

Description

The present invention involves two processes for the transformation of a Δ^{16} -steroid to a $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -20-silyl ether which is a useful intermediate in the synthesis of corticoids.

A copper iodide catalyzed conjugate reduction of an α,β -unsaturated ketone (cyclohex-2-enone) by lithium aluminum hydride (LAH) in hexamethylphosphoric triamide (HMPA)/THF is reported in J. Chem. Soc. Chem. Comm., 1013 (1980). Similarly, J. Org. Chem., 51, 537 (1986) reports conjugate reduction of a steroidal α,β -unsaturated ketone (progesterone) with diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBAH), catalytic amount of methylcopper(I) and HMPA to give 84% of the reduced A-ring and 6% of the corresponding 20-hydroxy- Δ^4 -3-ketone. When this process was applied to the Δ^{16} -steroids (I) of the present invention, the steroid A-ring was not reduced, but there was selective reduction of the Δ^{16} -20-keto functionality at the D-ring. The conjugate reduction process of the present invention is operable with both Δ^4 -3-keto and Δ^{14} -3-keto steroids.

Syn. Comm. 16, 639 (1986) and J. Org. Chem., 52 439 (1987) both report the reaction of an α,β -unsaturated ketone with DIBAH, a catalytic amount of methylcopper(I) and HMPA. The latter reference reports when the aluminum enolate produced was silylated the product was the reduced silyl enol ether, stating "The high efficiency of the conjugate reduction indicates the quantitative formation of the aluminum enolate by the hydroalumination of α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds with DIBAH-HMPA." When this process was performed on the Δ^{16} -steroids (I) of the present invention, no evidence of any silyl enol ether was observed.

Tet. Lett. 26, 6015 (1985), ibid 26, 6019 (1985), ibid 27, 4025 (1986) and ibid 27, 4029 (1986) all describe the reaction of conjugated carbonyl compounds with organocopper reagents in the presence of trimethylsilyl chloride to give the expected silyl enol ether. The silylating agent not only accelerated the reactions but also gave higher yields. When the copper catalyzed conjugate reduction of the Δ^{16} -steroids (I) of the present invention was performed in the presence of trimethylsilyl chloride only a small amount of the silyl enol ether (III) was formed.

US-A-4568492 discloses the reaction of Δ^{16} -steroids with trimethylsilyl chloride, catalysed by $(\phi P)_3RhCl$, to give the $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -20-silyl enol ether. It has now been found that the process is not operable with a Δ^{14} -3-keto functionality in the steroid A-ring.

Tet. Lett. 28, 1363 (1987) describes the peracid oxidation of a non-steroidal enol ether to give the corresponding epoxy-silyl ether and the subsequent isolation of a non-steroidal epoxy-silyl ether. In order to isolate the epoxy-silyl ether, very mild reaction conditions were used and sodium bicarbonate was added to the reaction mixture to neutralise the acid product of the peracid reactant. Tet. Lett., 26, 3227 (1985) reports a steroidal epoxy-silyl ether where the epoxy-silyl ether functionality was in the steroid A-ring. This compound was not isolatable.

EP-A-0165037 discloses the transformation of 16-unsaturated corticoids to the corresponding 16 α -methyl-17 α -hydroxycorticoids, by the combination of methylation and silylation.

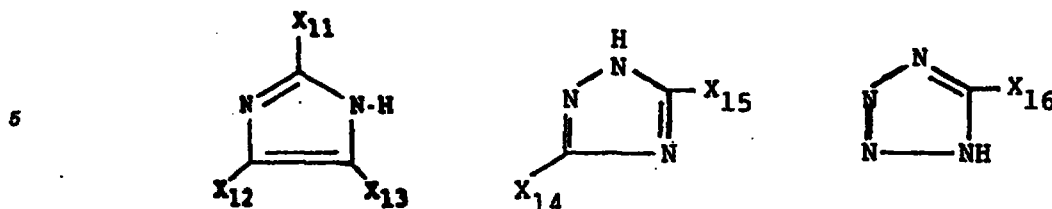
EP-A-0175540 discloses converting a 16-unsaturated 20-keto-steroid to a 17 α -hydroxy-20-keto steroid, using a silylating agent in the presence of a catalyst, and contacting the resultant 17(20)-unsaturated-20-silyl ether steroid with a peracid.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, a metal enolate of formula (II) is prepared by contacting a Δ^{16} -steroid of formula (I) with a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent, in the presence of a copper species; see Chart A.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, a silyl ether of formula (III) is prepared by contacting a metal enolate of formula (II) with a silylating agent.

According to a third aspect of the present invention, a silyl ether of formula (III) is prepared by contacting a Δ^{16} -steroid of formula (I) with a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species, in the presence of a silylating agent.

In the second aspect of the invention, and preferably also in the third aspect, the silylating agent is either (1) a combination of a silyl halide of the formula $X_1-Si(R_{20})_3$, where X_1 is Cl, Br or I and R_{20} is as defined above, with an amine catalyst selected from pyridine, triazine, tetrazine, an imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole or tetrazole of the respective formulae



where X_{11} , X_{12} , X_{13} , X_{14} , X_{15} and X_{16} are the same or different and are H or C₁-C₃ alkyl, and benzimidazole optionally substituted with 1-5 C₁-C₃ alkyl in the 2-, 4-, 5-, 6- and 7- positions; or
(2) an imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole, tetrazole or benzimidazole as defined above which has a Si(R₂₀)₃ substituent at the 1-, 1-, 1- or 3- position, respectively.

In formulae (I), (II) and (III) (see Chart A):

15 $=R_{16}$ is a α -H: β -R₁₆₋₂ where R₁₆₋₂ is -H or -CH₃;

-R₁₆ is -H or -CH₃;

R₂₁ is -H, -O-R₂₁₋₁ where R₂₁₋₁ is -H, C₁-C₄ alkyl, -CH₂-O-CH₃, -CHR₂₁₋₂-O-R₂₁₋₃ where R₂₁₋₂ is C₁-C₄ alkyl and R₂₁₋₃ is C₁-C₄ alkyl, -CH₂-O-CH₂CH₂-O-R₂₁₋₄ where R₂₁₋₄ is C₁-C₄ alkyl, THP, -CO-R₂₁₋₅ where R₂₁₋₅ is C₁-C₄ alkyl or - ϕ , or -Si(R₂₁₋₆)₃ where the R₂₁₋₆'s are the same or different and are selected from C₁-C₄ alkyl and - ϕ ;

M₂₀ is copper or a metal ion derived from the metal hydride reducing agent; and

the R₂₀'s are the same or different and are each C₁-C₇ alkyl or - ϕ .

An advantage of the present invention is that it does not require the addition of a base such as sodium bicarbonate in order to isolate the 17 α ,20 α -epoxy-20-silyl ether (IV).

25 The compound of formula (I) is preferably of formula (IA) wherein (see Chart B):

(A-I) R₆ is α -R₆₋₁: β -R₆₋₂, R₁₀ is α -R₁₀₋₁: β -R₁₀₋₂ and R₇ is α -H: β -H where one of R₆₋₁ and R₆₋₂ is -H and the other is -H, -F or -CH₃, R₁₀₋₂ is -CH₃, R₁₀₋₁ and R₅ taken together are -CH₂-CH₂-CO-CH= or -CH=CH-CO-CH=; or

30 (A-II) R₆ is R₆₋₃:R₆₋₄, R₇ is R₇₋₃:R₇₋₄, R₁₀ is α -R₁₀₋₃: β -R₁₀₋₄ where one of R₆₋₃ and R₆₋₄ is -H and the other taken together with one of R₇₋₃ and R₇₋₄ forms a second bond between C₆ and C₇, and the other of R₇₋₃ and R₇₋₄ is -H, R₁₀₋₄ is -CH₃, R₁₀₋₃ and R₅ taken together are -CH₂-CH₂-CO-CH= or -CH=CH-CO-CH=; and

(C-I) R₁₁ is R₁₁₋₁:R₁₁₋₂, where one of R₁₁₋₁ and R₁₁₋₂ is taken together with R₉ to form a second bond between C₉ and C₁₁ and the other of R₁₁₋₁ and R₁₁₋₂ is -H;

35 (C-II) R₁₁ is α -H: β -O- where β -O- is taken together with R₉ to form an epoxide between C₉ and C₁₁ in the β -configuration;

(C-III) α -R₉ is -H, -Br, -Cl, -F and R₁₁ is =O or α -R₁₁₋₃: β -R₁₁₋₄ where one of R₁₁₋₃ and R₁₁₋₄ is -H and the other of R₁₁₋₃ and R₁₁₋₄ is -H or -OH; or

(C-IV) R₉ is -OH and R₁₁ is α -H: β -H.

40 The Δ^{16} -steroids (I) are known to those skilled in the art or can readily be prepared from known starting materials, see for example, US Patents 2,864,834 (Δ^{16} -steroids) and 3,461,144 (16-methyl- Δ^{16} -steroids).

The process of the present invention will differ depending on whether or not it is desired to obtain a solution of the 20-metal enolate (II) or proceed with a silylating agent present which gives directly the $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -silyl ether (III). It is preferred to convert the Δ^{16} -steroid (I) directly to the $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -silyl ether (III).

45 The Δ^{16} -steroid (I) is contacted with a member selected from the group consisting of a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species in order to produce the 20-metal enolate (II). Metal is copper or a metal ion derived from the metal hydride reducing agent. It is understood in the art that M₂₀ is a copper, aluminum, substituted aluminum or boron cation which may contain other fragments besides the particular metal. Preformed copper hydride includes [(ϕ_3 P)CuH]_x, (CuH)_x where x is from 1 thru 6, LiCuH₂, LiCu₂H₃, Li₂Cu₃H₅, Li₂CuH₃, Li₃CuH₄, Li₄CuH₅, LiCuH₆, Li₅CuH₆, CH₃CH₂CH₂-C $\equiv$ C-CuHLi, t-butyl-O-CuHLi and ϕ SCuHLi. With (CuX)_x it is understood that the copper is an agglomerate complex, with "x" believed to be 1-6. The preformed copper, for example [(ϕ_3 P)Cu-H]₆, can be prepared as described in Tet. Lett. 29, 3749 (1988) or J.A.C.S. 110, 291 (1988) and then added to the reaction mixture. Alternatively, the copper hydride can be prepared in situ by reaction of a metal hydride reducing agent and a copper species. Suitable metal hydride reducing agents include

A) (X₂)(X₃)Al-H where X₂ and X₃ are the same or different and are C₁-C₈ alkyl;

B) [Cation]⁺[(X₄)₃Aluminum-H]⁻ where Cation is sodium, potassium or lithium, X₄ are the same or different

and are -H or -O-X₄₋₁ where X₄₋₁ is C₁-C₈ alkyl;

C) (Metal)(X₆)₃B-H where metal is sodium, potassium or lithium and X₆ is -H,

C₁-C₈ alkyl,

-O-X₆₋₁ where X₆₋₁ is C₁-C₈ alkyl,

-CO-X₆₋₁ where X₆₋₁ is as defined above. Preferred are DIBAH, LAH and (Metal)(X₆)B-H where metal is sodium or potassium and X₆ is -CH(CH₃)-CH(CH₃)₂ or -CH(CH₃)-CH₂-CH₃; more preferred is DIBAH or LAH. Suitable copper species include any soluble copper (I) or (II) compound, or solubilized form of the copper species. Preferred are

(1) Cu(I)X₆ where X₆ is -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN, acetate, propionate;

(2) Cu(I)(X₇)_n where X₇ is -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN, sulfate, acetate, propionate and

(3) dilithium tetrachlorocuprate (Li₂CuCl₄). More preferred are copper-(II)propionate and acetate, copper(I)iodide, chloride, bromide and cyanide; most preferred are copper(II)propionate and acetate. When the copper hydride is produced using DIBAH as the hydride source, the enolate has as its cation the diisobutylaluminum moiety, as defined above. When one equivalent of [(φ₃P)CuH]₆ is used, the copper enolate is obtained.

The active species is the copper hydride. If used as such, one equivalent is required. Less than one equivalent (a catalytic amount) can be used if a reducing agent is present to regenerate the active species. For example, if [(φ₃P)Cu-H]₆ is used as the copper hydride (active species) one equivalent is operable. Catalytic amounts can be used if hydrogen, or other appropriate hydride source, is also used to regenerate the active species. More than one equivalent is operable, just not needed and wasteful.

The Δ¹⁶-steroid (I) and a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species are contacted in an anhydrous aprotic solvent, such as an ether or non-halogenated aromatic hydrocarbon. Preferred solvents include tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, ether, diglyme, toluene and HMPA; more preferred is tetrahydrofuran. The reaction is operable in a temperature range of about -100 to about 50°; preferably about -30 to about -60°. The order of contacting the reactants is not critical.

While not necessary, it is preferred the contacting take place in the presence of a ligand. Suitable ligands include HMPA, DMI, DMPU, TMU, NMP, TES, DMAP, TMEDA and (X₂₀)₃P where X₂₀ is C₁-C₈ alkyl or -φ. Preferred ligands are HMPA, DMI, DMPU, TMU and NMP.

Preferably the metal enolate (II) is not isolated but carried on in situ to give the Δ¹⁷⁽²⁰⁾-silyl ether (III).

The metal enolate (II) is converted to the Δ¹⁷⁽²⁰⁾-silyl ether (III) by contacting with a silylating agent. Operable silylating agents include

(1) X₁-Si-(R₂₀)₃ where X₁ is -Cl, -Br, -I and where R₂₀ is as defined in claim 8, in the presence of an amine catalyst;

(2) a silylated imidazole of formula (IM-1) where X₈, X₉ and X₁₀ are the same or different and are -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl,

(3) a 1-silylated 1,2,4-triazole of the formula *NSi(R₂₀)₃-N=CX₁₇-N=CX₁₈* where X₁₇ and X₁₈ are the same or different and are -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl, and the atoms marked with an asterisk are bonded to each other resulting in the formation of a ring,

(4) a 1-silylated tetrazole of the formula *N(R₂₀)₃-N=N-N=CX₁₉* where X₁₉ is -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl and where the atoms marked with an asterisk are bonded to each other resulting in the formation of a ring,

(5) a 3-silylated benzimidazole optionally substituted with 1-5 C₁-C₃ alkyl in the 2-, 4-, 5-, 6- and 7- positions. When the silylating agent is a silyl halide then the contacting must be in the presence of an amine catalyst. It is preferred the silylating agent be selected from the group consisting of trimethylsilylhalide, diphenylmethylsilylhalide, diphenylmethylsilylimidazole or trimethylsilylimidazole, 1-silyl-1,2,4-triazole, 3-silylbenzimidazole and 1-silyl-2-methylimidazole, more preferably trimethylsilyl chloride or trimethylsilylimidazole. It is preferred that R₂₀ is -CH₃ or -φ; more preferred that R₂₀ is -CH₃. The contacting of the metal enolate (II) with the silylating agent is performed in the presence of an amine catalyst when the silylating agent is a silyl halide. Suitable amine catalysts include pyridine, triazine, tetrazine, an imidazole of formula (IM-2) where X₁₁, X₁₂ and X₁₃ are the same or different and are -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl, a 1,2,4-triazole of the formula *NH-N=CX₁₄-N-CX₁₅* where X₁₄ and X₁₅ are the same or different and are -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl and the atoms marked with an asterisk are bonded to each other resulting in the formation of a ring, a tetrazole of the formula *NH-N=N-N=CX₁₆* where X₁₆ is -H or C₁-C₃ alkyl and where the atoms marked with an asterisk are bonded to each other resulting in the formation of a ring, benzimidazole optionally substituted with 1-5 C₁-C₃ alkyl in the 2-, 4-, 5-, 6- and 7- positions. Preferred amine catalysts are imidazole, dimethylimidazole, triazole, tetrazole and benzimidazole; more preferred is imidazole. It is preferable to add additional amine catalyst during the reaction to ensure completion of the reaction.

The 20-metal enolate (II) and silylating agent are contacted in the same solvent that is operable for the

production of the 20-metal enolate (II). The reaction is operable in a temperature range of about -80 to about 80°; preferably about -60 to about 40°; more preferably about -60 to about 25°.

It is preferable to perform the process of the invention, the transformation of the Δ^{16} -steroids (I) to the corresponding $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -20-silyl ethers (III) in one step by contacting the Δ^{16} -steroid (I) (1) with a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species and (2) in the presence of a silylating agent. It is preferred that the contacting take place in the presence of a ligand. The preferred reagents are as described above.

The $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -20-silyl ethers (III) are transformed by known methods (peracid) to the corresponding 17 α ,20 α -epoxide-20-silyl ethers (IV). The 17 α ,20 α -epoxide-20-silyl ethers (IV) can be isolated if desired by addition of the reaction mixture to a dilute solution of aqueous acetic acid. The product is then extracted with an appropriate organic solvent.

The 17 α ,20 α -epoxide-20-silyl ethers (IV) are transformed by acid or base to the corresponding corticoids (V) which have a known utility in the pharmaceutical area as anti-inflammatory agents.

DEFINITIONS AND CONVENTIONS

The definitions and explanations below are for the terms as used throughout this entire document including both the specification and the claims.

I. CONVENTIONS FOR FORMULAS AND DEFINITIONS OF VARIABLES

The chemical formulas representing various compounds or molecular fragments in the specification and claims may contain variable substituents in addition to expressly defined structural features. These variable substituents are identified by a letter or a letter followed by a numerical subscript, for example, "Z_i" or "R_i" where "i" is an integer. These variable substituents are either monovalent or bivalent, that is, they represent a group attached to the formula by one or two chemical bonds. For example, a group Z_i would represent a bivalent variable if attached to the formula CH₃-C(=Z_i)H. Groups R_i and R_j would represent monovalent variable substituents if attached to the formula CH₃-CH₂-C(R_i)(R_j)H₂. When chemical formulas are drawn in a linear fashion, such as those above, variable substituents contained in parentheses are bonded to the atom immediately to the left of the variable substituent enclosed in parenthesis. When two or more consecutive variable substituents are enclosed in parentheses, each of the consecutive variable substituents is bonded to the immediately preceding atom to the left which is not enclosed in parentheses. Thus, in the formula above, both R_i and R_j are bonded to the preceding carbon atom. Also, for any molecule with an established system of carbon atom numbering, such as steroids, these carbon atoms are designated as C_i, where "i" is the integer corresponding to the carbon atom number. For example, C₆ represents the 6 position or carbon atom number in the steroid nucleus as traditionally designated by those skilled in the art of steroid chemistry. Likewise the term "R₆" represents a variable substituent (either monovalent or bivalent) at the C₆ position.

Chemical formulas or portions thereof drawn in a linear fashion represent atoms in a linear chain. The symbol "-" in general represents a bond between two atoms in the chain. Thus CH₃-O-CH₂-CH(R_i)-CH₃ represents a 2-substituted-1-methoxypropane compound. In a similar fashion, the symbol "=" represents a double bond, e.g., CH₂=C(R_i)-O-CH₃, and the symbol "≡" represents a triple bond, e.g., HC≡C-CH(R_i)-CH₂-CH₃. Carbonyl groups are represented in either one of two ways: -CO- or -C(=O)-, with the former being preferred for simplicity.

Chemical formulas of cyclic (ring) compounds or molecular fragments can be represented in a linear fashion. Thus, the compound 4-chloro-2-methylpyridine can be represented in linear fashion by N=C(CH₃)-CH-CCl-CH=C*H with the convention that the atoms marked with an asterisk (*) are bonded to each other resulting in the formation of a ring. Likewise, the cyclic molecular fragment, 4-(ethyl)-1-piperazinyl can be represented by -N*-(CH₂)₂-N(C₂H₅)-CH₂-C*H₂.

A rigid cyclic (ring) structure for any compounds herein defines an orientation with respect to the plane of the ring for substituents attached to each carbon atom of the rigid cyclic compound. For saturated compounds which have two substituents attached to a carbon atom which is part of a cyclic system, -C(X₁)(X₂)- the two substituents may be in either an axial or equatorial position relative to the ring and may change between axial/equatorial. However, the position of the two substituents relative to the ring and each other remains fixed. While either substituent at times may lie in the plane of the ring (equatorial) rather than above or below the plane (axial), one substituent is always above the other. In formulas depicting such compounds, a substituent (X₁) which is "below" another substituent (X₂) will be identified as being in the alpha (α) configuration and is identified by a broken, dashed or dotted line attachment to the carbon atom, i.e., by the symbol "- - -" or "...". The corresponding substituent attached "above" (X₂) the other (X₁) is identified as being in the beta (β) con-

figuration and is indicated by an unbroken line attachment to the carbon atom.

When a variable substituent is bivalent, the valences may be taken together or separately or both in the definition of the variable. For example, a variable R_i attached to a carbon atom as $-C(=R_i)-$ might be bivalent and be defined as oxo or keto (thus forming a carbonyl group $(-CO-)$ or as two separately attached monovalent variable substituents $\alpha-R_{i,j}$ and $\beta-R_{i,k}$. When a bivalent variable, R_i , is defined to consist of two monovalent variable substituents, the convention used to define the bivalent variable is of the form " $\alpha-R_{i,j};\beta-R_{i,k}$ " or some variant thereof. In such a case both $\alpha-R_{i,j}$ and $\beta-R_{i,k}$ are attached to the carbon atom to give $-C(\alpha-R_{i,j})(\beta-R_{i,k})-$. For example, when the bivalent variable R_6 , $-C(=R_6)-$ is defined to consist of two monovalent variable substituents, two monovalent variable substituents are $\alpha-R_{6-1};\beta-R_{6-2}$, ..., $\alpha-R_{6-9};\beta-R_{6-10}$, etc, giving $-C(\alpha-R_{6-1})(\beta-R_{6-2})-$, ..., $-C(\alpha-R_{6-9})(\beta-R_{6-10})-$, etc. Likewise, for the bivalent variable R_{11} , $-C(=R_{11})-$, two monovalent variable substituents are $\alpha-R_{11-1};\beta-R_{11-2}$. For a ring substituent for which separate α and β orientations do not exist (e.g. due to the presence of a carbon carbon double bond in the ring), and for a substituent bonded to a carbon atom which is not part of a ring the above convention is still used, but the α and β designations are omitted.

Just as a bivalent variable may be defined as two separate monovalent variable substituents, two separate monovalent variable substituents may be defined to be taken together to form a bivalent variable. For example, in the formula $-C_1(R_i)H-C_2(R_j)H-$ (C_1 and C_2 define arbitrarily a first and second carbon atom, respectively) R_i and R_j may be defined to be taken together to form (1) a second bond between C_1 and C_2 or (2) a bivalent group such as oxa $(-O-)$ and the formula thereby describes an epoxide. When R_i and R_j are taken together to form a more complex entity, such as the group $-X-Y-$, then the orientation of the entity is such that C_1 in the above formula is bonded to X and C_2 is bonded to Y . Thus, by convention the designation "... R_i and R_j are taken together to form $-CH_2-CH_2-O-CO-$..." means a lactone in which the carbonyl is bonded to C_2 . However, when designated "... R_j and R_i are taken together to form $-CH_2-CH_2-O-CO-$ the convention means a lactone in which the carbonyl is bonded to C_1 .

The carbon atom content of variable substituents is indicated in one of two ways. The first method uses a prefix to the entire name of the variable such as " C_1-C_4 ", where both "1" and "4" are integers representing the minimum and maximum number of carbon atoms in the variable. The prefix is separated from the variable by a space. For example, " C_1-C_4 alkyl" represents alkyl of 1 through 4 carbon atoms, (including isomeric forms thereof unless an express indication to the contrary is given). Whenever this single prefix is given, the prefix indicates the entire carbon atom content of the variable being defined. Thus C_2-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl describes a group $CH_3-(CH_2)_n-O-CO-$ where n is zero, one or 2. By the second method the carbon atom content of only each portion of the definition is indicated separately by enclosing the " C_i-C_j " designation in parentheses and placing it immediately (no intervening space) before the portion of the definition being defined. By this optional convention (C_1-C_3) alkoxycarbonyl has the same meaning as C_2-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl because the " C_1-C_3 " refers only to the carbon atom content of the alkoxy group. Similarly while both C_2-C_6 alkoxyalkyl and (C_1-C_3) alkoxy(C_1-C_3)alkyl define alkoxyalkyl groups containing from 2 to 6 carbon atoms, the two definitions differ since the former definition allows either the alkoxy or alkyl portion alone to contain 4 or 5 carbon atoms while the latter definition limits either of these groups to 3 carbon atoms.

II. DEFINITIONS

All temperatures are in degrees Centigrade.

TLC refers to thin-layer chromatography.

THF refers to tetrahydrofuran.

DIBAH refers to diisobutylaluminum hydride.

LAH refers to lithium aluminum hydride.

HMPA refers to hexamethylphosphoric triamide.

DMI refers to 1,3-dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone.

DMPU refers to N,N'-dimethylpropyleneurea.

TMU refers to tetramethylurea.

NMP refers to N-methylpyrrolidinone.

TES refers to tetraethylsulfone.

DMAP refers to dimethylaminopyridine.

TMEDA refers to tetramethylethylenediamine.

Ether refers to diethyl ether.

Saline refers to an aqueous saturated sodium chloride solution.

$-\phi$ refers to phenyl (C_6H_5).

When solvent pairs are used, the ratios of solvents used are volume/volume (v/v).

NMR refers to nuclear (proton) magnetic resonance spectroscopy; chemical shifts are reported in ppm (δ) downfield from tetramethylsilane.

When the $\Delta^{17(20)}$ -20-silyl ethers (III) are produced, two isomers, "Z" and "E" are formed. When R_{16-2} is -H, the mixture is substantially the "Z" isomer with a little "E" present. When R_{16-2} is -CH₃ and the hydride donor is lithium aluminum hydride, more "E" is present but the predominate isomer of the mixture is still "Z". Both "E" and "Z" (III) are transformed to the desired corticoid (V), see EXAMPLES 2 and 5.

EXAMPLES

Without further elaboration, it is believed that one skilled in the art can, using the preceding description, practice the present invention to its fullest extent. The following detailed examples describe how to prepare the various compounds and/or perform the various processes of the invention and are to be construed as merely illustrative, and not limitations of the preceding disclosure in any way whatsoever. Those skilled in the art will promptly recognize appropriate variations from the procedures both as to reactants and as to reaction conditions and techniques.

PREPARATION 1 20,21-Dihydroxy-16 α -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether

Under an inert atmosphere, copper(II) propionate (2.191 g) is dissolved in anhydrous THF (132 ml) and 1,3-dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone (48.0 ml). The mixture is cooled to $< -30^\circ$ and methylmagnesium chloride (2.07 M, 12.0 ml) is added slowly to maintain the low temperature. The resulting mixture is transferred rapidly into a slurry of 21-hydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (US Patent 4,031,080 Example 1, 76.66 g) anhydrous THF (832 ml) and stirred at $< -50^\circ$. Chlorotrimethylsilane (34.5 ml) is added to the chilled slurry. This mixture is aged for 10 minutes and then methylmagnesium chloride (2.07 M, 101 ml) is added over a period of 75 min. An extra 6.0 ml of the Grignard reagent is added during the next 50 min to consume the starting material. The reaction mixture is quenched by adding toluene (1.24 l) and aqueous acetic acid (5%, 1.24 l). The two phases are separated after 45 min of vigorous mixing at 5° . The aqueous phase is extracted with toluene (200 ml) and the two toluene solutions are combined. This net solution is washed with aqueous acetic acid (5%, 2 x 400 ml) and dried with magnesium sulfate. The drying agent is removed by filtration and the filtrate is concentrated under reduced pressure to give the title compound.

PREPARATION 2 17 α -Bromo-21-hydroxy-16 α -methylpregna-1,4,9(11)-triene-3,20-dione 21-acetate

A slurry, prepared from N-bromosuccinimide (40.96 g), acetone (225 ml) and water (37.7 ml) is cooled to $< -40^\circ$. A mixture of 20,21-dihydroxy-16 α -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (PREPARATION 1, 99.56 g) and acetone (350 ml) is added slowly while keeping the temperature less than -35° . The silyl ether (III) is consumed within one hour and n-butyl vinyl ether (5.41 ml) is added to quench any excess brominating agent. The quenching reaction proceeds for 20 min at a temperature of $< -30^\circ$ and is then warmed to 5° . When this temperature is reached, water (400 ml) and toluene (200 ml) are added. The two phases are separated after adequate mixing. The aqueous phase is extracted with toluene (100 ml). The toluene solutions are combined and washed with water (200 ml). Magnesium sulfate is used to dry the solution, which is concentrated under reduced pressure. The mixture is filtered to give the title compound.

PREPARATION 3 21-Hydroxy-16-methylpregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I)

Lithium carbonate (30.92 g) and lithium bromide (18.17 g) is added to a solution of 17 α -bromo-21-hydroxy-16 α -methylpregna-1,4,9(11)-triene-3,20-dione (PREPARATION 2, 98.43 g) in DMF. The solids are rinsed into the solution with DMF sufficient to bring the total amount to 350 ml. The reaction is warmed to 96° over a 3 hr and forty minute period. It is then transferred to a dropping funnel with 15 ml of DMF and added over a 40 min period to 3.4 l of vigorously stirred half-saturated saline. The funnel is rinsed with DMF (15 ml) and the knock-out slurry is cooled to $< 10^\circ$. After 30 min, the product is collected by filtration and washed thoroughly with water (3 x 250 ml). The moist solids are dried with nitrogen flow to give the title compound.

EXAMPLE 1 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 6 α -fluoro-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraene-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)

A solution of copper propionate (0.545 g) in THF (110 ml) is added to a precooled -50° slurry of 6 α -fluoro-21-hydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, US Patent 3,210,341 Example 1, 20.00 g) in THF (150 ml) containing dimethylimidazolidinone (9.10 ml) and N-trimethylsilylimidazole (15.3 ml) under a nitrogen atmosphere over a 5 min period. The suspension is stirred for 5 min, then a solution of DIBAH (25%, 55.27 ml) in toluene is added slowly dropwise over a 40-50 min period. The reaction is monitored by TLC [the TLC sample is obtained by diluting 0.5 ml of the reaction mixture with tetrahydrofuran (0.5 ml) and eluting with tetrahydrofuran/heptane (40/60), title compound (III) R_f = 0.64] during the addition and when the reduction is complete the DIBAH addition is discontinued.

Imidazole (1.77 g) is added and the reaction is allowed to warm to 20-25°C. After reaching 20-25° the reaction is checked for complete silylation by TLC.

When the silylation is complete the reaction is quenched by adding it to a mixture of aqueous acetic acid (1.5%, 1250 ml) and toluene (250 ml) at 0°. The mixture is stirred for 5-10 minutes, then the layers are separated. The aqueous layer is extracted with toluene (2 x 200 ml) and the combined organic extracts are washed with H₂O (2 x 300 ml) and then with saline (300 ml). The organic layer is dried over magnesium sulfate and filtered. The toluene is removed under reduced pressure to give the title compound in a total volume of 220 ml. The title compound is used in the oxidation reaction (EXAMPLE 2) without further purification, NMR (CDCl₃) 0.2, 0.9, 1.4, 2.1, 4.5 and 6.24 δ .

EXAMPLE 2 6 α -fluoro-17 α ,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11)-triene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (V)

Sodium acetate (0.384 g) is added to a solution of 6 α -fluoro-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraene-3-one 20-trimethyl silyl ester 21 acetate (III, EXAMPLE 1, 23.86 g) in toluene (220 ml total volume) under nitrogen. The reaction is cooled to 0° and peracetic acid (15.1 ml) is added dropwise over 5 minutes. A 5° exotherm is observed. The reaction is allowed to stir at 0° for 30-45 min, then it is checked by TLC [ethyl acetate/heptane (1/1), the epoxide (IV) has an R_f of just a little less than the silyl ether (III)].

When the reaction is complete, to check for peroxides, sodium bisulfite (6.60 g) in water (84 ml) is added over 5 min and the temperature rises to 30 to 40°. The product precipitates as a dense solid which stays in the aqueous layer when stirring is stopped. Heptane (180 ml) is added over 5-10 min and the slurry is cooled in an ice bath for 30 minutes. The product is isolated by filtration and washed thoroughly with water (5 x 100 ml), NMR (CDCl₃) 0.65, 1.4, 2.16, 4.97 and 6.38 δ .

EXAMPLE 3 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxy-16 β -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)

Anhydrous THF (106 ml) and HMPA (12.2 ml) are added to 21-hydroxy-16-methylpregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, PREPARATION 3, 5.33 g) and cuprous cyanide (500 g) contained under an inert atmosphere. This mixture is stirred for 10 min at 23° and then it is cooled to < -40° before trimethylsilylimidazole (4.2 ml) and LAH (95%, 0.211 g) are added to it. The reaction is held at a temperature less than or equal to -40° for 3 hr and periodic additions of fresh trimethylsilylimidazole (1.63 ml) and LAH (0.145 g) are required to complete the reduction. The reaction is then treated with acetone (3.50 ml) and imidazole (0.482 g). It is warmed to 23° and aged at this temperature for 1 hr before it is poured into aqueous acetic acid (2%, 420 ml) and hexane (250 ml) and stirred vigorously at 0°. This mixture is filtered through a celite pad, which is washed with aqueous acetic acid (2%, 50 ml) and hexane (200 ml). The two phases of the filtrate are separated. The aqueous phase is extracted with hexane (2 x 60 ml). The organic phases are combined and then washed with water (3 x) and saline (56 ml). Residual water is removed with sodium sulfate. The drying agent is removed by filtration and the filtrate is concentrated under reduced pressure at 38° to give the title compounds as an oil.

EXAMPLE 4 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxy-16 β -methyl pregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)

DIBAH (1.50 M, 16.0 ml) in toluene is added to a mixture of cupric propionate (0.314 g), anhydrous THF (10.0 ml) and HMPA (5.20 ml) stirred at < -60° under an inert atmosphere. The mixture is added rapidly to a solution of 21-hydroxy-16-methylpregna-3,20-dione-1,4,9,16-tetraene 21-acetate (I, PREPARATION 3, 5.71 g), THF (75.0 ml) and trimethylsilylimidazole (6.60 ml) and stirred at < -50°. The reaction proceeds at this tem-

perature for 4.5 hr, over which time five portions of fresh copper hydride, each prepared from cupric propionate (0.157 g), THF (5.0 ml), HMPA (0.91 ml) and DIBAH (1.5 M, 3.00 ml), are added. Imidazole (0.532 g) is added, the reaction is warmed to 20° and then it is stirred for 14 hr. The mixture is poured into hexane (300 ml) and aqueous acetic acid (2%, 300 ml) and stirred vigorously at < 10°. An emulsion results which is filtered through a bed of celite. The two phases in the filtrate are separated and the aqueous phase is extracted with hexane (100 ml). The organic extracts are combined and then washed with water (4 x 100 ml) and saline (50 ml). The residual water is removed with sodium sulfate. The dried hexane solution is concentrated under reduced pressure to give the title compounds as an oil. LC shows the oil to be a mixture (46.6/1) of 17Z-/17E-.

EXAMPLE 5 17 α ,21-dihydroxy-16 β -methylpregna-1,4,9(11)-triene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (V)

A solution, prepared from crude 21-hydroxy-16 β -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III, EXAMPLE 4, 3.906 g) and toluene (39.0 ml), is cooled to < 5° and sodium acetate (0.072 g) is added. Peracetic acid (5.57M, 2.31 ml) is added slowly. The reaction is kept at a temperature < 5° for 3.5 hr. A solution of sodium sulfate (2.34 g) in water (7.50 ml) is then added. The quenched reaction is stirred for 19 hr at 23°. Then hydrochloric acid (37%, 3.75 ml) is added portionwise over 7 hr. Heptane (25 ml) is then added and the mixture is cooled to 2°. The product is isolated by filtration of the acidic mixture. It is washed with water (3 x 12 ml) and heptane (2 x 10 ml). The product is dried with a nitrogen gas flow to give the title compound. The toluene layer of the filtrate is treated with acetone (10 ml) and then washed with water (2 x 10), aqueous sodium bicarbonate (5%, 15 ml) and additional water (15 ml). The solution is dried with magnesium sulfate and then concentrated at 50° under reduced pressure to give a second crop of the title compound.

EXAMPLE 6 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 9 β ,11 β -epoxy-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,17(20)-trien-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether (III)

A solution of copper propionate (0.137 g) in tetrahydrofuran (30 ml) under a nitrogen atmosphere is cooled in a dry ice/acetone bath to -50°. HMPA (3.64 ml) followed by a solution of DIBAH in toluene (25% wt, 13.3 ml) is added to the copper solution over a 5-10 min keeping the temperature near -50°. The solution turns dark green then lightens to brown during the addition. This brown solution is allowed to stir 3-5 min., then it is added via a cannula to a -50° slurry of 9 β ,11 β -epoxy-21-hydroxypregna-1,4,16-triene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, 5.000 g) in tetrahydrofuran (38 ml) containing N-trimethylsilylimidazole (6.71 ml) over a 12 min period. The Δ^{16} -steroid starting material (I) requires one hr to go into solution. The solution is allowed to stir after complete addition and checked by TLC [the TLC sample is obtained by diluting 0.5 ml of the reaction mixture with tetrahydrofuran (0.5 ml) and eluting with tetrahydrofuran/heptane (40/60), title compound (III) R_f = 0.64].

When the reduction is complete, imidazole (0.445 g) is added and the reaction is allowed to warm to 20-25° at which time the reaction is checked for complete silylation by TLC, as described above.

When the silylation is complete, the reaction is quenched by adding it to a 0° mixture of aqueous acetic acid (1.5%, 500 ml) and toluene (125 ml). The mixture is allowed to stir 5-10 min, then the layers are separated. The aqueous layer is extracted with toluene (2 x 100 ml) and the combined organic extracts are washed with water (2 x 1200 ml) and then with saline (100 ml). The organic layer is dried over magnesium sulfate, filtrated and concentrated under reduced pressure to a total volume of 35 ml containing the title compound.

EXAMPLE 7 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether (III)

A solution of copper propionate (0.572 g) in tetrahydrofuran (10 ml) under a nitrogen atmosphere is cooled in a dry ice/acetone bath to -50°. DIBAH in toluene (25% wt, 58 ml) is added to the copper solution over a 5-10 min. period keeping the temperature near -50°. The solution turns dark green then lightens to brown during the addition. This brown solution is allowed to stir 3-5 min., then it is added via a cannula to a -50° slurry of 21-hydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, US Patent 2, 864,834 Example 1, 20.00 g) in THF (150 ml) containing dimethylimidazolidinone (9.54 ml) and N-trimethylsilylimidazole (16.0 ml) over a 25 min period. The solution is allowed to stir 10 min after complete addition, then checked by TLC, as described in EXAMPLE 6.

When the reduction is complete imidazole (1.86 g) is added and the reaction is allowed to warm to 20-25°, after which the reaction is checked for complete silylation by TLC.

When the silylation is complete the reaction is quenched by adding it to a 0° mixture of aqueous acetic acid (1.5%, 1250 ml) and toluene (250 ml). The mixture is allowed to stir 5-10 min, then the layers are separated. The aqueous layer is extracted with toluene (2 x 200 ml) and the combined organic extracts are washed with

water (2 x 300 ml) and then with saline (300 ml). The organic layer is dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure to a total volume of 220 ml containing the title compounds, NMR (CDCl₃) 0.2, 0.9, 1.4, 2.08, 4.47 and 6.1 δ.

5 **EXAMPLE 8 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxypregna-4,9(11),17(20)-trien-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether (III)**

10 A solution of copper propionate (0.057 g) in THF (12 ml) under a nitrogen atmosphere is cooled in a dry ice/acetone bath to -50°. HMPA (1.51 ml) followed by a solution of DIBAH in toluene (25% wt, 5.44 ml) is added to the copper solution over a 5-10 min period keeping the temperature near -50°. The blue solution turns dark green then lightens to brown during the addition. This brown solution is allowed to stir 3-5 min, then it is added via a cannula to a -50° slurry of 21-hydroxypregna-4,9(11),16-triene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, US Patent 2,773,080 Example 1, 2.00 g) in tetrahydrofuran (25 ml) containing N-trimethylsilylimidazole (2.71 ml) over a 7 min period. The solution is allowed to stir after complete addition and checked by TLC.

15 When the reduction is complete, imidazole (0.185 g) is added and the reaction is allowed to warm to 20-25°, after which the reaction is checked for complete silylation by TLC.

20 When the silylation is complete the reaction is quenched by adding it to a 0° mixture of aqueous acetic acid (1.5%, 210 ml) and toluene (50 ml). The mixture is allowed to stir 5-10 min, then the layers are separated. The aqueous layer is extracted with toluene (2 x 50 ml) and the combined organic extracts are washed with water (2 x 50 ml) and then with saline (50 ml). The organic layer is dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure to give a solid which is crystallized from methanol to give the title compounds, NMR (CDCl₃) 0.22, 0.88, 1.37, 2.09, 4.5, 5.55 and 5.75 δ.

25 **EXAMPLE 9 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 6α-fluoro-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)**

30 A blue solution of copper propionate (0.545 g) in tetrahydrofuran (110 ml) under a nitrogen atmosphere is cooled in a dry ice/acetone bath to -50°. A solution of DIBAH in toluene (25% wt, 55.27 ml) is added over a 5-10 min period keeping the temperature near -50°. The blue solution turns dark green then lightens to brown during the addition. This brown solution is allowed to stir 3-5 min, then it is added via a cannula to a slurry of 6α-fluoro-21-hydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),16-tetraene-3,20-dione 21-acetate (I, 20 g) in THF (150 ml) containing dimethylimidazolidinone (9.10 ml) and N-trimethylsilylimidazole (15.3 ml), precooled to -50°, over a 25 min period. The reaction mixture is permitted to stir 10 min after addition is complete and is monitored by TLC [the TLC sample is obtained by diluting 0.5 ml of the reaction mixture with tetrahydrofuran (0.5 ml) and eluting with tetrahydrofuran/heptane (40/60), title compound (III) R_f = 0.64]. When the reduction is complete imidazole (1.77 g) is added and the reaction is permitted to warm to 20-25°. After reaching 20-25° the mixture is checked for complete silylation by TLC. When the silylation is complete the reaction is quenched by adding it to a 0° mixture of aqueous acetic acid (1,250 ml) and toluene (250 ml). The mixture is permitted to stir 5-10 min then the layers are separated. The aqueous layer is extracted with toluene (2 x 200 ml) and the combined organic extracts are washed with water (2 x 300 ml) and with saline (300 ml). The organic layer is dried over magnesium sulfate and the magnesium sulfate is removed by filtration. The toluene is removed by concentration under reduced pressure to give the title compounds, NMR (CDCl₃) 0.2, 0.9, 1.4, 2.1, 4.5 and 6.24 δ.

45 **EXAMPLE 10 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxy-16β-methyl pregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)**

Following the general procedure of EXAMPLE 4 and making non-critical variations but using 1-silyl-1,2,4-triazole in place of trimethylsilylimidazole, the title compound is obtained, 17Z-/17E-ratio is 22.1/1.

50 **EXAMPLE 11 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxy-16β-methyl pregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)**

Following the general procedure of EXAMPLE 4 and making non-critical variations but using 3-silylbenzimidazole in place of trimethylsilylimidazole, the title compound is obtained, 17Z-/17E-ratio is 15.8/1.

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EXAMPLE 12 17Z- and 17E- isomers of 20,21-dihydroxy-16 β -methyl pregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether (III)

Following the general procedure of EXAMPLE 4 and making non-critical variations but using 1-silyl-2-methylimidazole in place of trimethylsilylimidazole, the title compound is obtained, 17Z-/17E-ratio is 27.4/1.

CHART A

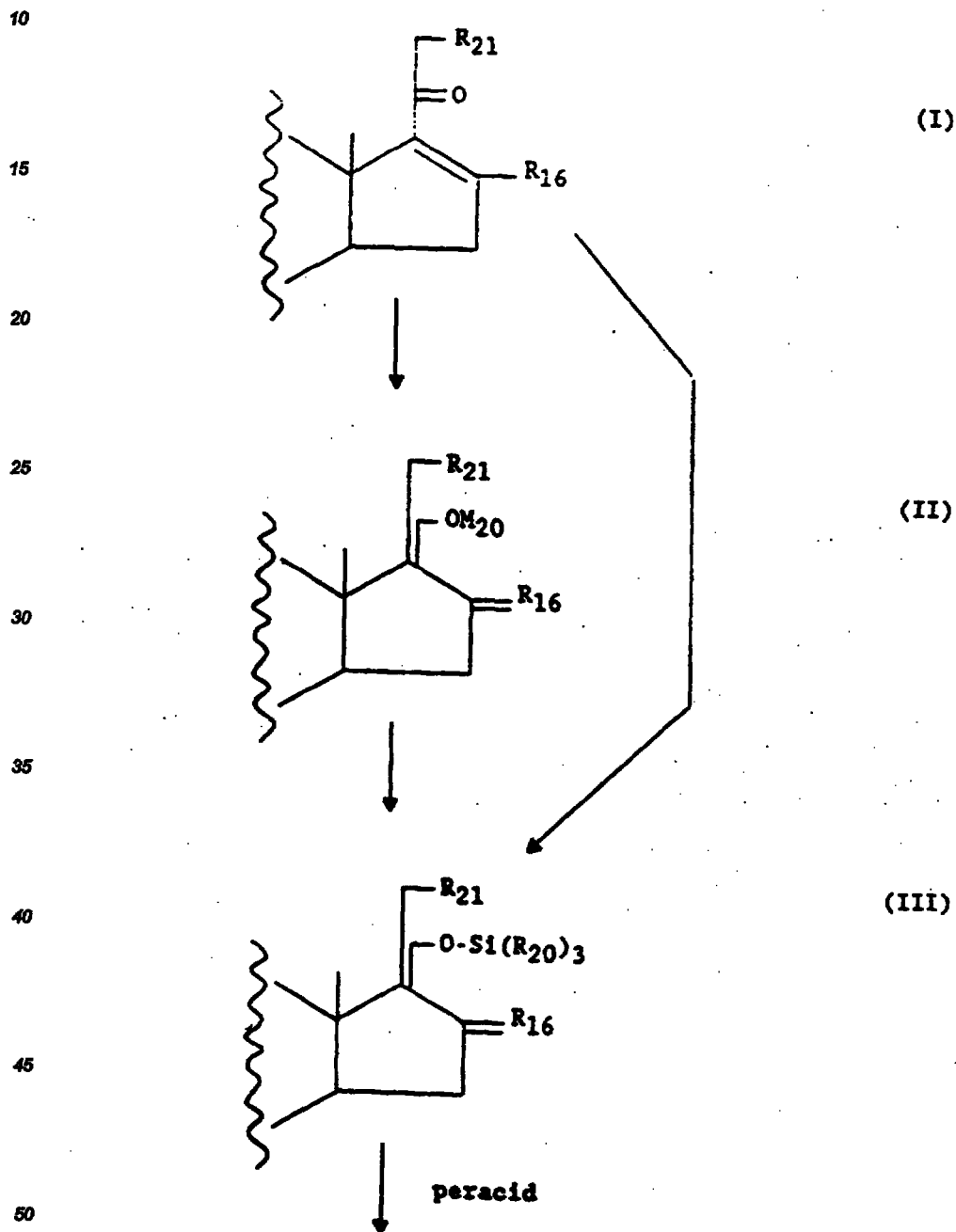


CHART A - Continued

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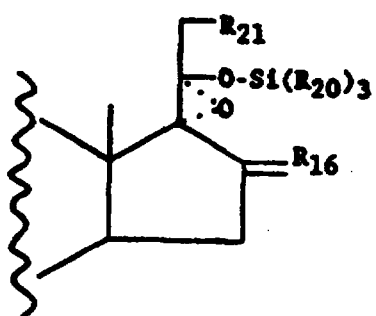
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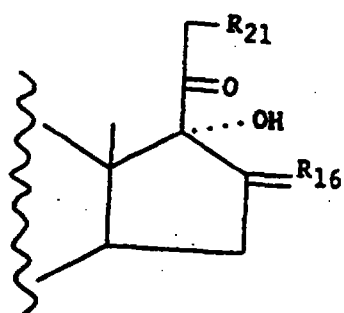
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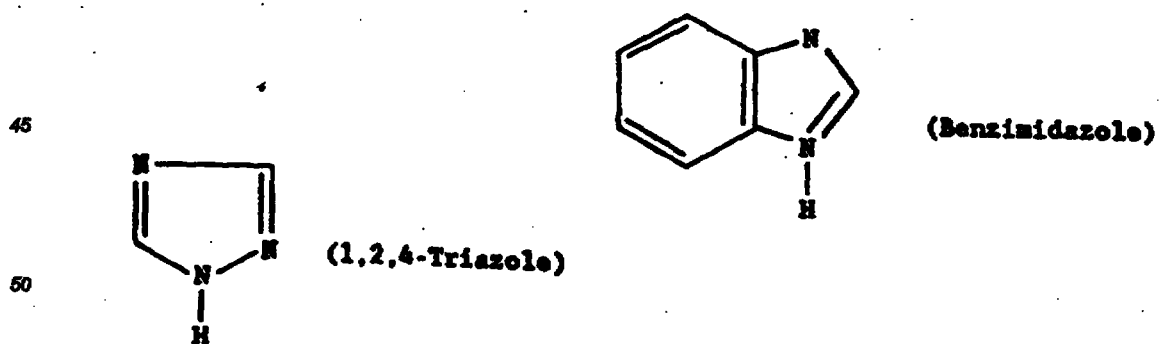
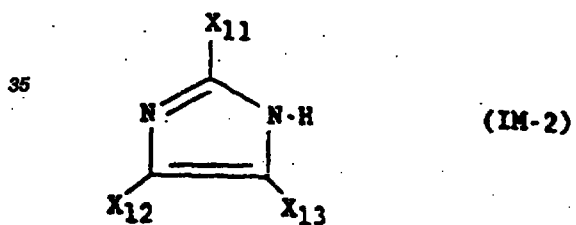
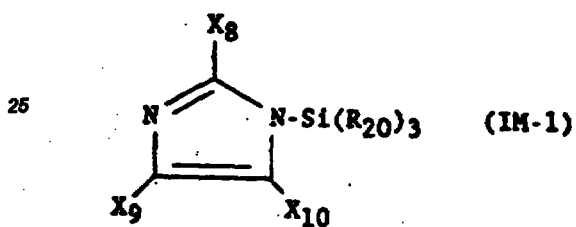
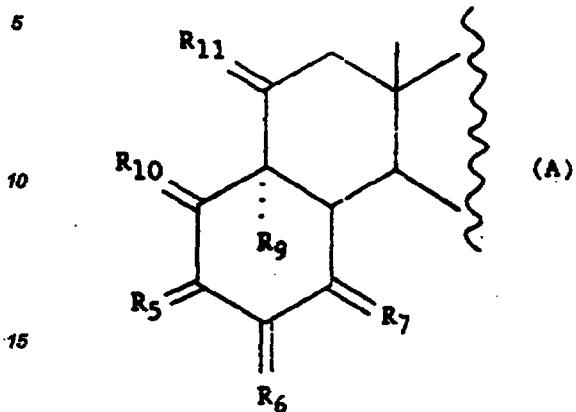
(IV)

↓
acid or base



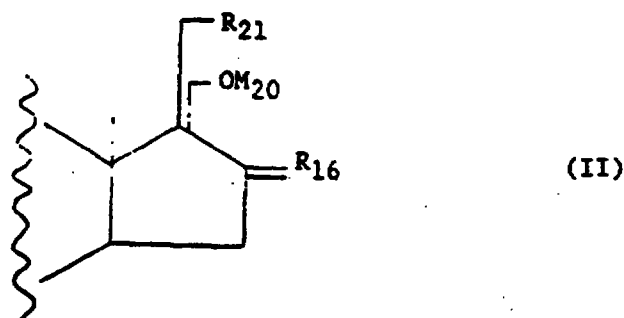
(V)

CHART B



Claims

1. A process for the production of a 17E-metal enolate (II)



and Z- isomer thereof where:

R_{16} is α -H: β - R_{16-2} where R_{16-2} is -H or -CH₃;

R_{21} is -H, -O- R_{21-1} where R_{21-1} is -H,

C₁-C₄ alkyl,

-CH₂-O-CH₃,

-CHR₂₁₋₂-O- R_{21-3} where R_{21-2} is C₁-C₄ alkyl and R_{21-3} is C₁-C₄ alkyl,

-CH₂-O-CH₂CH₂-O- R_{21-4} where R_{21-4} is C₁-C₄ alkyl,

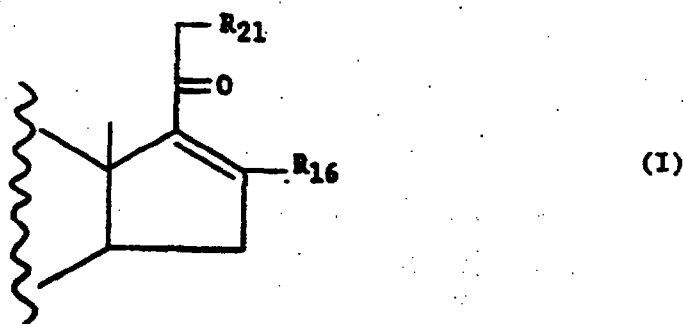
THP,

-CO- R_{21-5} where R_{21-5} is C₁-C₄ or - ϕ ,

-Si(R_{21-6})₃ where the R_{21-6} 's are the same or different and are selected from the group con-

sisting of C₁-C₄ alkyl and - ϕ ;

M_{20} is copper or a metal ion derived from the metal hydride reducing agent, which comprises contacting a Δ^{16} -steroid (I)



where R_{16} is -H or -CH₃ and R_{21} is as defined above with a member selected from the group consisting of a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species.

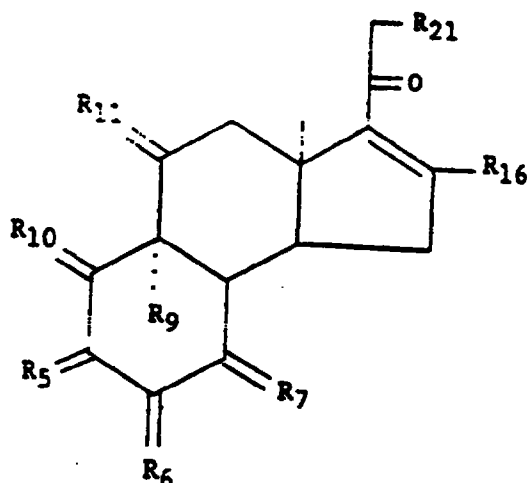
2. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 1 where the Δ^{16} -steroid (I) is of the formula



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(IA)

where:

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(A-I) R_8 is $\alpha\text{-}R_{8-1}:\beta\text{-}R_{8-2}$, R_{10} is $\alpha\text{-}R_{10-1}:\beta\text{-}R_{10-2}$ and R_7 is $\alpha\text{-}H:\beta\text{-}H$ where one of R_{8-1} and R_{8-2} is $-H$ and the other is $-H$, $-F$ or $-\text{CH}_3$, R_{10-2} is $-\text{CH}_3$, R_{10-1} and R_8 taken together are $-\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CO-CH=}$ or $-\text{CH=CH-CO-CH=}$;

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(A-II) R_8 is $R_{8-3}:R_{8-4}$, R_7 is $R_{7-3}:R_{7-4}$, R_{10} is $\alpha\text{-}R_{10-3}:\beta\text{-}R_{10-4}$ where one of R_{8-3} and R_{8-4} is $-H$ and the other taken together with one of R_{7-3} and R_{7-4} forms a second bond between C_8 and C_7 , and the other of R_{7-3} and R_{7-4} is $-H$, R_{10-4} is $-\text{CH}_3$, R_{10-3} and R_8 taken together are $-\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-CO-CH=}$ or $-\text{CH=CH-CO-CH=}$;

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(C-I) R_{11} is $R_{11-1}:R_{11-2}$, where one of R_{11-1} and R_{11-2} is taken together with R_9 to form a second bond between C_9 and C_{11} and the other of R_{11-1} and R_{11-2} is $-H$;

(C-II) R_{11} is $\alpha\text{-}H:\beta\text{-}O$ where $\beta\text{-}O$ is taken together with R_9 to form an epoxide between C_9 and C_{11} in the β -configuration;

(C-III) $\alpha\text{-}R_8$ is $-H$, $-\text{Br}$, $-\text{Cl}$, $-F$ and R_{11} is $=O$ or $\alpha\text{-}R_{11-3}:\beta\text{-}R_{11-4}$ where one of R_{11-3} and R_{11-4} is $-H$ and the other of R_{11-3} and R_{11-4} is $-H$ or $-\text{OH}$;

(C-IV) R_9 is $-\text{OH}$ and R_{11} is $\alpha\text{-}H:\beta\text{-}H$;

R_{16} is $-H$ or $-\text{CH}_3$ and R_{21} is as defined in claim 1.

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3. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 1 where the preformed copper hydride is $[(\phi_3\text{P})\text{-CuH}]_6$, $(\text{CuH})_x$ where x is from 1 thru 6, LiCuH_2 , LiCu_2H_3 , $\text{Li}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{H}_5$, Li_2CuH_3 , Li_3CuH_4 , Li_4CuH_5 , LiCuH_6 , Li_5CuH_6 , $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{-C}\equiv\text{C-CuHLi}$, $t\text{-butyl-O-CuHLi}$ and ϕSCuHLi .

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4. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 1 where the metal hydride reducing agent is selected from the group consisting of

A) $(X_2)(X_3)\text{Al-H}$ where X_2 and X_3 are the same or different and are $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8$ alkyl;

B) $[\text{Cation}]^+[(X_4)_3\text{Aluminum-H}]^-$ where Cation is sodium, potassium or lithium, X_4 are the same or different and are $-H$ or $-\text{O-X}_{4-1}$ where X_{4-1} is $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8$ alkyl;

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C) $(\text{Metal})(X_5)_3\text{B-H}$ where metal is sodium, potassium or lithium and X_5 is $-H$,

$\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8$ alkyl,

$-\text{O-X}_{5-1}$ where X_{5-1} is $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8$ alkyl,

$-\text{CO-X}_{5-1}$ where X_{5-1} is as defined above.

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5. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 1 where the copper species is selected from the group consisting of

(1) $\text{Cu(I)}X_6$ where X_6 is $-\text{CH}_3$, $-\text{Cl}$, $-\text{Br}$, $-\text{I}$, $-\text{CN}$, acetate, propionate;

(2) $\text{Cu(II)}(X_7)_n$ where X_7 is $-\text{CH}_3$, $-\text{Cl}$, $-\text{Br}$, $-\text{I}$, $-\text{CN}$, sulfate, acetate, propionate;

(3) dilithium tetrachlorocuprate (Li_2CuCl_4).

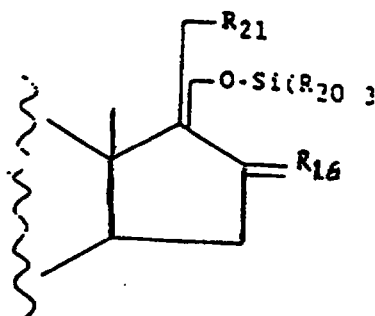
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6. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 1 where the process is performed in the presence of a ligand.



7. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-metal enolate (II) according to claim 6 where the ligand is selected from the group consisting of HMPA, DMI, DMPU, TMU, NMP, TES, DMAP, TMEDA and $(X_{20})_3P$ where X_{20} is C_1-C_8 alkyl or $-\phi$.

8. A process for the production of a 17E-silyl ether (III)



(III)

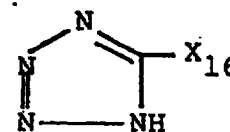
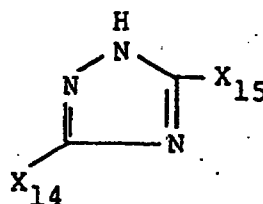
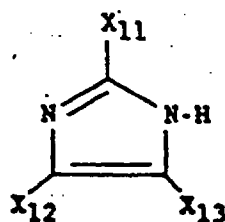
and the 17Z- isomer thereof, where

R_{16} and R_{21} are as defined for formula (II) in claim 1; and

the R_{20} 's are the same or different and are each C_1-C_7 alkyl or $-\phi$;

which comprises contacting a metal enolate of formula (II) as defined in claim 1 where M_{20} is a copper, aluminium or boron cation, with a silylating agent which is either

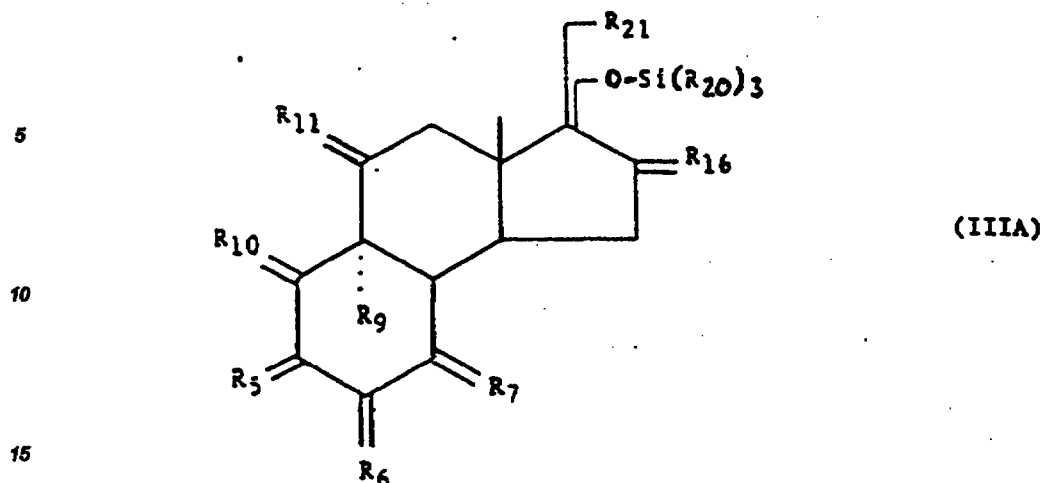
(1) a combination of a silyl halide of the formula $X_1-Si(R_{20})_3$, where X_1 is Cl, Br or I and R_{20} is as defined above, with an amine catalyst selected from pyridine, triazine, tetrazine, an imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole or tetrazole of the respective formulae



where X_{11} , X_{12} , X_{13} , X_{14} , X_{15} and X_{16} are the same or different and are H or C_1-C_3 alkyl, and benzimidazole optionally substituted with 1-5 C_1-C_3 alkyl in the 2-, 4-, 5-, 6- and 7- positions; or

(2) an imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole, tetrazole or benzimidazole as defined above which has a $Si(R_{20})_3$ substituent at the 1-, 1-, 1- or 3- position, respectively.

9. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-silyl ether (III) according to claim 8, where the silyl ether (III) is of the formula



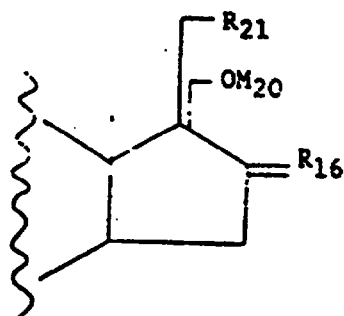
where R_{20} is as defined in claim 8 and the other substituents are as defined in claim 2.

- 20
10. A process for the production of a 17E/17Z-silyl ether of formula (III) as defined in claim 8, which comprises contacting a Δ^{16} -steroid of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 with a preformed copper hydride or a metal hydride reducing agent in the presence of a copper species, in the presence of a silylating agent.
- 25
11. A process according to claim 10, where the Δ^{16} -steroid (I) is as defined in claim 2.
12. A process according to claim 10, where the preformed copper hydride is as defined in claim 3.
13. A process according to claim 10, where the metal hydride reducing agent is as defined in claim 4.
- 30
14. A process according to claim 10, where the copper species is as defined in claim 5.
15. A process according to claim 10, which is performed in the presence of a ligand.
16. A process according to claim 15, where the ligand is as defined in claim 7.
- 35
17. A process according to claim 10, where the silylating agent is either a silyl halide as defined in claim 8, in the presence of an amine catalyst; or a silylated imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole, tetrazole or benzimidazole as defined in claim 8.
18. A process according to claim 17, where the amine catalyst is as defined in claim 8.
- 40
19. A process according to claim 10, which gives a mixture of the 17Z- and 17E- isomers of
 6 α -fluoro-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether,
 20,21-dihydroxy-16 β -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyl ether,
 9 β ,11 β -epoxy-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,17(20)-trien-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether,
 20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether, or
 45 20,21-dihydroxypregna-4,9(11),17(20)-trien-3-one 21-acetate 20-trimethylsilyloxy ether.

Patentansprüche

- 50
1. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E-Metallenolats (II)

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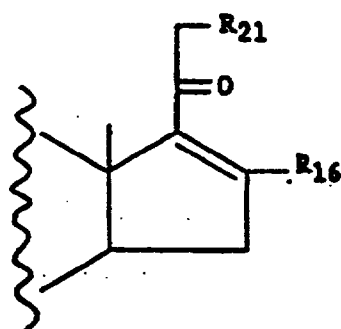
(II)

und dessen Z-Isomeren, worin bedeuten:

R_{16} α -H; β - R_{16-2} mit R_{16-2} gleich -H oder -CH₃;

R_{21} -H, -O- R_{21-1} mit R_{21-1} gleich -H, C₁-C₄ Alkyl, -CH₂-O-CH₃, -CHR₂₁₋₂-O- R_{21-3} , worin R_{21-2} für C₁-C₄ Alkyl steht und R_{21-3} C₁-C₄ Alkyl darstellt, -CH₂-O-CH₂CH₂-O- R_{21-4} , worin R_{21-4} für C₁-C₄ Alkyl steht, THP, -CO- R_{21-5} , worin R_{21-5} für C₁-C₄ oder - ϕ steht, Si(R_{21-6})₃, worin die Reste R_{21-6} gleich oder verschieden sind und aus der Gruppe C₁-C₄ Alkyl und - ϕ ausgewählt sind; und

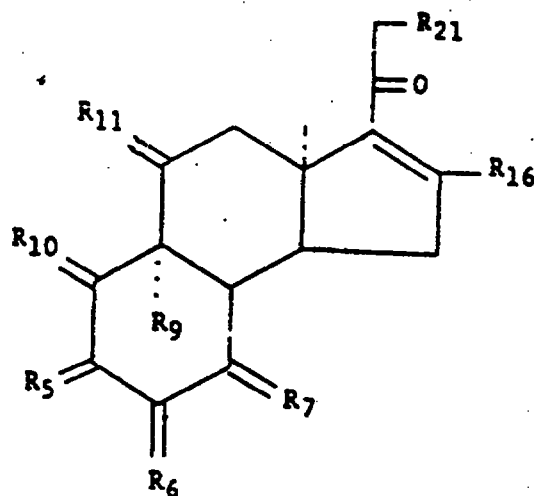
M_{20} Kupfer oder ein von dem Metallhydrid-Reduktionsmittel herrührendes Metallion durch Inberührungbringen eines Δ^{16} -Steroids (I)



(I)

worin R_{16} für -H oder -CH₃ steht und R_{21} die angegebene Bedeutung besitzt, mit einer Komponente aus der Gruppe vorgeformtes Kupferhydrid oder Metallhydrid-Reduktionsmittel in Gegenwart einer Kupfer-spezies.

2. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 1, wobei das Δ^{16} -Steroid (I) aus einem solchen der Formel



(IA)



worin bedeuten:

(A-I) $R_6 = \alpha\text{-}R_{6-1}\text{-}\beta\text{-}R_{6-2}$, $R_{10} = \alpha\text{-}R_{10-1}\text{-}\beta\text{-}R_{10-2}$ und $R_7 = \alpha\text{-}H\text{-}\beta\text{-}H$, wobei einer der Reste R_{6-1} und R_{6-2} für -H steht und der andere -H, -F oder -CH₃ bedeutet, R_{10-2} für -CH₃ steht, R_{10-1} und R_5 zusammen -CH₂-CH₂-CO-CH= oder -CH=CH-CO-CH= darstellen;

(A-II) $R_6 = R_{6-3}\text{-}R_{6-4}$, $R_7 = R_{7-3}\text{-}R_{7-4}$, $R_{10} = \alpha\text{-}R_{10-3}\text{-}\beta\text{-}R_{10-4}$, wobei einer der Reste R_{6-3} und R_{6-4} für -H steht und der andere zusammen mit einem der Reste R_{7-3} und R_{7-4} eine zweite Bindung zwischen C₆ und C₇ bildet, und der andere der Reste R_{7-3} und R_{7-4} -H darstellt, R_{10-4} für -CH₃ steht, R_{10-3} und R_5 zusammen -CH₂-CH₂-CO-CH= oder -CH=CH-CO-CH= darstellen;

(C-I) $R_{11} = R_{11-1}\text{-}R_{11-2}$, worin einer der Reste R_{11-1} und R_{11-2} zusammen mit R_9 eine zweite Bindung zwischen C₉ und C₁₁ ausbildet und der andere der Reste R_{11-1} und R_{11-2} für -H steht;

(C-II) $R_{11} = \alpha\text{-}H\text{-}\beta\text{-}O\text{-}$, wobei $\beta\text{-}O\text{-}$ zusammen mit R_9 ein Epoxid zwischen C₉ und C₁₁ in der β -Konfiguration bildet;

(C-III) $\alpha\text{-}R_9 = -H, -Br, -Cl, -F$ und $R_{11} = =O$ oder $\alpha\text{-}R_{11-3}\text{-}\beta\text{-}R_{11-4}$, worin einer der Reste R_{11-3} und R_{11-4} für -H steht und der andere der Reste R_{11-3} und R_{11-4} -H oder -OH darstellt;

(C-IV) $R_9 = -OH$ und $R_{11} = \alpha\text{-}H\text{-}\beta\text{-}H$;

$R_{16} = -H$ oder -CH₃ und worin

R_{21} die in Anspruch 1 angegebene Bedeutung besitzt, besteht.

3. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 1, wobei das vorgeformte Kupferhydrid aus $[(\phi_3P)\text{-CuH}]_6$, $(CuH)_x$ mit $x = 1$ bis 6, $LiCuH_2$, $LiCu_2H_3$, $Li_2Cu_3H_5$, Li_2CuH_3 , Li_3CuH_4 , Li_4CuH_5 , $LiCuH_6$, Li_5CuH_6 , $CH_3CH_2CH_2\text{-C}\equiv\text{C-CuHLi}$, tert.-Butyl-O-CuHLi oder ϕSCuHLi besteht.

4. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 1, wobei das Metallhydrid-Reduktionsmittel aus der Gruppe

A) $(X_2)(X_3)Al\text{-}H$ mit X_2 und X_3 , die gleich oder verschieden sind, gleich C₁-C₆ Alkyl;

B) $[Kation]^+[(X_4)_3Aluminum\text{-}H]^-$, wobei das Kation aus Natrium, Kalium oder Lithium besteht und X_4 gleich oder verschieden -H oder -O- X_{4-1} mit X_{4-1} gleich C₁-C₆ Alkyl ist;

C) $(Metall)(X_5)_3B\text{-}H$, wobei das Metall aus Natrium, Kalium oder Lithium besteht und $X_5 = -H, C_1\text{-}C_6$ Alkyl, -O- X_{5-1} , worin $X_{5-1} = C_1\text{-}C_6$ Alkyl, -CO- X_{5-1} , worin X_{5-1} die angegebene Bedeutung besitzt, ausgewählt ist.

5. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 1, worin die Kupferspezies aus der Gruppe:

(1) $Cu(I)X_6$ mit X_6 gleich -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN, Acetat, Propionat;

(2) $Cu(II)(X_7)_n$ mit X_7 gleich -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN, Sulfat, Acetat, Propionat;

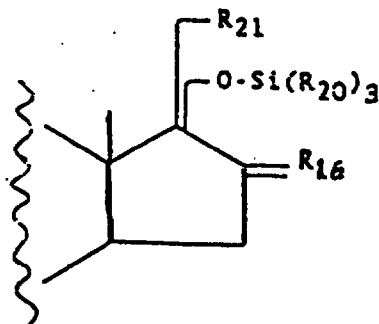
(3) Dilitiumtetrachlorocuprat (Li_2CuCl_4)

ausgewählt ist.

6. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 1, durchgeführt in Gegenwart eines Liganden.

7. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Metallenolats (II) nach Anspruch 6, wobei der Ligand aus der Gruppe HMPA, DMI, DMPU, TMU, NMP, TES, DMAP, TMEDA und $(X_{20})_3P$ mit X_{20} gleich C₁-C₆ Alkyl oder ϕ ausgewählt ist.

8. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E-Silylethers (III)

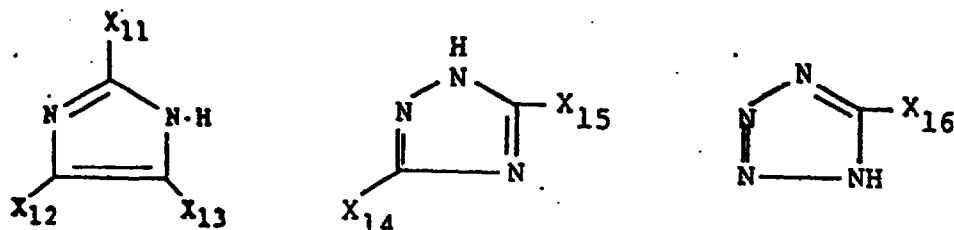


(III)



und dessen 17Z-Isomeren, wobei R_{16} und R_{21} die bei Formel (II) in Anspruch 1 angegebene Bedeutung besitzen und die Reste R_{20} gleich oder verschieden sind und jeweils für C_1 - C_7 Alkyl oder - ϕ stehen, durch Inberührungbringen eines Metallenolats der Formel (II) gemäß der Definition in Anspruch 1 mit M_{20} gleich einem Kupfer-, Aluminium- oder Borkation, mit einem Silylierungsmittel, bei dem es sich entweder um

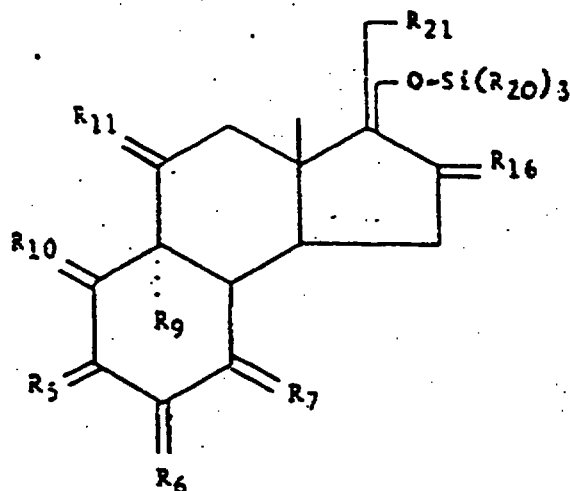
(1) eine Kombination aus einem Silylhalogenid der Formel $X_1-Si(R_{20})_3$ mit X_1 gleich Cl, Br oder I und R_{20} in der angegebenen Definition mit einem Aminkatalysator, ausgewählt aus Pyridin, Triazin, Tetrazin, einem Imidazol, 1,2,4-Triazol oder Tetrazol der Formeln:



worin X_{11} , X_{12} , X_{13} , X_{14} , X_{15} und X_{16} gleich oder verschieden sind und für H oder C_1 - C_3 Alkyl stehen und Benzimidazol, gegebenenfalls substituiert mit 1 bis 5 C_1 - C_3 Alkyl in den 2-, 4-, 5-, 6- und 7-Stellungen; oder

(2) ein Imidazol, 1,2,4-Triazol, Tetrazol oder Benzimidazol der angegebenen Definition mit einem $Si(R_{20})_3$ -Substituenten in der 1-, 1-, 1- bzw. 3-Stellung handelt.

9. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Silylethers (III) nach Anspruch 8, wobei der Silylether (III) die Formel:



(IIIA)

in welcher R_{20} die in Anspruch 8 angegebene Bedeutung besitzt und die sonstigen Substituenten entsprechend Anspruch 2 definiert sind, aufweist.

10. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines 17E/17Z-Silylethers der Formel (III) nach Anspruch 8 durch Inberührungbringen eines Δ^{16} -Steroids der Formel (I) entsprechend Anspruch 1 mit einem vorgebildeten Kupferhydrid oder einem Metallhydrid-Reduktionsmittel in Gegenwart einer Kupferspezies in Gegenwart eines Silylierungsmittels.
11. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, wobei das Δ^{16} -Steroid (I) entsprechend Anspruch 2 definiert ist.
12. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, wobei das vorgebildete Kupferhydrid entsprechend Anspruch 3 definiert ist.
13. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, wobei das Metallhydrid-Reduktionsmittel entsprechend Anspruch 4 defi-



niert ist.

14. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, wobei die Kupferspezies entsprechend Anspruch 5 definiert ist.
- 5 15. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, durchgeführt in Gegenwart eines Liganden.
16. Verfahren nach Anspruch 15, wobei der Ligand entsprechend Anspruch 7 definiert ist.
17. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10, wobei das Silylierungsmittel entweder aus einem Silylhalogenid entsprechend der Definition von Anspruch 8 in Gegenwart eines Aminkatalysators oder aus einem silylierten Imidazol, 1,2,4-Triazol, Tetrazol oder Benzimidazol entsprechend der Definition von Anspruch 8 besteht.
- 10 18. Verfahren nach Anspruch 17, wobei der Aminkatalysator entsprechend Anspruch 8 definiert ist.
19. Verfahren nach Anspruch 10 zur Herstellung eines Gemischs der 17Z- und 17E-Isomeren von
 15 6 α -Fluor-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-on 21-acetat 20-trimethylsilylether,
 20,21-Dihydroxy-16 β -methylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-on 21-acetat 20-trimethylsilylether,
 9 β ,11 β -Epoxy-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,17(20)-trien-3-on 21-acetat 20-trimethylsilyloxyether,
 20,21-Dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tetraen-3-on 21-acetat 20-trimethylsilyloxyether oder
 20,21-Dihydroxypregna-4,9(11),17(20)-trien-3-on 21-acetat 20-trimethylsilyloxyether.
- 20

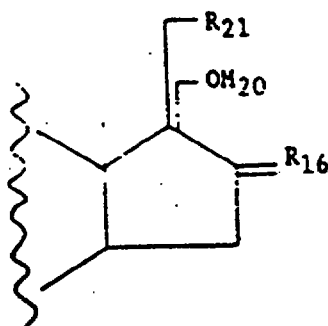
Revendications

1. Procédé de production d'un 17E-énolate métallique (II)

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(II)

et de son isomère Z, dans lequel :

R_{16} représente un groupe α -H: β - R_{16-2} dans lequel R_{16-2} représente -H ou un groupe -CH₃ ;

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R_{21} représente -H, un groupe -O- R_{21-1} dans lequel R_{21-1} représente -H,

un groupe alkyle en C₁ à C₄,

un groupe -CH₂-O-CH₃,

un groupe -CHR₂₁₋₂-O- R_{21-3} dans lequel R_{21-2} représente un groupe alkyle en C₁ à C₄ et R_{21-3} représente un groupe alkyle en C₁ à C₄,

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un groupe -CH₂-O-CH₂CH₂-O- R_{21-4} dans lequel R_{21-4} représente un groupe alkyle en C₁ à C₄,

un groupe THP,

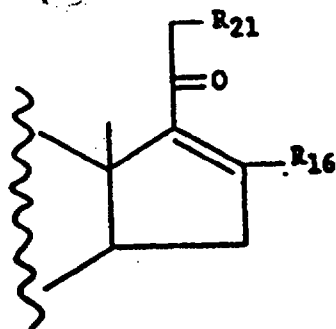
un groupe -CO- R_{21-5} dans lequel R_{21-5} représente un groupe alkyle en C₁ à C₄ ou - ϕ .

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un groupe -Si(R_{21-6})₃ dans lequel les groupes R_{21-6} sont identiques ou différents et sont choisis entre des groupes alkyle en C₁ à C₄ et - ϕ ;

M_{20} représente le cuivre ou un ion métallique dérivé de l'agent réducteur consistant en un hydrure métallique, qui comprend la mise en contact d'un Δ^{16} -stéroïde (I)

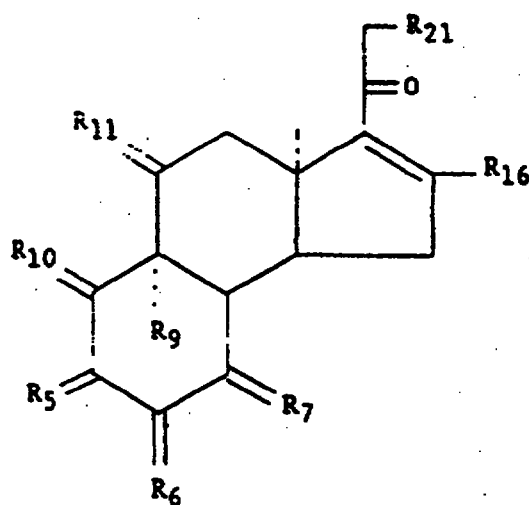
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(I)

dans laquelle R_{16} représente -H ou un groupe $-CH_3$ et R_{21} répond à la définition précitée avec un membre du groupe consistant en un hydrure de cuivre préformé ou un agent réducteur consistant en un hydrure métallique en présence d'un composé de cuivre.

2. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel le Δ^{16} -stéroïde (I) répond à la formule



(IA)

dans laquelle

(A-I) R_6 représente un groupe $\alpha-R_{6-1}:\beta-R_{6-2}$, R_{10} représente un groupe $\alpha-R_{10-1}:\beta-R_{10-2}$ et R_7 représente un groupe $\alpha-H:\beta-H$ dans lesquels l'un des groupes R_{6-1} et R_{6-2} représente -H et l'autre représente -H, -F ou un groupe $-CH_3$, R_{10-2} représente un groupe $-CH_3$, R_{10-1} et R_5 , pris conjointement, représentent un groupe $-CH_2-CH_2-CO-CH=$ ou $-CH=CH-CO-CH=$;

(A-II) R_6 représente un groupe $R_{6-3}:R_{6-4}$, R_7 représente un groupe $R_{7-3}:R_{7-4}$, R_{10} représente un groupe $\alpha-R_{10-3}:\beta-R_{10-4}$, dans lesquels l'un des groupes R_{6-3} et R_{6-4} représente -H et l'autre, pris conjointement avec l'un des groupes R_{7-3} et R_{7-4} , forme une seconde liaison entre C_6 et C_7 , et l'autre groupe de R_{7-3} et R_{7-4} représente -H, R_{10-4} représente un groupe $-CH_3$, R_{10-3} et R_5 , pris conjointement, représentent un groupe $-CH_2-CH_2-CO-CH=$ ou $-CH=CH-CO-CH=$;

(C-I) R_{11} représente un groupe $R_{11-1}:R_{11-2}$ dans lequel l'un des groupes R_{11-1} et R_{11-2} est pris conjointement avec R_9 pour former une seconde liaison entre C_9 et C_{11} et l'autre des groupes R_{11-1} et R_{11-2} représente -H ;

(C-II) R_{11} représente un groupe $\alpha-H:\beta-O-$ dans lequel $\beta-O-$ est pris conjointement avec R_9 pour former un époxyde entre C_9 et C_{11} dans la configuration β ;

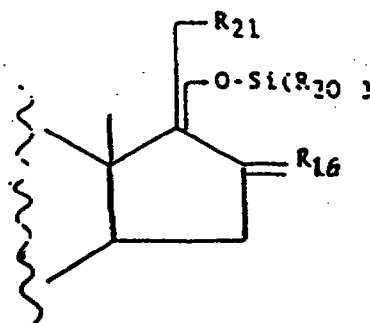
(C-III) $\alpha-R_9$ représente -H, -Br, -Cl, -F et R_{11} représente $=O$ ou un groupe $\alpha-R_{11-3}:\beta-R_{11-4}$ dans lequel l'un des groupes R_{11-3} et R_{11-4} représente -H et l'autre des groupes R_{11-3} et R_{11-4} représente -H ou un groupe -OH ;

(C-IV) R_9 représente un groupe -OH et R_{11} représente un groupe $\alpha-H:\beta-H$;

R_{16} représente -H ou un groupe $-CH_3$ et R_{21} répond à la définition suivant la revendication 1.



3. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel l'hydru-
 dre de cuivre préformé est $[(\phi_3P)-CuH]_6$, $(CuH)_x$ dans lequel x a une valeur de 1 à 6, $LiCuH_2$, $LiCu_2H_3$,
 $Li_2Cu_3H_6$, Li_2CuH_3 , Li_3CuH_4 , Li_4CuH_5 , $LiCuH_6$, Li_5CuH_6 , $CH_3CH_2CH_2-C\equiv C-CuHLi$, t-butyl-O-CuHLi ou
 $\phi SCuHLi$.
4. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel l'agent
 réducteur consistant en un hydru-
 re métallique est choisi dans le groupe consistant en
 A) un composé de formule $(X_2)(X_3)Al-H$ dans laquelle X_2 et X_3 sont identiques ou différents et repré-
 sentent des groupes alkyle en C_1 à C_6 ;
 B) un composé de formule $[cation]^+[(X_4)_3aluminium-H]^-$ dans laquelle le cation est le sodium, le potas-
 sium ou le lithium, les groupes X_4 sont identiques ou différents et représentent -H ou des groupes -O-
 X_{4-1} dans lesquels X_{4-1} représente un groupe alkyle en C_1 à C_6 ;
 C) un composé de formule $(métal)(X_5)_3B-H$ dans lequel le métal est le sodium, le potassium ou le lithium
 et X_5 représente -H,
 un groupe alkyle en C_1 à C_6 ,
 un groupe -O- X_{5-1} dans lequel X_{5-1} représente un groupe alkyle en C_1 à C_6 ,
 un groupe -CO- X_{5-1} dans lequel X_{5-1} répond à la définition précitée.
5. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 1 dans lequel le
 composé de cuivre est choisi dans le groupe consistant en
 (1) un composé de formule $Cu(I)X_6$ dans laquelle X_6 représente un groupe -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN, acé-
 tate, propionate ;
 (2) un composé de formule $Cu(II)(X_7)_n$ dans laquelle X_7 représente un groupe -CH₃, -Cl, -Br, -I, -CN,
 sulfate, acétate, propionate ;
 (3) le tétrachlorocuprate de dilithium (Li_2CuCl_4).
6. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 1, qui est mis en oeu-
 vre en présence d'un ligand.
7. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-énolate métallique (II) suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel le li-
 gand est choisi dans le groupe consistant en HMPA, DMI, DMPU, TMU, NMP, TES, DMAP, TMEDA et un
 composé de formule $(X_{20})_3P$ dans laquelle X_{20} représente un groupe alkyle en C_1 à C_6 ou - ϕ .
8. Procédé de production d'un 17E-éther de silyle (III)



(III)

et de son isomère 17Z, dans lequel

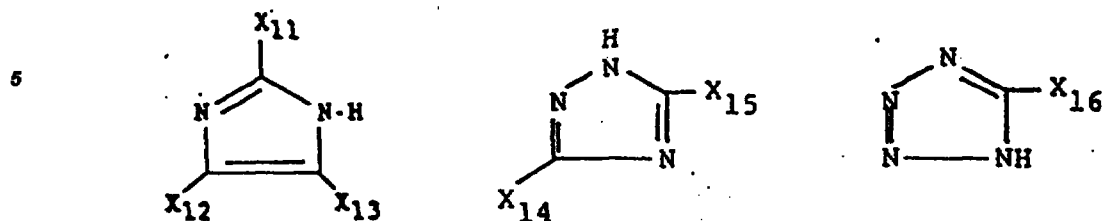
R_{16} et R_{21} répondent aux définitions mentionnées pour la formule (II) dans la revendication 1 ; et
 les groupes R_{20} sont identiques ou différents et représentent chacun un groupe alkyle en C_1 à C_7
 ou - ϕ ;

qui comprend la mise en contact d'un énolate métallique de formule (II) tel que défini dans la re-
 vendication 1, dans lequel M_{20} représente un cation cuivre, aluminium ou bore, avec un agent de silylation
 qui est

(1) une association d'un halogénure de silyle de formule $X_1-Si(R_{20})_3$, dans laquelle X_1 représente Cl,
 Br ou I et R_{20} répond à la définition précitée, avec un catalyseur consistant en une amine choisie entre
 la pyridine, la triazine, la tétrazine, un imidazole, le 1,2,4-triazole ou un tétrazole répondant aux formules



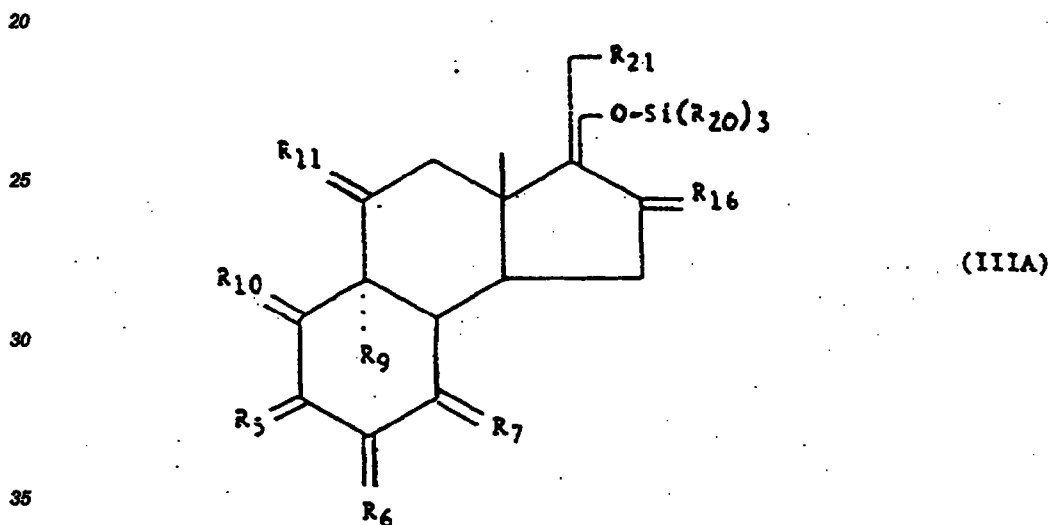
respectives



dans lesquelles X_{11} , X_{12} , X_{13} , X_{14} , X_{15} et X_{16} sont identiques ou différents et représentent H ou des groupes alkyle en C_1 à C_3 , et un benzimidazole facultativement substitué avec 1 à 5 groupes alkyle en C_1 à C_3 en positions 2, 4, 5, 6 et 7 ; ou

(2) un imidazole, le 1,2,4-triazole, un tétrazole ou benzimidazole répondant à la définition précitée qui porte un substituant $Si(R_{20})_3$ en position 1, 1, 1 ou 3, respectivement.

9. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-éther de silyle (III) suivant la revendication 8, dans lequel l'éther de silyle (III) répond à la formule



dans laquelle R_{20} répond à la définition suivant la revendication 8 et les autres substituants répondent aux définitions suivant la revendication 2.

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10. Procédé de production d'un 17E/17Z-éther de silyle de formule (III) répondant à la définition suivant la revendication 8, qui comprend la mise en contact d'un Δ^{16} -stéroïde de formule (I) répondant à la définition suivant la revendication 1 avec un hydrure de cuivre préformé ou un agent réducteur consistant en un hydrure métallique en présence d'un composé de cuivre, en la présence d'un agent de silylation;
 11. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, dans lequel le Δ^{16} -stéroïde (I) répond à la définition suivant la revendication 2.
 12. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, dans lequel l'hydrure de cuivre préformé répond à la définition suivant la revendication 3.
 13. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, dans lequel l'agent réducteur consistant en un hydrure métallique répond à la définition suivant la revendication 4.
 14. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, dans lequel le composé de cuivre répond à la définition suivant la revendication 5.
 15. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, qui est mis en oeuvre en présence d'un ligand.



16. Procédé suivant la revendication 15, dans lequel le ligand répond à la définition suivant la revendication 7.
- 5 17. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, dans lequel l'agent de silylation est un halogénure de silyle répondant à la définition suivant la revendication 8, en présence d'un catalyseur consistant en une amine ; ou bien est un imidazole, 1,2,4-triazole, tétrazole ou benzimidazole silylé répondant à la définition suivant la revendication 8.
- 10 18. Procédé suivant la revendication 17, dans lequel le catalyseur consistant en une amine répond à la définition suivant la revendication 8.
19. Procédé suivant la revendication 10, qui donne un mélange des isomères 17Z et 17E
du 21-acétate, 20-éther de triméthylsilyle de 6 α -fluoro-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-
tétrène-3-one,
15 du 21-acétate, 20-éther de triméthylsilyle de 20,21-dihydroxy-16 β -méthylpregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-
tétrène-3-one,
du 21-acétate, 20-triméthylsilyloxy-éther de 9 β ,11 β -époxy-20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,17(20)-triène-3-one,
du 21-acétate, 20-triméthylsilyloxy-éther de 20,21-dihydroxypregna-1,4,9(11),17(20)-tétrène-3-
one, ou
20 du 21-acétate, 20-éther de triméthylsilyloxy de 20,21-dihydroxypregna-4,9(11),17(20)-triène-3-one.
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