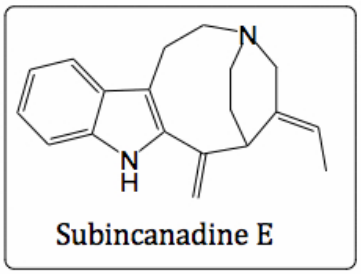
Studies towards the first total synthesis of the indole alkaloid subincanadine E are reported in a multi-step sequence starting from tryptamine. This natural product was first isolated from *Picralima nitida* cell suspension cultures by Lim and co-workers in 1982 under the name pericine and again in 2002 by Kobayashi as subincanadine E from *Aspidosperma subincanum*. It is the most biologically potent member of the subincanadine family of alkaloids with *in vitro* toxicity against both lymphoma and carcinoma cell lines (LD_{50} = 0.3 μg/mL and 4.4 μg/mL, respectively).



Subincanadine E