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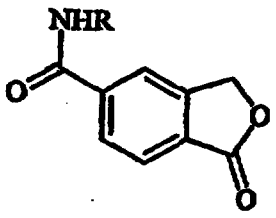
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(54) Title: METHOD FOR THE PREPARATION OF 5–CYANOPHTHALIDE

(57) Abstract

A method for the preparation of 5–cyanophthalide in which 5–carboxyphthalide is converted to the corresponding amide of Formula (IV) in which R is hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl, which is then reacted with a dehydrating agent thereby obtaining 5–cyanophthalide. The conversion of 5–carboxyphthalide to the corresponding amide of Formula (IV) may be carried out via the corresponding C_{1-6} alkyl or phenyl ester or the acid chloride, which is converted to the amide of Formula (IV) by amidation with ammonia or a C_{1-6} alkylamine. By the process 5–Cyanophtalide, an important intermediate used in the preparation of the antidepressant drug citalopram, is prepared in high yields by a convenient, cost effective procedure.



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