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## Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

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### Synthesis of the $\alpha$ BuSATE Pronucleotide of AZT by Two Different Synthetic Approaches

M. Lannuzel<sup>a</sup>; D. Egron<sup>a</sup>; J. -L. Imbach<sup>a</sup>; G. Gosselin<sup>a</sup>; C. Périgaud<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Laboratoire de Chimie Bioorganique, U.M.R. 5625 C.N.R.S.-U.S.T.L., Université de Montpellier II, Montpellier Cedex 05, France

**To cite this Article** Lannuzel, M. , Egron, D. , Imbach, J. -L. , Gosselin, G. and Périgaud, C.(1999) 'Synthesis of the  $\alpha$ BuSATE Pronucleotide of AZT by Two Different Synthetic Approaches', *Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids*, 18: 4, 1001 — 1002

**To link to this Article:** DOI: 10.1080/15257779908041628

**URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15257779908041628>

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## SYNTHESIS OF THE *t*BuSATE PRONUCLEOTIDE OF AZT BY TWO DIFFERENT SYNTHETIC APPROACHES

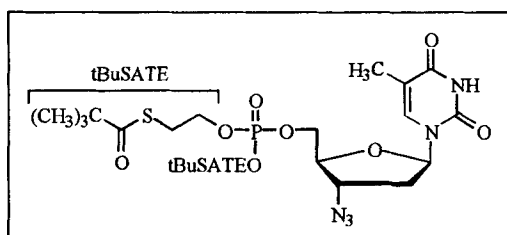
M. Lannuzel, D. Egron, J.-L. Imbach, G. Gosselin and C. Périgaud\*

Laboratoire de Chimie Bioorganique, U.M.R. 5625 C.N.R.S.-U.S.T.L., Université de Montpellier II, CC 008, Place E. Bataillon, 34095 Montpellier Cedex 05, France

**ABSTRACT** A large scale synthesis of the *t*BuSATE pronucleotide of AZT was required for *in vivo* studies. A comparative synthesis of this derivative by phosphoramidite and monophosphate approaches is reported.

### INTRODUCTION

We have previously demonstrated that mononucleoside phosphotriester derivatives of AZT incorporating *S*-acyl-2-thioethyl (SATE) groups are promising new kinds of esterase-labile mononucleotide prodrugs (pronucleotides).<sup>(1)</sup> Among the SATE transient phosphate protections, the *S*-pivaloyl-2-thioethyl (*t*BuSATE) group (Fig.) appeared as the most appropriate for *in vivo* experiments in regard to its high resistance against enzymatic hydrolysis.<sup>(2)</sup> *In vivo* studies of the *t*BuSATE pronucleotide of AZT needed large quantities of this derivative. In this respect, we decided to compare two different synthetic approaches using P(III) and P(V) intermediates.

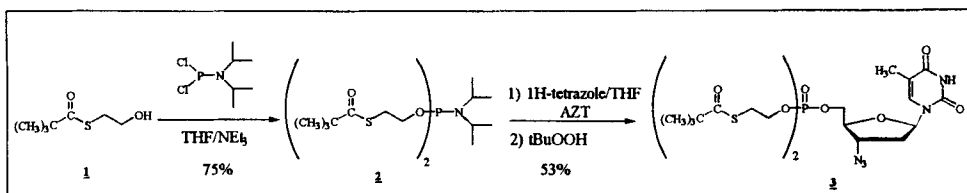


**Figure :** Structure of the *t*BuSATE pronucleotide of AZT

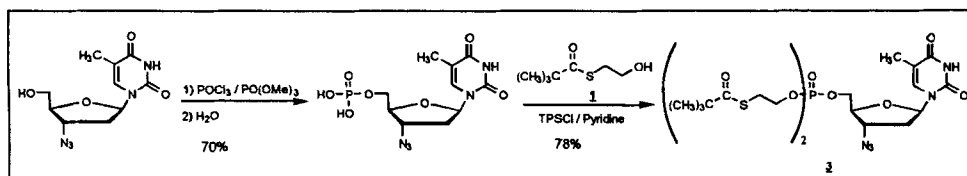
## SYNTHESIS

The phosphoramidite method (Scheme 1) used a common procedure for the synthesis of SATE pronucleotides.<sup>(1)</sup> The key step involved coupling of AZT with the phosphoramidite **2**, which incorporated the two *t*BuSATE groups, followed by *in situ* oxidation.

On the other hand, monophosphate approach (Scheme 2) required the preliminary synthesis of 5'-monophosphate (AZTMP). Then, the mononucleotide was activated by TPSCI and coupled with the thioester precursor **1**.



**Scheme 1 : The phosphoramidite approach**



**Scheme 2 : The monophosphate approach**

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

In the case of a large scale synthesis, the phosphoramidite approach did not seem to be effective due to the strictly anhydrous conditions required and the concomitant formation of by-products.

The monophosphate approach appeared to be more appropriate. The reaction of AZTMP with *S*-pivaloyl-2-thioethanol **1** gave a single product (the target pronucleotide **3**) which was easily purified by silica gel column chromatography.

*These investigations were supported by grants from "Institut de Recherche Pierre Fabre".*

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