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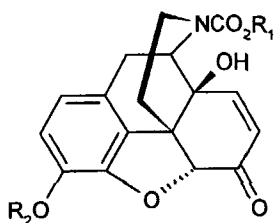
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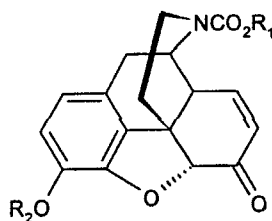
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(54) Title: C-14 OXIDATION OF MORPHINE DERIVATIVES



(IV)



(III)

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to process for the preparation of a 14-hydroxynormorphinone derivative of formula IV comprising reacting the compound of formula III, with a cobalt (II) oxidant in the presence of a mild base and air or oxygen as the cooxidant; wherein

R₁ is (1C-7C) alkyl optionally substituted with one or more chlorines, butenyl, vinyl, benzyl, phenyl or naphthyl; and R₂ is benzyl or benzyl substituted with one or more (1C-6C) alkoxy group or benzyl substituted with one or more halogen. The process is very suitable in the production of noroxymorphone.