



Review article

Quinazolines and quinazolinones as ubiquitous structural fragments in medicinal chemistry: An update on the development of synthetic methods and pharmacological diversification



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ABSTRACT

Nitrogen-rich heterocycles, particularly quinazolines and quinazolinones, represent a unique class of diversified frameworks displaying a broad spectrum of biological functions. Over the past several years, intensive medicinal chemistry efforts have generated numerous structurally functionalized quinazoline and quinazolinone derivatives. Interest in expanding the biological effects, demonstrated by these motifs, is growing exponentially, as indicated by the large number of publications reporting the easy accessibility of these skeletons in addition to the diverse nature of synthetic as well as biological applications. Therefore, the main focus of the present review is to provide an ample but condensed overview on various synthetic approaches providing access to quinazoline and quinazolinone compounds with multifaceted biological activities. Furthermore, mechanistic insights, synthetic utilization, structure–activity relationships and molecular modeling inputs for the potent derivatives have also been discussed.

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Contents

1. Introduction	2362
2. Advancements in synthetic methods	2362
2.1. Synthesis of quinazolines	2362
2.1.1. Rhodium-catalyzed <i>ortho</i> -amidation cyclocondensation	2362
2.1.2. Base-promoted synthesis of 3,4-dihydroquinazolines	2364
2.1.3. Cu-catalyzed intramolecular N-arylation	2364
2.1.4. Niementowski and BOP-mediated ring closures	2365
2.1.5. I ₂ -catalyzed aerobic oxidative C(sp ³)-H amination	2365
2.1.6. MnO ₂ -catalyzed synthesis of quinazolines	2365
2.2. Synthesis of quinazolinones	2366
2.2.1. SBA-Pr-SO ₃ H-catalyzed synthesis of fused-quinazolinones	2366
2.2.2. Formic acid-catalyzed intramolecular cyclization	2366

Abbreviations: BPO, Benzotriazole-1-yl-oxy-tris-(dimethylamino)-phosphonium hexafluorophosphate; BSA, bovine serum albumin; BZD, benzodiazepine; DBU, 1,8-diazabicycloundec-7-ene; DIPEA, *N,N*-Diisopropylethylamine; DMAD, dimethyl acetylenedicarboxylate; DNA, Deoxyribonucleic acid; EGFR, Epidermal growth factor receptor; GABA, Gamma-aminobutyric acid; MAO, monoamine oxidase; MES, maximal electroshock seizure; MTT, 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2, 5-diphenyltetrazolium; MW, microwave; NIS, *N*-Iodosuccinimide; PARP, poly ADP ribose polymerase; PTZ, pentylentetrazole; RBV, ribavirin; RT, room temperature; SAR, structure–activity relationship; TBAF, tetra-*n*-butylammonium fluoride; TBHP, *tert*-Butyl hydroperoxide; TG, triglyceride; TMEDA, Tetramethylethylenediamine; TFA, Trifluoroacetic acid; *p*-TSA, *p*-toluenesulfonic acid; ZNMR, zanamivir.

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2.2.3.	Starch sulfate-catalyzed synthesis of quinazolinones	2367
2.2.4.	Nano-SiO ₂ -catalyzed green synthesis of quinazolinones	2367
2.2.5.	Brønsted acid ionic liquids catalyzed synthesis of quinazolinones	2367
2.2.6.	<i>p</i> -Toluene sulfonic acid-catalyzed synthesis of spiroquinazolinones	2367
2.2.7.	Synthesis of 4(3 <i>H</i>)-quinazolinones by cleavage of the C—C triple bond of ketoalkynes	2367
2.2.8.	Pd/C-catalyzed synthesis of quinazolinones	2367
2.2.9.	Fe ₃ O ₄ /SBA-15-catalyzed one-pot synthesis of 2,3-dihydroquinazolinones	2368
2.2.10.	DBU-assisted cyclization of amino- <i>N</i> -substituted benzamides and DMAD	2370
2.2.11.	Domino oxidative cyclization of 2-aminoacetophenones	2370
2.2.12.	H ₃ PO ₃ -catalyzed one-pot synthesis of spiroquinazolinones	2370
2.2.13.	Synthesis of tetracyclic ring system from pyrrolotriazepine and anthranilic acids	2370
2.2.14.	Tandem aza-Wittig/nucleophilic addition/intramolecular cyclization/isomerization reaction	2370
2.2.15.	I ₂ -catalyzed aerobic oxidative C(sp ³)-H amination	2371
2.2.16.	MnO ₂ -catalyzed synthesis of quinazolinones	2372
2.3.	Synthetic applications of quinazoline and quinazolinone skeletons	2372
2.3.1.	Quinazoline-based ruthenium complexes for hydrogenation reactions	2372
2.3.2.	Quinazolinone-based aziridine diols as chiral ligands	2372
2.3.3.	Quinazoline-directed regioselective arylation	2372
2.3.4.	Access to fused heterocyclic skeletons	2373
3.	Pharmacological applications of quinazolines and quinazolinones	2373
3.1.	Anticancer activity	2373
3.2.	Anticonvulsant activity	2375
3.3.	Antihistaminic activity	2376
3.4.	Antihyperlipidemic activity	2376
3.5.	Anti-influenza activity	2376
3.6.	Anti-inflammatory activity	2376
3.7.	Antimicrobial activity	2378
3.8.	Antimalarial activity	2378
3.9.	Anti-oomycete activity	2378
3.10.	Cathepsin inhibitors	2378
3.11.	α-Glucosidase inhibitors	2378
3.12.	Monoamine oxidase inhibitors	2379
3.13.	Poly(ADP-ribose)polymerase inhibitors	2379
3.14.	Thymidine phosphorylase inhibitors	2379
3.15.	Topoisomerase inhibitors	2379
4.	Agrochemical applications	2380
4.1.	Insecticidal activity	2380
5.	Conclusion and future prospects	2380
	Acknowledgement	2380
	References and notes	2380

1. Introduction

Nitrogen-containing heterocycles are ubiquitous and integral pharmacophoric units prevalent in a diverse variety of bioactive natural products, synthetic drugs, pharmaceutical and agrochemicals.¹ Among these heterocycles, quinazoline and quinazolinone cores, and their derivatives constitute an imperative class of compounds with a diverse therapeutic and pharmacological properties such as antimicrobial,² anticonvulsant,³ anticancer,⁴ antimalarial,⁵ antihypertensive,⁶ anti-inflammatory,⁷ anti-diabetic,⁸ antitumor,⁹ anti-cholinesterase,¹⁰ dihydrofolate reductase inhibition,¹¹ cellular phosphorylation inhibition,¹² and kinase inhibitory activities.¹³ A variety of quinazoline derivatives have been synthesized to provide synthetic drugs and to design more effective medicines for several disorders.^{14–17} Some representative examples of drugs and natural products containing quinazoline and quinazolinone motifs are displayed in Figure 1.

Owing to the widespread biological properties, a vast number of synthetic approaches have been developed to synthesize quinazoline and quinazolinone derivatives, and we have recently documented a formal collection of significant developments in this field of research.^{18,19} Recognizing the importance of quinazoline and quinazolinone skeletons in synthetic and medicinal chemistry arena, and as part of a larger drug discovery program,²⁰ it was considered worthwhile to update the recent literature findings comprising of efficient synthetic protocols to access these

aza-heterocyclic skeletons, key mechanistic investigations, synthetic utility along with an array of pharmaceutical and agrochemical applications. In addition, the aim of this review is not only to present some fundamental methodological principles used for the design and synthesis of new *N*-heterocycles but also to provide some insights and inspiration for future medicinal chemistry research.

2. Advancements in synthetic methods

The volume of new synthetic methodologies regarding the synthesis of quinazoline and quinazolinone cores has dramatically increased from year to year. All these transformations generally provide straightforward access to new and effective quinazoline and quinazolinone compounds with increased structural diversity from easily accessible and affordable substrates.

2.1. Synthesis of quinazolines

In this part, we outline examples dealing with the synthesis of quinazoline skeleton from readily available and cheap starting material.

2.1.1. Rhodium-catalyzed *ortho*-amidation cyclocondensation

Harrity and co-workers²¹ developed a mild and regioselective *ortho*-amidation cyclocondensation sequence delivering a range of 4-aminoquinazolines **3** in good yield (Scheme 1). The study

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