaldehyde 5

Oxalyl chloride (1.9 mL, 21.6 mmol) was added to anhydrous DCM (70 mL) at -78 °C under argon and stirred for 5 min. Anhydrous DMSO (2.7 mL, 38.0 mmol) was added and the resulting solution stirred at -78 °C for 30 min. A solution of alcohol 12 (3.00 g, 15.3 mmol) in anhydrous DCM (20 mL) was added slowly. After stirring for 30 min, anhydrous triethylamine (10.65 mL, 76.4 mmol) was added. After stirring for a further 30 min at -78 °C, the solution was allowed to warm to RT and stir for a further 2.5 h. The reaction was concentrated under reduced pressure. H₂O (50 mL) was added and extractions were made with DCM (3 \times 30 mL). Combined organics were dried over MgSO₄ and concentrated under Column chromatography [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (9:1) to (7:3)] yielded reduced pressure. aldehyde **5** as an oil (2.97 g, 94%). R_f [SiO₂, petroleum ether-EtOAc (4:1)]: 0.44. v_{max} (ATR): 2996 (CH), 2957 (CH), 2933 (CH), 2898 (CH), 2848 (CH), 2826 (CH), 2792 (CH), 1722 (C=O), 1611 (Ar), 1585 (Ar) cm⁻¹. $\delta_{\rm H}$ (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 9.78 (1H, t, J = 1.4 Hz, H-1), 7.10 (2H, d, J = 8.7 Hz, H-2' and H-6'), $6.96 (2H, d, J = 8.6 Hz, H-3' and H-5'), 5.13 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 3.45 (3H, s, OMe), 2.89 (2H, t, 2 \times H-3, J)$ = 7.5 Hz), 2.73 (2H, broad t, 2 × H-2, J = 7.5 Hz. $\delta_{\rm C}$ (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 201.60 (CH), 155.73 (C), 133.72 (C), 129.26 (CH), 116.42 (CH), 94.48 (CH₂), 55.84 (CH₃), 45.39 (CH₂), 27.27 (CH₂). ¹H and ¹³C NMR data agree with literature.²⁴

[4-(Bromomethyl)benzyl]triphenylphosphonium bromide 8

A solution of triphenylphosphine (100 mg, 0.38 mmol) in anhydrous toluene (1.25 mL) was added dropwise to a stirring solution of α , α' -*para*-dibromoxylene **13** (604 mg, 2.3 mmol) in anhydrous toluene (2.5 mL) at 95 °C under argon and stirred for 1 h. A further solution of triphenylphosphine (100 mg, 0.38 mmol) in anhydrous toluene (2.5 mL) was added dropwise and the resulting mixture was stirred for 5 h at 95 °C under argon. The hot mixture was filtered and the precipitate washed with hot toluene and then Et₂O. The solid was dried under reduced pressure to yield phosphonium bromide **8** as an amorphous solid (391 mg, 98%). Mp: >220 °C (Decomp.). v_{max} (ATR): 3054 (CH), 3010 (CH), 2990 (CH), 2965 (CH), 2887 (CH), 2850 (CH), 2779 (CH), 1604 (Ar), 1588 (Ar), 1572 (Ar). $\delta_{\rm H}$ (400 MHz, CD₃CN): 7.91-7.84 (3H, m, 3 × *p*-H PPh₃), 7.72-7.64 (6H, m, 6 × *o*-H PPh₃), 7.61-7.51 (6H, m, 6 × *m*-H PPh₃), 7.27 (2H, d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, H-3 and H-5), 6.94 (2H, dd, *J* = 7.9 and 1.8 Hz, H-2 and H-6), 4.68 (2H, d, *J* = 14.3 Hz, CH₂P), 4.52 (2H, s, CH₂Br). $\delta_{\rm C}$ (100 MHz, CD₃CN): 138.89 (d, *J* = 4.6 Hz, C), 134.95 (d, *J* = 2.9 Hz, CH), 133.89 (d, *J* = 9.8 Hz, CH), 131.01 (d, *J* = 5.4 Hz, CH), 129.77 (d, *J* = 12.6 Hz, CH), 129.29 (d, *J* = 3.0 Hz, CH), 127.21 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, C), 117.06 (d, *J* = 86.0 Hz, C), 32.36 (s, CH₂), 29.16 (d, *J* = 48.3 Hz, CH₂). d_p ^{1}H} (162 MHz, CD₃CN): 22.71 (s). LRMS (ESI⁺): 447 [cation (⁸¹Br), 100%], 445 [cation (⁷⁹Br), 93]. HRMS: 447.0683 and 445.0707. C₂₆H₂₆⁸¹BrP requires cation, 447.0695 and C₂₆H₂₆⁷⁹BrP requires cation, 445.0715. LRMS (ESI⁻): 81 (⁸¹Br⁻, 99%) and 79 (⁹Br⁻, 100).

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