



## Regiochemistry of Mercury(II) oxide Oxidation of Unsymmetrical *N,N*-Disubstituted Hydroxylamines

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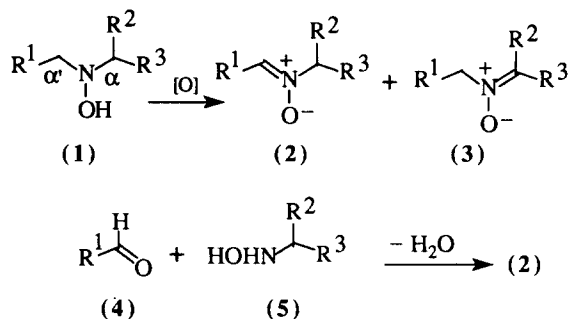
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**Abstract:** Mercury(II) oxide oxidation of *N,N*-disubstituted hydroxylamines with the  $\alpha$  and  $\alpha'$  carbon atoms containing one and two hydrogen atoms, respectively, gave aldonitrones in a highly regioselective manner. Removal of the  $\alpha$  proton is involved in the rate determining step as shown by primary kinetic isotope effect.

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### INTRODUCTION

Among the plethora of functional groups, nitron functionality has etched an important place in organic synthesis<sup>1</sup> and in spin trapping experiments to trap and identify reactive free radicals<sup>2</sup> especially in biomedical fields. Generally nitrones have been prepared by oxidation of *N,N*-disubstituted hydroxylamines<sup>1</sup>(1), condensation of aldehydes (4) or ketones with *N*-monosubstituted hydroxylamines (5)<sup>1</sup>, Michael addition of oximes to electron-deficient alkenes,<sup>3</sup> and alkylation of oximes.<sup>4</sup> To overcome the difficulty associated with the nontrivial task of synthesizing the hydroxylamines, recent developments provide simpler and efficient methods for the preparation of nitrones from secondary amines by oxidation with hydrogen peroxide mediated



Scheme 1.

by selenium dioxide,<sup>5</sup> and unstate catalysts.<sup>6,7</sup> While there are numerous reports involving the oxidation of symmetrical amines and hydroxylamines, the study with unsymmetrical hydroxylamines (**1**) and its cyclic counterparts remains scanty<sup>1,7, 8</sup> apparently owing to the anticipation of regiochemical complications.

Herein we report a systematic study involving the mercury(II) oxide oxidation of several unsymmetrical cyclic and acyclic hydroxylamines with each  $\alpha$  carbon containing at least one hydrogen atom.

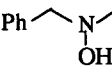
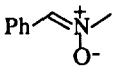
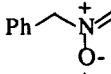
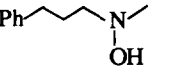
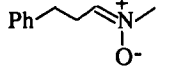
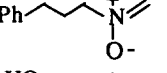
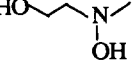
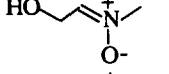
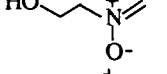
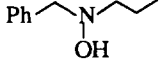
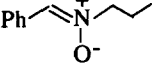
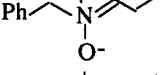
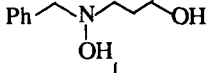
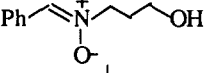
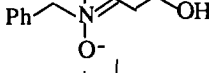






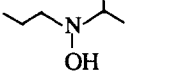
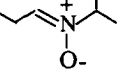
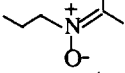
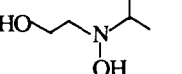
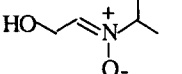
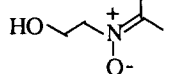
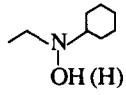
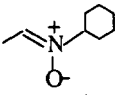
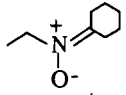
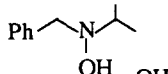
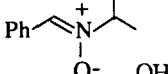
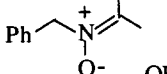
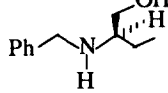
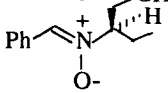
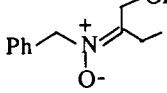
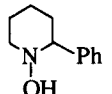
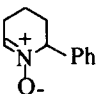
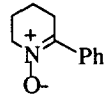
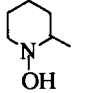
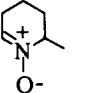
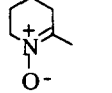
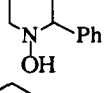
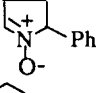
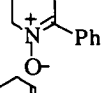
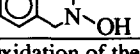
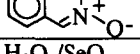
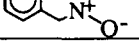
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The selenium dioxide mediated hydrogen peroxide oxidation of the secondary amines could conceivably provide the same information as does the HgO oxidation of the corresponding hydroxylamines on the regioselectivity of the nitron formation, however, the presence of water in the reaction mixture sometimes leads to the hydrolysis of the resulting nitrones.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, mercury(II) oxide oxidation, carried out in aprotic solvents, provides nitrones in almost quantitative yield.

The regiochemical details of the oxidation of various unsymmetrical hydroxylamines and amines by HgO and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/SeO<sub>2</sub>, respectively, are included in the table. While a mixture of nitrones is expected in entries 2 and 3, the formation of the nitrones **B** in significant amount by abstraction of the nonbenzylic hydrogen (entries 1, 4, 5) is quite surprising. Conjugated nitrones **A** should have been the sole or overwhelmingly predominant products. Contrary to the common understanding, the regiochemistry of the nitron formation is thus not governed significantly by the different acidities of the  $\alpha$  protons. Entries 6-12 describes the oxidation of hydroxylamines in which one of the  $\alpha$  carbon contains a hydrogen atom. Even though the ketonitrones (**B**) are expected to be more stable, aldonitrones (**A**) are the ones formed in a highly regioselective manner. This could be attributed to the kinetic preference for the abstraction of the less hindered  $\alpha$  hydrogen. It was reported<sup>9,10</sup> that while mercury(II) oxide oxidation of 2-phenyl-N-hydroxypiperidine (entry 13) gave the nonconjugated nitron **A** as the sole product, the five-membered counterpart in entry 15 provided the conjugated nitron **B** exclusively. Reexamination of the oxidation of these two hydroxylamines, however, revealed the formation of two isomeric nitrones with the predominance of the conjugated isomer **B** in both the cases (table).

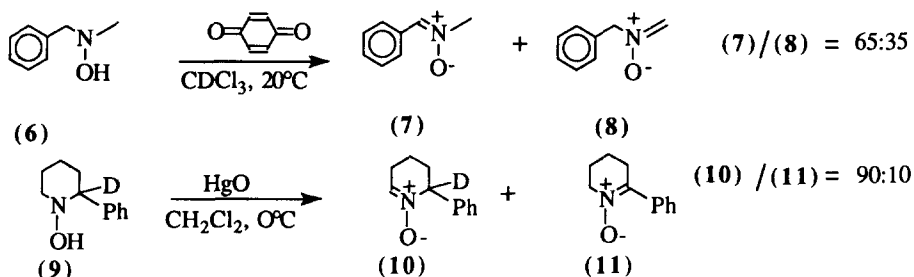
In contrast to the acyclic hydroxylamines, the cyclic counterparts behave differently in their regioselection. (Compare, for instance, the oxidation of acyclic hydroxylamine and its cyclic counterpart in entries 8 and 14). The higher acidity of the benzylic hydrogen, however, does not control the regioselection (compare entries 13, 14). Quite interesting is the observation: how differently the cyclic hydroxylamine (entry 16) and its acyclic counterpart (entry 4) behave in their regioselection! While the former gave the conjugated nitron as exclusive product, the latter afforded the conjugated and non-conjugated nitrones in almost 1:1 ratio. We are at this stage unable to offer a convincing rationale for the difference in the regioselection of the cyclic and acyclic cases. The selenium dioxide mediated hydrogen peroxide oxidation of *N*-methylcyclohexylamine (entry 7) and *N*-ethylcyclohexylamine (entry 10) in acetone and methanol, respectively, afforded the aldonitrones in a highly regioselective manner. Regiochemical behaviour of the hydrogen peroxide and mercury(II) oxide

**Table. Oxidation of Secondary Hydroxylamines with Mercury(II) oxide in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> .**

Entry	Hydroxylamines	(A)	Nitrones	(B)	Composition (A) : (B)
1					62:38
2					63:37
3					58:42
4					55:45
5					55:45
6					90:10
7					85:15 (93:07) <sup>a</sup>
8					90:10
9					92:08
10					90:10 (~100:0) <sup>a</sup>
11					94:06
12					~100:0
13					30:70
14					25:75
15					17:83
16					~100:0

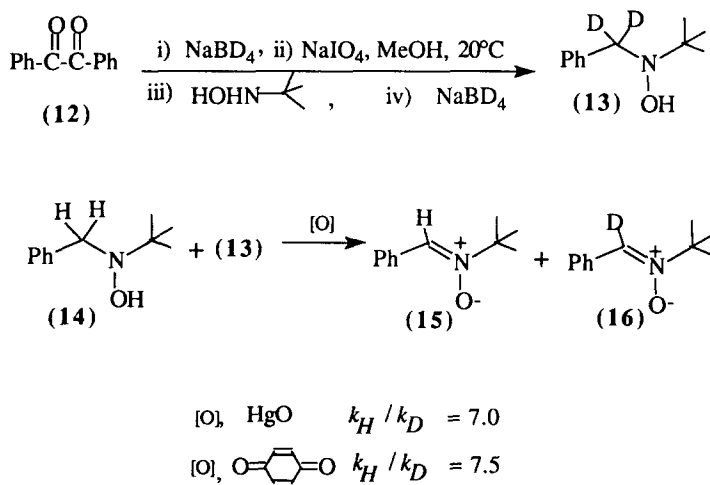
<sup>a</sup> Oxidation of the amine by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/SeO<sub>2</sub>.

processes are thus found to be similar. Efficient and regioselective formation of the chiral nitron (A) (entry 12) from the corresponding amine (prepared from (*R*)-2-amino-1-butanol) paves the way to study asymmetric induction and the effects of hydroxyl group in nitron cycloaddition reactions.



Scheme 2.

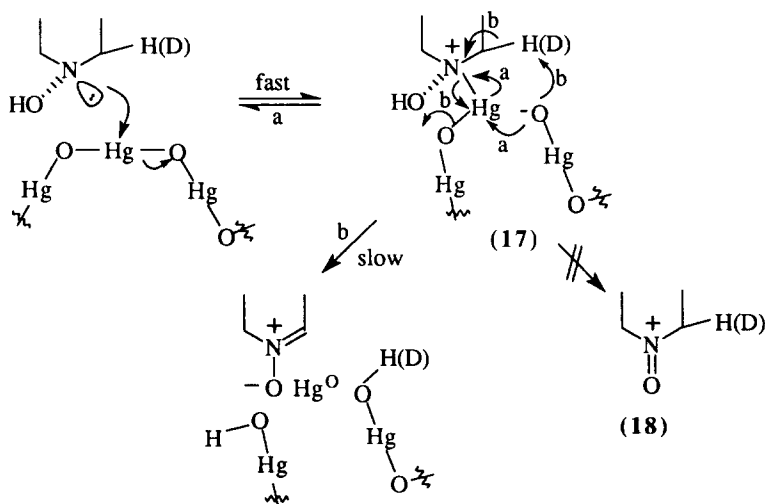
Even though there are numerous reports on the oxidation process leading to the nitrones, to the best of our knowledge, the mechanistic pathway this reaction traverses is not investigated to any meaningful extent. The oxidation of *N*-methyl-*N*-benzylhydroxylamine (6) (entry 1) with one equivalent of *p*-benzoquinone in  $\text{CDCl}_3$  afforded a mixture of nitrones (7) and (8) in a similar ratio as in the case of mercury(II) oxidation, indicating that both the oxidation processes may be traversing similar mechanistic pathways (Scheme 2). The oxidation of the C(2) deuteriated hydroxylamine (9) showed a dramatic reversal in the regioselection of the products (10) and (11) in comparison to its C(2)H counterpart (entry 13).



Scheme 3.

Finally, the dideuteriated hydroxylamine (**13**) was prepared by the synthetic route shown in the scheme 3. Reduction of benzil with NaBD<sub>4</sub> afforded hydrobenzoin-d<sub>2</sub> which on periodate oxidation gave benzaldehyde-d<sub>1</sub>. The nitron **16** was prepared by condensation of PhCDO with *t*-butylhydroxylamine and the reduction of the nitron **16** with NaBD<sub>4</sub> provided the dideuteriated hydroxylamine **13**. The hydroxylamine (**14**) was prepared by NaBH<sub>4</sub> reduction of the nitron (**15**).<sup>6</sup> When a mixture of the hydroxylamine (**14**) (0.474 mmol) and (**13**) (0.915 mmol) in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was treated with HgO (0.60 mmol) at 0 °C, <sup>1</sup>H nmr spectrum revealed the presence of 0.106 mmol of unreacted (**14**), 0.738 mmol of unreacted (**13**) along with the presence of the product nitrones (**15**) and (**16**) (0.545 mmol). Using the rate equation of Ingold and Shaw<sup>11</sup> the  $k_H/k_D$  was found to be 7.0. The corresponding  $k_H/k_D$  for the oxidation using *p*-benzoquinone in CDCl<sub>3</sub> was determined to be 7.5.

In order to account for the primary isotope effect the reversible formation of the metal complex (**17**) is envisaged (scheme 4). The complex (**17**) may either reverse to the starting reactants (pathway "a") or go to the nitron upon removal of the proton (or deuterium) (pathway "b") in the rate determining step. Formation of the nitrosonium ion (**18**) is excluded since its irreversible presence in the mechanistic pathway would be unable to manifest deuterium effect in the present experimental set up (scheme 3).



Scheme 4.

## EXPERIMENTAL

All m.p.s are uncorrected. Elemental analysis were performed on a carlo - Erba elemental analyzer 1106. IR spectra were recorded on a nicolet 5DXB FT IR and are reported in wave numbers (cm<sup>-1</sup>). <sup>1</sup>H nmr spectra were recorded on a XL 200 using deuteriated chloroform with Me<sub>4</sub> Si as internal standard. 70 e.v. EI. Mass spectra were recorded on a Ribermag GC-MS system, R-10-10 with Quadrupole mass filter and Riber 400

acquisition system. Silica gel chromatographic separations were performed with flash silica (Baker Chemical Co.). HPLC grade dichloromethane was used. Hydroxylamines in entries (3, 4, 8, 9, 11)<sup>12</sup> and (13, 15)<sup>9,10</sup> prepared as described. Oxidation of hydroxylamines in entry 14 is described in our earlier work.<sup>8d</sup> *R*-(*-*)-2-amino-1-butanol (~ 90% pure,  $[\alpha]^{25}_D = -8.5$  (c 2, ethanol) from fluka was used as received.

**Preparation and mercury(II) oxide oxidation of the hydroxylamines (General Procedure) :**

To a solution of the hydroxylamine (2.0 mmol) in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  (10  $\text{cm}^3$ ) at 0°C was added yellow  $\text{HgO}$  (3.0 mmol) in three portions (*ca.* 20 min) and stirred for 1 h. The resulting greyish mixture was filtered through a small bed of  $\text{MgSO}_4$ . Evaporation of the solvent gave the nitrones in almost quantitative yield. The composition of the nitrones was determined by integration of several proton signals.

**Entry 1:** *N*-Methyl-*N*-Benzylhydroxylamine was prepared using procedure as described<sup>13</sup> (m.p. 40-41°C ; lit. 40 - 41°C). On  $\text{HgO}$  oxidation the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 62 : 38 as determined by integration of several proton signals. The  $^1\text{H}$  n.m.r. data for the major nitrone **A** matched with those described in the literature.<sup>13</sup> The spectral data for the isomers was deduced from the  $^1\text{H}$  n.m.r. spectrum of the mixture of nitrones. Nitrone **A**:  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  3.93 (3 H, s) 7.50 (4 H, m), 8.30 (2 H, m). Nitrone **B** :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  4.98 ( 2 H, s ), 6.32 ( 1 H, d, *J* 7.0 Hz), 6.64 ( 1 H, d, *J* 7.0 ), 7.50 ( 5 H, m).

Oxidation using *p*-benzoquinone was carried out as follows. The *p*- benzoquinone ( 54 mg, 0.50 mmol) was added to a solution of the hydroxylamine (69 mg, 0.50 mmol) in  $\text{CDCl}_3$  ( 1  $\text{cm}^3$  ) at 20°C. The solution turned blue within few minutes and become colorless again (10 min) . The precipitate of hydroquinone was filtered and the nmr of the filtrate revealed the formation of nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 65:35.

**Entry 2 :** *N*-Methyl-*N*-(3-phenylpropyl)hydroxylamine was prepared by  $\text{NaBH}_4$  reduction of the nitrone **A**. To a solution of *N*- methylhydroxylamine hydrochloride (251 mg , 3.0 mmol) in ethanol (2  $\text{cm}^3$ ) was added in succession sodium acetate (3.5 mmol) and hydrocinnamaldehyde (3.3 mmol). The resulting mixture was stirred at 20°C for 1 h and was taken up in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  (30  $\text{cm}^3$ ). The organic layer was washed with 20 %  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$  solution (10  $\text{cm}^3$ ) , dried ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ ) and purified by chromatography using 10 : 1 ether - methanol mixture as the eluent to give the nitrone **A** as colorless flakes (383 mg, 78.3 %), m.p. 41-42°C (hexane-ether) (Found : C, 73.3 ; H, 7.9 ; N, 8.4.  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}$  requires C, 73.59 ; H, 8.03 ; N 8.58 %) ;  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3022, 2912, 1493, 1406, 1148, 1019, 752, 706  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  2.85 (4 H, m), 3.65 (3 H, s) , 6.70 ( 1 H, br t, *J* 6.0 Hz), 7.30 (5 H, m).

To a solution of the nitrone **A** (277 mg, 1.70 mmol) in ethanol (3  $\text{cm}^3$ ) was added excess sodium borohydride (10 mmol) in five portions over a period of 5 h. The resulting mixture after stirring overnight was diluted with water (15  $\text{cm}^3$ ) and extracted with dichloromethane (3x20  $\text{cm}^3$ ). ( In cases of water soluble hydroxylamine the aqueous layer was saturated with  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$ ). The organic layer was dried ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ ) and purified by chromatography using 1:1 ether - hexane mixture as the eluent to give the hydroxylamine as a colorless liquid (230 mg, 82.4 % ) ( Found : C, 72.8; H, 9.0; N, 8.3.  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}$  requires C, 72.69; H, 9.15; N, 8.48%);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (neat) 3230, 3025, 2950, 2863, 1606, 1499, 1455, 1034, 796, 754, and 703  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  ;

$\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.93 (2 H, quint,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 2.62 (3 H, s), 2.66 (4 H, m), 7.30 (5 H, m), 7.58 (1 H, br, OH). Mass spectrum :  $m/z$  165 ( $M^+$  35), 117 (15), 91 (75), 77 (25), 60 (100).

**Entry 3:** The hydroxylamine prepared as described<sup>12</sup>, on HgO oxidation afforded a mixture of nitrones **A** and **B** as a pale yellow liquid,  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (neat) 3320, 2940, 2857, 1664, 1625, 1593, 1429, 1410, 1295, 1166, 1061, 987, 941  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The nmr signals of the nitrones **A** and **B** were deduced from the spectrum of the mixture.

Nitrone **A** :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  3.95 (3 H, s), 4.43 (2 H, m), 5.00 (1 H, br, OH), 7.02 (1 H, t,  $J$  4.0 Hz).

Nitrone **B** :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  3.70 (4 H, br, s), 5.00 (1 H, br, OH), 6.36 (1 H, d,  $J$  8.0 Hz), 6.54 (1 H, d,  $J$  8.0 Hz).

The nitrones were found to be quite unstable and darkens to brown colour after 2 days at room temperature.

**Entry 4 :** The nitrone **B** and *N*-propyl-*N*-benzylhydroxylamine were prepared as described.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the *N*-benzylhydroxylamine (733 mg, 5.96 mmol) was reacted with propanal (380 mg, 6.55 mmol) in ethanol (5  $\text{cm}^3$ ) at 20°C for 1 h. The resulting nitrone **B** was obtained as colorless needles (90%), m.p. 84-85°C (ether) (Found : C, 73.7 ; H, 7.9 ; N, 8.45.  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}$  requires C, 73.59 ; H, 8.03 ; N, 8.58 %);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3050, 2980, 1595, 1491, 1463, 1426, 1287, 1206, 1166, 1111, 930, 907, 743, 700  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.08 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 2.50 (2 H, quint,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 4.94 (2 H, s), 6.70 (1 H, t,  $J$  6.5 Hz), 7.45 (5 H, m).

The hydroxylamine<sup>12</sup>, obtained by  $\text{NaBH}_4$  reduction of the nitrone **B**, on oxidation afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 55 : 45 as determined by integration of several proton signals. The  $^1\text{H}$  nmr signal of the major nitrone was deduced from the spectrum of the mixture :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.00 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 2.03 (2 H, hex,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 3.93 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.5 Hz), 7.50 (4 H, m), 8.32 (2 H, m).

**Entry 5 :** 3-Amino-1-propanol (7 equiv) was reacted with benzylbromide (1 equiv) at 20°C for 24 h. The resulting mixture was taken up in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  and washed with water. The organic layer was dried, concentrated and distilled to give 3-(*N*-benzylamino)-1-propanol (b.p. 3 mmHg 108 °C). Using procedure as described<sup>5</sup> the amine on  $\text{SeO}_2$  mediated oxidation using  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  in acetone afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a ratio of 65 : 45, respectively. The above mixture of the nitrones on  $\text{NaBH}_4$  reduction afforded 3-(*N*-benzylhydroxylamino)-1-propanol which was purified by chromatography using 2 : 1 hexane- ether mixture as the eluent (two steps 65% yield), white crystals, mp 51-52 °C (ether) (Found : C, 66.4, H, 8.2 ; N, 7.70  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_2$  requires C, 66.27 ; H, 8.34, N, 7.73%);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3320, 3034, 2962, 2847, 1457, 1346, 1074, 1033, 1001, 918, 826, 757, and 697  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.73 (2 H, m), 2.88 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 3.57 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 3.79 (2 H, s), 7.30 (5 H, m); hydroxyl proton signals were too broad to be seen. The hydroxylamine on HgO oxidation afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 55 : 45 as determined by integration of several proton signals. The  $^1\text{H}$  nmr signal of the major nitrone **A** matches with those reported.<sup>14</sup> The following signals were deduced from the spectrum of the mixture of the nitrones: (**A**) :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  2.14 (2 H, q,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 3.75 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 4.10 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 5.2 (1 H, br OH), 7.20- 7.55 (4 H, m), 8.20 (2 H, m). (**B**) 2.70 (2 H, q,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 3.78 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 4.90 (2 H, s), 5.2 (1 H, br OH), 6.92 (1 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 7.30 (5 H, m).

**Entry 6 :** A mixture of *N*-isopropylhydroxylamine (750 mg, 10.0 mmol) and formaldehyde (350 mg, 12.0 mmole) in ethanol was heated at 70°C in a closed flask for 20 min. The mixture was then cooled to 20°C and the crude nitrone **A** was reduced with NaBH<sub>4</sub>. The reaction mixture was acidified with 20% HCl solution (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the volume of the solution was reduced to half by blowing a gentle stream of nitrogen at 50°C. The solution was then saturated with K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> and extracted with ether (3×15 cm<sup>3</sup>). The organic layer was dried (Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>) and HCl gas was passed through the solution to obtain *N*-Methyl-*N*-isopropylhydroxylamine hydrochloride as a colorless liquid (1.08 g, 86% ) (Found : C, 38.0; H, 9.4; N, 10.9. C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO.HCl requires, C, 38.25; H 9.63; N 11.15 % ).

Treatment of the aqueous solution of the hydrochloride salt with K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> and extraction with ether, followed by careful removal of ether afforded the free hydroxylamine as a colorless volatile liquid,  $\nu_{\max}$ . (neat) 3207, 2976, 2857, 1461, 1341, 1318, 1208, 1143, 1051, 932, 858, 747 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_H$  (45 °C) 1.09 (6 H, d, *J* 6.5 Hz), 2.59 (3 H, s), 2.80 (1 H, hept, *J* 6.5 Hz), 8.00 (1H ,br). The proton signals at ambient temperature were broad due to slow nitrogen inversion.

HgO oxidation of the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** as a colorless liquid,  $\nu_{\max}$ . (neat) 2976, 1572, 1457, 1365, 1295, 1213, and 1065 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_H$  1.46 (6 H, d, *J* 6.5 Hz), 4.18 (1 H, hept, *J* 6.5 Hz), 6.48 (2 H, s). The presence of the minor isomer **B** was indicated by the presence of signals at  $\delta_H$  2.15 (3 H, s), 2.18 (3 H, s ), 3.87 (3 H, s).

**Entry 7 :** Oxidation with SeO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> of *N*-methylcyclohexylamine in acetone using the procedure as described<sup>5</sup> afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 93 : 07, respectively. The crude mixture of nitrones on NaBH<sub>4</sub> reduction in ethanol gave *N*-cyclohexyl-*N*-methylhydroxylamine which was purified by chromatography using ether as eluent. The overall yield of the reactions was 75%; colorless needles, mp 61-62°C (hexane) (Found : C, 64.95, H, 11.6 ; N, 10.8. C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>15</sub>NO requires C, 65.07; H, 11.70 ; N, 10.84 % );  $\nu_{\max}$ . (KBr) 3150, 2925, 2850, 1443, 1374, 1350, 1204, 1061, 1028, 945, 900, 829, 778, 638 and 623 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_H$  1.00 - 2.24 (10 H, m ), 2.48 (1 H, m ), 2.66 (3 H, s), 7.30 (1 H, br OH).

Oxidation (HgO) of the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** from which the nitrone **A** was separated by crystallization as colorless flakes, m.p. 56-58°C (ether) (Found: C, 65.9; H, 10.4; N, 10.9. C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO requires C, 66.10; H, 10.30; N, 11.02%);  $\nu_{\max}$ . (KBr) 2940, 2857, 1563, 1457, 1369, 1295, 1143, 1074, 899, 849 cm<sup>-1</sup> ;  $\delta_H$  1.08 - 2.00 (10 H, m), 3.74 (1 H, m ), 6.36 (1 H, d, *J* 8.0 Hz), 6.49 (1 H, d, *J* 8.0 Hz). The presence of minor isomer **B** was revealed by the the overlapping singlet at 3.73 (N-CH<sub>3</sub>). The ratio of **A** and **B** was estimated to be 93 : 07.

**Entry 8 :** The nitrone **A** and *N*-propyl-*N*-isopropylhydroxylamine were prepared as described.<sup>12</sup> Thus a solution of *N*-isopropylhydroxylamine (700 mg , 9.3 mmol) in ethanol (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was treated with propanal (596 mg, 10.3 mmol) at 20°C for 30 min. Removal of the solvent and excess aldehyde afforded the nitrone **A** in quantitative yield as colorless liquid. An analytical sample was prepared by washing the nitrone with cold hexane ether mixture (Found : C, 62.4 ; H, 11.5 ; N, 12.0. C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO requires C, 62.57; H, 11.38; N, 12.16 %);  $\nu_{\max}$ . (neat) 2965, 2925, 1590, 1452, 1373, 1287, 1176, 1078, and 920 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_H$



1.12 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 1.42 (6 H, d,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 2.52 (2 H, quint,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 4.07 (1 H, hept,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 6.79 (1 H, t,  $J$  6.5 Hz).

The hydroxylamine on oxidation gave a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio 90 : 10 as determined by integration of several proton signals. The signals of the minor nitron **B** was deduced from the spectrum of the mixture;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  0.98 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 1.90 (2 H, hex,  $J$  7.0), 2.15 (3 H, s), 2.18 (3 H, s), 3.86 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.5 Hz).

**Entry 9 :** The hydroxylamine, prepared as described<sup>12</sup>, on HgO oxidation afforded a mixture of nitrones **A** and **B**. The protons signals for the major and minor isomers was deduced from the spectrum of the mixture of isomers. The major isomer **A** was crystallized from  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  - hexane - ether mixture, colorless needles, m.p. 66 - 68°C (Found : C, 51.1; H, 9.4; N, 12.0.  $\text{C}_5\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}_2$  requires C, 51.26; H, 9.47; N, 11.96%).

$\nu_{\text{max}}$  (KBr) 3225, 2986, 2949, 2892, 1609, 1452, 1295, 1157, 1088, 978, 927, and 849  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.43 (6 H, d,  $J$  6.5 Hz), 4.08 (1 H, hept,  $J$  6.5 Hz), 4.47 (2 H, d,  $J$  4.3 Hz), 4.95 (1 H, s), 7.12 (1 H, t,  $J$  4.5 Hz). Nitron **B**:  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  2.21 (6 H, s), 4.08, (4 H accidental degeneracy of the *N*- alkyl proton signals). Mass spectrum :  $m/z$  117 ( $\text{M}^+$  12), 116 (23), 88 (30), 74 (100).

**Entry 10 :** Oxidation of *N*-ethylcyclohexylamine with  $\text{SeO}_2$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  in methanol using literature procedure<sup>5</sup> gave the only nitron **A** which without purification was reduced with  $\text{NaBH}_4$  in ethanol to give *N*-ethyl-*N*-cyclohexylhydroxylamine. The product was purified by chromatography using ether as eluent. The overall yield was found to be 83%, colorless liquid; hydrochloride salt, colorless needles (ether- methanol), mp 125-126°C, (Found : C, 53.6; H, 10.2; N, 8.0.  $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{17}\text{NO} \cdot \text{HCl}$  requires C, 53.47; H, 10.10; N, 7.80%).  $\nu_{\text{max}}$  (neat) 3250, 2920, 2890, 1446, 1366, 1342, 1163, 1103, 1042, and 890  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.14 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 1.26 (5 H, m), 1.52-2.08 (5 H, m), 2.60 (1 H, m), 2.81 (2 H, q,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 7.32 (1 H, br OH).

Oxidation (HgO) of the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 90 : 10. which on crystallization gave the nitron **A**. Colourless needles (hexane-ether), m.p. 80-81°C (Found : C, 67.9; H, 10.9; N, 9.8.  $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}$  requires C, 68.04; H, 10.71; N, 9.92%);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$  (KBr) 2920, 2840, 1598, 1442, 1348, 1298, 1180, 1143, 1095, 1042, 893, 875, and 784  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.08- 1.52 (3 H, m), 2.02 (3 H, d,  $J$  7.0 Hz) 1.56-2.16 (7 H, m), 3.72 (1 H, m) 6.94 (1 H, q,  $J$  7.0 Hz). The presence of minor nitron **B** in the original mixture was revealed by the presence of the signal at  $\delta$  3.98 (2 H, q,  $J$  7.0 Hz, *N*- $\text{CH}_2$ -), 2.76 (2 H, m, allylic axial hydrogens) and 2.52 (2 H m, allylic equatorial hydrogens). The original mixture of the nitrones on treatment with methanol (2 h, 20°C) failed to reveal the presence of the ketonitron **B**, thus indicating its hydrolysis under this condition. This could be the reason for the absence of minor nitron **B** in the  $\text{SeO}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  oxidation in methanol.

**Entry 11 :** *N*- benzyl-*N*- isopropylhydroxyl amine was prepared from the nitron **A** as described<sup>12</sup> (using  $\text{NaBH}_4$  reduction). The oxidation of the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 94 : 06 as determined by the integration of several proton signals. The mixture of nitrones

was crystallized (hexane-ether) in the freezer to give the nitron A, colorless liquid (solidifies in the freezer), (Found : C, 73.4 ; H, 7.8 ; N, 8.6.  $C_{10}H_{13}NO$  requires C, 73.59 ; H, 8.03 ; N, 8.58);  $\nu_{\max}$ . (neat) 3055, 2970, 2925, 1575, 1556, 1446, 1374, 1360, 1305, 1172, 1144, 1086, 925, 803, 750 and  $690\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_H$  1.51 (6 H, d,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 4.23 (1 H, hept,  $J$  7.0 Hz) 7.45 (3 H, m), 7.50 (1 H, s), 8.28 (2 H, m). The  $^1H$  nmr spectrum of the minor isomer A was deduced from the nmr spectrum of the mixture;  $\delta_H$  2.14 (3 H, s), 2.19 (3 H, s), 5.09 (2 H, s), 7.45 (5 H, m).

**Entry 12 :** (*R*)-2- amino -1-butanol (7 equiv) was reacted with benzylbromide (1 equiv) using procedure as described in entry 5 to give (*R*)-2-(*N*-benzylamino)-1-butanol as colorless needles, (needless to say this is not the efficient method to prepare the amine. The amine could be prepared *via* the benzamide derivative with  $LiAlH_4$  reduction), b.p. 0.1 mmHg  $107^\circ\text{C}$  ; m.p.  $72-73^\circ\text{C}$  (Found C, 73.6 ; H, 9.6 ; N, 7.8.  $C_{11}H_{17}NO$  requires C, 73.70 ; H, 9.56 ; N, 7.82%);  $\nu_{\max}$ . (KBr) 3300, 3090, 3057, 2958, 2850, 1461, 1380, 1350, 1139, 1082, 1064, 978, 939, 864, 835, 748, and  $700\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_H$  0.90 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 1.40 (2 H, q,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 2.24 (2 H, br s), 2.57 (1 H, m), 3.44 (2 H, m), 3.77 (2 H, s), 7.30 (5 H, m). Mass spectrum :  $m/z$  179 ( $M^+$  1), 148 (31), 91 (100).

The amine was oxidised as described<sup>5</sup> using  $H_2O_2/SeO_2$  in methanol to give the only nitron A (63%) as colorless needles, m.p.  $109-110^\circ\text{C}$  (ether) (Found : C, 68.2; H, 7.7 ; N, 7.2.  $C_{11}H_{15}NO_2$  requires C, 68.37; H, 7.82; N, 7.25 % );  $\nu_{\max}$ . (KBr) 3275, 3057, 2950, 2912, 1598, 1464, 1347, 1154, 1085, 906, 867, 793, 763, 750, and  $697\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\delta_H$  0.96 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 1.73 (1 H, m), 2.07 (1 H, m), 3.55 (1 H, br OH), 3.87 (1 H, m and 1 H, dd,  $J$  3.0, 11.5 Hz), 4.01 (1 H, dd,  $J$  7.5, 11.5 Hz), 7.47 (4 H, m), 8.28 (2 H, m). Mass spectrum :  $m/z$  193 ( $M^+$  24), 162 (76), 122 (100), 91 (38), 77 (66).  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -24.0^\circ$  (c 0.05, ethanol)

**Entry 13 :** Oxidation (HgO) of 2-phenyl-*N*-hydroxypiperidine was reexamined.<sup>9,10a</sup> The earlier report<sup>10a</sup> indicated the formation of the nonconjugated nitron A as the exclusive product. However we found a mixture of the nitrones A and B in a ratio of 30 : 70, respectively, as determined by the  $^1H$  nmr integration. The following  $^1H$  nmr signals for the major nitron B was deduced from the spectrum of the mixture.  $\delta_H$  1.32 - 2.16 (4 H, m), 2.66 (2 H, m), 3.89 (2 H, t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 7.28 (3 H, m), 7.96 (2 H, m). The broad triplet at  $\delta$  4.91 ( $J$  6.0 Hz) was assigned to the benzylic proton of the minor nitron A. The above nonseparable mixture of the nitrones (2.0 mmol) in  $CH_2Cl_2$  ( $1\text{ cm}^3$ ) was treated with methyl acrylate (0.8 mmol) at  $20^\circ\text{C}$  for 2 h. Under this condition the minor nitron A reacted completely to give a mixture of cycloadducts which was separated easily by chromatography (ether). The polar nitron B (colourless liquid 60%) was eluted with 2 : 1 ethyl acetate - methanol mixture.

The nitron B was reduced with  $NaBD_4$  in ethanol to give the C (2) Deuterohydroxylamine (9) in 85% yield. Oxidation of the hydroxylamine afforded a mixture of the nitron (10) and (11) in a ratio of 90 : 10, respectively, as determined by the integration of the ortho aromatic protons at  $\delta$  7.96 ppm and C (6) protons at  $\delta$  3.89 ppm of (11) and the total integration for the aromatic and  $CH=N$  protons.

**Entry 15 :** A reexamination<sup>9</sup> of the oxidation of 2-phenyl-*N*-hydroxypyrrolidine revealed the formation of a mixture of the nitrones **A** and **B** in a respective ratio of 17 : 83. The following signals were assigned to the major nitron **B** :  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  2.22 (2 H, app. quint,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 3.18 (2 H, app. t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 4.25 (2 H, app. t,  $J$  7.0 Hz), 7.50 (3 H, m), 8.40 (2 H, m) .

The minor signals at  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  2.28 (2 H, overlapping, m), 2.79 (2 H, m), 5.08 (1 H, br t,  $J$  6.0 Hz), 7.12 (1 H, m), 7.40 (5 H, m) were assigned to the minor isomer **A**.

**Entry 16 :** The hydroxylamine, prepared as described<sup>10b</sup> from its corresponding amine, on oxidation afforded the conjugated nitron **A** as the sole product. The structure of **A** was identified by comparison of its spectroscopic data with those described in the literature.<sup>15</sup> The nmr spectrum failed to detect the minor isomer **B**.

**Preparation and oxidation of *N*-benzyl-*N*-*t*-butylhydroxylamine (14) and *N*-dideuteriobenzyl-*N*-*t*-butylhydroxylamine (13).**

Condensation of *t*-butylhydroxylamine (0.890 g, 10.0 mmol) and benzaldehyde (1.06 g, 10.0 mmol) in ethanol (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) at 80°C for 5 h afforded the nitron **15** in 90 % yield. The spectroscopic data ( $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.58 (9 H, s), 7.42 (3 H, m), 7.49 (1 H, s), 8.34 (2 H, m)) and m.p. (74-75°C; lit. 74-75°C) for the nitron matched with those reported in the literature.<sup>6,16</sup> The above nitron was reduced as usual with the excess NaBH<sub>4</sub> in ethanol (20°C, 12 h and 60°C, 4 h). The resulting product was purified by chromatography using 10 : 1 hexane-ether as eluent to give the hydroxylamine **14** (77% yield) as colorless needles, mp. 70-71 °C (hexane) (Found C, 7.38; H, 9.4 ; N, 7.8 . C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO requires C, 73.70; H, 9.56 ; N, 7.82 %);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3400, 3162, 3125, 2976, 2924, 1496, 1455, 1437, 1365, 1234, 1210, 1070, 1031, 927, 826, 727 and 697 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.17 (9 H, s), 3.70 (2 H, s), 4.50 (1 H, br, OH), 7.25 (5 H, m)

Deuteriobenzaldehyde (PhCDO) was prepared by usual reduction of benzil (**12**) with NaBD<sub>4</sub> followed by treatment of the resulting diol, hydrobenzoin, with NaIO<sub>4</sub> in ethanol at 20 °C. The overall yield of the two steps was 80%. As described above the condensation of the PhCDO with *t*-butylhydroxylamine afforded the nitron (**16**) as colorless needles, m.p. 73 - 74 °C (Found : C, 74.1; H, 9.0 ; N, 7.7. C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>14</sub>DNO requires C, 74.12 ; H, 9.04 ; N, 7.86 %);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3060, 2975, 2925, 2294, 1553, 1481, 1446, 1323, 1308, 1237, 1195, 1154, 957, 891, 778, and 703 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.58 (9 H, s), 7.42 (3 H, m), 8.34 (2 H, m). Mass spectrum : m/z 178 (M<sup>+</sup> 57), 122 (31), 90 (38), 77 (31), 57 (100)

The nitron (**16**) on reduction with NaBD<sub>4</sub> gave the dideuteriohydroxylamine (**13**) as colorless needles, m.p. 69 - 70 °C (hexane) (Found : C, 72.6; H, 10.5; N 7.7. C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>15</sub>D<sub>2</sub>NO requires C, 72.88 ; H, 10.56 ; N 7.73);  $\nu_{\text{max}}$ . (KBr) 3400, 3075, 2976, 2225 (W) 1452, 1370, 1359, 1288, 1213, 1076, 1025, 724, and 697 cm<sup>-1</sup>;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  1.17 (9 H, s) 4.55 (1 H, br OH), 7.25 (5 H, m). Mass spectrum : m/z 181 (M<sup>+</sup> 21), 97 (100), 57 (100).

To a solution of the hydroxylamines (**14**) (85.0 mg, 0.474 mmol) and (**13**) (164 mg, 0.915 mmol) in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) at 0°C was added yellow HgO (0.60 mmol) in five portions over a period of 50 min. The reaction mixture was stirred for an additional period of 30 min. The proton nmr spectrum revealed the

presence of starting material and the nitrones. Using integration of several proton signals the amounts of various compounds were quantified as described in the results and discussion.

**Acknowledgments:** Facilities provided by King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals, Dhahran are gratefully acknowledged.

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(Received in UK 22 May 1996; revised 27 September 1996; accepted 3 October 1996)