(6*R*)-6-(SUBSTITUTED METHYL)PENICILLANIC ACID SULFONES: NEW POTENT β -LACTAMASE INHIBITORS

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A series of (6R)-6-(substituted methyl)penicillanic acid sulfones has been prepared starting from the corresponding 6-(substituted methylene)penicillanates. The new sulfones 9a, 9b, 9c and 9d have been shown to be potent β -lactamase inhibitors.

Production of β -lactamases is by far the most common mechanism of acquired resistance to β -lactam antibiotics. These enzymes efficiently hydrolyze the amide bond of the β -lactam nucleus, yielding products devoid of antibiotic activity. Inhibition of these enzymes has found clinical application, *i.e.* clavulanic acid which is used in combination with the potent but (otherwise) β -lactamase-sensitive antibiotic amoxicillin and so protects it from inactivation^{1,2}).

In earlier accounts we described the synthesis and biological activities of 6-acylmethylenepenicillanates $1 (R_1 = Piv.; Fig. 1)$, potent broad spectrum β -lactamase inhibitors^{3~6)}. We also reported similar properties for the related penem 2^{71} as well as for 3, a vinylogous analogue of 6-formylmethylenepenicillanate⁸⁾ (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, it turned out that application of these inhibitors *in vivo*, especially for therapeutic purposes, is limited due to their instability in biological fluids⁹⁾. This instability was also reflected in another series lacking the carbonyl function: *i.e.* 5; in that case the instability in the test medium of the corresponding pivaloyloxymethyl ester was such that no true β -lactamase-inhibition value could be determined (Table 2). Our efforts at designing potential prodrugs of 1a, endowed with improved chemical stability led to no concomitant *in vivo* activity improvement¹⁰). Herein we report further work done on some of the 6-(substituted methylene)penicillanates in a further attempt to obtain inhibitors with greater chemical stability but still endowed with potent β -lactamase activity. The rationale behind the work reported here was simply the following: Hydrogenation of the 6 exocyclic double bond in 1 should relieve the β -lactam

Fig. 1. Structure of compounds 1, 5 and 6.



- 1a $R = -CH_3$ $R_1 = -CH_2OCOC(CH_3)_3 = Piv$ 1b $R = -CH_2O-Ph$
- $R_1 = -CH_2OCOC(CH_3)_3$
- $1c \quad R = -CH_3 \quad R_1 = -PNB$
- 1d $R = -CH_2O Ph R_1 = -PNB$



5a $R_1 = -CH_2OCOC(CH_3)_3$ 5b $R_1 = -PNB$



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strain and so improve the chemical stability, but in doing so, the preformed Michael acceptor incorporating the ketone (which is a requisite for the inhibition¹¹) disappears. At this stage (reminiscent from the published work on sulbactam¹²) we anticipated that introduction of the sulfone functionality might provide another adequate "activation" for potential β -lactamase inhibition. Furthermore the new chemical entity would bypass the need for using the pivaloyloxymethyl ester and allow the use of the *p*-nitrobenzyl (PNB) ester as the carboxyl protecting group which we anticipated could be readily removed by hydrogenolysis

(past experience called for its use rather than the benzyl ester). The same reasoning was applied to 5. In addition, for comparison purposes, we also included 6 which had turned out to be practically inactive (though containing a preformed Michael acceptor) (Table 2).

Chemistry

The starting 6-(substituted methylene)penicillanates 1, 5 and 6 as well as the 6-(substituted methyl)penicillanates 7 were prepared according to previously employed conditions¹³⁾. The oxidation at







room temperature of compounds 7 with an excess (2.2 equiv.) of *m*-chloroperbenzoic acid (*m*-ClPBA) led rapidly and quantitatively to a mixture of the corresponding α and β sulfoxides (kinetic products of the reaction). Subsequent heating of the reaction mixture for a few hours at 60°C led to the sulfones 8 which were isolated in relatively good yields after work up of the reaction mixture followed by flash chromatography of the crude product. The β -sulfoxides of 7b, 7c and 7d were also isolated from the oxidation mixtures in low yield. Tetrahydrofuran (THF) was found to be the most appropriate solvent for this oxidation (when compared to chloroform and dichloromethane). Removal of the PNB ester was readily achieved by hydrogenolysis using an equal weight of 10% palladium on carbon in ethyl acetate (EtOAc). The acids were isolated quantitatively as their sodium salts 9 after treatment of the hydrogenation mixture with 1 equiv. of sodium 2-ethylhexanoate

(2 N in EtOAc).

Biological Results

Inhibition of β -Lactamases

Table 1 shows the inhibitory properties of the new compounds using partially purified enzyme preparations: Against the β -lactamase from *Proteus vulgaris* 1028, **9a**, **9b**, **9c** and **9d** are more active than sulbactam. When compared to clavulanic acid **9a**, **9b** and **9d** are only slightly superior and **9c** less potent. Against the constitutive penicillinase from *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, the new sulfones are only slightly superior when compared to sulbactam and less active when compared to clavulanic acid. **9b**, **9c**, **9d** and to a lesser degree **9a** are good inhibitors of the 1024 enzyme of *Escherichia coli*, a β -lactamase Table 1. Inhibitory properties of (6R)-6-(substituted methyl)penicillanic acid sulfones against isolated β -lactamases.

	IC ₅₀ (μ M) for the β -lactamase			
Compound	Proteus vulgaris 1028ª	Klebsiella pneumoniae NCTC 418 ^b	Escherichia coli 1024°	
Sulbactam	0.11	2.8	8.0	
Clavulanic acid	0.03	0.02	85.0	
9a	0.013	1.35	24.0	
9b	0.018	1.8	18.0	
9c	0.06	1.5	9.5	
9d	0.017	2.35	12.0	

 β -Lactamase type:

- Inducible, chromosomally determined cephalosporinase (type Ic).
- ^b Constitutive penicillinase (type II).
- ^c Constitutive chromosomal cephalosporinase (type I).

Table 2. Inhibitory properties of 6-(substituted methylene)penicillanates against isolated β -lactamases.

	IC_{50} (μ M) for the β -lactamase					
Compound	mpound Proteus vulgari 1028 ^a		Klebsiella pneumoniae NCTC 418 ^b		Escherichia coli 1024°	
-	E	+ E	- E	+E	-E	+ E
Sulbactam	0.11		2.8		8.0	
la	0.16	0.015	0.19	0.0005	32.0	-1.5
1b	0.7	0.011	3.5	0.06	29.0	0.75
5a	*	*	90.0*	13.0*	*	*
6a	100.0	65.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	29.0

E: Test carried out in the presence of $10 \,\mu$ l of hog liver esterase following the procedures described in reference 4, after a 15 minutes preincubation time of the β -lactamase and inhibitor.

* Compound unstable. No true β -lactamase-inhibition value could be determined.

 β -Lactamase type:

^a Inducible, chromosomally determined cephalosporinase (type Ic).

^b Constitutive penicillinase (type II).

^c Constitutive chromosomal cephalosporinase (type I).

	MIC (µg/ml) inhibitor + ampicillin ^a			
Compound	Klebsiella pneumoniae NCTC 418	Proteus vulgaris 1028	Escherichia coli 1024	
Sulbactam	3.1+3.1	1.6+1.6	12+12	
9a	> 12 + 50	0.4+1.6	12 + 50	
9b	50 + 25	12.5 + 6.3	ND	
9c	12 + 25	1.6 + 6.3	< 50 + 6	
9d	25 + 25	1.6 + 1.6	25 + 25	

Table 3. In vitro synergy with ampicillin against β -lactamase-producing isolates.

ND: Not done.

Figures presented were selected on the basis of minimal drug concentration required for inhibition, as read from checkerboard titration experiments. MICs of ampicillin alone were in all instances greater than 50 μ g/ml. Medium: Mueller-Hinton broth (Difco). Inoculum: 10⁵ cfu/ml.

Table 4. Therapeutic activity in combination with ampicillin (A) against experimental septicemias in mice. (ED₅₀, mg/kg, sc)

	Proteus vulgaris 1028	Staphylococcus aureus 887
A+Sulbactam	1.8+12.5	10+10
A+9a	0.6+12.5	20+20
A + 9c	0.6 + 12.5	12 + 12
A + 9b	28 + 28	ND
$\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{9d}$	>25+25	ND

ND: Not done.

 ED_{50} single compounds, > 50 mg/kg, sc.

against which clavulanic acid has little activity. Table 3 shows that the new sulfones (9a, 9c and 9d) considerably reduced the MIC values of ampicillin against *Proteus vulgaris* and that they are as effective

as sulbactam against this organism. As can be seen, synergism was less pronounced against the other β -lactamase-producing organisms. Their performance *in vivo* is given in Table 4: In combination with ampicillin **9a** and **9c** are better synergists than sulbactam against systemic infection with *Proteus vulgaris* 1028 after subcutaneous administration. The other compounds were less active in mice.

Conclusion

The chemical modifications reported here have been successful in so far that they have transformed an inactive 6-(substituted methylene)penicillanate **6a** (Table 2) into a true β -lactamase inhibitor **9c** (Table 1) whilst, the same structural modifications onto **1a** and **1b** (already potent β -lactamase inhibitors, Table 2), have had a detrimental effect on the inhibitory potency of the resulting compounds **9a** and **9b**, though they still are good β -lactamase inhibitors, comparable to sulbactam (Table 1).

Experimental

The conditions were the same as described¹³⁾ unless otherwise quoted.

p-Nitrobenzyl (6R)-6-(Cyanomethyl)penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (8c)

A solution of 7c (2.5 g, 6.61 mmol) in 150 ml THF was treated under stirring at 20°C with *m*-ClPBA (2.66 g, 13.9 mmol). The temperature rose to 30°C. The stirred mixture was then heated at 60°C for 24 hours. The excess of peracid was destroyed as usual by the dropwise addition at 5°C of 2 ml of a 10% aqueous solution of sodium sulfite to the stirred mixture which was then concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was partitioned between EtOAc and water. The organic phase was separated and washed successively with dilute cold NaHCO₃ aq. and water, dried, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was rapidly flash chromatographed. Elution with EtOAc - cyclohexane (1 : 1) furnished the sulfone **8c** in 63% yield (1.7 g, 4.17 mmol) as colorless crystals: IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 2262, 1803, 1761, 1324, 1119; MS *m*/z 407 (M), 343 (M – SO₂), 328, 83; ¹H NMR (60 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.35 and 1.56 (2 × s, 2-CCH₃), ~2.94 (dd, $J_{gem} = 16.5$ Hz, $J_{68} = 8$ Hz) and ~3.39 (dd, $J_{68'} = 9$ Hz) (8-CH₂), ~4.1 (m, 6-CH), 4.02 (s, 3-CH), 4.73 (d, $J_{56} = 4.8$ Hz, 5-CH), 5.32 (nearly a s, O-CH₂–), 7.58 and 8.26 centers of AA'BB'-spectrum (aromatic H); MP: 125~126°C.

Further elution with EtOAc - cyclohexane (7:3) furnished the corresponding β -sulfoxide in 25% yield (0.66 g, 1.7 mmol).

Sodium (6R)-6-(Cyanomethyl)penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (9c)

To a stirred suspension of 2g prereduced 10% Pd/C in 50 ml EtOAc was added a solution of **8c** (1.6g, 3.9 mmol) in 50 ml EtOAc. The stirred mixture was hydrogenated at atmospheric pressure for 40 minutes. The catalyst was removed by filtration through MgSO₄. The filtrate was concentrated to a volume of 5 ml. Under cooling and stirring the solution was treated with 1.9 ml 2 N solution of sodium 2-ethylcaproate in EtOAc. Addition of 500 ml ethyl ether precipitated the Na salt. The crystalline salt was filtered, thoroughly washed with ether and dried to give 0.98 g of **9c** (3.3 mmol, 85% yield): IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 2264, 1782, 1626, 1389, 1315, 1115; ¹H NMR (60 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 1.35 and 1.46 (2 × s, 2-CCH₃), ~3.16 (m, ~d, J = ~8 Hz, 8-CH₂), 5.86 (s, 3-CH), ~4.2 (m, 6-CH), 5.04 (d, J = 4.5 Hz, 5-CH); MP: 160°C (dec.).

p-Nitrobenzyl (6R)-6-(2-Oxo-3-phenoxypropyl)penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (8b)

To a stirred solution of **7b** (1.8 g, 3.65 mmol) in 100 ml THF at 20°C was added *m*-ClPBA (1.6 g, 8.0 mmol) portionwise. The temperature rose to 31°C. The stirred mixture was then heated at 64°C for 6 hours. After cooling at $0 \sim 5^{\circ}$ C, the excess of peracid was destroyed by the dropwise addition of a 10% aqueous solution of sodium sulfite. The mixture was then concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was partitioned between water and EtOAc. The organic phase was separated and washed successively with dilute cold NaHCO₃ aq. and water, dried, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash chromatography. Eluent cyclohexane - EtOAc (1 : 1). The first colorless foamy eluted material 1.5 g (2.9 mmol, 80%) was the sulfone **8b**: IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 1799, 1760, 1738, 1321, 1185; MS *m*/*z* 516 (M); ¹H NMR (80 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.35 and 1.52 (2 × s, 2-CCH₃), ~ 3.21 (dd, J_{gem} = 19 Hz, J_{68} = 6.5 Hz) and ~ 3.7 (dd, J_{68} = 9.5 Hz) (8-CH₂), ~4.2 (m, 6-CH), 4.48 (s, 3-CH), 4.62 (m, nearly a s, -OCH₂CO-), 4.87 (d, J = 5 Hz, 5-CH), 5.35 (m, nearly a s, -CO₂CH₂-), ~ 6.7 ~ 7.4 (m, aromatic H), 7.59 and 8.3 centers of AA'BB'-spectrum (aromatic H).

The second eluted material 0.3 g (0.6 mmol, 17%) was the corresponding β -sulfoxide.

Sodium (6R)-6-(2-Oxo-3-phenoxypropyl)penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (9b)

To a prereduced suspension of 2.0 g 10% Pd/C in 50 ml EtOAc was added **8b** (1.5 g, 2.9 mmol) in 50 ml EtOAc. The stirred mixture was hydrogenated for 40 minutes and worked up as for **9c** and the solvent was concentrated under reduced pressure to a volume of 5 ml. Treatment with 1.45 ml of the solution of sodium 2-ethylhexanoate followed by the same work up as for **9c** furnished 1 g of **9b** (2.5 mmol, 86% yield): IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 1781, 1737, 1615, 1388, 1317, 1117; ¹H NMR (60 MHz, D₂O) δ 1.44 and 1.56 (2×s, 2-CCH₃), ~3.15~3.62 (m, 8-CH₂), ~4.1~4.45 (m, 6-CH), 4.25 (s, 3-CH), 4.82~5.05 (m, -OCH₂CO-), 5.14 (d, J=4.5 Hz, 5-CH), ~6.7~7.6 (m, aromatic H). MP: 150°C (dec.).

p-Nitrobenzyl (6R)-6-Acetonylpenicillanate S,S-Dioxide (8a)

Under stirring at 20°C *m*-ClPBA (5.6 g, 29.1 mmol) was added portionwise to a solution of **7a** (4.3 g, 13.1 mmol) in 300 ml THF. The stirred mixture was then heated at 60°C for 6.5 hours; only traces of β -sulfoxide were still present. The excess of peroxide was destroyed under stirring and cooling by the dropwise addition of 4 ml of a 10% aqueous solution of sodium sulfite. The mixture was then concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was partitioned between EtOAc and water. The organic phase was separated and washed successively with dilute cold NaHCO₃ aq. and water, dried, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash chromatography. Elution with cyclohexane - EtOAc (4:6) gave 4.5 g (10.5 mmol, 80% yield) of colorless foamy **8a**: IR (CHCl₃) cm⁻¹ 1800, 1761, 1719, 1329, 1186; CI-MS 442 (M+NH₄)⁺, 425 (M+H)⁺; ¹H NMR (80 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.34 and 1.42 (2×s, 2-CCH₃), 2.23 (s, CH₃CO-), ~3.0 (dd, J_{gem} =19 Hz, J_{68} =6.5 Hz) and ~3.50 (dd, $J_{68'}$ =10 Hz) (8-CH₂), ~3.93~4.33 (m, 6-CH), 4.47 (s, 3-CH), 5.85 (d, J=4.8 Hz, 5-CH), 5.35 (nearly a s, -CO₂CH₂-), 7.47 and 8.28 centers of AA'BB'-spectrum (aromatic H).

Sodium (6R)-6-Acetonylpenicillanate S,S-Dioxide (9a)

Starting from 4.4 g (10.3 mmol) 8a, 3 g 10% Pd/C, (hydrogenation time: 120 minutes) and following the methodology described for 9c, 2.9 g (9.4 mmol, 91% yield) of 9a were obtained: IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 1782, 1730, 1316, 1117; ¹H NMR (60 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 1.33 and 1.41 (2×s, 2-CCH₃), 2.14 (s, CH₃CO-),

~2.88 (dd, $J_{gem} = 16.5$ Hz, $J_{68} = 8$ Hz) and ~3.25 (dd, $J_{68'} = 9$ Hz) (8-CH₂), 3.78 (s, 3-CH), ~3.9~4.26 (m, 6-CH), 4.94 (d, J = 4.8 Hz). MP: 195°C (dec.).

p-Nitrobenzyl (6R)-6-[(Ethoxycarbonyl)methyl]penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (8d)

A stirred solution of 7d (2.35 g, 5.5 mmol) in 50 ml THF was treated portionwise at 20°C with *m*-ClPBA (2.2 g, 11.7 mmol). The mixture was then heated at 60°C for 48 hours. The excess of peracid was destroyed as above. The mixture was concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was partitioned between water and EtOAc. The organic phase was then washed in sequence with dilute cold aqueous NaHCO₃, water, dried, filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash chromatography. Eluent cyclohexane - EtOAc (4:6). Yield, 1.5 g (2.95 mmol, 53%) of colorless foamy 8d: IR (CHCl₃) cm⁻¹ 1806, 1763, 1733, 1332, 1168; CI-MS 472 (M+NH₄)⁺, 455 (M+H)⁺; ¹H NMR (80 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.29 (t, CH₃CH₂-), 1.37 and 1.58 (2×s, 2-CCH₃), ~2.82 (dd, J_{gem} = 18 Hz, J₆₈ = 6.5 Hz) and ~3.43 (dd, J_{68'} = 11 Hz) (8-CH₂), ~4.1~4.3 (m, 6-CH), 4.25 (q, CH₃CH₂-), 4.55 (s, 3-CH), 4.85 (d, J = 5 Hz, 5-CH), 5.39 (nearly a s, -CO₂CH₂-), 7.61 and 8.35 centers of AA'BB'-spectrum (aromatic H).

The second eluted material (0.21 g) was the corresponding β -sulfoxide.

Sodium (6R)-6-[(Ethoxycarbonyl)methyl]penicillanate S,S-Dioxide (9d)

Starting with 1g 8d, 1g 10% Pd/C, (hydrogenation time: 30 minutes) and following the protocol described for 9c, 0.74 g (2.1 mmol, 85% yield) colorless 9d were obtained: IR (KBr) cm⁻¹ 1784, 1730, 1628, 1386, 1319, 1207, 1160; ¹H NMR (80 MHz, D₂O) δ 1.31 (t, CH₃CH₂-), 1.48 and 1.59 (2 × s, 2-CCH₃), ~2.93 (dd, J_{gen} = 18 Hz, J₆₈ = 7.5 Hz) and ~3.34 (dd, J_{68'} = 10.5 Hz) (8-CH₂-), 4.29 (q, CH₃CH₂-), 4.33 (s, 3-CH), ~4.16~4.59 (m, 6-CH), 5.13 (d, J=4.5 Hz). MP: 155°C (dec.).

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