

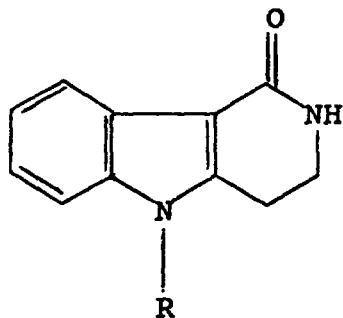
ABSTRACT

PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF LACTAM DERIVATIVES

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The invention relates to a process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I)

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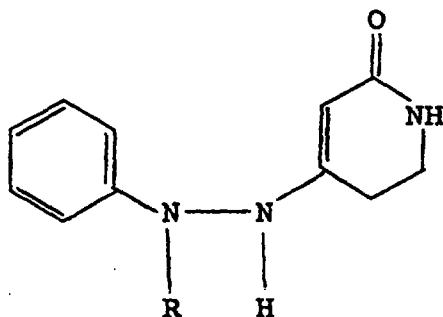
(I)

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wherein R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl or ethyl group, which comprises cyclising a compound of formula (IV)

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(IV)

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Where R represents a hydrogen atom, the compound formula (IV) may optionally be alkylated to produce compound in which R is methyl or ethyl.

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5 The compound of formula (I) is useful as an intermediate in the preparation of 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(imidazol-4(or5)-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-ones having 5-HT₂ antagonist activity.

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