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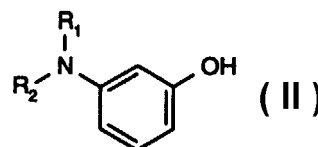
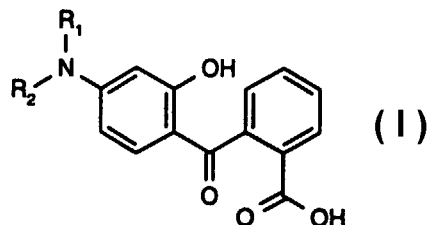
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(54) Title: PRODUCTION OF KETO ACIDS



(57) **Abstract:** An improved method of producing keto acids having the formula (I), wherein R₁ and R₂ independently represent (a) hydrogen, wherein at least one of R₁ and R₂ do not stand for hydrogen, (b) branched or unbranched alkyl of 1-18 carbon atoms, which may be substituted by C₁-C₄alkoxy or 2- or 3-tetrahydrofuryl, (c) a cycloalkyl of 4-8 carbon atoms, (d) C₄-C₈cycloalkyl-C₁-C₄alkyl, or phenyl, wherein both, cycloalkyl and phenyl, may be substituted by at least one member selected from the group consisting of halogen atoms and alkyls having 1-4 carbon atoms, (e) an aralkyl of 7-10 carbon atoms, or (f) R₁ and R₂ together with the adjacent nitrogen atom may form a heterocyclic ring, by reacting a *m*-amino phenol having the formula (II) with phthalic anhydride at an elevated temperature in the absence of an organic solvent, which comprises: (I) mixing *m*-amino phenol II and phthalic anhydride in a molar ratio of from 0.5 to 10:1, (II) melting the mixture of step I at an elevated temperature, (III) choosing a reaction time in the range of from 5 minutes to 40 hours, (IV) then separating the liquid phase from the solid phase as well as a method in which a solvent is added after the reaction.



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