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(54) Title: CHEMICAL PROCESS

(57) **Abstract:** The present invention provides a process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I): wherein R¹ is C₁₋₆ alkyl; R² and R³ are, independently, C₁₋₆ alkyl; and R⁴ is C₁₋₆ alkyl or benzyl (wherein the phenyl ring of benzyl is optionally substituted by nitro, S (O)₂(C₁₋₄ alkyl), cyano, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C(O)(C₁₋₄ alkyl), N(C₁₋₆ alkyl)₂, CF₃ or OCF₃); the process comprising reacting a compound of formula (II): wherein R², R³ and R⁴ are as defined above, with a suitable base; and reacting the product so formed with R¹OC(O)CH₂X, wherein R¹ is as defined above and X is chloro, bromo or iodo; wherein the process is carried out in a suitable solvent at a temperature in the range -40°C to -5°C; and wherein at least 0.2 moles of the compound of formula (II) are used in the process.

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