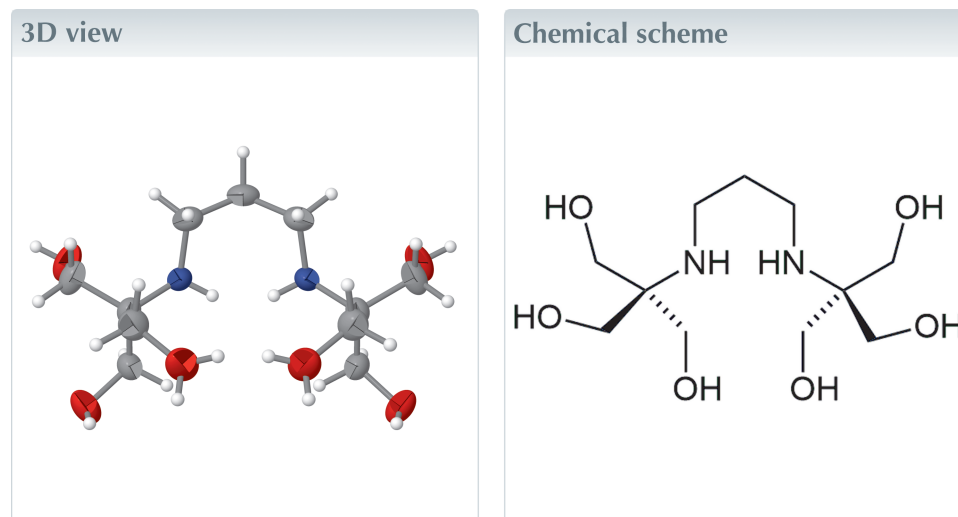


N,N'-Bis[tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl]propane-1,3-diamine (bis-tris propane)

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The title compound, C₁₁H₂₆N₂O₆, used for the preparation of buffer solutions and high-nuclearity coordination complexes, crystallizes with a half molecule in the asymmetric unit. The full molecule is completed through mirror symmetry *m* in the space group *Pnma*. The molecular shape is bent and, as a consequence, some H atoms are disordered to avoid too short H···H intramolecular contacts. Molecules in the crystal are linked *via* O—H···N and N—H···O hydrogen bonds, forming chains along [100], which are further packed through other O—H···O hydrogen bonds between hydroxy groups. The here-reported structure probably represents the less-stable form in a set of polymorphs.



Structure description

1,3-Bis[tris(hydroxymethyl)methylamino]propane, also known as bis-tris propane or BTP, is a diaminopolyol used in biochemistry and molecular biology for the preparation of buffer solutions in the wide pH range 6.0–9.5. It is readily soluble in water, and can be recrystallized as large plate-shaped single crystals (Fig. 1, inset).

This polydentate molecule can also be used as a ligand for coordination chemistry. Crystal structures based on Cu²⁺ (*e.g.* Milway *et al.*, 2013; Kirillova *et al.*, 2017), V⁴⁺ (Nachtigall *et al.*, 2017), polyoxidomolybdates (Li *et al.*, 2015) and lanthanides (*e.g.* Yinling *et al.*, 2022) have been reported. It is surprising that the crystal structure of the free ligand BTP has never been published.

BTP crystallizes in a centrosymmetric space group, *Pnma*, with the molecule placed on the mirror plane normal to the unit-cell *b* axis (Fig. 1). Within this structure, the molecule thus belongs to the *C_s* point group, although it does not display a *trans*-extended geometry, as might be expected. Instead, it adopts a bent-shaped geometry, defined by the *gauche* torsion angle N1—C2—C1—C2¹ = −70.4 (3)° [symmetry code: (i) *x*, $\frac{3}{2} - y$, *z*]. This

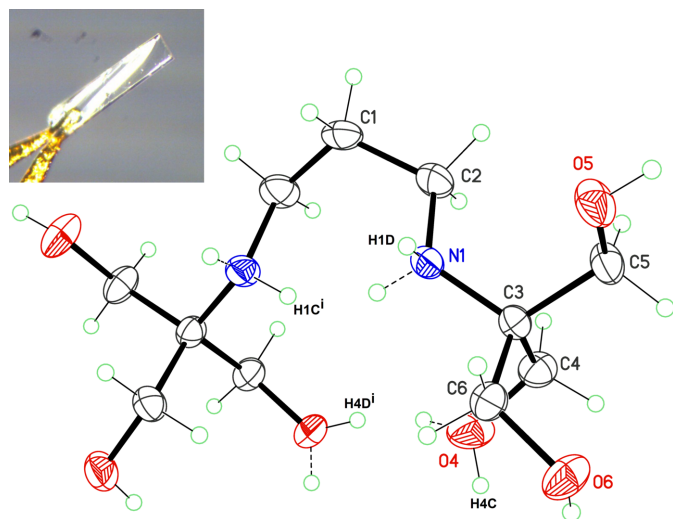


Figure 1
Molecular structure of the title compound, with displacement ellipsoids for non-H atoms at the 30% probability level. H atoms with dashed bonds are disordered counterparts for crystallographically equivalent H atoms generated through m symmetry ($x, \frac{3}{2} - y, z$). Non-labelled C, N and O atoms are generated using the same mirror symmetry. The top-left inset shows the single crystal used for data collection. It is *ca.* 0.7 mm long.

shape was previously observed for a Ca^{2+} complex (Liu *et al.*, 2021) or in Cu^{2+} coordination compounds (Milway *et al.*, 2013). The amine H atom is clearly disordered over two equally occupied positions, H1C and H1D, avoiding a short

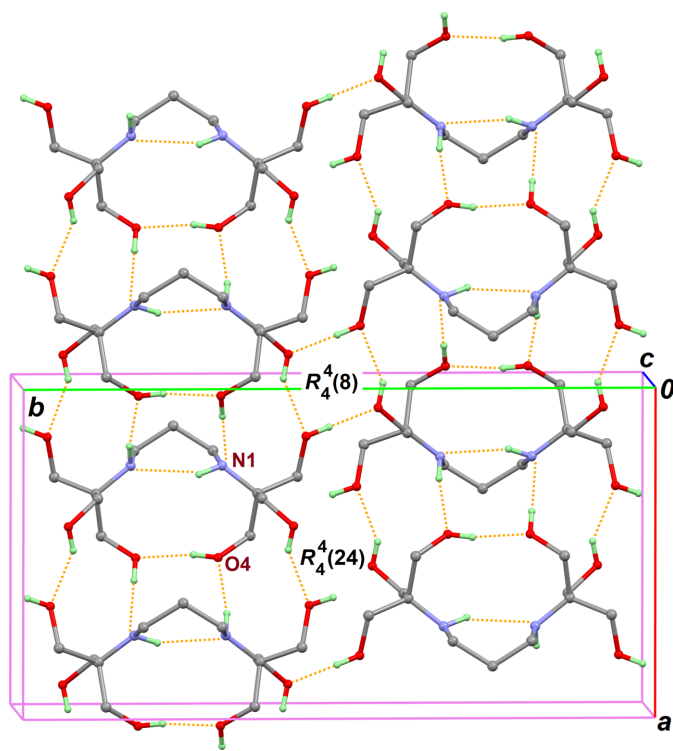


Figure 2
Part of the crystal structure, as viewed down unit-cell axis c , showing the framework of hydrogen bonds (orange dashed lines). For the sake of clarity, only one position for disordered H atoms bonded to amine N1 and hydroxy O4 groups is retained, and all C-bonded H atoms are omitted.

Table 1
Hydrogen-bond geometry (\AA , $^\circ$).

$D-H\cdots A$	$D-H$	$H\cdots A$	$D\cdots A$	$D-H\cdots A$
$\text{N1-H1C}\cdots\text{N1}^i$	0.86 (2)	2.24 (3)	2.970 (3)	143 (3)
$\text{O4-H4D}\cdots\text{O4}^i$	0.80 (3)	1.90 (3)	2.679 (3)	162 (6)
$\text{O4-H4C}\cdots\text{N1}^{ii}$	0.82 (3)	2.09 (3)	2.905 (2)	175 (4)
$\text{N1-H1D}\cdots\text{O4}^{iii}$	0.82 (2)	2.09 (3)	2.905 (2)	169 (3)
$\text{O6-H6}\cdots\text{O5}^{ii}$	0.81 (2)	2.02 (3)	2.7390 (19)	148 (3)
$\text{O5-H5}\cdots\text{O6}^{iv}$	0.85 (2)	1.88 (2)	2.7305 (18)	176 (3)

Symmetry codes: (i) $x, -y + \frac{3}{2}, z$; (ii) $x + \frac{1}{2}, y, -z + \frac{1}{2}$; (iii) $x - \frac{1}{2}, y, -z + \frac{1}{2}$; (iv) $-x + \frac{1}{2}, -y + 1, z + \frac{1}{2}$.

$\text{H}\cdots\text{H}$ contact [$\text{H1C}\cdots\text{H1C}^i \simeq 1.4 \text{\AA}$], which would be destabilizing for the molecular structure. In the same way, the H atom for the hydroxy group O4 is disordered over two sites, H4C and H4D. An alternative would be to refine a non-disordered model in space group $Pn2_1a$, with independent amine H atoms fully occupying sites H1C and H1D on two independent N atoms, as well as hydroxy H atoms with full occupancy on two independent O4 atoms. Such a model refines well ($R_1 = 0.039$) but is unlikely, for two reasons: (i) convergence is not reached if H atoms are refined with free coordinates, and (ii) intensity statistics show a centric distribution, with, for example, $\langle |Z - 1| \rangle = 0.957$ (theoretical: 0.968). These disordered H atoms also allow the formation of two intramolecular $\text{N-H}\cdots\text{N}$ and $\text{O-H}\cdots\text{O}$ hydrogen bonds, consolidating the bent conformation (Table 1, entries 1 and 2).

The crystal structure is essentially monophasic: the molecules form chains along the $[100]$ direction through the intermolecular hydrogen bonds $\text{O4-H4C}\cdots\text{N1}^{ii}$ and $\text{N1-H1D}\cdots\text{O4}^{iii}$ involving amine and hydroxy functional

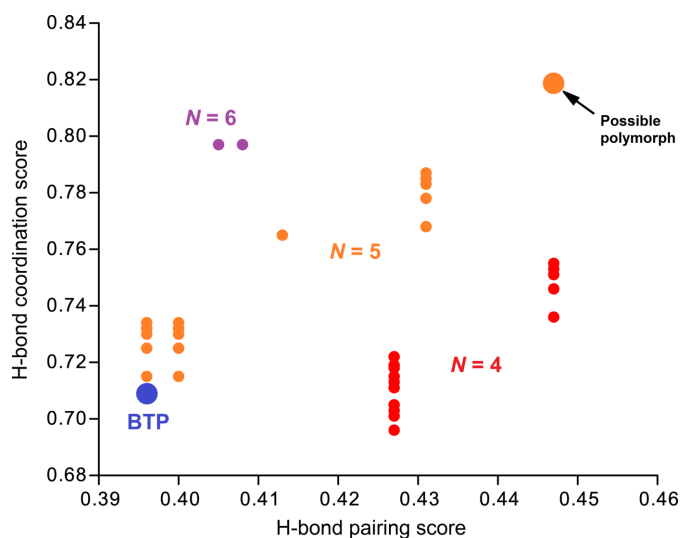


Figure 3
Hydrogen-bonding landscape for BTP, calculated with *Mercury* (Macrae *et al.*, 2020). The blue dot on the left-bottom corner corresponds to the here-reported structure, while the orange spot on the upper-right corner is for an hypothetical polymorph. N represents the number of intermolecular hydrogen-bond pairs, which are shown with different colours. For the regression analysis, the area under ROC curve was 0.835. Putative hydrogen-bonding networks were built with likelihood > 0.1 , for both hydrogen-bond propensity and hydrogen-bond coordination.

groups with disordered H atoms (Table 1, entries 3 and 4). Interchain O—H...O contacts build a network of fused centrosymmetric $R_4^4(8)$ and $R_4^4(24)$ ring motifs, parallel to the monoperiodic chains (see two last entries in Table 1 and Fig. 2).

The unexpected conformation reported herein for BTP could be a consequence of a propensity to polymorphism. The assessment of hydrogen-bond coordination likelihood of BTP was carried out using the hydrogen bond propensity tool available in *Mercury* (Galek *et al.*, 2014; Macrae *et al.*, 2020), with the CSD-6.00 database as a training dataset. The model refined in the $Pn2_1a$ space group was used as a target, since the molecule is disorder-free, and the asymmetric unit includes the complete BTP molecule ($Z' = 1$). The resulting hydrogen-bonding landscape is compelling (Fig. 3): in the map (mean hydrogen-bond pairing propensity, mean hydrogen-bond coordination), the here-reported crystal structure is found at coordinates (0.396, 0.709), while a more stable polymorph is predicted at coordinates (0.447, 0.819). We thus assume that the Ostwald's rule for the formation of polymorphs holds, and that we crystallized the less-stable form of BTP.

Synthesis and crystallization

BTP, coming from a commercial supplier (Sigma-Aldrich), was recrystallized from a saturated water solution, at room temperature. Single crystals were obtained after a few days.

Refinement

Crystal data, data collection and structure refinement details are summarized in Table 2. All H atoms were visible in difference maps, and were refined with free coordinates and isotropic displacement parameters. O—H and N—H bond lengths were restrained to 0.85 (2) and 0.90 (2) Å, respectively. H atoms bonded to N1 and O4 are disordered over two positions (H1C/H1D and H4C/H4D), and their occupancies were fixed to 1/2.

Funding information

Funding for this research was provided by: Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (grant No. 268178; scholarship No. 928228 to Ismael Angel-Nieto). APB thanks VIEP-BUAP for the financial support to Project 00075-PVG/2025.

Table 2
Experimental details.

Crystal data	
Chemical formula	$C_{11}H_{26}N_2O_6$
M_r	282.34
Crystal system, space group	Orthorhombic, $Pnma$
Temperature (K)	296
a, b, c (Å)	10.7262 (3), 20.5189 (5), 6.4624 (3)
V (Å ³)	1422.31 (8)
Z	4
Radiation type	Ag $K\alpha$, $\lambda = 0.56083$ Å
μ (mm ⁻¹)	0.07
Crystal size (mm)	0.68 × 0.15 × 0.05
Data collection	
Diffractometer	Stoe Stadivari
Absorption correction	Multi-scan (<i>LANA</i> ; Stoe, 2025)
T_{min}, T_{max}	0.960, 0.997
No. of measured, independent and observed [$I > 2\sigma(I)$] reflections	68162, 1942, 1392
R_{int}	0.058
$(\sin \theta/\lambda)_{max}$ (Å ⁻¹)	0.682
Refinement	
$R[F^2 > 2\sigma(F^2)], wR(F^2), S$	0.047, 0.140, 1.08
No. of reflections	1942
No. of parameters	150
No. of restraints	6
H-atom treatment	All H-atom parameters refined
$\Delta\rho_{max}, \Delta\rho_{min}$ (e Å ⁻³)	0.25, -0.22

Computer programs: *X-AREA Pilatus3-SV*, *X-AREA Recipe*, *X-AREA Integrate* and *LANA* (Stoe, 2025), *SHELXT2018/2* (Sheldrick, 2015a), *SHELXL2025/1* (Sheldrick, 2015b), *XP* in *SHELXTL-Plus* (Sheldrick, 2008), *Mercury* (Macrae *et al.*, 2020) and *publCIF* (Westrip, 2010).

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full crystallographic data

IUCrData (2025). **10**, x250954 [https://doi.org/10.1107/S241431462500954X]

***N,N'*-Bis[tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl]propane-1,3-diamine (bis-tris propane)**

Ismael Angel-Nieto, Rosa Elena Arroyo-Carmona, Aarón Pérez-Benítez and Sylvain Bernès

N,N'*-Bis[tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl]propane-1,3-diamineCrystal data*

$C_{11}H_{26}N_2O_6$
 $M_r = 282.34$
 Orthorhombic, *Pnma*
 $a = 10.7262$ (3) Å
 $b = 20.5189$ (5) Å
 $c = 6.4624$ (3) Å
 $V = 1422.31$ (8) Å³
 $Z = 4$
 $F(000) = 616$

$D_x = 1.319$ Mg m⁻³
 Melting point: 437 K
 Ag *Kα* radiation, $\lambda = 0.56083$ Å
 Cell parameters from 34115 reflections
 $\theta = 2.9$ – 26.7°
 $\mu = 0.07$ mm⁻¹
 $T = 296$ K
 Plate, colourless
 0.68 × 0.15 × 0.05 mm

Data collection

Stoe Stadivari
 diffractometer
 Radiation source: Sealed X-ray tube, Axo Astix-
 f Microfocus source
 Graded multilayer mirror monochromator
 Detector resolution: 5.81 pixels mm⁻¹
 ω scans
 Absorption correction: multi-scan
 (*LANA*; Stoe, 2025)

$T_{\min} = 0.960$, $T_{\max} = 0.997$
 68162 measured reflections
 1942 independent reflections
 1392 reflections with $I > 2\sigma(I)$
 $R_{\text{int}} = 0.058$
 $\theta_{\max} = 22.5^\circ$, $\theta_{\min} = 3.0^\circ$
 $h = -14 \rightarrow 12$
 $k = -28 \rightarrow 28$
 $l = -8 \rightarrow 8$

Refinement

Refinement on F^2
 Least-squares matrix: full
 $R[F^2 > 2\sigma(F^2)] = 0.047$
 $wR(F^2) = 0.140$
 $S = 1.08$
 1942 reflections
 150 parameters
 6 restraints
 Primary atom site location: dual

Secondary atom site location: difference Fourier
 map
 Hydrogen site location: difference Fourier map
 All H-atom parameters refined
 $w = 1/[\sigma^2(F_o^2) + (0.0665P)^2 + 0.2802P]$
 where $P = (F_o^2 + 2F_c^2)/3$
 $(\Delta/\sigma)_{\max} < 0.001$
 $\Delta\rho_{\max} = 0.25$ e Å⁻³
 $\Delta\rho_{\min} = -0.22$ e Å⁻³

Fractional atomic coordinates and isotropic or equivalent isotropic displacement parameters (Å²)

	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>	$U_{\text{iso}}^*/U_{\text{eq}}$	Occ. (<1)
C1	0.1413 (2)	0.750000	0.6466 (4)	0.0518 (6)	
H1A	0.064 (3)	0.750000	0.554 (5)	0.053 (7)*	
H1B	0.104 (3)	0.750000	0.788 (5)	0.071 (9)*	
C2	0.2155 (2)	0.68773 (9)	0.6187 (3)	0.0546 (5)	

H2A	0.291 (2)	0.6900 (11)	0.706 (4)	0.080 (7)*	
H2B	0.168 (2)	0.6504 (12)	0.675 (4)	0.075 (6)*	
N1	0.25043 (14)	0.67764 (6)	0.4019 (2)	0.0429 (3)	
H1C	0.275 (3)	0.7150 (13)	0.357 (5)	0.043 (9)*	0.5
H1D	0.188 (3)	0.6744 (16)	0.329 (5)	0.033 (8)*	0.5
C3	0.33326 (13)	0.62212 (7)	0.3552 (2)	0.0398 (3)	
C4	0.46486 (15)	0.63221 (9)	0.4434 (3)	0.0510 (4)	
H4A	0.5140 (18)	0.5938 (10)	0.417 (3)	0.050 (5)*	
H4B	0.4579 (17)	0.6395 (9)	0.596 (3)	0.050 (5)*	
O4	0.52710 (14)	0.68472 (8)	0.3514 (3)	0.0724 (5)	
H4C	0.592 (3)	0.6809 (18)	0.284 (6)	0.048 (10)*	0.5
H4D	0.519 (6)	0.7230 (15)	0.375 (9)	0.12 (3)*	0.5
C5	0.28593 (15)	0.55783 (8)	0.4441 (3)	0.0501 (4)	
H5A	0.343 (2)	0.5226 (10)	0.405 (3)	0.059 (5)*	
H5B	0.293 (2)	0.5591 (10)	0.591 (4)	0.062 (6)*	
O5	0.16180 (11)	0.54508 (7)	0.3811 (2)	0.0631 (4)	
H5	0.136 (3)	0.5082 (12)	0.423 (5)	0.103 (9)*	
C6	0.33686 (17)	0.62006 (8)	0.1183 (3)	0.0479 (4)	
H6A	0.2525 (18)	0.6105 (9)	0.072 (3)	0.051 (5)*	
H6B	0.3643 (18)	0.6628 (10)	0.065 (3)	0.058 (5)*	
O6	0.41686 (13)	0.57189 (6)	0.0346 (2)	0.0616 (4)	
H6	0.490 (2)	0.5798 (15)	0.052 (5)	0.104 (10)*	

Atomic displacement parameters (Å²)

	U^{11}	U^{22}	U^{33}	U^{12}	U^{13}	U^{23}
C1	0.0506 (12)	0.0636 (15)	0.0410 (12)	0.000	0.0170 (11)	0.000
C2	0.0696 (11)	0.0542 (10)	0.0400 (9)	0.0025 (9)	0.0154 (8)	0.0084 (7)
N1	0.0535 (8)	0.0364 (6)	0.0388 (7)	0.0008 (6)	0.0116 (6)	0.0046 (5)
C3	0.0404 (7)	0.0332 (7)	0.0458 (8)	-0.0037 (6)	0.0032 (6)	0.0031 (6)
C4	0.0406 (8)	0.0500 (9)	0.0625 (11)	-0.0065 (7)	0.0037 (8)	-0.0049 (8)
O4	0.0602 (8)	0.0573 (8)	0.0998 (12)	-0.0234 (7)	0.0339 (8)	-0.0183 (8)
C5	0.0407 (7)	0.0407 (8)	0.0690 (12)	-0.0048 (6)	-0.0056 (8)	0.0159 (8)
O5	0.0443 (6)	0.0509 (7)	0.0941 (11)	-0.0121 (5)	-0.0080 (6)	0.0221 (7)
C6	0.0555 (9)	0.0386 (8)	0.0496 (9)	0.0020 (7)	0.0062 (8)	-0.0051 (7)
O6	0.0526 (7)	0.0546 (7)	0.0776 (9)	0.0017 (6)	0.0052 (7)	-0.0260 (7)

Geometric parameters (Å, °)

C1—C2 ⁱ	1.515 (2)	C4—O4	1.400 (2)
C1—C2	1.515 (2)	C4—H4A	0.96 (2)
C1—H1A	1.02 (3)	C4—H4B	1.00 (2)
C1—H1B	1.00 (3)	O4—H4C	0.82 (3)
C2—N1	1.465 (2)	O4—H4D	0.80 (3)
C2—H2A	0.99 (3)	C5—O5	1.417 (2)
C2—H2B	0.99 (3)	C5—H5A	0.98 (2)
N1—C3	1.4759 (19)	C5—H5B	0.95 (2)
N1—H1C	0.86 (2)	O5—H5	0.85 (2)

N1—H1D	0.82 (2)	C6—O6	1.416 (2)
C3—C5	1.526 (2)	C6—H6A	0.973 (19)
C3—C6	1.532 (2)	C6—H6B	0.99 (2)
C3—C4	1.536 (2)	O6—H6	0.81 (2)
C2 ⁱ —C1—C2	114.9 (2)	O4—C4—C3	112.62 (16)
C2 ⁱ —C1—H1A	111.0 (7)	O4—C4—H4A	107.1 (11)
C2—C1—H1A	111.0 (7)	C3—C4—H4A	109.2 (11)
C2 ⁱ —C1—H1B	108.6 (8)	O4—C4—H4B	109.7 (11)
C2—C1—H1B	108.6 (8)	C3—C4—H4B	108.5 (11)
H1A—C1—H1B	102 (2)	H4A—C4—H4B	109.6 (16)
N1—C2—C1	111.53 (16)	C4—O4—H4C	124 (3)
N1—C2—H2A	109.8 (15)	C4—O4—H4D	128 (5)
C1—C2—H2A	108.9 (14)	H4C—O4—H4D	106 (5)
N1—C2—H2B	111.9 (14)	O5—C5—C3	111.35 (14)
C1—C2—H2B	109.7 (13)	O5—C5—H5A	111.9 (12)
H2A—C2—H2B	104.7 (19)	C3—C5—H5A	109.6 (12)
C2—N1—C3	117.32 (14)	O5—C5—H5B	111.2 (14)
C2—N1—H1C	106 (2)	C3—C5—H5B	109.1 (13)
C3—N1—H1C	116 (2)	H5A—C5—H5B	103.4 (18)
C2—N1—H1D	110 (2)	C5—O5—H5	112 (2)
C3—N1—H1D	108 (2)	O6—C6—C3	114.61 (15)
H1C—N1—H1D	98 (3)	O6—C6—H6A	107.8 (11)
N1—C3—C5	112.95 (13)	C3—C6—H6A	106.8 (11)
N1—C3—C6	103.95 (12)	O6—C6—H6B	107.8 (12)
C5—C3—C6	111.15 (14)	C3—C6—H6B	109.4 (12)
N1—C3—C4	111.92 (13)	H6A—C6—H6B	110.4 (16)
C5—C3—C4	106.41 (13)	C6—O6—H6	113 (2)
C6—C3—C4	110.56 (14)		
C2 ⁱ —C1—C2—N1	-70.4 (3)	C6—C3—C4—O4	50.48 (19)
C1—C2—N1—C3	174.27 (15)	N1—C3—C5—O5	53.8 (2)
C2—N1—C3—C5	52.1 (2)	C6—C3—C5—O5	-62.6 (2)
C2—N1—C3—C6	172.74 (15)	C4—C3—C5—O5	176.99 (16)
C2—N1—C3—C4	-67.92 (19)	N1—C3—C6—O6	176.97 (13)
N1—C3—C4—O4	-64.88 (19)	C5—C3—C6—O6	-61.23 (19)
C5—C3—C4—O4	171.30 (16)	C4—C3—C6—O6	56.72 (18)

Symmetry code: (i) $x, -y+3/2, z$.

Hydrogen-bond geometry (\AA , $^\circ$)

$D-H\cdots A$	$D-H$	$H\cdots A$	$D\cdots A$	$D-H\cdots A$
N1—H1C \cdots N1 ⁱ	0.86 (2)	2.24 (3)	2.970 (3)	143 (3)
O4—H4D \cdots O4 ⁱ	0.80 (3)	1.90 (3)	2.679 (3)	162 (6)
O4—H4C \cdots N1 ⁱⁱ	0.82 (3)	2.09 (3)	2.905 (2)	175 (4)
N1—H1D \cdots O4 ⁱⁱⁱ	0.82 (2)	2.09 (3)	2.905 (2)	169 (3)

O6—H6···O5 ⁱⁱ	0.81 (2)	2.02 (3)	2.7390 (19)	148 (3)
O5—H5···O6 ^{iv}	0.85 (2)	1.88 (2)	2.7305 (18)	176 (3)

Symmetry codes: (i) $x, -y+3/2, z$; (ii) $x+1/2, y, -z+1/2$; (iii) $x-1/2, y, -z+1/2$; (iv) $-x+1/2, -y+1, z+1/2$.