

## Review Article : Open Access

## Benzimidazole as promising antimicrobial agents: A systematic review

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## Abstract

Benzimidazole is an aromatic heterocyclic organic molecule which contains nitrogen. The benzene ring is fused with the imidazole ring to form this bicyclic compound. It is an essential pharmacophore and favoured structure in pharmaceutical chemistry with antibacterial, antitubercular, antiulcer, antihypertensive, analgesic, antiviral, antifungal, antipsychotic, antioxidant, antiinflammatory, antiprotozoal, anticancer and antihistaminic properties. These categories of medications encourage the creation of more effective and significant pharmaceuticals. The current article extensively covers various procedures for synthesis of 2-substituted benzimidazole and its analogues using various reactants, catalysts, solvent conditions and microwave irradiation to obtain an economical, eco-friendly, less time-consuming procedure that ensures good yield and quick isolation of the pure product and their antimicrobial activities.

## 1. Introduction

Benzimidazoles are heterocyclic aromatic organic molecules with broad pharmacophore appeal in pharmaceutical chemistry. One of the most beneficial scaffolds for the discovery and synthesis of new medicinal compounds is the benzimidazole ring (Tewari *et al.*, 2006; Mishra *et al.*, 2006). Benzimidazole is a six-membered bicyclic heteroaromatic molecule in which the benzene ring is fused to the 4- and 5-positions of the imidazole ring. The benzimidazole ring contains two amphoteric nitrogen atoms in positions 1 and 3 that show both acidic and basic characteristics (Wright *et al.*, 1951). This nitrogen-containing heterocyclic moiety exhibited antibacterial, anticancer, anthelmintic, anticonvulsant, antioxidant (Singh *et al.*, 2016) antiinflammatory, antifungal, antipsychotic, antihistaminic and antiviral effects (Alaqeel *et al.*, 2016; Shatha Ibrahim *et al.*, 2016). The benzimidazole ring occurs in two tautomeric forms, with the hydrogen atom positioned on one of the two nitrogen atoms (Phillip *et al.*, 1951).

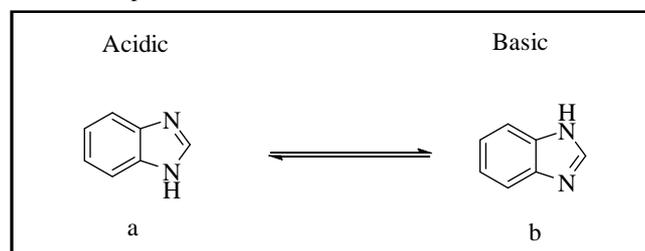


Figure 1: Structure of benzimidazole.

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Table 1: Properties of benzimidazole

IUPAC name	1 <i>H</i> -1,3-Benzimidazole
Molecular formula	C <sub>7</sub> H <sub>6</sub> N <sub>2</sub>
Molar mass	118.139 g·mol <sup>-1</sup>
Melting point	170 to 172°C (338 to 342°F; 443 to 445 K)
Boiling point	360°C
Appearance	Whitish
Odour	Characteristics

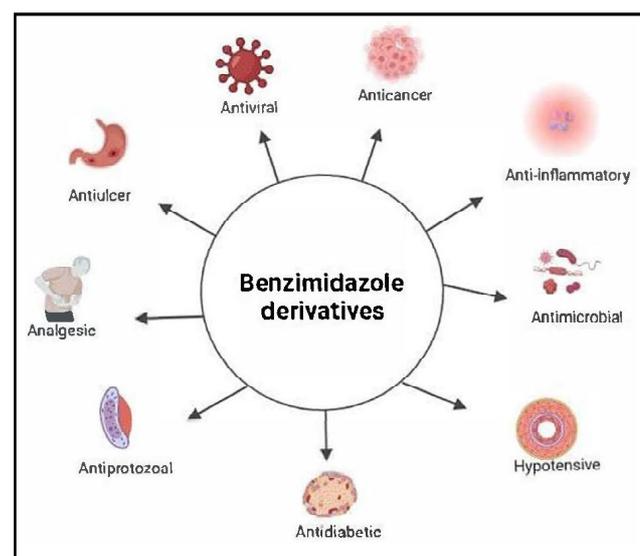
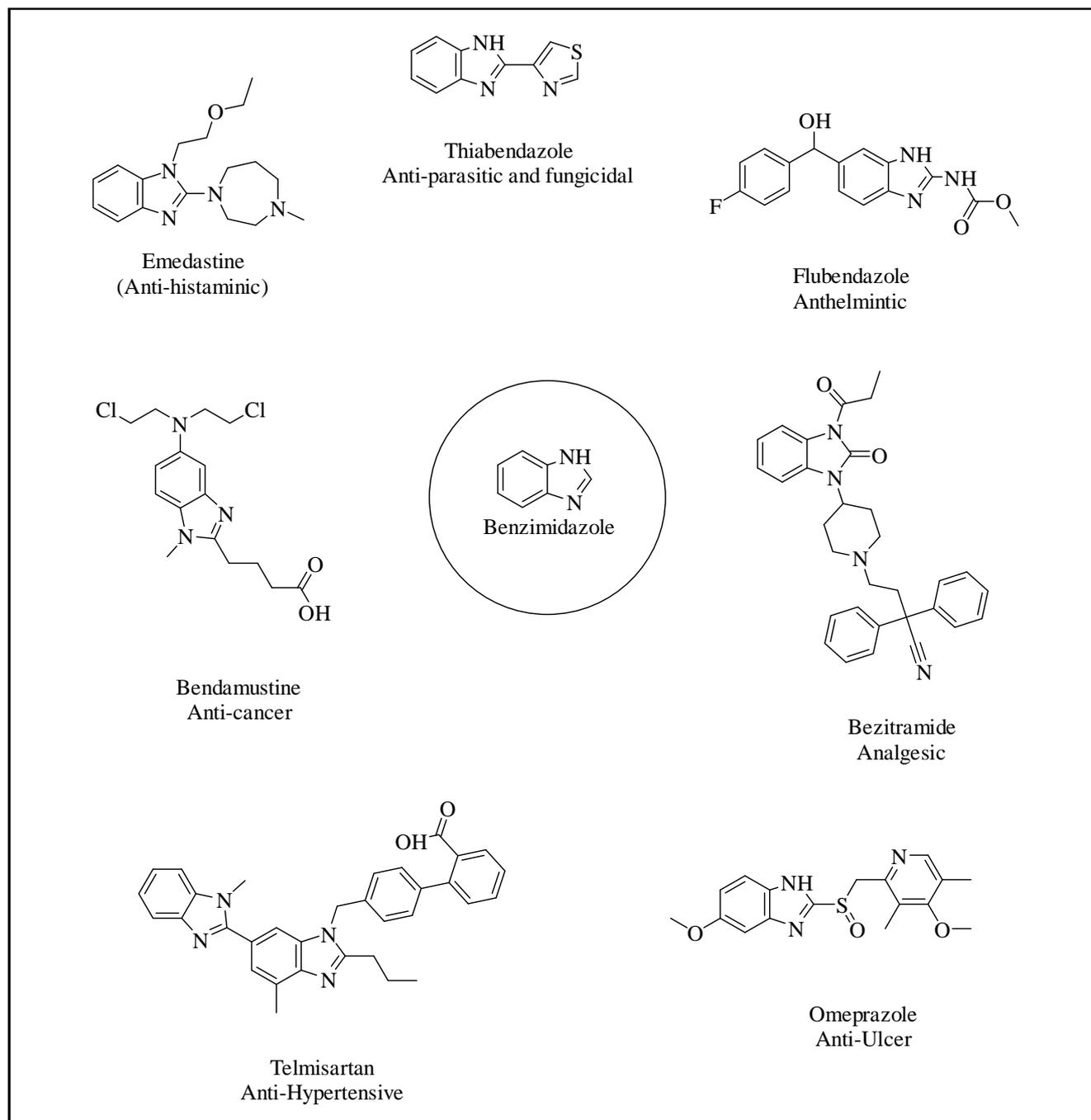


Figure 2: Biological activities of benzimidazole derivatives.

Numerous research has been undertaken in recent years that have generated highly exciting findings about the chemistry, structure-activity connection and biological activities of numerous benzimidazole-based compounds. The numerous biological actions of molecules containing the benzimidazole nucleus have encouraged

scientists (Fahim *et al.*, 2017) all around the world to develop and synthesise eco-friendly (Sudha *et al.*, 2020) and readily available (Punit *et al.*, 2019) efficacious (Thakur *et al.*, 2020) many benzimidazole derivatives. A series of latest released patents on the benzimidazole nucleus are given below (Bansal *et al.*, 2012; Silakari *et al.*, 2012).

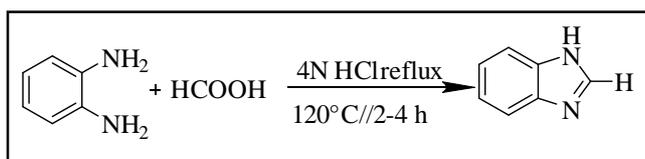


**Figure 3:** Some marketed drugs containing benzimidazole.

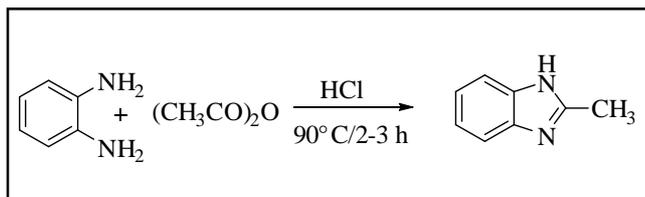
## 2. Material and Methods

**Method 1: Carboxylic acid reaction and its derivatives:** By refluxing o-phenylenediamine and formic acid in acidic conditions

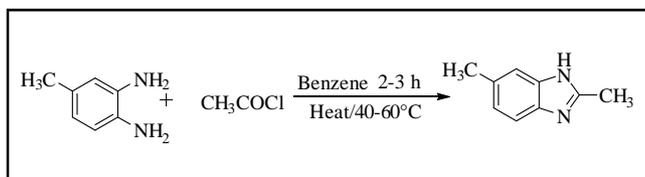
(4NHCl) at 120°C for 2 to 4 h to achieve 75% yield of benzimidazole. This is a typical laboratory technique for producing benzimidazole (Wundt *et al.*, 1878).



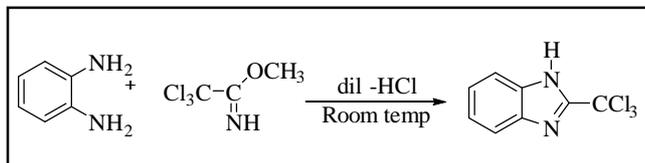
**Method 2: Using acidic anhydride:** O-phenylenediamine was condensed with acetic anhydride for 2 to 3 h at 90°C in the presence of diluted HCl. The yield of 2-methyl benzimidazole was determined to be 68% (Wagner *et al.*, 1946).



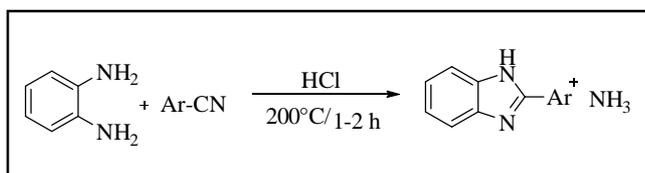
**Method 3: Using acetyl chloride:** The yield of 2,6-dimethyl benzimidazole is 71% when condensed with acetyl chloride and 5-methyl-1, 2-diaminophenyl are combined at 40 to 60°C for 2 to 3 h in benzene (Park *et al.*, 2014).



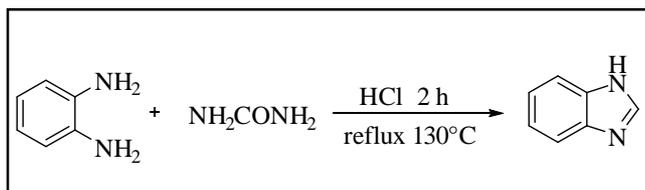
**Method 4: Using imino-ethers imidates:** When o-phenylene diamine and trichloro-acetimidate were combined at room temperature with dilute hydrochloric acid, 81% of 2-trichloromethyl benzimidazole was produced (Vishwanath *et al.*, 2015).



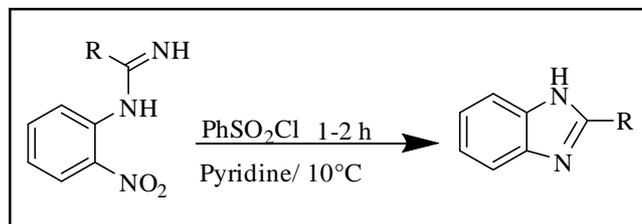
**Method 5: Nitrile-related reaction:** By combining substituted nitrile with o-phenylenediamine at 200°C for 1-2 h it produced 2-substituted benzimidazole with a 77% yield (Singh *et al.*, 2019).



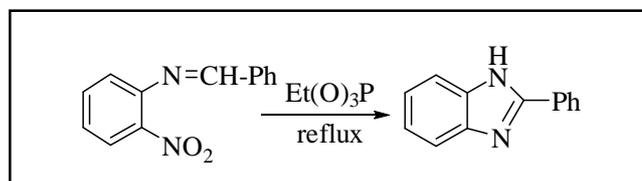
**Method 6: Using urea:** Benzimidazole is produced with a 78% yield when o-phenylene-diamine and urea are refluxed at 130°C for 2 h while being in the presence of hydrochloric acid (Shibinskya *et al.*, 2010).



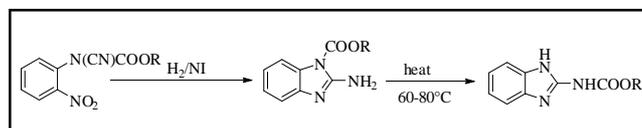
**Method 7: By amidine:** At 10°C for 1 to 2 h the derivative of amidine interacts with the phenylsulfonyl-chloride in pyridine to produce an 81% yield of 2-substituted benzimidazole (Rathod *et al.*, 2013).



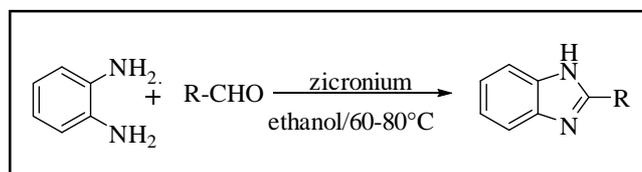
**Method 8: Via o-substituting N-benzamidinylanilines:** When N-benzyl-2-nitroaniline is refluxed at 80 to 100°C for 2 h with the reducing agent triethyl phosphate, 89% of 2-phenyl benzimidazoles are produced (Chiyanzu *et al.*, 2005).



**Method 9: Derived from ortho nitroarylamines and ortho-dinitroarenes:** Benzimidazoles are created by reducing ortho-nitroarylamines with a reducing agent such as nickel. Following reduction, ortho-nitroarylamines are transformed into 1-alkyl-2-amino-benzimidazole, which is subsequently heated to 60-80°C to generate a good yield of 2-substituted benzimidazole. Because of the high yield of this method, it is used in industry to produce large quantities of benzimidazole (Panneerselvam *et al.*, 2010).

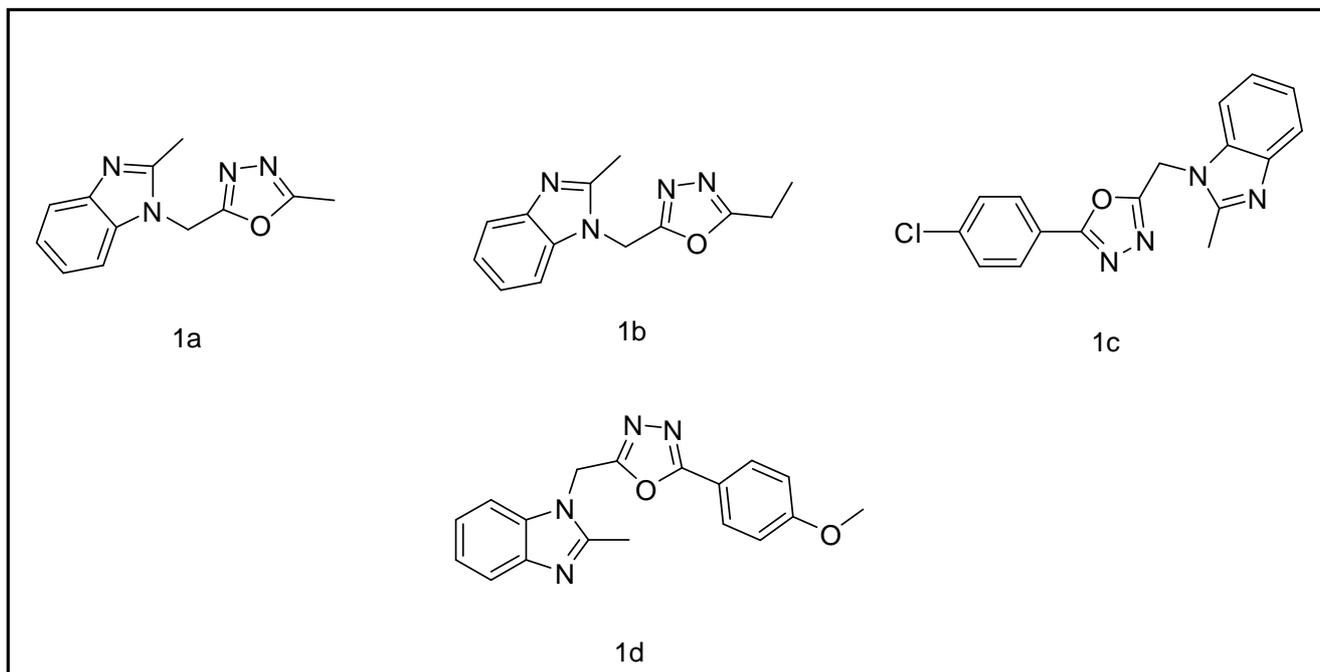


**Method 10: Green synthesis of benzimidazole:** o-phenylene-diamine with substituted aldehydes or ketone heated under the influence of greenish zirconium catalyst for 3-4 h at 60-80°C. These methods provide roughly 82% of the product yield while being economical and environment friendly (Sriram *et al.*, 2013).



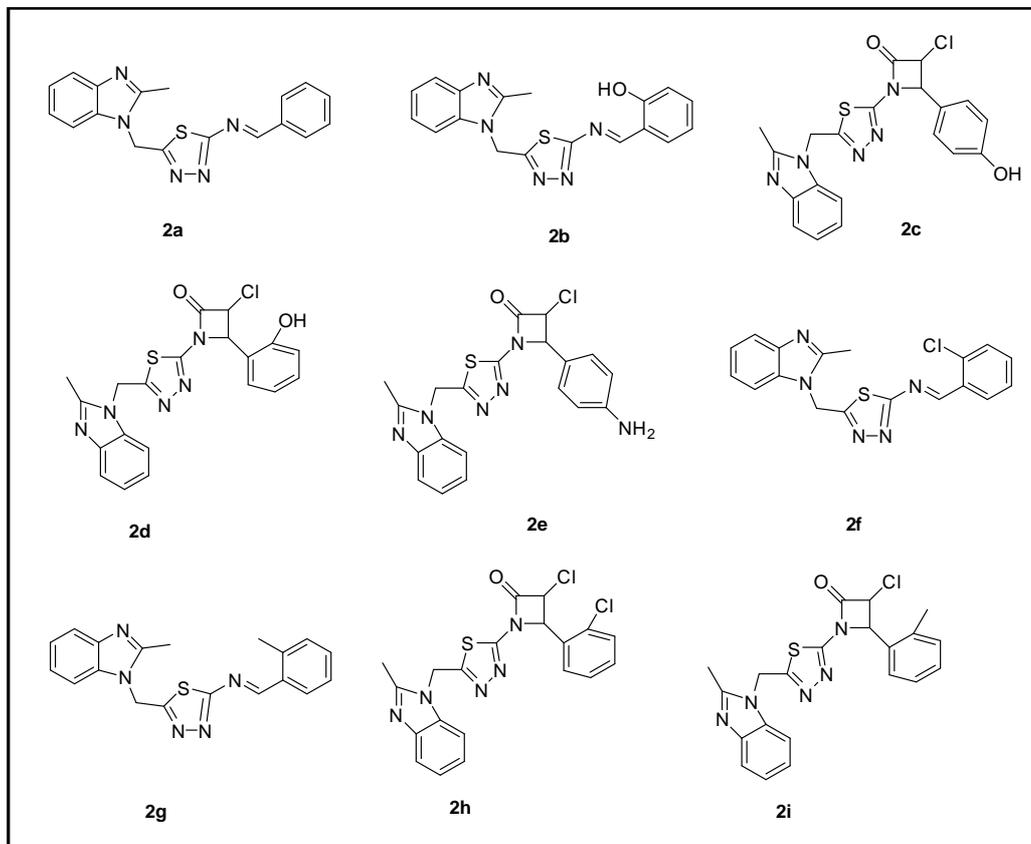
### 3. Antimicrobial activity

Ansari *et al.* (2009) used nucleophilic substitution reactions to create 2-substituted 1H-benzimidazole derivative and tested their antimicrobial activity as opposed to various microbes. Compound 1a, 1b, 1d demonstrated strong bacterial resistance, while compound 1c demonstrated strong action against fungi. According to SAR studies, increasing the number of side-chain carbon atoms at position-2 of the oxadiazole moiety and the para-substituted phenyl nucleus increases antimicrobial effectiveness against *C. albicans*, *B. subtilis*, *S. aureus*.

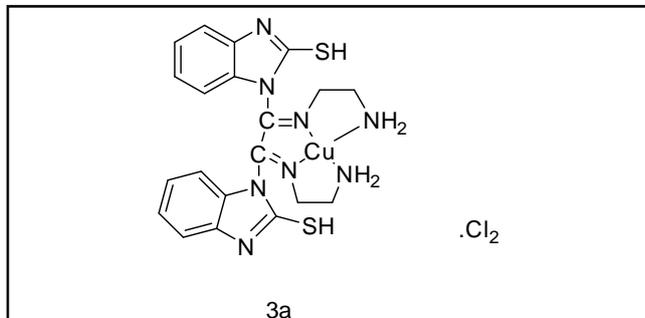


Ansari *et al.* (2009) reported number of 2-mercaptobenzimidazole derivative, their *in vitro* antibacterial effectiveness is determined by the cup-plate agar diffusion technique to wards *C. albicans*, *A. flavus*, *B. subtilis*, *E. coli* and *A. niger*. Studies of the relationships between

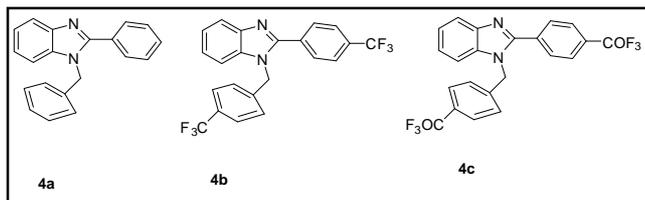
structure and activity identified compounds with ortho chloro, ortho-methyl, hydroxide and para amine (2b, 2c, and 2d). It became evident a group present in the phenyl ring, similar to that in the unsubstituted compound 2a, demonstrated high antibacterial activity potential as reference drugs.



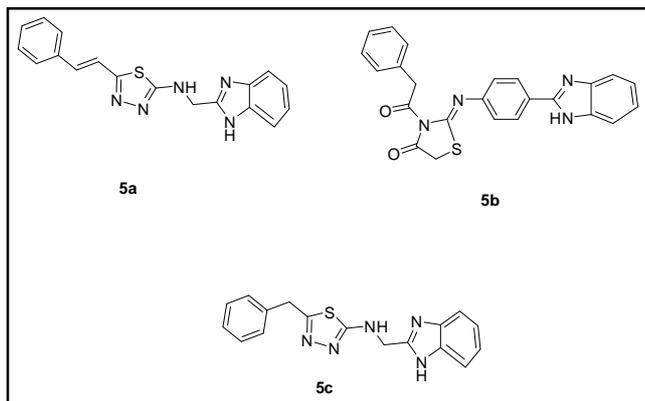
Arjmand *et al.* (2005). By condensation of 2-mercaptobenzimidazole and diethyl oxalate, a novel Cu (II) complex benzimidazole derivatives was created. It was then tested for its antibacterial activity towards *S. aureus*, *E. coli* and *A. niger*. Compound 3a has the strongest antibacterial and antifungal effects.



Bandyopadhyay *et al.* (2011) Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> nanocrystals were used as heterogeneous catalysts in the mild reaction conditions for the synthesis of a new class of 1,2-disubstituted benzimidazole derivatives for antimicrobial effectiveness towards *S. aureus*, *S. dysenteriae*, *B. cereus*, *V. cholerae*, and *E. coli*. The activity was evaluated (Kirby-Bauer disc diffusion method). When compared to conventional ciprofloxacin, compounds 4a, 4b, and 4c displayed good action whereas ciprofloxacin killed these bacteria after 48 h, compounds 4a-4c produced 100% bactericidal effectiveness towards tested microbes within 24 h.

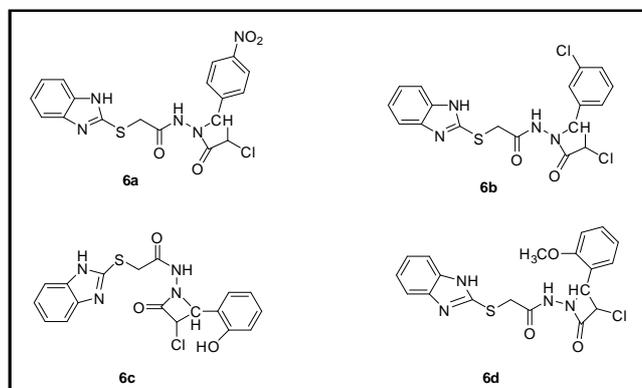


Barot *et al.* (2017) created novel benzimidazole derivatives and tested them against *C. albicans*, *E. faecalis*, *P. aeruginosa*, *B. cereus*, *E. coli*, *K. pneumoniae*, *S. aureus*, *A. niger*, and *F. oxyspora*. Compounds 5a and 5b showed strong antibacterial activity, compound 5c showed strong antifungal activity.

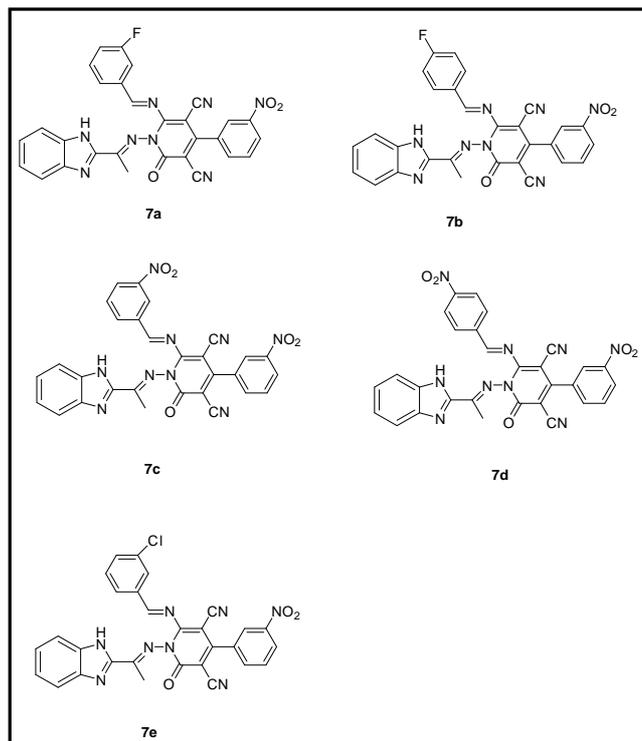


Desai *et al.* (2006) synthesised some 2-mercapto benzimidazole and  $\beta$ -lactam segment derivative containing -CONH- and their antimicrobial effectiveness was examined through Kirby-Bauer disc diffusion technique and *in vitro* antibacterial capability was examined towards standard tested strains using streptomycin and fluconazole.

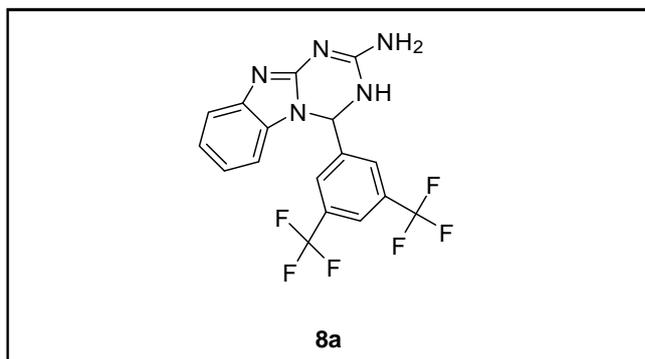
Compound 7a demonstrated excellent inhibited behaviour to wards *B. subtilis*, compound 7b demonstrated significant efficacy to wards *S. aureus*, *E. coli* and compound 7c demonstrated significant inhibitory behaviour to wards *A. niger*. Compound 7d demonstrated excellent efficacy to wards *C. krusei*.



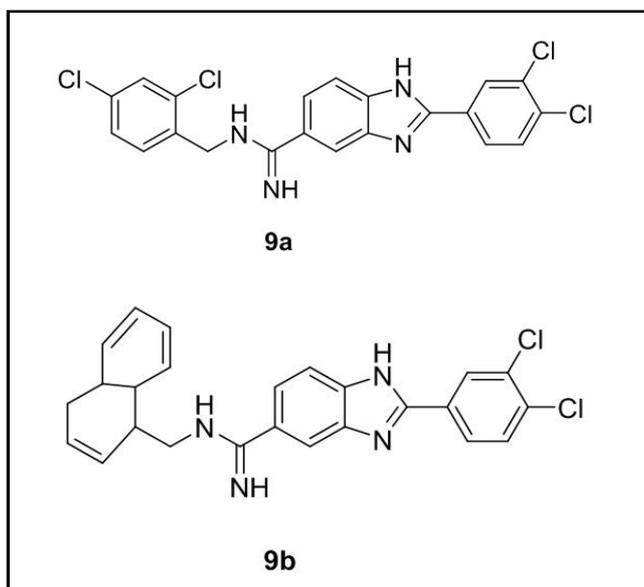
Desai *et al.* (2014) identified new 2-pyridone-containing benzimidazoles that were tested by the traditional broth dilution method for their antibacterial efficacy towards *A. clavatus*, *C. albicans*, *S. pyogenes*, *E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *A. niger* compared to chloramphenicol, the produced compounds 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d with electron-withdrawing group (nitro) at meta position had higher antimicrobial effectiveness, compound 7e showed the best antifungal action as compared to ketoconazole.



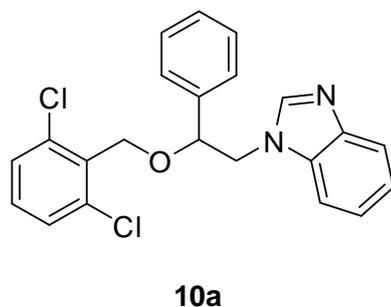
Dolzhenko *et al.* (2005) by using the two fold serial dilution procedure, new benzimidazole compound was created and examine their *in vitro* for antimicrobial effectiveness. When compared to common medication tetracycline, compound 8a showed good antibacterial activity.



Goker *et al.* (2005) by using the tube dilution method, newly synthesised substituted benzimidazole carboxamide compounds were tested for their antibacterial efficacy against a selection of microorganisms. The antibacterial activity of compounds 9a and 9b was substantial and comparable to that of conventional medications (ampicillin and sultamicillin).

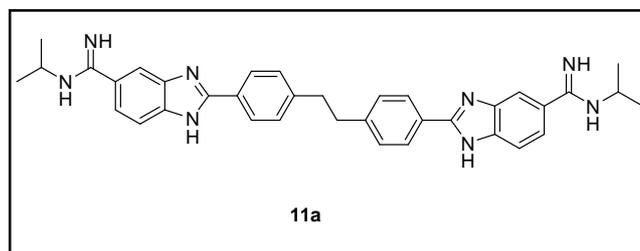


Güven *et al.* (2007) identified some phenyl-substituted benzyl ethers and benzimidazoles and assessed their antibacterial efficacy against a number of microbial species. Compound 10a is produced derivative which has a good antimicrobial effect and is compared to original medication.

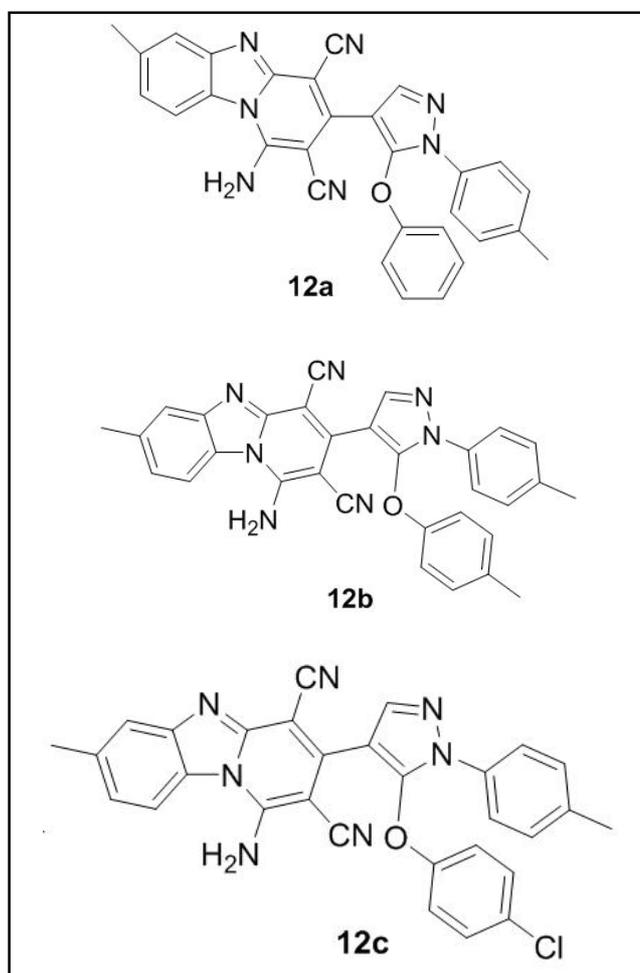


Hu *et al.* (2009) created compounds containing bis-benzimidazole diamidine, their effectiveness against test species and existing

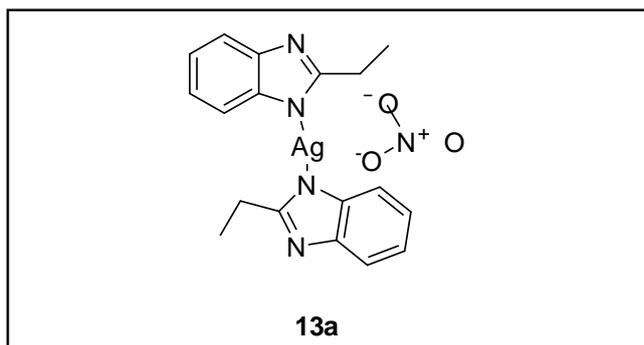
treatments were evaluated (penicillin G, vancomycin and ciprofloxacin). Vancomycin was outperformed in terms of compound 11a as powerful antibacterial action.



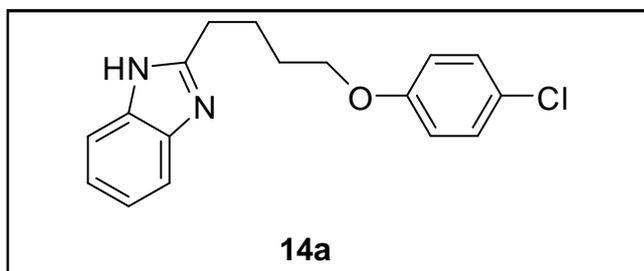
Jardosh *et al.* (2013) developed a pyrido[1,2-a] benzimidazole derivative using the broth microdilution technique and tested their *in vitro* antimicrobial activity towards *C. albicans*, *V. cholerae*, *S. typhi*, *B. subtilis*, *S. pneumoniae*, *C. tetani*, *A. fumigatus*, and *E. coli*. Compounds 12a-12c from the produced derivatives showed good antibacterial efficacy when compared to conventional medications.



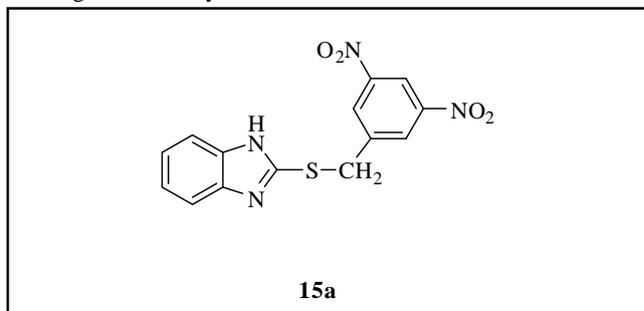
Kalinowska-Lis *et al.* (2014) created synthetic benzimidazole silver (I) complexes and tested them towards *C. albicans*, *S. aureus* and *S. epidermidis* for antibacterial activity. Comparing compound 13a to the conventional medications  $\text{AgNO}_3$  and silver sulfadiazine, compound 13a showed good antifungal but modest antibacterial action.



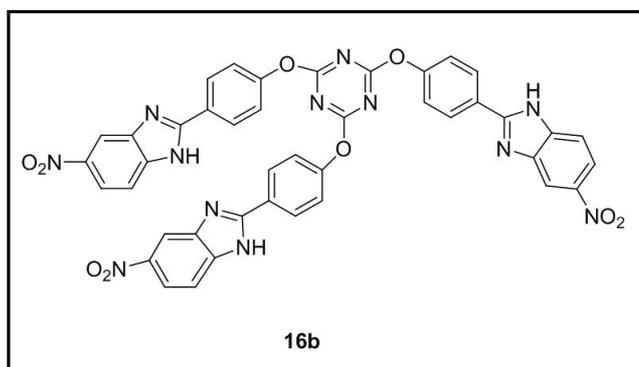
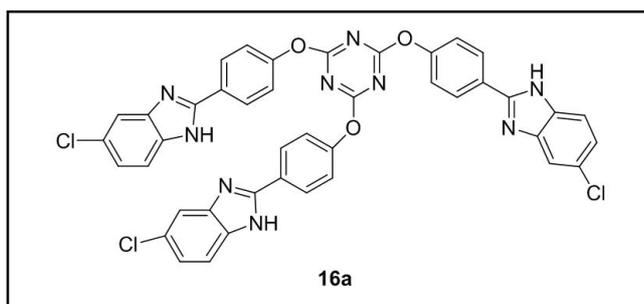
Khalafi-Nezhad *et al.* (2005) developed chloro aryloxyalkyl benzimidazole derivatives using the disc diffusion method and examined their *in vitro* antimicrobial efficacy towards *S. aureus* and *S. typhi*. Compound 14a effectively combated the indicated microbial species when evaluated for bacterial activity.



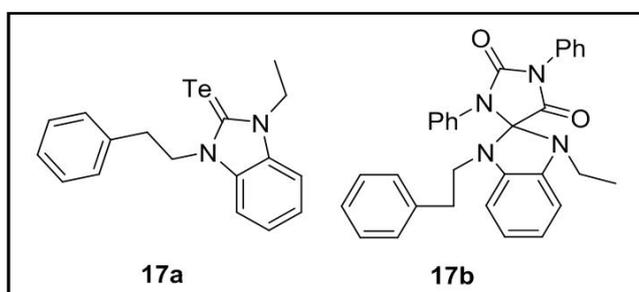
Klimesova *et al.* (2002) produced some 2-alkylsulphonyl benzimidazoles and tested their *in vitro* against a number of different species of mycobacteria and fungi using isoniazid and ketoconazole as standards. Among the produced substances, 15a had notable antifungal and antimycobacterial effects.



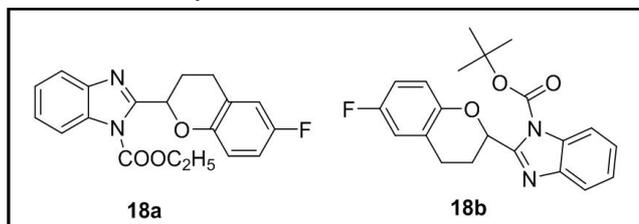
Koc *et al.* (2010) developed some tripodal-benzimidazole derivatives using the standard disc diffusion method and tested their antimicrobial efficacy towards *E. coli*, *B. subtilis* and *S. aureus*. Compounds 16a-16b showed promising antimicrobial activity as gen-tamycin a reference.



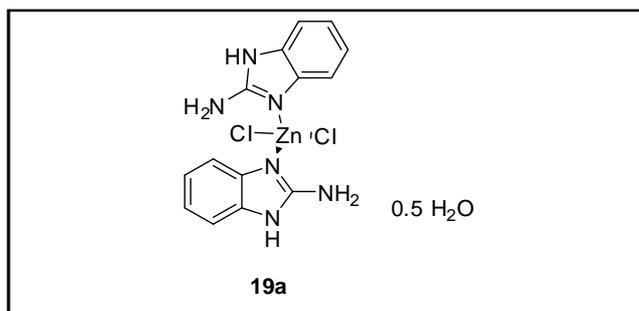
Kucukbay *et al.* (2003) created novel electron-rich olefin benzimidazole derivatives and assessed for their *in vitro* antibacterial efficacy against *C. tropicalis* and *C. albicans*. Compound 17a-17b, were discovered to be the most successful antibacterial activity as standard medication.



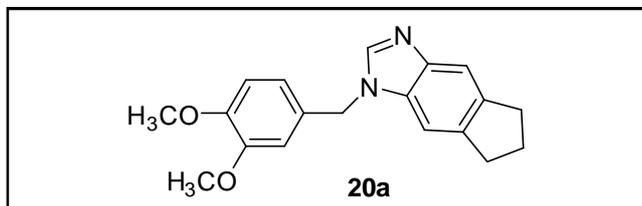
Kumar *et al.* (2006) produced some substituted benzimidazole scaffolds and tested them towards *S. typhimurium* and *S. aureus* for their *in vitro* antibacterial properties, and contrasted them to the gold standard cephalixin. Compounds 18a and 18b displayed dismal antibacterial efficacy.



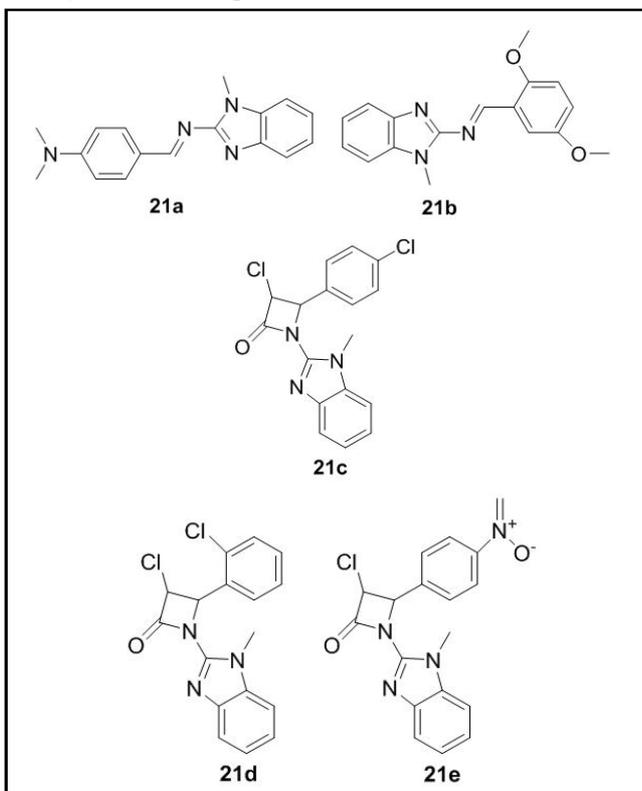
Lopez-Sandoval *et al.* (2008) presented variety of benzimidazole with complexes of cobalt (II), zinc (II) and assessed their antibacterial activity through disc diffusion and antibiotic microbiological tests towards *S. aureus*, *P. vulgaris*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. Typhi*, *E. coli* and *M. luteus*. Complex 19a, one of the produced compounds showed good antibacterial efficacy.



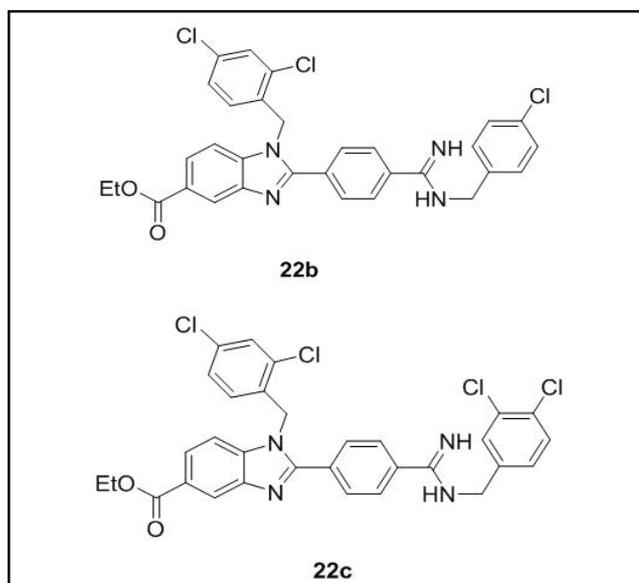
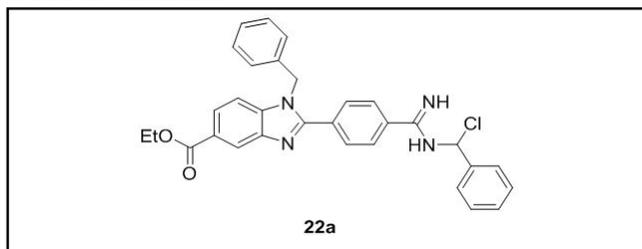
Mehboob *et al.* (2015) identified some second-generation benzimidazole derivatives and tested them against *F. tularensis*, *E. coli* and MRSA for their antibacterial activity. The synthesised substance 20a showed effective antibacterial action against particular bacterial strains.



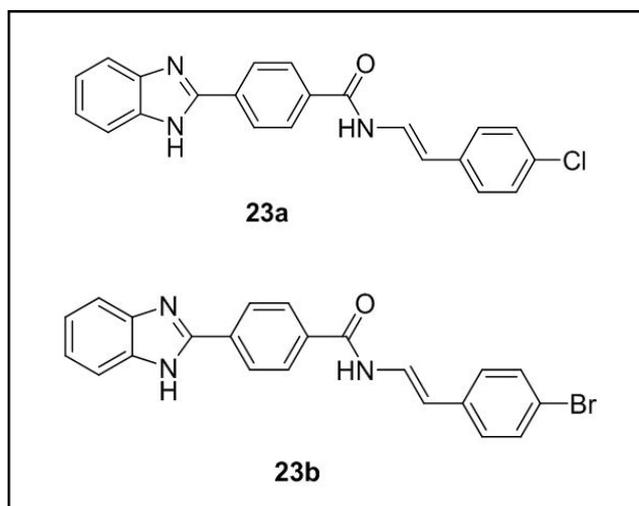
Noolvi *et al.* (2014) produced some 1H-benzimidazole azetidine-2-one scaffolds using an agar diffusion technique and examined their antibacterial activity against *P. aeruginosa*, *E. coli*, *B. pumillus*, and *S. aureus*. Compounds 21a-21e demonstrated good antimicrobial efficacy as standard ampicillin.



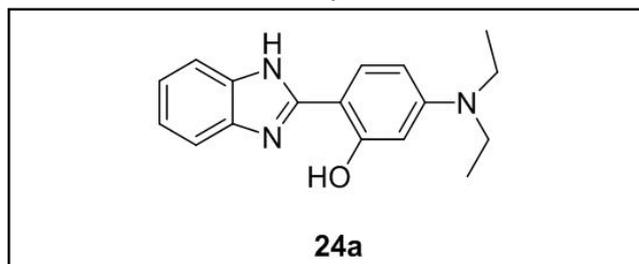
Ozden *et al.* (2005) created some benzimidazole-5-carboxylic acid alkyl esters and tested their antibacterial effectiveness against methicillin-resistant *C. albicans*, *S. aureus*, *S. faecalis* and *E. coli*. Compound 22a, 22b, and 22c revealed potential antibacterial activity as reference medicines.

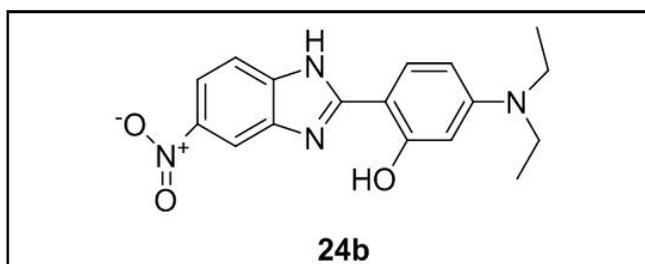


Ozkay *et al.* (2010) developed number some benzimidazole compound with hydrazone moiety and tested their *in vitro* antibacterial activity towards *P. aeruginosa*, *L. cytogenes*, *E. faecalis*, *B. subtilis*, *E. coli* ATCC 35218, *S. aureus*, *K. pneumoniae*, *E. coli* ATCC 25922, *etc.* Comparing these compounds to conventional medicines (chloramphenicol and ketoconazole) 23a and 23b in this series shown potential antibacterial and antifungal properties.

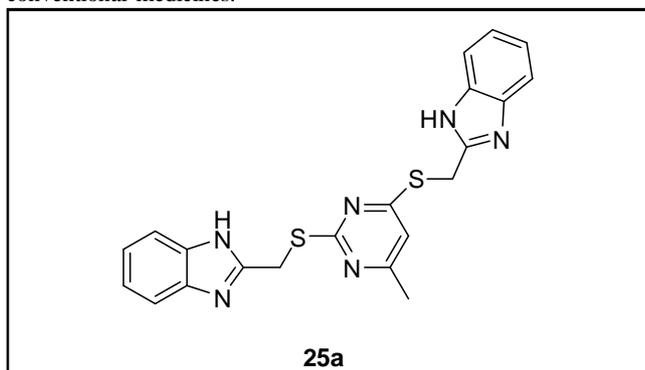


Padalkar *et al.* (2016) developed novel class of benzimidazole derivatives, using serial dilution technique and they were examined towards *S. aureus*, *C. albicans*, *E. coli* and *A. niger*. Compounds 24a and 24b shown substantial activity as conventional medicines.

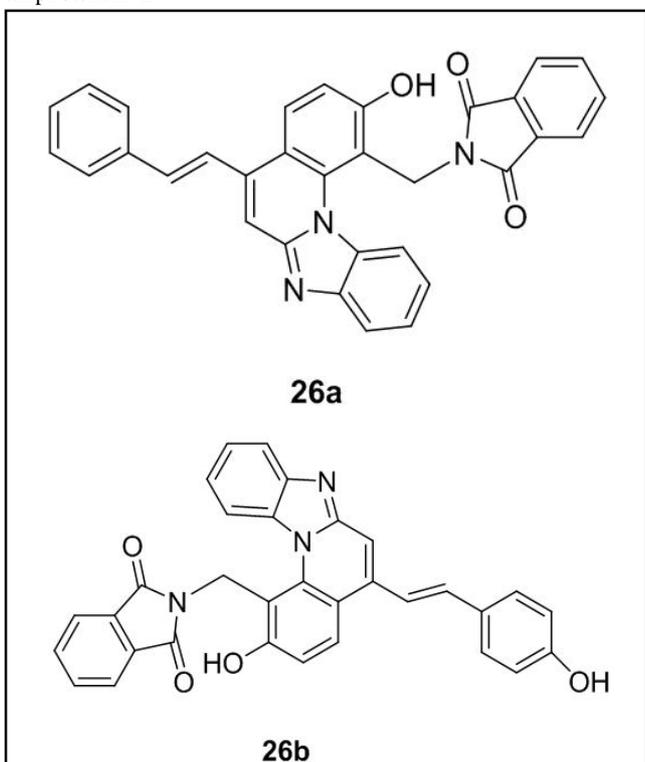




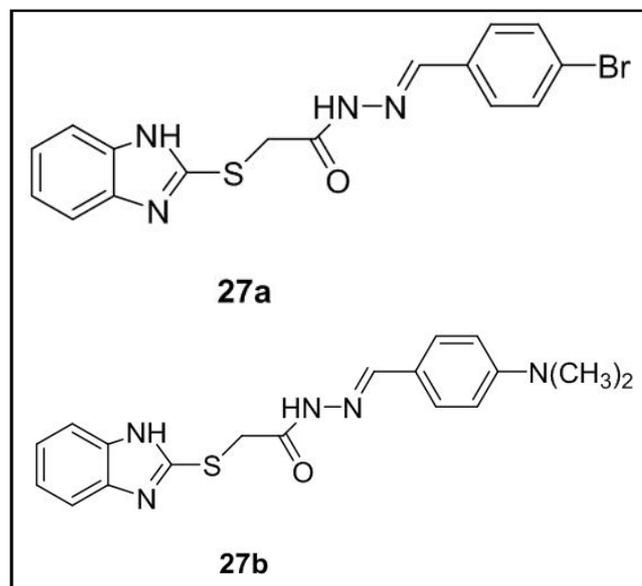
Seenaiah *et al.* (2014) developed some benzimidazole derivatives using broth dilution and agar well diffusion (ZI) techniques and tested towards microbial species for their antibacterial efficacy. Compound 25 a showed potential activity as compared to conventional medicines.



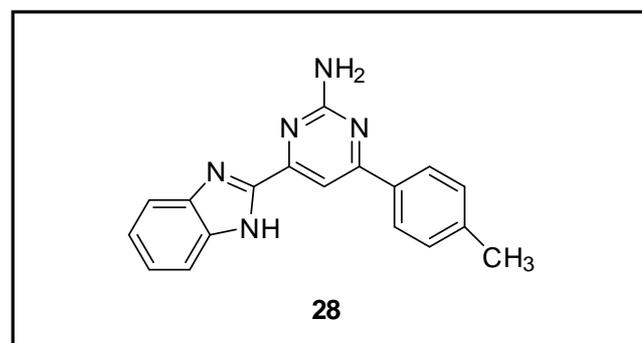
Tiwari *et al.* (2007) created some benzimidazole scaffolds using agar plate method and tested their *in vitro* for antifungal potential towards *A. niger* and *A. flavus*. Compounds 26a and 26b from the synthesised derivatives demonstrated excellent antimicrobial activity against amphotericin B.



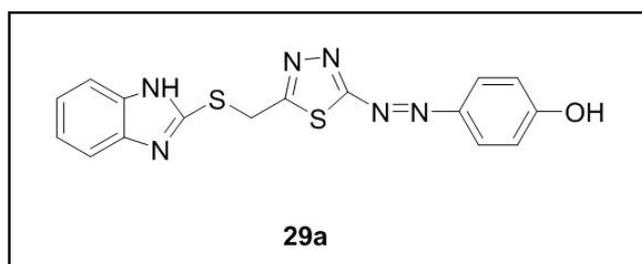
Yadav *et al.* (2018) synthetically produced 2-substituted benzimidazole derivatives and tested towards microbial species for their antimicrobial efficacy. Compound 27a shown excellent antimicrobial activity when compared to standard cefadroxil while as compound 27b demonstrated the highest antimicrobial potential against *A. niger* (MIC = 0.018 mM).

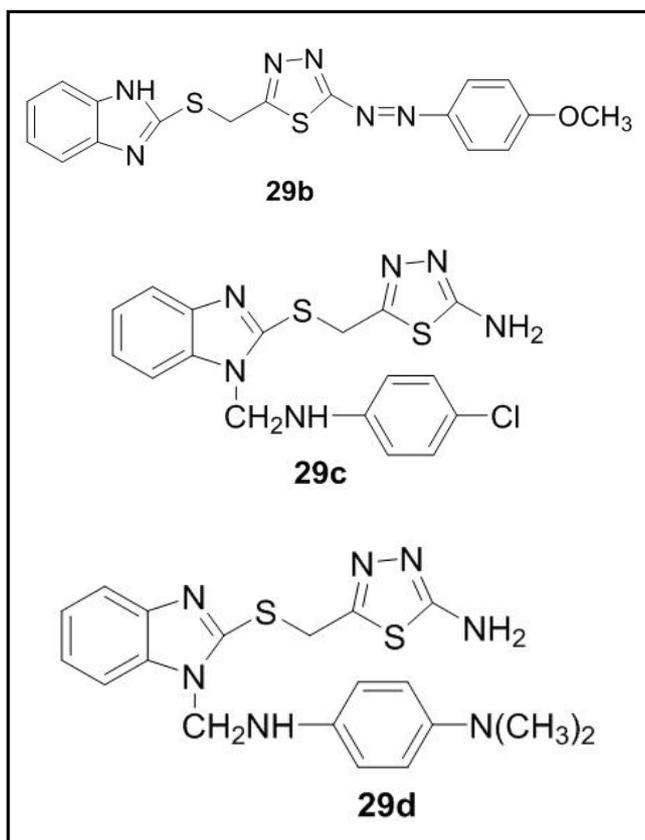


Liu *et al.* (2018) developed some aminopyrimidinyl benzimidazoles as antibacterial agents and tested towards methicillin resistant *S. aureus*, *A. flavus* and *E. coli*. Compound 28 demonstrated good antibacterial activity than the usual medications chloromycin, norfloxacin and fluconazole.

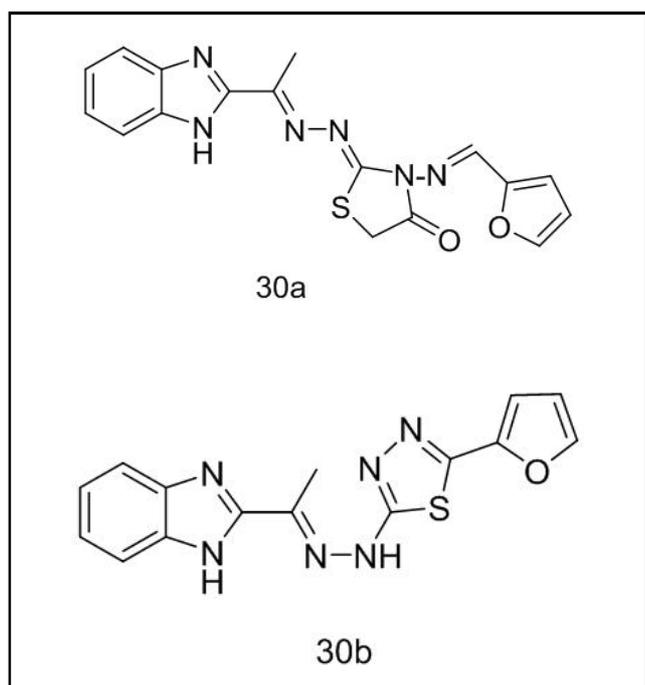


Mahmoud *et al.* (2020) produced several possible antibacterial benzimidazole derivatives having 1,3,4-thiadiazole ring and azo moiety and tested towards *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *E. coli* and *B. subtilis*. Compound 29a, 29b, 29c, 29d shown good action as standard ciprofloxacin and amoxicillin.

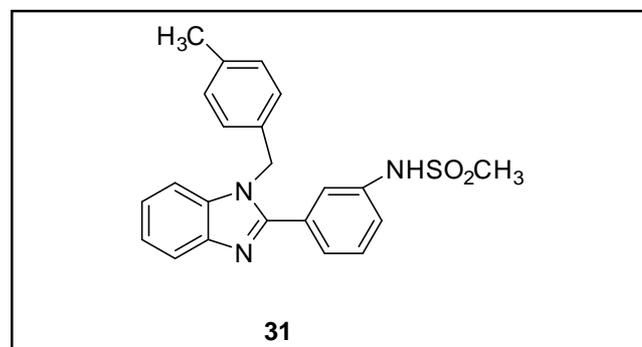




Abdel-Motaal *et al.* (2020) produced some substituted benzimidazole-2-yl derivatives and tested towards *B. pumilus*, *E. coli*, and *S. aureus*. Compounds 30a and 30b which included thiazolone and thiazolone moieties, demonstrated good antimicrobial efficacy to normal gentamicin.



Dokla *et al.* (2020) developed benzimidazole derivative with colistin and tested towards *K. pneumoniae*, *E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa* and *A. baumannii*. Compound 31 demonstrated a potential synergistic effect with MICs ranging from 8 to 16 µg/ml.



#### 4. Conclusion

After analysing the literature reports, we concluded that benzimidazoles is recognised as a potential class of bioactive heterocyclic compounds which demonstrated variety of biological actions, such as antimicrobial, antiviral, antidiabetic, and anticancer activity.

Researchers looking to synthesise new molecules with the benzimidazole nucleus, which have a great deal of potential for further investigation into new therapeutic possibilities, may find the current review which only focuses on the antimicrobial activity of reported benzimidazole derivatives, to be a useful source of information.

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#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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