

## Synthesis, *in silico* ADME, Molecular Docking and *in vitro* Cytotoxicity Evaluation of Indolin-2-one linked Stilbene Derivatives

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Considering the potential of stilbene derivatives as biologically active frameworks in cancer research, the synthesis of several indole-2-one linked stilbenes was proposed as evaluate their cytotoxic effects on cancer cells. To develop some indole-2-one linked stilbene analogs as lead molecule against cancer, novel indole-2-one linked derivatives (**BK 1-11**) were synthesized by reacting 4-formyl-*trans*-stilbene with 2-oxindole in methanol. The structural characterizations were performed by FTIR, NMR and mass techniques. Molecular docking was performed on the Janus kinase 2 (JAK2) receptor (Pdb ID: 4Z32), with binding energies expressed in kcal/mol. All the synthesized compounds were screened for their cytotoxicity against MCF, HCT116 and HeLa cells taking 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) and resveratrol as reference. Among tested derivatives, compound **BK-6** was found to be most potent against all the three cell lines with IC<sub>50</sub> of 48-64 μM and 49.92% cell viability after 72 h of treatment. A low to moderate aqueous solubility was predicted by Swiss-ADME web-tool. The docking score and cytotoxicity data suggest compound **BK-6** as a potential molecule against MCF cancer cells. However, further biological studies require to support the cytotoxicity and *in silico* results.

**Keywords:** Stilbene, Indole, Cytotoxicity, Cell lines, JAK-2.

### INTRODUCTION

Cancer is accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2022 with an estimated 30 million new cases by 2050 [1]. Regardless of the cause, it is essential to treat and eliminate cancer for the betterment of society. Chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, gene therapy and palliative care are commonly used to cure or control cancer. Despite all advancements, the survival rate in cancer is limited to 50% [2]. The surgery or radiation therapy is not sufficient alone and chemotherapy always comes with equal intensity of side effects. The simultaneous administration of multiple drugs causes severe toxicity.

Use of natural products to treat different chronic ailments is in practice since ancient times. These plants or their active constituents have attracted the scientific community for their health benefits and therapeutic values. For example, resveratrol,

(3,4',5-trihydroxy-*trans*-stilbene) is one among several. It is a non-flavonoid polyphenolic phytoalexin found in grapes, peanuts and berries, known for its cardio-protective, antioxidant, anti-aging and anti-inflammatory properties [3]. Studies report the use of resveratrol as an adjuvant in multidrug-resistant cancer. It sensitizes cancer cells towards the chemotherapeutic agents [4]. The stilbene derivatives like diethylstilbestrol and tamoxifen are clinically used to treat prostate and breast cancer, respectively [5]. The several other stilbene derivatives have also been reported in the literature for its anticancer properties [6-8].

Indole, (benzo[*b*]-pyrrole), is another naturally occurring moiety known for its synthetic versatility and outstanding pharmacological properties. The indole derivatives have been widely explored for their cytotoxic, antiviral, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and anti-hypertensive activities [9-12]. Tryptophan, vinblastine, vincristine, vallesiachotamine, reserpine,

ergotamine, *etc.*, are the few naturally occurring indole derivatives with medicinal values [13-18]. Considering the therapeutic potential of stilbene and indole nucleus, the present work is aimed to develop a potential stilbene based lead against cancer with minimal adverse effect.

## EXPERIMENTAL

All chemicals used in this study were of LR grade, with some also being of AR grade and procured from Sigma-Aldrich and S.D. Fine Chemicals Ltd., India. Before use, the solvents and reagents were checked for purity. The melting points (m.p.) were recorded using a DBK digital melting point device and are reported without correction. FTIR spectra were obtained using a JASCO 460+ FTIR instrument. Proton NMR ( $^1\text{H NMR}$ ) spectra were recorded on a Bruker Ultraspec AMX 400 instrument in DMSO- $d_6$  at 400 and 500 MHz. Mass spectrometry data were collected in positive ion mode using a Waters Xevo G2 XS-QTOF instrument (Milford, USA). Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on pre-coated silica gel plates from SD Fine Chemicals, Mumbai, India and  $R_f$  values were calculated accordingly.

**General procedure for synthesis of (Z)-5-substituted-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one:** Novel indolin-2-one linked stilbene derivatives (**BK 1-11**) were synthesized by adopting the procedures reported earlier [19,20]. In brief, equimolar quantity (0.001 M) of 2-oxindoles (**1**) and 4-formyl-*trans*-stilbene (**2**) were refluxed in methanol for 1 h in the presence of 0.5 mL of piperidine as catalyst. The progress of the reaction was monitored at different time intervals by TLC on silica-gel 60 plates, until a distinct spot of product was obtained. The precipitated mass was filtered and recrystallized from ethanol-DMF mixture in appropriate ratio (**Scheme-I**).

**(Z)-3-(4-((E)-Styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-1):** Yellow crystals, m.p.: 256-258 °C, yield: 73%,  $R_f$ : 0.63. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 3443, 3372, 3177, 3028, 2974, 2706, 1701, 1631, 1613, 1464, 1368.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm:

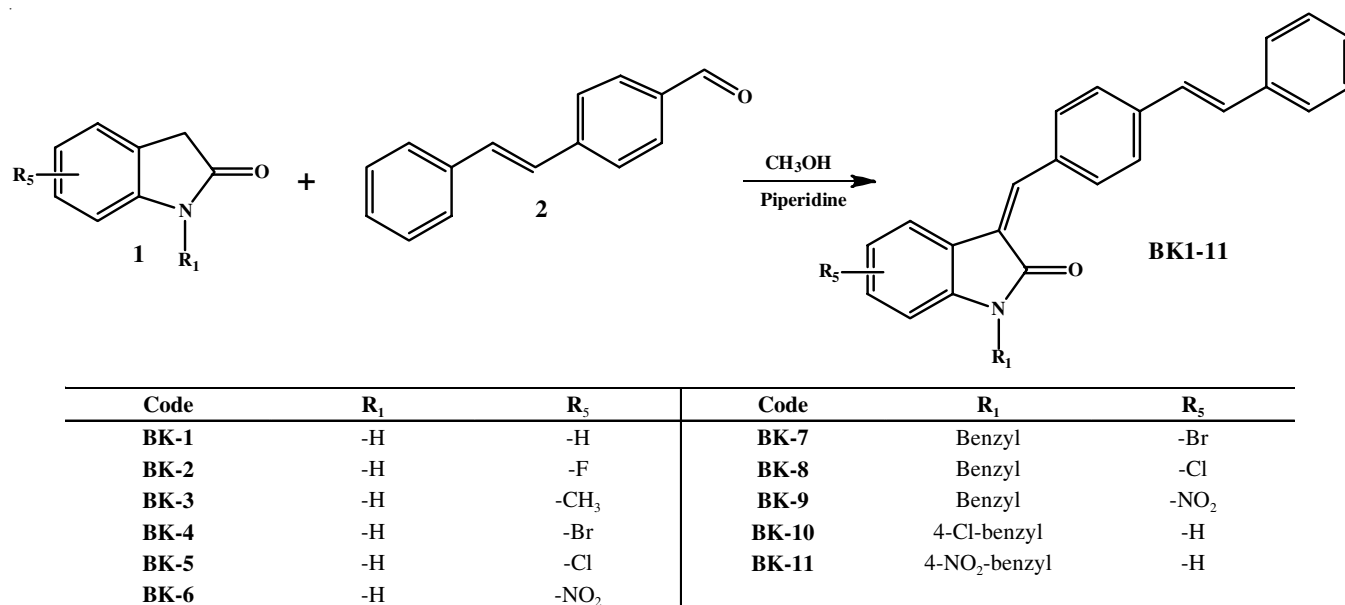
6.90-6.86 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.26-7.22 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.33-7.29 (3H, m, Ar-H), 7.36 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.44-7.39 (m, 3H, Ar), 7.66-7.62 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.76-7.76 (4H, m, Ar-H), 10.58 (1H, s, -NH). MS (ESI) of  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}$ :  $m/z$  324.18 (323.38).

**(Z)-5-Fluoro-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-2):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 281-283 °C, yield: 59%,  $R_f$ : 0.53. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 3246, 3112, 3029, 2928, 2787, 1739, 1645, 1617, 1480, 1375, 1186.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 6.58-6.56 (1H, m,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 6.77-6.73 (1H, t,  $J = 16$  Hz), 6.91-6.89 (2H, d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.08-7.06 (2H, d,  $J = 6.4$  Hz), 7.34-7.27 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.46-7.36 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.63 (3H, d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.73 (2H, d,  $J = 6.8$  Hz), 10.97 (1H, s, -NH), MS (ESI) of  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{16}\text{FNO}$ :  $m/z$  341.09 (341.37).

**(Z)-5-Methyl-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-3):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 273-274 °C, yield: 71%,  $R_f$ : 0.59. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 3172, 3082, 3026, 2913, 2859, 2815, 2711, 1701, 1614, 1598, 1447, 1416.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 2.21 (3H, s, -CH<sub>3</sub>), 6.81-6.79 (1H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.09-7.07 (1H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.35-7.31 (1H, t,  $J = 15.2$  Hz), 7.47-7.39 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.49-7.51 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.58-7.60 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.69-7.65 (2H, d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, Ar-H), 7.76-7.78 (4H, m, Ar-H), 10.52 (1H, s, -NH); MS (ESI) of  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}$ :  $m/z$  338.20 (337.41).

**(Z)-5-Bromo-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-4):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 287-289 °C, yield: 72%,  $R_f$ : 0.56. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 3377, 3163, 3058, 3024, 2864, 2748, 2703, 1699, 1548, 1450, 1383.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 6.85-6.94 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.26-7.36 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.42-7.58 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.67-7.69 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.73-7.88 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.94-7.97 (1H, m, Ar-H), 8.48-8.51 (1H, m, Ar-H), 10.78 (1H, s, -NH); MS (ESI) of  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{16}\text{BrNO}$ :  $m/z$  402.20 (402.05).

**(Z)-5-Chloro-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-5):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 290-292 °C, yield: 63%,  $R_f$ : 0.54. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 3160, 3063, 2858, 2730, 2703, 1700, 1625, 1597, 1508, 1448.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)



**Scheme-I:** Synthesis of (Z)-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (**BK 1-11**)

$\delta$  ppm: 6.91-6.94 (1H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.40-7.38 (1H, t,  $J = 13.6$  Hz), 7.55-7.45 (5H, m, Ar-H), 7.77-7.72 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.81-7.88 (4H, m, Ar-H), 10.84 (1H, s, -NH); MS (ESI) of  $C_{23}H_{16}ClNO$ :  $m/z$  357.22 (357.83).

**(Z)-5-Nitro-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)indolin-2-one (BK-6):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 301-303 °C, yield: 56%,  $R_f$ : 0.49. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3107, 3024, 2887, 2846, 2803, 1691, 1595, 1578, 1472, 1389.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 6.96-6.84 (1H, d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.48-7.38 (1H, t,  $J = 12.0$  Hz), 7.56-7.53 (5H, m, Ar-H), 7.75-7.73 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.83-7.77 (4H, m, Ar-H), 10.86 (1H, s, -NH). MS (ESI) of  $C_{23}H_{16}N_2O_3$ :  $m/z$  368.13 (368.38)

**(Z)-1-(4-Chlorobenzyl)-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)-indolin-2-one (BK-7):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 303-308 °C, yield: 52%,  $R_f$ : 0.47. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3129, 3087, 3031, 2968, 2880, 2712, 1696, 1606, 1496, 1341.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 5.08 (2H, s,  $-CH_2-$ ), 6.76 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.03-7.08 (1H, m, Ar-H), 7.18-7.20 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.35-7.48 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.64-7.74 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.88-7.96 (3H, m, Ar-H). MS (ESI) of  $C_{30}H_{22}BrNO$ :  $m/z$  493.03 (492.40).

**(Z)-1-Benzyl-5-chloro-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)-indolin-2-one (BK-8):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 288-290 °C, yield: 57%,  $R_f$ : 0.48. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3129, 3087, 3033, 2968, 2925, 1697, 1609, 1573, 1496, 1468, 1384.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 4.99 (2H, s,  $-CH_2-$ ), 6.65-6.64 (1H, d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 6.86-6.82 (1H, t,  $J = 15.2$  Hz), 7.03-7.01 (1H, d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.10-7.07 (2H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.16-7.15 (1H, d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.31-7.38 (3H, m, Ar-H), 7.39-7.59 (7H, m, Ar-H), 7.61-7.65 (2H, m,  $J = 13.2$  Hz), 7.73 (2H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz); MS (ESI) of  $C_{30}H_{22}ClNO$ :  $m/z$  448.08 (447.95).

**(Z)-1-Benzyl-5-nitro-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)-indolin-2-one (BK-9):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 284-289 °C, yield: 54%,  $R_f$ : 0.46. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3284, 3168, 3085, 3026, 2946, 2848, 1702, 1601, 1598, 1464, 1378.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 4.89 (2H, s,  $-CH_2-$ ), 6.75-6.71 (1H, d,  $J = 16.4$  Hz), 6.90-6.83 (1H, t, Ar-H), 7.17-7.15 (1H, d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.28-7.26 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.32-7.29 (1H, d,  $J = 12.4$  Hz), 7.37-7.31 (3H, m, Ar-H), 7.53-7.38 (7H, m, Ar-H), 7.59-7.55 (3H, m, Ar-H), 7.74-7.62 (2H, d,  $J = 13.2$  Hz); MS (ESI) of  $C_{30}H_{22}N_2O_3$ :  $m/z$  459.11 (458.50).

**(Z)-1-(4-Chlorobenzyl)-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)-indolin-2-one (BK-10):** Orange crystals, m.p.: 288-292 °C, yield: 57%,  $R_f$ : 0.48. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3219, 3085, 3046, 3028, 2923, 2864, 1704, 1605, 1598, 1468, 1387.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 5.07 (2H, s,  $-CH_2-$ ), 6.76-6.74 (1H, d,  $J = 8$  Hz), 7.07-7.05 (1H, d,  $J = 8$  Hz), 7.20-7.17 (2H, d,  $J = 10.8$  Hz), 7.40-7.27 (10H, m, Ar-H), 7.47-7.44 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.74-7.63 (4H, m, Ar-H), 7.95-7.88 (2H, m, Ar-H); MS (ESI) of  $C_{30}H_{22}ClNO$ :  $m/z$  447.08 (447.95).

**(Z)-1-(4-Nitrobenzyl)-3-(4-((E)-styryl)benzylidene)-indolin-2-one (BK-11):** Red crystals, m.p.: 287-289 °C, yield: 56%,  $R_f$ : 0.47. IR (KBr,  $\nu_{max}$ ,  $cm^{-1}$ ): 3184, 3096, 3036, 2946, 2850, 2724, 1704, 1601, 1548, 1458, 1361.  $^1H$  NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 500 MHz)  $\delta$  ppm: 4.86 (2H, s,  $-CH_2-$ ), 6.65-6.63 (1H, d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 6.85-6.81 (1H, t,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.03-7.01 (1H, d,  $J = 8$  Hz), 7.10-7.07 (2H, m, Ar-H), 7.17-7.15 (1H, d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.27-7.32 (3H, m, Ar-H), 7.36-7.43 (7H, m, Ar-H), 7.46-7.65

(2H, m, Ar-H), 7.88 (2H, d,  $J = 8$  Hz); MS (ESI) of  $C_{30}H_{22}N_2O_3$ :  $m/z$  448.08 (458.50).

**In vitro cytotoxicity studies:** The MTT test was used to assess the cytotoxicity of the synthesized compounds **BK 1-11** in accordance with reported method [21]. Briefly, 10,000 MCF7 (human breast cancer), HCT116 and Hela cells were seeded per well of 96-well plates, with a final volume of 100  $\mu$ L per well. Different quantities of compounds **BK 1-11** (200, 100, 50, 25, 12.5  $\mu$ M) were applied to the cells and then incubated for 24, 48 and 72 h. To prepare the MTT solution, dissolved 5 mg of MTT in 1 mL PBS and diluted the mixture with media to a working concentration of 0.5 mg/mL. Added 100  $\mu$ L of 0.5 mg/mL MTT solution to each well. The cells underwent an additional 4 h of incubation at 37 °C. Following the incubation phase, each well was treated with 100  $\mu$ L of DMSO to facilitate the dissolution of the formazan and absorbance was recorded at 570 nm using a spectrophotometer. Data was represented as % viability using the formula given below:

$$\text{Viability (\%)} = \frac{\text{OD of sample} - \text{OD of blank}}{\text{OD of untreated} - \text{OD of blank}} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

The absorbance at 570 nm is proportional to the number of viable cells.

#### In silico studies

**Docking and molecular dynamics:** Every stilbene derivative was docked into the tyrosine-protein kinase/Janus complex (Jak2 (kinase 2) receptors). PyRx software was used to create all of the ligands and the target and AutoDock Vina software was used to perform the docking experiment with the algorithm for Lamarckian genetics (LGA) [22,23]. The docking results visualizations were obtained using the Discovery studio software [24]. Using Avogadro (Version 1.2.0), the 3D structures were created [25]. The MMFF94s force field was utilized to the minimize energy. The structure of the protein 4Z32 (JAK 2 receptor) was improved and adjusted to fix any structural anomalies [26]. Hydrogen atoms added to the protein structure and appropriate ionization states assigned based on the desired pH conditions. Water molecules and other hetero atoms removed before docking. The binding site analysis was performed using sitemap. The ADME and drug-likenesses were investigated using Swiss-ADME webserver [27,28].

A molecular dynamics (MD) simulation was performed on the docked complex of jak2 with 5-fluorouracil (5FU) and compound **BK-6** using OPLS4 force field [29]. The simulation was carried out for 100 ns under isothermal-isobaric (NPT) conditions at 300 K and 1.013 bar pressure. The solvent model used was TIP3P and the boundary was set to default with an orthorhombic box shape. The system volume was minimized and sodium ( $Na^+$ ) and chloride ( $Cl^-$ ) ions were added at 0.15 M concentration.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eleven indole linked stilbene analogs **BK 1-11** were synthesized by reacting substituted indolin-2-one and *E*-formyl stilbene in 40 mL methanol and 0.5 mL piperidine. The structural confirmation was performed with FTIR, NMR and mass



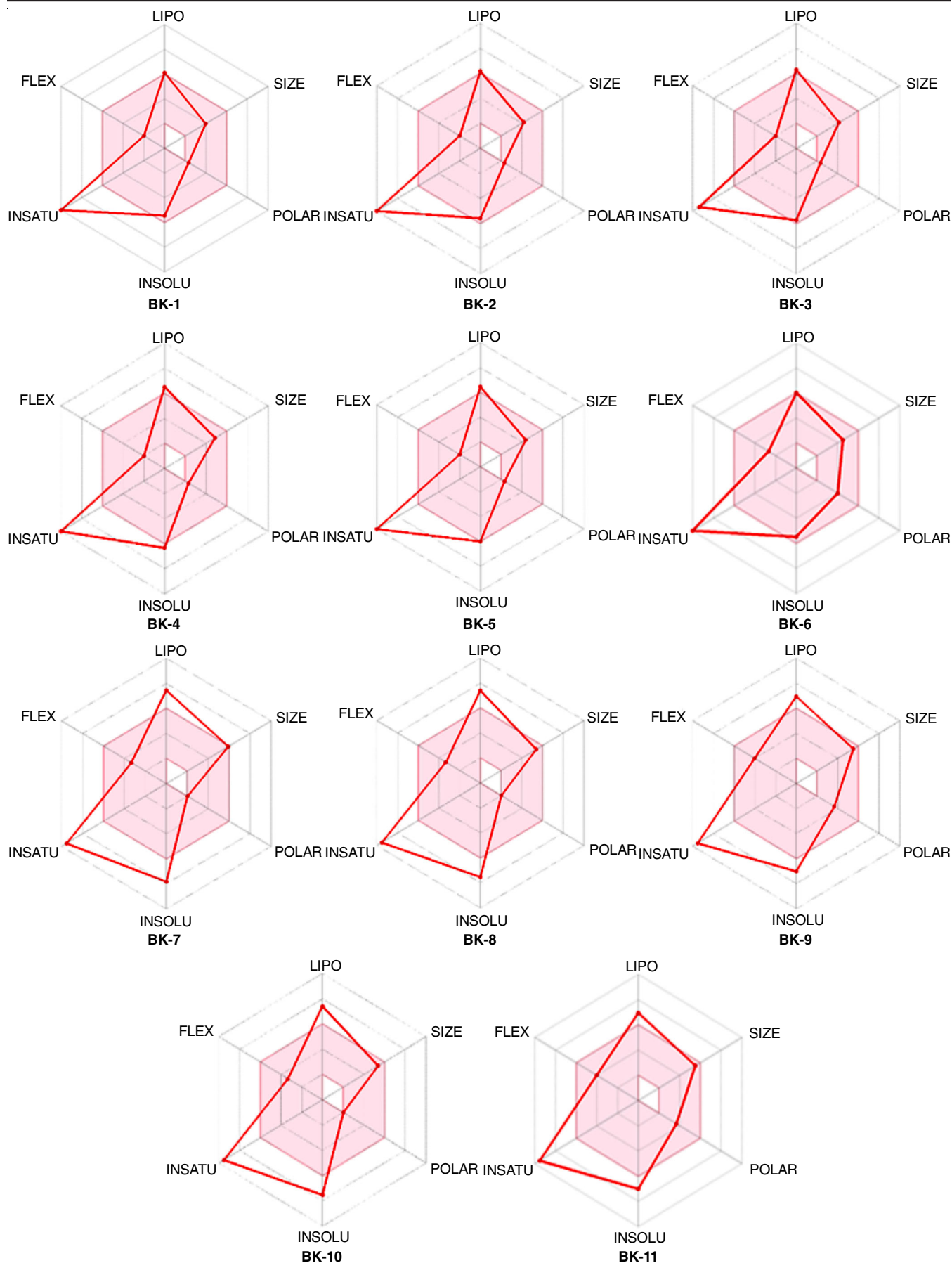


Fig. 1. Physico-chemical parameters space for oral bioavailability of BK-1 to BK-11



TABLE-3  
PHYSICO-CHEMICAL AND PHARMACOKINETIC PROPERTIES OF  
(Z)-3-(4-(*E*-STYRYL)BENZYLIDENE)INDOLIN-2-ONE (BK-1 TO BK-11)

Compd.	Physico-chemical properties							Lipophilicity					
	MW	Csp3	RB	HBA	HBD	MR	TPSA	llogp	XLOGP3	WLOGP	MLOGP	Silicos-IT	Consensus
BK-1	323.39	0	3	1	1	107.51	29.1	3.35	5.17	4.45	4.35	5.6	4.58
BK-2	341.38	0	3	2	1	107.47	29.1	3.42	5.27	5.01	4.72	6	4.89
BK-3	337.41	0.04	3	1	1	112.47	29.1	3.58	5.53	4.76	4.56	6.11	4.91
BK-4	402.28	0	3	1	1	115.21	29.1	3.62	5.86	5.21	4.93	6.26	5.18
BK-5	357.83	0	3	1	1	112.52	29.1	3.53	5.79	5.1	4.83	6.22	5.1
BK-6	368.38	0	4	3	1	116.33	74.92	2.85	4.99	4.36	3.27	3.4	3.78
BK-7	492.41	0.03	5	1	0	144.6	20.31	4.65	7.53	6.85	6.1	7.65	6.56
BK-8	447.95	0.03	5	1	0	141.91	20.31	4.61	7.47	6.74	6.01	7.62	6.49
BK-9	458.51	0.03	6	3	0	145.72	66.13	3.93	6.67	5.99	4.48	4.8	5.17
BK-10	447.95	0.03	5	1	0	141.91	20.31	4.6	7.47	6.74	6.01	7.62	6.49
BK-11	458.51	0.03	6	3	0	145.72	66.13	4.02	6.67	5.99	4.48	4.8	5.19

Compd.	Drug likeliness					Water solubility		Pharmacokinetics	
	Lipinski	Ghose	Veber	Egan	Muegge	ESOL Log S	ESOL Class	log Kp	F
BK-1	1	0	0	0	1	-5.44	Moderate soluble	-4.6	0.55
BK-2	1	0	0	0	1	-5.59	Moderately soluble	-4.64	0.55
BK-3	1	0	0	0	1	-5.73	Moderately soluble	-4.43	0.55
BK-4	1	0	0	0	1	-6.34	Poorly soluble	-4.59	0.55
BK-5	1	0	0	0	1	-6.02	Poorly soluble	-4.37	0.55
BK-6	0	0	0	0	0	-5.48	Moderately soluble	-5	0.55
BK-7	1	3	0	1	1	-7.84	Poorly soluble	-3.96	0.55
BK-8	1	2	0	1	1	-7.53	Poorly soluble	-3.73	0.55
BK-9	1	2	0	1	1	-7	Poorly soluble	-4.36	0.55
BK-10	1	2	0	1	1	-7.53	Poorly soluble	-3.73	0.55
BK-11	1	2	0	1	1	-7	Poorly soluble	-4.36	0.55

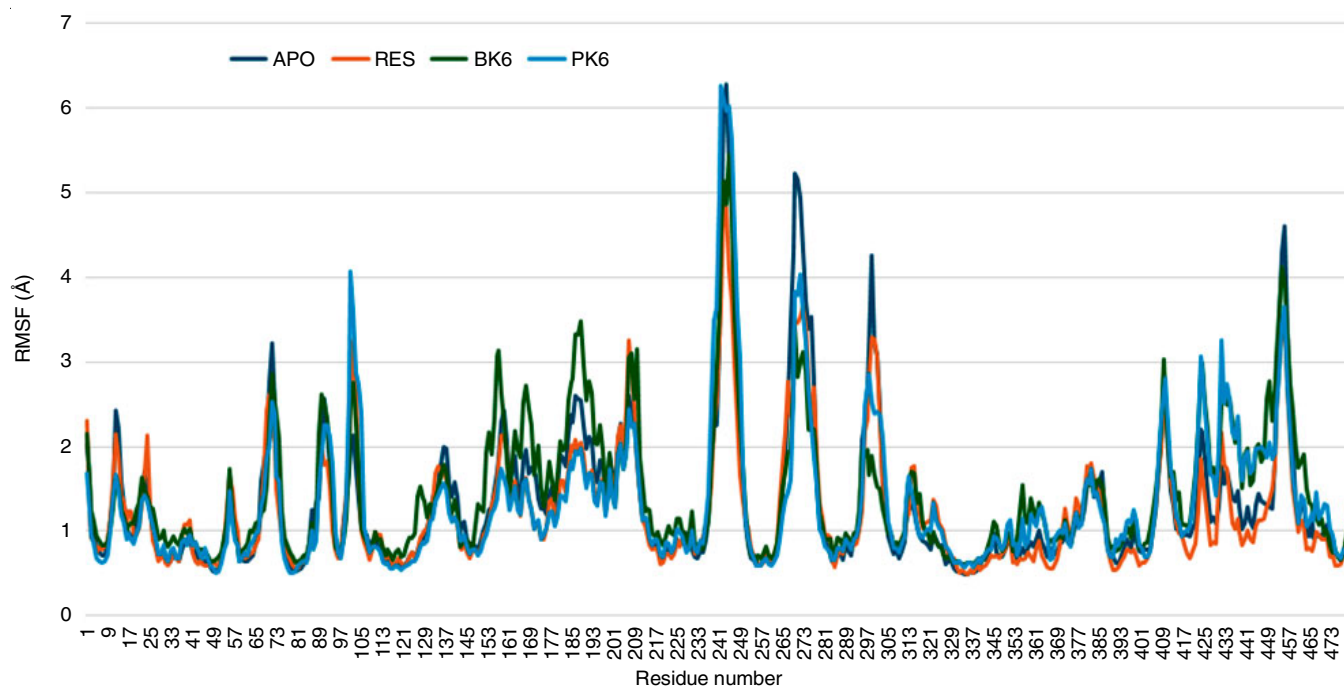


Fig. 4. Root mean square fluctuation (RMSF) plot

the analogues, compound **BK-6** emerged as the most potent, with  $IC_{50}$  values of 48  $\mu$ M, 64  $\mu$ M and 57  $\mu$ M against MCF-7, HCT-116 and HeLa cell lines, respectively. Furthermore, *in silico* ADME analysis showed that compound **BK-6** violated none of the Lipinski, Ghose, Veber, Egan or Muegge rules and

exhibited moderate water solubility. These results suggest that indole-linked stilbenes possess promising cytotoxic activity against various cancer cell lines. Therefore, this study paves the way for future investigations aimed at developing novel therapeutic strategies for cancer treatment.

TABLE-4  
BINDING AFFINITY (Kcal/mol) OF (Z)-3-(4-((E)-STYRYL) BENZYLIDENE)INDOLIN-2-ONES (BK-1 TO BK-11), RESVERATROL AND 5-FU WITH PROTEIN 4Z32 (JAK2 RECEPTOR)

Code	Docking score	Code	Docking score
BK-1	-7.3	BK-8	-6.1
BK-2	-7.3	BK-9	-4.1
BK-3	-7.6	BK-10	-6.9
BK-4	-7.8	BL-11	-4.4
BK-5	-7.3	RSV	-7.8
BK-6	-7.8	5FU	-6.4
BK-7	-5.8		

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this article.

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