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Fluorescent carbazolylurea and carbazolylthiourea based anion receptors and sensors

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# Abstract

A series of carbazolylurea and carbazolylthiourea-based receptors have been synthesized and their anion complexation and fluorescence properties studied. The urea compounds show selectivity for oxoanion complexation over chloride and the fluorescence of compound **1** is selectively quenched by benzoate anions in DMSO/0.5% water. However the thiourea compounds show reduced anion affinities compared to the urea analogues.

# **Keywords**

Anion binding, indole, hydrogen bonding, crystallography

# Introduction

Interest in new hydrogen bond donor receptors for anionic species has led our group and others to begin to explore indole, carbazole, indolocarbazoles and biindoles as components of new anion complexation agents.<sup>1</sup> We have recently reported that indole appended isophthalamides and pyridine-2,6-dicarboxamides function as selective fluoride binding agents,<sup>2</sup> and our interest in urea<sup>3</sup> as a receptor for oxo-



anions led us to synthesise oxo-anion selective urea functionalized 2,7-disubstituted indoles (in collaboration with Albrecht and Triyanti)<sup>4</sup> and most recently both functionalized and unfunctionalised diindolylureas have particularly high affinities for dihydrogen phosphate anions.<sup>5</sup> In fact when dihydrogen phosphate is bound to diindolylureas containing pendant additional hydrogen bond donor groups, the pKa of the anion is reduced to such an extent that it can be deprotonated by dihydrogen phosphate free in solution.<sup>6</sup>

We wished to study analogues of the diindolylurea skeleton and synthesised a series of carbazole urea and thiourea compounds and studied their anion complexation and fluorescence properties. Aspects of this work have been communicated previously.<sup>7</sup>



# **Experimental**

**General remarks:** All reactions were performed using oven dried glassware under slight positive pressure of nitrogen/argon (as specified). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz) and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (75 MHz) spectra were determined on a Bruker AV300 spectrometer. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz) and <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz) spectra were determined on a Bruker AV400 spectrometer. Chemical shifts for <sup>1</sup>H NMR are reported in parts per million (ppm), calibrated to the solvent peak set, with coupling constants reported in Hertz (Hz). The following abbreviations are used for spin multiplicity: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, m = multiplet. Chemical shifts for <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR are reported in ppm, relative to the central line of a septet at  $\delta$  = 39.52 ppm for deuteriodimethylsulfoxide. Infrared (IR) spectra were recorded on a Matterson Satellite (ATR). FTIR are reported in wavenumbers (cm<sup>-1</sup>). All solvents and starting materials

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Thermo

Nicolet

Evolution

were purchased from chemical sources where available. NMR titrations were performed by adding aliquots of the putative anionic guest (as the TBA/TEA) salt (0.15 M) in a solution of the receptor (0.01 M) in DMSO- $d_6$  to a solution of the receptor (0.01 M). Fluorescence and UV-Vis titrations were performed by adding aliquots of the putative anionic guest (as the TBA salt or TEA salt in the case of bicarbonate)  $(1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M})$  in a solution of the receptor  $(1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M})$  in DMSO/water 0.5%. All fluorescence and UV-Vis spectra were recorded on a Varian Cary Eclipse fluorescence spectrophotometer and spectrophotometer, respectively. Luminescence quantum yields were determined using quinine sulfate in a 1 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> aqueous solution ( $\Phi = 0.546$ ) as a reference. Compounds 1 - 3 were synthesised by our previously published procedures.<sup>7</sup> 1-Aminocarbazole 1-Nitrocarbazole was synthesised according to a literature procedure<sup>8</sup> modified by separation of the 1- and 3-nitrocarbazoles *via* chloroform flash chromatography (see ESI for details). Characterisation data agreed with previously published characterisation data.<sup>9</sup> 

**1-Isothiocyanato-9H-carbazole** was prepared by reaction of 1-aminocarbazole with thiophosgene in a mixture of dichloromethane and a saturated aqueous solution of NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (see ESI for details).

## 1,3-di(9H-Carbazol-1-yl)thiourea (4)

A solution of the isothiocyanate (0.23 g, 1.04 mM) in chloroform (20 ml) was then added dropwise to a solution of 1-aminocarbazole (0.19 g, 1.04 mM) in chloroform (25 ml). The solution was then heated at reflux overnight with triethylamine (2 mL). The solution was then taken to dryness and the product isolated by filtration by recrystallisation from an ether/methanol slow evaporation to give a light green solid. Yield 36%, 0.15g; mp. 221 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ: 7.13-7.20 (m, 4H), 7.33 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 7.40-7.45 (m, 2H), 7.61 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 8.03 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 8.12 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 9.71 (s, thiourea NH, 2H), 11.27 (s, indole NH, 2H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ: 111.2 (CH), 118.5 (CH), 118.6 (CH), 118.7 (CH), 120.2 (CH), 122.7 (C), 123.1 (C), 124.0 (C), 124.2 (CH), 125.7 (CH), 136.3 (C), 139.8 (C), 180.8 (CS); IR (film): v = 3389, 3281, 1148 cm<sup>-1</sup>. LRMS (ES<sup>-</sup>):m/z: 405 [M-H]<sup>-</sup>; HRMS (ES<sup>+</sup>): m/z: act: 407.1332 [M+H]<sup>+</sup> cal: 407.1325 [M+H]<sup>+</sup>

# 1-(9H-Carbazol-1-yl)-3-(1H-indol-7-yl)thiourea (5)

A solution of 7-aminoindole (0.31 g, 2.35 mM) and 1-isothiocyanatocarbazole (0.53 g, 2.36 mM) was stirred in dry pyridine (20 mL) at room temperature for 48 hours. The solution was washed with hexane and taken to dryness and the oil was dissolved in hot methanol (2 mL) and left to cool to room temperature. White crystals were removed after 24 hrs and washed with hexane (25 mL) and dried under vacuum. Yield 48 %, 0.41 g; mp. 144 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$ : 6.48 (dd, 1 J<sub>1</sub> = 1.83 Hz, J<sub>2</sub> = 2.55 Hz, ArH), 6.99 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 7.06-7.20 (m, 3 ArH), 7.29 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 7.38-7.47 (m, 3 ArH), 7.57 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1 ArH), 8.00 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 8.12 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 9.59 (s, thiourea NH, 1H), 9.61 (s, NH, 1H), 11.11 (s, NH, 1H), 11.19 (s, NH, 1H);  ${}^{13}$ C NMR (75 MHz, DMSO- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$ : 101.6 (ArCH), 111.2 (ArCH), 118.4 (ArCH), 118.6 (ArCH), 118.6 (ArCH), 118.6 (ArCH), 118.8 (ArCH), 119.3 (ArCH), 120.2 (ArCH), 122.7 (ArC), 123.2 (ArC), 123.6 (ArC), 123.9 (ArC), 124.0 (ArCH), 125.4 (ArCH), 125.7 (ArCH), 129.3 (ArC), 132.0 (ArC), 136.2 (ArC), 139.7 (ArC), 180.7 (CS); IR (film):  $v = 3380, 3280, 1210 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; LRMS  $(ES^{-})$ : m/z: 355 [M-H]<sup>-</sup>; HRMS  $(ES^{+})$ : m/z: act: 357.1168 [M+H]<sup>+</sup> cal: 357.1166  $[M+H]^+$ 

1-(9H-Carbazol-1-yl)-3-phenylthiourea (6) A solution of phenylisothiocyanate (0.41 g, 3.00 mM) in chloroform (20 ml) was added dropwise to a stirring solution of 1-aminocarbazole (0.21 g, 1.18 mM) in chloroform (20 ml). The solution was then heated to reflux under argon for 48 hours. The solution was then reduced in volume to 2ml and DCM (10 ml) and hexane (20 ml) added. The solution was then sonicate for 5 min and a dark green semi-solid removed and a white precipitate collected, washed with hexane (10 ml) and dried under vacuum. Yield 41 %, 0.16 g; mp. 169 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ: 7.11-7.19 (m, 3 ArH), 7.28-7.41 (m, 4 ArH), 7.53-7.60 (m, 3 ArH), 8.01 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 8.11 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 9.65 (s, thiourea NH, 1H), 9.83 (s, thiourea NH, 1H), 11.14 (s, indole NH, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ: 111.3 (ArCH), 118.3 (ArCH), 118.5 (ArCH), 118.7 (ArCH), 120.2 (ArCH), 122.6 (ArC), 123.2 (ArCH), 123.9 (ArC), 124.5 (ArCH), 125.7 (ArCH), 128.4 (ArCH), 136.0 (ArC), 139.6 (ArC), 139.8 (ArC), 180.4 (CS) (there are overlapping signals in the <sup>13</sup>C NMR resulting in fewer than expected carbon resonances); IR (film):  $v = 3300, 3320, 1220 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; LRMS (ES<sup>-</sup>): m/z: 316 [M-H]<sup>-</sup>; HRMS (ES<sup>+</sup>): m/z: act: 318.1059 [M+H]<sup>+</sup> cal: 318.1031 [M+H]<sup>+</sup>

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Crystal data for compound **1**.tetrabutylammonium benzoate: C<sub>48</sub>H<sub>59</sub>N<sub>5</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, Mr = 754.00, T = 120(2) K, triclinic, space group *P*1 *a* =10.980(5), *b* = 13.774(5), *c* = 15.173(5) Å,  $\alpha$  =68.760(5)°,  $\beta$  =85.232(5)°,  $\gamma$  =81.541(5)°, *V* =2114.5(14) Å<sup>3</sup>,  $\rho_{calc}$  = 1.184 g cm <sup>-3</sup>,  $\mu$  = 0.074 mm<sup>-1</sup>, *Z* = 2, reflections collected: 44837, independent reflections: 9728 (*R*<sub>int</sub> = 0.1052), final *R* indices [*I* > 2 $\sigma$ *I*]: *R*1 = 0.0661, *wR*2 = 0.1368, *R* indices (all data): *R*1 = 0.1190. *wR*2 = 0.1589.<sup>7</sup>

## **Results and Discussion**

The synthesis of compounds 1-3 has been communicated previously.<sup>7</sup> 1-Aminocarbazole was prepared by literature methods.<sup>8</sup> This was converted to the isothiocyanate by reaction with thiophosgene in  $CH_2Cl_2/sat.NaHCO_3(aq)$ . Compounds 4 and 5 were prepared by reaction of the isothiocyanate with 1-aminocarbazole or 7aminoindole respectively. Compound 6 was prepared by reaction of phenyl isothiocyanate with 1-aminocarbazole in chloroform.

Stability constants for the compounds with a range of anionic guests were determined using <sup>1</sup>H NMR titration techniques with stability constants calculated using the EQNMR computer program (Table 1).<sup>10</sup> The results show that all the compounds bind acetate and bicarbonate strongly. NMR titrations with  $H_2PO_4^-$  show titration profiles usually indicative of strong binding but the titration curves for compounds **1** and **2** show features at 1 and 2 equivalents of anion that cannot be fitted adequately to a binding model.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that an anion deprotonation process is occurring in these cases.<sup>6</sup> Titrations with  $F^-$  resulted in broadening of the NH resonances in all cases thus it was not possible to determine an accurate stability constant. Shifts of the NH resonances suggest weak complex formation (i.e. a continuous downfield shift - see ESI for compounds **2** and **3**).

Table 1 The stability constants  $(K_a/M^{-1})$  of compounds **1**, **2** and **3** with a variety of anionic guests (added as tetrabutylammonium salts except bicarbonate which was added as a tetraethylammonium salt) at 298K in DMSO- $d_6/0.5\%$  water as determined by following urea NH resonance adjacent to the carbazole. In all cases 1:1 receptor: anion stoichiometry was observed. Errors estimated to be no more than ±15%

Anion Compound Compound	Compound
-------------------------	----------

	1	2	3
acetate	>10 <sup>4</sup>	>10 <sup>4</sup>	>10 <sup>4</sup>
benzoate	5670	5880	3420
dihydrogen	a	a	6140
phosphate			
chloride	102	139	85
bicarbonate	>10 <sup>4</sup>	> 10 <sup>4</sup>	> 10 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>a</sup> NMR titration curve could not be fitted to a 1:1 or 1:2 receptor:anion binding stoichiometry but indicates strong binding.

Compounds **4-6** displayed reduced affinities for anions as compared to the urea analogues **1-3** (Table 2). This is unusual as thioureas are more acidic than ureas and hence would be expected to form stronger hydrogen bonding interactions. Interestingly though, the reduction in affinity in thiourea analogues of urea based receptors was also observed with diindolylurea based receptors which was attributed either to size or conformational interconversion effects.<sup>5</sup> The work presented here further highlights that thiourea based receptors do not always possess higher affinities for anions than urea based systems.

Table 2 The stability constants  $(K_a/M^{-1})$  of compounds **4**, **5** and **6** with a variety of anionic guests (added as tetrabutylammonium salts except bicarbonate which was added as a tetraethylammonium salt) at 298K in DMSO- $d_6/0.5\%$  water as determined by following urea NH resonance adjacent to the carbazole. In all cases 1:1 receptor: anion stoichiometry was observed. Errors estimated to be no more than ±15%

Anion	Compound	Compound	Compound
	4	5	6
acetate	2230	1800	1780
benzoate	658	675	870
dihydrogen	687	1340	a
phosphate			
chloride	15	17	23
bicarbonate	а	а	а

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<sup>a</sup> Peak broadening prevented a stability constant from being determined in these cases.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the <sup>1</sup>H NMR titration curves for compounds **1** and **4** with tetrabutylammonium benzoate in DMSO- $d_0/0.5\%$  water solution. Upon addition of excess benzoate salt to compound **1** (the dicarbazolylurea), the urea NH shifts downfield by 2.3 ppm whilst the indole NH shifts downfield by approximately 1 ppm. Compound **4** is the thiourea analogue of compound **1**. In this case whilst the thiourea NH groups shift downfield by 2.8 ppm, the indole NH shifts downfield by only 0.4 ppm. The lower affinity of the thiourea analogues of the original diindolylurea compounds was attributed to a conformation effect that caused the thiourea receptors to adopt a twisted conformation due to the large size of the sulfur atom present in these compounds.<sup>5</sup> The NMR evidence presented here is consistent this theory in that if the compound is adopting a twisted conformation we would expect a less linear relationship between the carbazole NH hydrogen bond donors and the benzoate oxygen atoms resulting in a weaker interaction.



Figure 1 Proton NMR titration curves for compounds 1 and 4 with tetrabutylammonium benzoate in DMSO- $d_6/0.5\%$  water showing shifts of indole and urea NH groups.

Crystals of the benzoate complex of compound **1** were grown by slow evaporation of a DMSO solution of the receptor in the presence of excess tetrabutylammonium benzoate. The unit cell contains two crystallographically distinct benzoate complexes which adopt similar conformations. In both benzoate complexes one of the carbazoles is in the plane of the urea whilst the other is twisted out of plane by 37.1°

or 43.0° (Figure 2). Each benzaote anion is bound by four hydrogen bonds in the range N<sup>...</sup>O 2.762(5) – 2.996(5) Å.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 2 The X-ray crystal structure of one of the two crystallographically distinct benzoate complexes present in the unit cell of the tetrabutylammonium benzoate complex of receptor **1**. Tetrabutylammonium counter cations and selected hydrogen atoms have been omitted for clarity.

In order to investigate the ability of compounds 1-3 to act as sensors, fluorescence studies were performed in a DMSO/0.5% water solution. Under these conditions receptor 1 displays an intense fluorescence emission ( $\Phi = 0.549$ ) with maxima at 363 nm and 376 nm when excited at 270 nm. As shown in Fig. 3 upon addition of increasing amounts of tetrabutylammonium benzoate, a selective quenching of the fluorescence emission was observed ( $I_{res} = 10\%$ ).



Figure 3. Fluorescence quenching of receptor **1** in DMSO/0.5% water upon addition of increasing amounts of tetrabutylammonium benzoate (for benzoate concentrations for each fluorescence spectrum see Figure 4).

Addition of the tetrabutylammonium salts of fluoride chloride, acetate, dihydrogen phosphate and tetraethylammonium bicarbonate resulted in significantly less dramatic fluorescence quenching as shown in Fig. 4. Addition of acetate resulted in only a partial quenching of the emission ( $I_{res} = 50\%$ ) whilst a stronger quenching of the

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fluorescence emission was observed upon addition of > 3.0 equivalents of fluoride, a finding which may be indicative of receptor deprotonation.<sup>11</sup> Smaller perturbations of the fluorescent emission of **1** were observed in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> (I<sub>res</sub> = 68%) and HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> (I<sub>res</sub> = 73%). Chloride did not effect the emission of the system. The trend in fluorescence quenching is similar to that found for the stability constants by <sup>1</sup>H-NMR titrations with the exception for benzoate. This may be due to a  $\pi$ - $\pi$  interaction in the excited state between the aromatic groups of the receptor and guest.



Figure 4. Effect of increasing anion concentration upon the relative fluorescence emission of receptor **1** in DMSO/0.5% water.

Compounds 4-6 did not reveal any selectivity for the anionic guests considered in this study and had significantly lower quantum yields ( $\Phi = 0.01$ ,  $\Phi = 0.0025$ ,  $\Phi = 0.0019$  for 4, 5 and 6 respectively) than those observed for compounds 1-3. When excited at 332 nm (compounds 4-5) and 344 nm (compound 6) they showed two maxima in their fluorescence emission, at 379 and 395 nm in DMSO/water 0.5%, in the case of 4, a less structured spectrum with a maximum at 390 nm in the case of compound 5, and a maximum at 385 nm with a shoulder at 404 nm in the case of compound 6. Only compound 4 in the presence of tetrabutylammonium benzoate showed a partial quenching of the fluorescence ( $I_{res} = 54\%$ ) which is much less pronounced than that

observed with the same anion and urea analogue 1 ( $I_{res}$ = 10%). With the other anions only negligible changes in fluorescence were observed upon addition to the three thiourea receptors.

### Conclusions

Carbazole ureas are effective hosts for oxo-anions binding acetate selectively in DMSO- $d_6$ /water solutions. Compound **1**, a dicarbazolylurea, functions as a selective fluorescent sensor for benzoate anions. In contrast to these results however, thiourea based analogues show reduced affinities and selectivity for anionic guests and show reduced perturbations to their fluorescence properties in the presence of anions. These finding further highlight that thiourea based analogues.

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Graphical abstract



Fluorescent carbazolylurea and carbazolylthiourea based anion receptors and sensors

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Electronic supplementary information

**1-Aminocarbazole** 1-Nitrocarbazole was synthesised according to a literature procedure<sup>8</sup> modified by separation of the 1- and 3-nitrocarbazoles *via* chloroform flash chromatography. 1-Nitrocarbazole (0.27 g, 1.28 mM) and a Pd/C 10% catalyst (0.02 g) were suspended in ethanol (25mL). The flask was evacuated and the mixture placed under a hydrogen atmosphere and stirred vigorously for 45 mins. After this time the palladium catalyst was removed by filtration through celite and the filtrate taken to dryness and placed under reduced pressure. This gave a white solid. Assumed yield 100%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ: 5.14 (s, amine NH, 2H), 6.65 (dd , J<sub>1</sub> = 7.3 Hz, J<sub>2</sub> = 1.1 Hz, 1 ArH), 6.91 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 7.08-7.13 (m, 1 ArH), 7.31-7.36 (m, 2 ArH), 7.49 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 ArH), 7.99 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 ArH), 10.77 (s, indole NH, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ: 108.4 (ArCH), 109.3 (ArCH), 110.9 (ArCH), 118.2 (ArCH), 119.7 (ArCH), 120.2 (ArCH), 122.7 (ArC), 123.2 (ArC), 124.9 (ArCH), 128.7 (ArC), 133.5 (ArC), 139.0 (ArC); LRMS (ES<sup>-</sup>):m/z: 181 [M-H]<sup>-</sup>. These values agree with previously published characterisation data.<sup>9</sup>

**1-Isothiocyanato-9H-carbazole** 1-Aminocarbazole (0.43 g, 2.36 mM) was dissolved in a mixture of dichloromethane (20 mL) and a saturated aqueous solution of NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (40 mL). Thiophosgene (0.11 mL, 2.36 mM) was added dropwise in dichloromethane (20 mL) and the reaction mixture stirred under nitrogen atmosphere at room temperature overnight. The organic layer was washed with water, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, filtered and reduced *in vacuo*. The pure product was obtained by recrystallisation from hot MeOH. The isothiocyanate was isolated as a white solid in quantitative yield.

# NMR data



Figure S1 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of compound 4 in DMSO- $d_6$ .



Figure S2<sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of compound 4 in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>.



Figure S3 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of compound 5 in DMSO- $d_6$ .



Figure S4 <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of compound 5 in DMSO- $d_6$ .





6.0

5.0

4.0

3.0

2.0

1.0

Figure S6  $^{13}$ C NMR spectrum of compound 6 in DMSO- $d_6$ .

# **Titration data**



# $K_a = 658 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 3 \%$

Figure S7 NMR titration of compound 4 vs. TBAOBz in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



 $K_a = 15 M^{-1} Error = 10 \%$ 

Figure S8 NMR titration of compound 4 vs. TBACl in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.













Figure S10 NMR titration of compound 4 vs. TBAH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



 $K_a = 675 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 7 \%$ Figure S11 NMR titration of compound 5 *vs*. TBAOBz in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



 $K_a = 17 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 10 \%$ Figure S12 NMR titration of compound 5 *vs*. TBACl in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



 $K_a = 1804 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 7 \%$ Figure S13 NMR titration of compound 5 *vs.* TBAOAc in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



 $K_a = 1342 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 12 \%$ Figure S14 NMR titration of compound 5 *vs*. TBAH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.











 $R_a = 25 \text{ M}$  Error = 0 % Figure S16 NMR titration of compound 6 vs. TBACl in DMSO- $d_6/H_2O$  0.5%.



 $K_a = 1782 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ Error} = 16 \%$ Figure S17 NMR titration of compound 6 vs. TBAOAc in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O 0.5%.



**Figure S18** Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of **4** upon addition of TBAF in dmso.



Figure S19 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 4 upon addition of TBAOAc in dmso.



Figure S20 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 4 upon addition of  $TBAH_2PO_4$  in dmso.



Figure S21 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 4 upon addition of TBAOBz in dmso.



**Figure S22** Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of **4** upon addition of TBACl in dmso.



Figure S23 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 5 upon addition of TBAF in dmso.



Figure S24 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 5 upon addition of TBAOAc in dmso.



Figure S25 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 5 upon addition of  $TBAH_2PO_4$  in dmso.



**Figure S26** Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of **5** upon addition of TBAOBz in dmso.



Figure S27 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 5 upon addition of TBACl in dmso.



Figure S28 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 6 upon addition of TBAF in dmso.



Figure S29 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 6 upon addition of TBAOAc in dmso.







Figure S30 Changes in the fluorescence emission of 6 and absorption upon addition of TBAH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> in dmso.



Figure S31 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 6 upon addition of TBAOBz in dmso.



Figure S32 Changes in the fluorescence emission and absorption of 6 upon addition of TBACl in dmso.



252x153mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Urea NH

▲ Indole NH

7.0

6.0







60x44mm (300 x 300 DPI)











60x44mm (300 x 300 DPI)