



(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 1997/03/07

(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 1997/09/12

(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2003/02/18

(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 1998/07/20

(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: GB 1997/000643

(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 1997/032851

(30) Priorités/Priorities: 1996/03/08 (9604943.2) GB;
1996/05/07 (60/016,986) US

(51) Cl.Int.⁶/Int.Cl.⁶ C07D 211/34

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(54) Titre : RESOLUTION DE THREO-METHYLPHENIDATE

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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A process for preparing substantially single enantiomer d-threo-methylphenidate, proceeds by means of a classical salt resolution using (-)-menthoxyacetic acid.



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International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : C07D 211/34	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 97/32851 (43) International Publication Date: 12 September 1997 (12.09.97)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB97/00643 (22) International Filing Date: 7 March 1997 (07.03.97) (30) Priority Data: 9604943.2 8 March 1996 (08.03.96) GB 60/016,986 7 May 1996 (07.05.96) US (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): MEDEVA EUROPE LIMITED [GB/GB]; 10 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1EF (GB). (72) Inventor; and (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): ZAVAREH, Hooshang, Shahriari [GB/GB]; Chiroscience Limited, Cambridge Sci- ence Park, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 4WE (GB). (74) Agent: GILL JENNINGS & EVERY; Broadgate House, 7 Eldon Street, London EC2M 7LH (GB).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CN, CU, CZ, EE, GB, GE, GH, HU, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, RO, RU, SD, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: RESOLUTION OF THREO-METHYLPHENIDATE		
(57) Abstract A process for preparing substantially single enantiomer <i>d-threo</i> -methylphenidate, proceeds by means of a classical salt resolution using (-)-menthoxyacetic acid.		

RESOLUTION OF *THREO*-METHYLPHENIDATE

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the resolution of *threo* methylphenidate via crystallisation of diastereomeric salts.

5 Background of the Invention

Methylphenidate was first prepared as a mixture of the *erythro* and *threo* racemates. US-A-2957880 discloses studies upon the two racemic mixtures, which revealed that the therapeutic activity resides in the *threo* diastereomer.

The resolution of *threo* methylphenidate can be-achieved using the expensive resolving agent 1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-diylhydrogen phosphate, a process first reported by
10 Patrick *et al* (The Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, 241:152-158 (1987)), and subsequently used by other workers in the field (e.g. Aoyama *et al*, Journal of Chromatography, 494:420 (1989)). This is perceived to be a more efficient procedure than the method disclosed in US-A-2957880, wherein the corresponding amide of
15 *erythro* methylphenidate (i.e. R-CONR₂ rather than R-CON₂Me) is resolved with tartaric acid prior to amide hydrolysis and equilibration at the benzylic centre, followed by esterification of the resultant *threo*-acid.

An improved resolution process is described in WO97/27176. Such a resolution can be combined with the racemisation described in WO97/28124.

20 Summary of the Invention

This invention is based upon the discovery that racemic *threo* methylphenidate can be resolved using inexpensive (-)-menthoxyacetic acid.

Description of the Invention

The process of this invention may be carried out under conditions that are
25 generally known to those skilled in the art of classical salt resolution procedures. For example, a mixture of *threo* methylphenidate free base and 1 molar equivalent of (-)-menthoxyacetic acid in an inert organic solvent is heated and then allowed to cool; the resultant precipitate is filtered, washed with an appropriate solvent and dried to afford directly a salt enriched in 98% ee *d-threo* methylphenidate. This is a great improvement
30 on the literature method using 1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-diylhydrogen phosphate, described by Patrick *et al*, *supra*, in which the first crystallisation gave a salt corresponding to 85-90%

ee material, and further recrystallisation of this material was necessary to raise the ee to 95-97%. The latter level of optical purity is achieved in the present invention in one crystallisation, with an overall higher yield. The method of this invention is therefore more efficient and more economical than the one described by Patrick *et al.*

5 The following Example illustrates the resolution of *threo* methylphenidate using (-)-menthoxyacetic acid.

Example

dl-threo methylphenidate (1.0 g, 3.7 mmol) was suspended in water (20 ml) and treated with caustic solution. The liberated free base was extracted with MTBE (3 x 25
10 ml), dried over MgSO₄ and evaporated to a light oil. This was dissolved in IPA (15 ml) and heated to 60°C. (-)-Menthoxyacetic acid (0.79 g, 3.79 mmol) in IPA (5 ml) was added. Heating was continued for a further 30 min and the mixture was gradually cooled to 10°C. The resulting white crystalline product was filtered off, washed with cold IPA and dried (0.85 g, 47% by weight, corresponding to 98% ee *d-threo* methylphenidate,
15 as determined by chiral HPLC after salt cracking).

CLAIM

1. A process for preparing substantially single enantiomer *d-threo*-methylphenidate, which proceeds by means of a classical salt resolution using (-)-menthoxyacetic acid.