## **Conversion of Cholic Acids into Aza Steroids**

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Cholic and chenodeoxycholic acids have been transformed into analogues of the anti-fungal aza steroid A25822A *via* the 8(14)-ene and 8,14-diene derivatives.

The A25822 group of fungal metabolites isolated and characterised by the Lilly group<sup>1</sup> have been shown to exhibit antifungal activity under certain circumstances.<sup>2</sup> This activity has been traced to their inhibition of the 14-ene hydrogenation step of sterol biosynthesis.<sup>3</sup> At the inception of our work the only synthetic studies published were those of the Barton group<sup>4</sup> who prepared the aza steroid 1 from ergosterol. Since then Dolle and Kruse have described a synthesis of the 4,4-dimethyl compound.<sup>5</sup>



We wished to investigate whether cholic  $\dagger$  acid could be used as a source of aza steroids of this type. The Fetizon group <sup>6</sup> has described the conversion of methyl  $3\alpha$ ,  $12\alpha$ -diacetoxychol-8(14)en-24-oate into the 8,14-diene **2** by reaction with Bu'OOH-SeO<sub>2</sub> and its further transformation into the 14-hydroxy-15-oxo compound. Since the preparation of this ketone proved to be capricious  $\ddagger$  and cleavage of ring *D* difficult we turned to reaction of the diene **2** with OsO<sub>4</sub>-Me<sub>3</sub>NO which gave a 1:1 mixture of 14,15-diols (80%). Oxidation with NaIO<sub>4</sub> gave the ketoaldehyde **7** (90%).

Reaction of the aldehyde 7 with NH<sub>3</sub>-MeOH gave a variety of products from which the carbinolamine 8 (30%) could be isolated. The presence of the unsaturated imine was confirmed by the shift of  $\lambda_{max}$  from 242 nm ( $\varepsilon$  10 300) to 282 nm ( $\varepsilon$  10 100) on acidification. Attempts to reduce the carbinolamine 8 to the



azasteroid 9 with NaBH<sub>3</sub>CN were unsuccessful, the allylamine 10 being obtained (92%). Direct oxidation of the amine 10 with Hg(OAc)<sub>2</sub> or Pb(OAc)<sub>4</sub> failed to form the azomethine, but the two step process <sup>7</sup> of *N*-chlorination with Bu'OCl followed by dehydrochlorination with DBU§ formed compound 9 (84%).<sup>8</sup>



Now that we had developed a method for the construction of the aza compound we endeavoured to apply it to a target more closely related to the natural products. The starting material was chenodeoxycholic acid ¶ which was converted to the 8(14)ene apo compound using the conditions previously described; however in this case the 8(14)-ene isomer was contaminated with the 7-ene compound. If After acetylation exposure of the mixture to Pt-H<sub>2</sub> converted it to pure 8(14)-ene material 11. Reaction of the acid with (COCl)<sub>2</sub> formed the acid chloride which was treated with Pr<sup>1</sup>MgCl-CuCN to give ketone 12. Attempts to transform the enone into the 8,14-diene 3 using

 $<sup>+ 3\</sup>alpha, 7\alpha, 12\alpha$ -Trihydroxy-5B-cholan-24-oic acid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>‡</sup> The hydroxy ketone was accompanied by varying amounts of 8-en-15-one and 8(14)-en-15-one according to the base used.

<sup>§ 1,8-</sup>Diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene.

<sup>¶</sup>  $3\alpha$ ,  $7\alpha$ -Dihydroxy-5 $\beta$ -cholan-24-oic acid.

<sup>||</sup> MM2 calculations confirm that removal of the 12-acetate reduces the energy differences between the 7-ene and  $\Delta 8(14)$ -ene isomers from 2.2 to 0.9 kcal (1 cal = 4.18 J).



Bu'OOH-SeO<sub>2</sub> gave intractable materials, presumably due to interference by the side-chain ketone. Thus it was decided to introduce the diene first and then complete the side-chain. The known diene ester 4 was hydrolysed to the acid and acetylated with Ac<sub>2</sub>O-pyridine. On aqueous work-up the acid 5 was obtained, but the bulk of the material from the reaction was present as the mixed anhydride 6. It was possible to hydrolyse the anhydride selectively, but in poor yield; however the anhydride could be converted into the acid chloride using (COCl)<sub>2</sub>. Reaction of the acid chloride with Pr<sup>i</sup>MgCl-CuCN gave the ketone 3.

The results of  $OsO_4$ -Me<sub>3</sub>NO oxidation of the diene 3 were disappointing since the 14,15-diol was obtained in poor yield, the major product being an unidentified ether. Stoichiometric  $OsO_4$  oxidation gave the 14,15-diol (28%) which proved to be unstable.\* We next turned to selective ozonolysis which had been used by Dolle and Kruse<sup>5</sup> in a similar situation. Reaction of the diene with O<sub>3</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at -78 °C followed by reduction of the reaction mixture with Zn-AcOH gave the ketoaldehyde 13 (23%) which was treated with NH<sub>3</sub> to form the carbinolamine 17 (25%). Reduction of the carbinolamine 17 as before gave the allylamine (29%). This succession of poor yields caused us to examine other routes from the ketoaldehyde to the imine. Dolle and Kruse<sup>5</sup> had converted their ketoaldehyde to primary alcohol and thence to the unsaturated imine using (PhO)<sub>2</sub>PON<sub>3</sub>-(Pr<sup>i</sup>OCON)<sub>2</sub>-Ph<sub>3</sub>P in an aza-Wittig reaction. The ketoaldehyde was reduced with  $Bu'NH_2-BH_3$  in  $CH_2Cl_2$  to the alcohol 14 (54%) but all attempts to form the imine 18 in one step failed so a well established route was adopted. Reaction of the alcohol with  $Ph_3P-N$ -bromosuccinimide gave the bromide 15 (90%) which with  $NaN_3-Me_2NCHO$  formed the azide 16 (100%); reduction of 16 with  $H_2$ -Lindlar catalyst gave the imine 18 (64%). The synthesis was completely by Wittig reaction of 18 with  $CH_2PPh_3$  to give the analogue 19.

## Experimental

NMR spectra were measured in CDCl<sub>3</sub> at 300 MHz (J values in Hz), IR spectra as thin films, and UV spectra in EtOH. 'Usual work-up' implies extractions with an organic solvent, washing the combined extracts with brine, drying the organic solvent over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, and concentration of the extract under reduced pressure.

Oxidation of Methyl  $3\alpha$ , $12\alpha$ -Diacetoxy-5 $\beta$ -chola-18,14-dien-24-oate 2.—OsO<sub>4</sub> (50 mg) in Bu'OH (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise to a solution of the diene 2 (383 mg) and Me<sub>3</sub>NO (103 mg) in Bu'OH (20 cm<sup>3</sup>), water (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) and pyridine (1.2 cm<sup>3</sup>) at ambient temperature under N<sub>2</sub>. After 1 h aqueous Na<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (20%) was added to the dark red solution. Extraction with Et<sub>2</sub>O (3 × 50 cm<sup>3</sup>) followed by work-up in the usual way gave a green oil which was chromatographed on SiO<sub>2</sub>; elution with light petroleum (b.p. 60–80 °C)–EtOAc (1:1) gave the 14,15diols (340 mg) as a glass.

The diols (310 mg) and NaIO<sub>4</sub> (400 mg) were dissolved in MeOH (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) and water (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the solution left at ambient temperature for 3 h. A white precipitate formed which dissolved on the addition of water (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the resulting mixture was extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (3 × 40 cm<sup>3</sup>). Work-up in the usual way gave an oil which solidified on trituration with light petroleum. Recrystallisation from MeOH–H<sub>2</sub>O gave the *ketoaldehyde* 7 (298 mg, 90%), m.p. 137–141 °C;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  9.66 (1 H, s), 5.16 (1 H, q), 4.78 (1 H, m), 3.66 (3 H, s), 2.10 (3 H, s), 1.99 (3 H, s), 1.14 (3 H, s), 1.08 (3 H, s) and 0.84 (3 H, d);  $\nu_{\rm max}/\rm{cm}^{-1}$  1735, 1666 and 1624;  $\lambda_{\rm max}/\rm{mm}$  248 ( $\epsilon$  8500) (Found: C, 66.9; H, 8.1. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>42</sub>O<sub>8</sub> requires C, 67.2; H, 8.1%).

Reaction of Methyl  $3\alpha$ ,  $12\alpha$ -Diacetoxy-14, 15-dioxo-14, 15-seco-5 $\beta$ -chola-8, 14-dien-24-oate 7 with NH<sub>3</sub>.—Aqueous ammonia (d 0.880; 0.1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to the aldehyde 7 (55 mg) in MeOH (1.5 cm<sup>3</sup>). After 8 h water (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added and the mixture extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (3 × 10 cm<sup>3</sup>). Concentration of the dried extract gave an oil which was chromatographed on SiO<sub>2</sub>; elution with light petroleum (b.p. 60–80 °C)—EtOAc (1:1) gave the carbinolamine **8** (16 mg, 30%);  $\delta_{\rm H}$  5.32 (1 H, m), 5.10 (1 H, q), 4.80 (1 H, m), 2.02 (3 H, s), 2.00 (3 H, s), 1.14 (3 H, s), 1.10 (3 H, s) and 0.86 (3 H, d) (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 517.3041. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>43</sub>O<sub>7</sub> requires *M*, 517.3036).

Reduction of Methyl  $3\alpha$ ,  $12\alpha$ -Diacetoxy-16-hydroxy-15-aza-17a-homo-5 $\beta$ -chola-8, 14-dien-24-oate 8.—NaBH<sub>3</sub>CN (10 mg) was added to the carbinolamine 8 (16 mg) in MeOH (1 cm<sup>3</sup>). After 1 h the mixture was diluted with water (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) and extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2 × 10 cm<sup>3</sup>). The extract was washed with aqueous NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, dried and concentrated to give the amine 10 as an oil (15 mg);  $\delta_{\rm H}$  0.81 (3 H, d), 0.86 (3 H, s), 1.00 (3 H, s), 2.00 (3 H, s), 2.06 (3 H, s), 3.25 (2 H, m), 3.66 (3 H, s), 3.80 (1 H, m), 4.76 (1 H, m) and 5.22 (1 H, d) (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 503.3245. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>45</sub>NO<sub>6</sub> requires *M*, 503.3243).

Methyl  $3\alpha$ ,  $12\alpha$ -Diacetoxy-5-aza-17a-homo-5 $\beta$ -chola-8, 14-dien-24-oate 9.—Bu'OCl in Et<sub>2</sub>O (10 cm<sup>3</sup>, 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>) was added to the amine 10 (5 mg) in Et<sub>2</sub>O (1 cm<sup>3</sup>). After 1 h in Et<sub>2</sub>O (10

<sup>\*</sup> The diol dehydrated readily to a triene tentatively identified as the 8(14),9,15-compound.

cm<sup>3</sup>) was added and after washing with aqueous NaHCO<sub>3</sub> the dried solution was concentrated to give the *N*-chloro compound (5 mg). This was dissolved in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) and DBU (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) added. After 30 min CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added and the solution worked up in the usual way to give an oil which was chromatographed on SiO<sub>2</sub>; elution with light petroleum (b.p. 60–80 °C)-EtOAc (1:1) gave the *imine* **9** (4 mg) as an oil;  $\lambda_{max}/mm$  242 ( $\varepsilon$  10 300);  $\lambda_{max} + H^+/mm$  282 ( $\varepsilon$  10 100) (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 501.3091. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>43</sub>NO<sub>6</sub> requires *M*, 501.3088).

3α-Acetoxy-5β-chol-8(14)-en-24-oic Acid 11.—Apochenodeoxycholic acid (9.36 g) in AcOH (150 cm<sup>3</sup>) containing H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> (0.5 cm<sup>3</sup>, conc.) and Ac<sub>2</sub>O (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was stirred at room temp. for 4 h. The reaction mixture was then poured into EtOAc (200 cm<sup>3</sup>) and worked up in the usual way, to give an orange solid (11.03 g). SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (35% EtOAc-hexane; 7:13) gave the acetates as pale yellow crystals. The acetates in AcOH (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) containing PtO<sub>2</sub> were shaken under an H<sub>2</sub> atmosphere for 24 h. The Pt was filtered off and the filtrate evaporated to give the pure (14)-ene acid 11 (7.21 g), m.p. 120– 124 °C (Et<sub>2</sub>O);  $[\alpha]_D$  + 57 (c 1.0);  $v_{max}$ /cm<sup>-1</sup> 2940, 2870, 1740 and 1710;  $\delta_H$  4.75 (1 H, m), 2.0 (3 H, s), 1.0 (3 H, d), 0.85 (3 H, s), 0.8 (3 H, s) (Found: C, 75.3; H, 10.0 C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>40</sub>O<sub>4</sub> requires C, 75.0; H, 9.6%).

 $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-5 $\beta$ -cholest-8(14)-en-24-one 12.—(COCl)<sub>2</sub> (168 mm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a stirred solution of the acid 11 (410 mg) in PhMe (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. Once effervescence had stopped the orange solution was evaporated to give the acid chloride (405 mg) as an orange solid,  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  1740. Pr<sup>i</sup>MgCl in Et<sub>2</sub>O (2 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>; 9.2 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a stirred

Pr<sup>i</sup>MgCl in Et<sub>2</sub>O (2 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>; 9.2 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a stirred suspension of CuCN (817 mg) in tetrahydrofuran (THF) (40 cm<sup>3</sup>) under N<sub>2</sub> at -78 °C. The solution was then warmed to 0 °C. When clear, the solution was recooled to -78 °C and the acid chloride (2.055 g) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added. The mixture was stirred for 15 min and then MeOH (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) added at -78 °C. After the mixture had warmed to room temp. Et<sub>2</sub>O (150 cm<sup>3</sup>) and water (100 cm<sup>3</sup>) were added and the resulting suspension was filtered through Celite. Work-up in the usual way followed by SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (hexane-EtOAc; 9:1) furnished the *ketone* **12** (1.449 g); m.p. 95–97 °C (hexane); [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub> + 72 (c 1.2);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  1740 and 1715;  $\delta_{H}$  4.7 (1 H, m), 2.0 (3 H, s), 1.05 (6 H, d), 0.9 (3 H) and 0.8 (3 H); m/z 442 (Found: C, 79.1; H, 10.7. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>46</sub>O<sub>3</sub> requires C, 78.7; H, 10.4%).

 $3\alpha$ -Hydroxy-5 $\beta$ -chola-8,14-dien-24-oic Acid.—LiOH (1 g) was added to a stirred solution of the diene 4 (2.03 g) in AnalaR MeOH (90 cm<sup>3</sup>) and water (30 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. After 48 h a white precipitate had formed and the suspension was acidified with HCl (3 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>) to pH 2. The precipitate was then filtered off, washed with water (4 × 50 cm<sup>3</sup>) amd dried to give the acid (1.625 g); m.p. 149–151 °C (Me<sub>2</sub>CO–H<sub>2</sub>O); [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub> –20 (c 2.0);  $\lambda_{max}$ /nm 247 ( $\varepsilon$  17 125);  $\nu_{max}$ /cm<sup>-1</sup> 3600–2450 and 1710;  $\delta_{H}$  5.3 (1 H, br s), 3.65 (3 H, s), 1.05 (3 H, s), 0.95 (3 H, d) and 0.8 (3 H, s); *m*/z 372.

 $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-5 $\beta$ -chola-8,14-dien-24-oic Acid 5.—Ac<sub>2</sub>O (60 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise to a stirred solution of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxy-5 $\beta$ -chol-8,14-dienoic acid (202 mg), pyridine (0.5 cm<sup>3</sup>) and DMAP\* (20 mg) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (10 cm<sup>3</sup>). After 3 h the reaction mixture was diluted further with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (30 cm<sup>3</sup>) and washed with water (3 × 30 cm<sup>3</sup>). Work-up in the usual way gave a pale yellow oil, purified by SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (EtOAc-hexane 3:7) to give the acid 5 (52 mg) as a colourless oil;  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  246 ( $\epsilon$  17 100);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  3400–2600;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  5.3 (1 H, s), 4.7 (1 H, m), 2.0 (3 H, s), 1.1 (3 H, s), 1.0 (3 H, d) and 0.85 (3 H, s); m/z 414.

 $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-5 $\beta$ -cholesta-8,14-dien-24-one 3.—Pyridine (6 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise to a stirred suspension of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxy-5 $\beta$ -chola-8,14-dienoic acid (1.6 g) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. Ac<sub>2</sub>O (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was then added once the suspension had dissolved. After 1.5 h the solution was washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and worked up in the usual way to give a colourless oil. This material was then dissolved in PhMe (30 cm<sup>3</sup>) and (COCl)<sub>2</sub> (3 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added. Once effervescence had stopped, evaporation yielded the crude acid chloride (1.792 g) as orange crystals.

Pr<sup>i</sup>MgCl (2 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> in Et<sub>2</sub>O; 8 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a stirred suspension of CuCN (716 mg) in THF (40 cm<sup>3</sup>) at -78 °C under N<sub>2</sub>. The mixture was warmed to 0 °C and upon dissolution of all the material was cooled to -78 °C; a solution of the acid chloride (1.792 g) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) was then added. After 15 min MeOH (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added at -78 °C and the mixture warmed to ambient temperature. Et<sub>2</sub>O (150 cm<sup>3</sup>) and water (100 cm<sup>3</sup>) were added and the mixture filtered through Celite. Work-up in the usual way gave an oil, purified by SiO<sub>2</sub> chromatography (EtOAc-hexane 1:10) to give the *ketone* **3** (1.515 g) m.p. 66–67 °C (hexane); λ<sub>max</sub>/nm 247 (ε 17 300); ν<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 1735 and 1715; δ<sub>H</sub> 5.3 (1 H, s), 4.7 (1 H, m), 2.0 (3 H, s), 1.1 (3 H, s), 1.05 (6 H, d), 0.9 (3 H, d) and 0.8 (3 H, s) (Found: C, 79.5; H, 10.4. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>44</sub>O<sub>3</sub> requires C, 79.1; H, 10.0%).

Ozonolysis of the Diene 3.—The ketone 3 (1.4 g) dissolved in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (350 cm<sup>3</sup>) containing Sudan III (5 mg) was cooled to -78 °C and O<sub>3</sub> passed until the solution was colourless. Zn dust (10 g) and AcOH (30 cm<sup>3</sup>) were then added and the mixture warmed to ambient temp. After 2 h the mixture was filtered and the filtrate concentrated to give an oil, which was chromatographed (SiO<sub>2</sub>, 1:3 EtOAc-light petroleum) to give the ketoaldehyde 13 (368 mg),  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  250 ( $\varepsilon$  10 200);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  1730, 1655 and 1620;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  9.6 (1 H, s), 4.75 (1 H, m), 2.00 (3 H, s), 1.10 (6 H, s), 1.08 (3 H, s) and 0.90 (3 H, d); m/z 490 and 472.

Reduction of  $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-14,15-seco-5 $\beta$ -cholest-8-ene-14,15,-24-trione 13.—To a stirred solution of trione 13 (475 mg) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) at 0 °C Bu'NH<sub>2</sub>–BH<sub>3</sub> was added. After 1 h HCl (1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>; 1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added followed by work-up in the usual way to give an oil which on SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (EtOAc-light petroleum, 1:1) furnished the alcohol 14 (275 mg) as a colourless oil,  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  250;  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  3480, 1735 and 1710;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.7 (1 H, m) and 3.35 (2 H, m).

3α-Acetoxy-16-hydroxy-15-aza-17a-homo-5β-cholesta-8,14diene-24-one 17.—To a stirred room temp. solution of the trione 13 (71 mg) in AnalaR MeOH (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) NH<sub>3</sub> (d 0.88) was added dropwise until no starting material remained. The solution was then poured into water (100 cm<sup>3</sup>) and worked up in the usual way to give a pale yellow brown oil (60 mg), which on SiO<sub>3</sub> column chromatography (EtOAc-hexane, 4:6) furnished the carbinolamine 17 (16 mg) as a colourless oil,  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  243 ( $\varepsilon$  14 600),  $\lambda_{max} + H^+/nm$  280 ( $\varepsilon$  14 800);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$ 1615;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  5.1 (1 H, q) and 4.75 (1 H, m); m/z 470.

 $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-15-aza-17a-homo-5 $\beta$ -cholest-8-en-24-one.—Na-BH<sub>2</sub>CN (3.8 mg) was added to a stirred room temp. solution of the carbinolimine 17 (14 mg) in AnalaR MeOH (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) with 2 drops of AcOH. After 30 min the solution was poured into Et<sub>2</sub>O (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) and worked-up in the usual way to give an oil which on SiO<sub>2</sub> chromatography (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>-MeOH; 9:1) produced the *allylamine* (4 mg) as a colourless oil,  $v_{max}/cm^{-1}$  3400;

<sup>\* 4-</sup>Dimethylaminopyridine.

 $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.7 (1 H, m), 3.5 (1 H, m), 3.2 (1 H, m) and 2.8 (1 H, m) (Found; M<sup>+</sup>, 457.3556. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>47</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> requires *M*, 457.3553).

Conversion of  $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-15-hydroxy-14,15-seco-5 $\beta$ -cholest-8-ene-14,24-dione 14 to  $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-15-bromo-14,15-seco-5 $\beta$ cholest-8-ene-14,24-dione 15.—A solution of Ph<sub>3</sub>P (284 mg) in THF (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise to a stirred solution of *N*bromosuccinimide\* (194 mg) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. After 10 min a white precipitate had formed and a solution of the alcohol 14 (257 mg) in THF (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added. Et<sub>2</sub>O (100 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added after a further 2 h and the mixture washed (water, 3 × 80 cm<sup>3</sup> and brine 50 cm<sup>3</sup>). Work-up in the usual way followed by SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (EtOAclight petroleum; 1:5) gave the bromide 15 (263 mg); m.p. 135-137 °C;  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  249 ( $\epsilon$  12 400);  $v_{max}/cm^{-1}$  1735, 1710 and 1660;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.7 (1 H, m) and 3.25 (2 H, m); m/z 457 (M<sup>+</sup> – Br).

Conversion of Bromide 15 into  $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-15-azido-14,15seco-5 $\beta$ -cholest-8-ene-14,24-dione 16.—NaN<sub>3</sub> (1 g) was added to a stirred solution of the bromide 15 (263 mg) in Me<sub>2</sub>NCHO (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) and water (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. The solution was stirred for 2 d and then poured into Et<sub>2</sub>O (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) and worked up in the usual way to give the azide 16 (247 mg) as a pale yellow oil,  $\lambda_{max}/nm$  249 ( $\varepsilon$  10 100);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2100, 1735, 1710 and 1660;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.7 (1 H, m), 3.20 (1 H, q, J 6.3) and 3.00 (1 H, m); m/z 500.

3α-Acetoxy-15-aza-17a-homo-5β-cholesta-8,14-dien-24-one **18**.—Lindlar catalyst (100 mg) was added to a stirred solution of the azide **16** (247 mg) in AnalaR MeOH (15 cm<sup>3</sup>) at room temp. and the mixture agitated under H<sub>2</sub> (1 atm) for 3 h. The catalyst was then filtered off and the solution evaporated. SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (MeOH–CHCl<sub>3</sub>, 1:19) gave the *imine* **18** (145 mg), m.p. 138–142 °C;  $\lambda_{max}$ /nm 241 and 276 ( $\varepsilon$  4400 and 1900);  $\lambda_{max}$  + H<sup>+</sup>/nm 273 ( $\varepsilon$  5600);  $\nu_{max}$ /cm<sup>-1</sup> 1735, 1715 and 1620;  $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.75 (1 H, m), 4.0 (1 H, m) and 3.50 (1 H, q) (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 455.3399. C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>45</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> requires *M*, 455.3397).

 $3\alpha$ -Acetoxy-15-aza-17a-homo-5 $\beta$ -ergost-8,14,24(24<sup>1</sup>)-triene 19.—BuLi (1.6 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>; 0.5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise to a stirred suspension of methyl(triphenyl)phosphonium iodide (286 mg) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) at -78 °C under N<sub>2</sub>. The solution was left to warm to room temp. and after 1 h the solution had become clear yellow. This solution was then added dropwise to a stirred solution of the imine **18** (91 mg) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) under N<sub>2</sub> at room temp. After 1 h the reaction was quenched with water (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) and worked up in the usual way to give a colourless oil, which on SiO<sub>2</sub> column chromatography (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>-MeOH; 49:1) yielded the *imine* **19** (40 mg) as a white solid,  $[\alpha]_D -24$  (c 0.8);  $\lambda_{max}/nm 238$  ( $\varepsilon 10650$ );  $\lambda_{max} + H^+/nm 277$  ( $\varepsilon 9000$ );  $v_{max}/cm^{-1}$  1715 and 1620;  $\delta_H 4.75$  (2 H, m), 4.65 (1 H, m), 4.00 (1 H, m), 3.5 (1 H, m), 2.00 (3 H, s), 1.10 (3 H, s), 1.00 (6 H, d) and 0.95 (6 H, d) (Found: M<sup>+</sup>, 453.3607. C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>47</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> requires *M*, 453.3604).

## Acknowledgements

We thank the SERC and ICI Agrochemicals (which is part of ICI plc in the UK) for a CASE award and financial assistance.

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Paper 2/001201 Received 10th January 1992 Accepted 24th January 1992

<sup>\* 1-</sup>Bromopyrrolidine-2,5-dione.