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A NOVEL LIGHT INDUCED OXYGEN SHIFT FROM SULFUR TO NITROGEN IN SACCHARINE DERIVED SULTAMS

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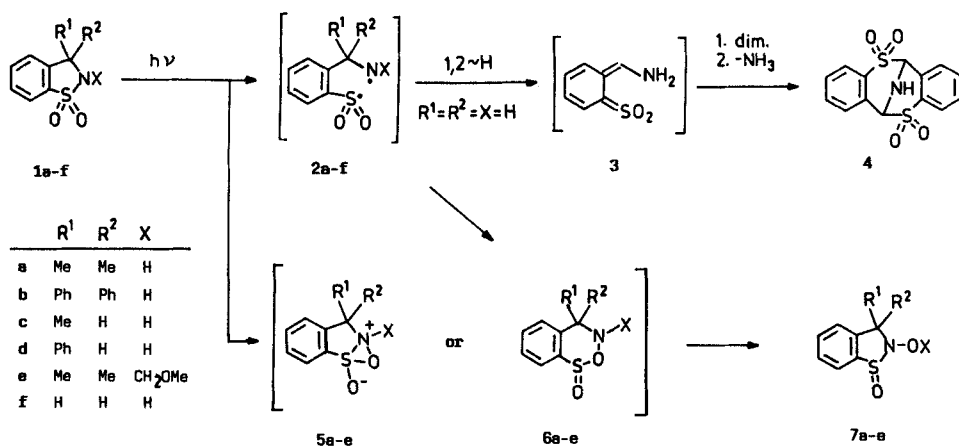
Abstract 2,3-Dihydrobenzo-1,2-thiazole-1,1-dioxides **1a-e** bearing at least one alkyl or aryl group at C-3 undergo a smooth photoisomerization into the isomeric N-hydroxy sulfonamides **7a-e**. These represent a new thermodynamically instable functional group, i. e. the sulfine hydroxamic acid moiety. The mode of formation probably involves initial S-N homolysis followed by a sequence of steps.

According to current knowledge¹ photochemical activation of sulfonamides $R-SO_2-NH-R'$ may result in homolysis of the $R-SO_2$, SO_2-N and $N-R'$ bonds. The resulting radicals in turn undergo typical reactions open to them, among others loss of SO_2 from $R-\dot{S}O_2$. The light induced reactions of sultams, being cyclic sulfonamides, have received so far comparatively little attention.

In methanol or acetonitrile solution upon 254 nm irradiation, sultams **1a-d** undergo a smooth and efficient (the quantum yields for formation of **7a** and **7b** are 0.51 and 0.36, respectively) into the cyclic sulfine hydroxamic acids **7a-d**². The sulfine hydroxamic acid is a hitherto unknown functional group. Its thermodynamic instability with respect to the sulfonamide moiety may have prevented its detection as a product in reactions of sulfinyl chlorides with hydroxylamines³.

Crystalline **7a-d** is perfectly stable, in solution, especially under the influence of added mineral acid, the labile functionality tends to revert rapidly to the thermodynamically more stable starting materials **1a-d**. Two pathways ($1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 6 \rightarrow 7$) and ($1 \rightarrow 5 \rightarrow 7$) are conceivable. Since **1f** does not give rise to a product of type **7** but forms the dimerization/condensation product **4**, S-N bond rupture is regarded as the most likely primary event, followed by formation of **6a-e** or, as the case of **2f**, by rearrangement to **3** and dimerization/condensation of the latter to form compound **4**, the structure of which has been unambiguously confirmed by an X-ray structural analysis⁴.

The proton on nitrogen in **1a-d** ($X = H$) may be replaced by electrophilic carbon (e.g. $X = CH_2-O-CH_3$ as in **1e**) but not by alkyl groups. For four wavelengths the absorbancy difference diagrams⁵ are strictly linear, thus no spectroscopically detectable intermediate is accumulating.



Racemic **1c** is photoisomerized to a 72:28 trans/cis mixture of **7c**. The geometrical isomers could not be interconverted thermally, instead, **7c** is reverted into **1c**. This process is accompanied by some dehydration of **7c**. Inversion at sulfur does not noticeably compete with re-isomerization below 60°C in solution.

The benzo[e]- and [g]-homologues of **1a** undergo analogous light induced transformations.

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