The Synthesis of Perdeuterated Azone  $(d_{35}-1-Dodecylhexahydro-2H-azepin-2-one)$ 

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#### Summary

Perdeuteroazone (3) has been synthesised via the base-catalysed coupling of  $d_{11}$ -hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2) with  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane.

# Keywords

Perdeuteroazone, mass spectrometry, <sup>2</sup>H NMR, Beckmann rearrangement

# Introduction

Azone (1-dodecylhexahydro-2H-azepin-2-one) (1) is a well established dermal penetration enhancer<sup>1</sup> that is known to increase

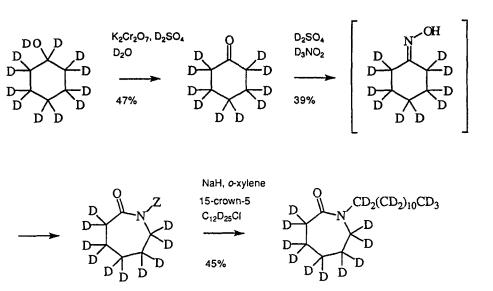
CCC 0362-4803/94/111047-07 ©1994 by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. Received 18 May, 1994 Revised 27 June, 1994 the passage of a wide range of molecules through the skin. The precise mechanism by which this is achieved is, however, still unknown. The synthesis of the fully deuterated azone (3) would provide a useful tool with which to further investigate the mechanism of action of azone by the use of fourier transform infrared spectroscopy<sup>2,3</sup> and neutron reflectometry<sup>4,5</sup>.

# **Results and Discussion**

The synthesis of perdeuterated azone  $(d_{35}-1-dodecylhexahydro-2H$ azepin-2-one) (3) was achieved via the base-catalysed coupling of  $d_{11}$ -hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2) with  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane.  $d_{11}$ -Hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2) was prepared as shown in Scheme 1.  $d_{12}$ -Cyclohexanol, which is commercially available from Aldrich, was oxidised to  $d_{10}$ -cyclohexanone using a standard procedure. This oxidation was performed in fully deuterated solvents and with deuterated reagents to prevent the loss of deuterium experienced by Farmer et al.<sup>6</sup> Upon oxidation of  $d_{12}$ cyclohexanol with chromic acid in protiated media, these workers obtained  $d_{10}$ -cyclohexanone with a  $d_{10}$ :d9 ratio of 100:45, which they attributed to the loss of deuterium via exchange at the 2- or 6-This loss could be reversed by treating the product with positions. boiling DCl-D<sub>2</sub>O to give  $d_{10}$ -cyclohexanone with a  $d_{10}$ :  $d_9$  ratio of 100:9. These workers also observed a gradual deuterium loss on storage of the  $d_{10}$ -cyclohexanone. Comparison of the mass spectra of  $d_{10}$ -cyclohexanone and cyclohexanone shows that oxidation under fully deuterated conditions has maintained the  $d_{10}$ : dg ratio at 100:11. Analysis using an isotopic abundance calculation programme<sup>7</sup> indicates that this represents greater than 98 atom % D.  $d_{11}$ -Hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one was then prepared from  $d_{10}$ cyclohexanone by the one-step Beckmann rearrangement procedure

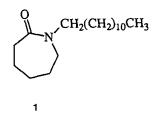
of Novotny.<sup>7</sup> This one-step method obviates the need for the

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2 Z=H or D

Scheme 1



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isolation and purification of the intermediate cyclohexanone oxime and thus results in a higher yield since oximes are notoriously difficult to purify. Once again, the reaction was performed with the deuterated reagents to ensure no loss of deuterium. Calculations of the % D are complicated in this case by the ready exchange of the N-D.

The optimum conditions for the base-catalysed coupling of  $d_{11}$ hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2) and  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane involved the use of sodium hydride as base in *o*-xylene with the addition of 15-crown-5, Scheme 1. The  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane was prepared by the chlorination of  $d_{25}$ -1-dodecanol, available commercially from Cambridge Isotopes, U.K., with thionyl chloride. Comparison of the mass spectra of  $d_{35}$ -1-dodecylhexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (3) and 1-dodecylhexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2) and use of the mass calculation programme indicates that (3) contains greater than 98 atom % D.

#### Experimental

All experiments were initially tested on the corresponding protiated materials and the base-catalysed coupling of the protiated species was also attempted, with  $D_2O$  quenching, to ensure that no exchange occurred under the conditions used. Infra-red spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 1600 series FTIR spectrophotometer using sodium chloride plates. Solid samples were run as nujol mulls and liquid samples as thin films. The  $^{2}$ H NMR spectrum of (3) was acquired on a Bruker WM360 spectrometer at 55.3 MHz. <sup>2</sup>H NMR chemical shifts are relative to an internal standard of CDCl<sub>3</sub>. Low resolution electron impact mass spectra were obtained on a Varian CH5-D spectrometer (Cardiff) and high resolution spectra on a VG ZAB-E spectrometer (S.E.R.C. Mass Spectrometry Service Centre, Swansea). The extent of isotopic labelling was determined by comparison of the mass spectra of the perdeuterated species with those of the corresponding protiated compounds. Repeated scans were taken at an ionising voltage of 70eV and a source temperature of 140°C.

### d<sub>10</sub>-Cyclohexanone

A chromic acid solution was prepared by dissolving potassium dichromate (11.65g, 0.04 mol) in deuterium oxide (36mL).  $d_2$ -Sulphuric acid (16.21g, 0.16 mol) was then added slowly. The solution was cooled in ice with vigorous stirring, made up to 60mL using deuterium oxide and then stored under nitrogen until ready for use.

A solution of  $d_{12}$ -cyclohexanol (3g, 0.027 mol) in ether (15mL) was cooled to below 0°C under nitrogen. The chromic acid solution (15mL) was added slowly to the vigorously stirred  $d_{12}$ -cyclohexanol solution over a period of 15 minutes whilst ensuring that the temperature remained below 5°C. This procedure was repeated for another 15 mL of the chromic acid solution and then the mixture was stirred for a further 15 minutes at 0°C. The ether layer was separated and the aqueous layer was washed with ether (2x25mL). The ether layers were combined and washed with 5% w/v sodium carbonate in deuterium oxide (30mL) followed by deuterium oxide (3x25mL). The ether solution was dried over anhydrous magnesium sulphide and the ether was then removed by distillation at atmospheric pressure. Fractional distillation of the residue gave  $d_{10}$ cyclohexanone; yield; 1.38g (47%); b.p. 50°C/10mm Hg (lit.<sup>6</sup> b.p. 153-155°C); v<sub>max</sub> (film)/cm<sup>-1</sup> 2210, 2108 (C-D), and 1710 (C=O); m/z 109 (3%), 108 (M+, 36), 107 (4), 106 (2), 76 (21), 74 (29), 63 (17), and 59 (100).

[Cyclohexanone; m/z 99 (5%), 98 (M<sup>+</sup>, 37), 97 (3), 70 (21), 69 (30), and 55 (100).]

### $d_{11}$ -Hexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (2)

This was prepared using an adaptation of the method of Novotny.<sup>8</sup> To well stirred  $d_2$ -sulphuric acid (1.57g, 0.0157 mol), heated to 125°C under nitrogen, was added  $d_3$ -nitromethane (1g, 0.0157 mol), dropwise, with external cooling when necessary to maintain the temperature at 125-130°C. When the addition was complete the mixture was stirred for a further 5 minutes at that temperature.  $d_{10}$ -Cyclohexanone (1.38g, 0.013 mol) was added slowly to the mixture, which was heated, if necessary, to hold the temperature at 120-125°C. After 5 minutes stirring at that temperature the reaction was cooled to below 36°C and slowly neutralised with 28% ammonia solution. The mixture was then filtered under vacuum and the filtrate extracted with chloroform (3x25mL). The combined chloroform extracts were dried over magnesium sulphate and the solvent removed by distillation at atmospheric pressure. Fractional distillation of the residue gave (2) as a straw coloured waxy solid; yield: 0.61g (39%); b.p. 155°C/10mm Hg (lit.<sup>9</sup> hexahydro-2H-azepin-2-one b.p. 139°C/12mm Hg);  $v_{max}$  (film)/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3420 (N-H), 2209, 2108 (C-D), and 1648 (C=O); m/z 125 (2%), 124 (22), 123 (100), 122 (12), 121 (2), 108 (44), 93 (18), 92 (26), 85 (24), and 83 (42). [Hexahydro-2H-azepin-2-one; MS: m/z 115 (1%), 114 (7), 113 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100), 85 (55), 84 (53), 83 (23), 57 (54), and 55 (93).]

### d25-1-Chlorododecane

To freshly distilled thionyl chloride (4.52g, 0.038 mol) was added  $d_{25}$ -1-dodecanol (2g, 0.095 mol), with vigorous stirring under nitrogen, over a period of 2 hours. The mixture was then heated under reflux with continued stirring for 24 hours. The excess thionyl chloride was removed by distillation and the crude product purified by distillation to give  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane; yield: 1.92g (88%), b.p. 120°C/10mm Hg; m/z 231 (0.8%), 230 (0.5), 229 (0.5), 228 (0.4), 115 (33), 101 (41), 99 (100), 67 (85), 63 (57), and 49 (93).

### $d_{35}$ -1-Dodecylhexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one (3)

This was prepared using an adaptation of the method of Marvel and Mayer.<sup>10</sup> To  $d_{11}$ -hexahydro-2*H*-azepinone (0.54g, 0.0044 mol) and sodium hydride (60% dispersion in oil, 0.176g, 0.44 mol) in *o*-xylene (20mL) under nitrogen was added 15-crown-5 (10 drops) and the mixture was refluxed with stirring for 10 hours. The mixture was then cooled and  $d_{25}$ -1-chlorododecane (1g, 0.0044 mol) dissolved in *o*-xylene (5mL) was added. The reaction mixture was refluxed for a further 6 hours and filtered hot. The solid obtained was washed with toluene (50mL) and the filtrate and washings were combined. The solvents were removed by distillation at 10 mmHg and the

product was isolated by fractional distillation to give (3) as a straw coloured liquid; yield: 0.63g (45%), b.p.  $170^{\circ}$ C/0.06 mmHg (lit.<sup>1</sup> 1-dodecylhexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one b.p.  $160^{\circ}$ C/0.1 mmHg). (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 316.4916, C<sub>18</sub>D<sub>35</sub>NO requires M, 316.4916); <sup>2</sup>H NMR (CHCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta_{\rm D}$  0.82 (3D, s), 1.14 (18D, s), 1.5 (8D, m), 2.46 (2D, s), and 3.28 (4D, s); v<sub>max</sub> (film)/cm<sup>-1</sup> 2197, 2099 (C-D), and 1639 (C=O); m/z 317 (4%), 316 (M<sup>+</sup>, 33), 315 (14), 314 (7), 138 (100), and 89 (52). [1-Dodecylhexahydro-2*H*-azepin-2-one; MS: m/z 283 (1%), 282 (7), 281 (M<sup>+</sup>, 33), 280 (2), 127 (54), 126 (100), and 98 (39).]

We are grateful to Dr. D.R. Kelly for help with the analysis of the mass spectra.

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