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| Title | ² H nuclear magnetic resonance studies on biosynthesis : stereochemistry of the 5'-hydrogen atoms of griseofulvin derived from griseophenone B and 4-demethyldehydrogriseofulvin |
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| Sub Title | |
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| Publisher | 共立薬科大学 |
| Publication year | 1978 |
| Jtitle | 共立薬科大学研究年報 (The annual report of the Kyoritsu College of Pharmacy). No.23 (1978.) ,p.120- 121 |
| JaLC DOI | |
| Abstract | |
| Notes | 抄録 |
| Genre | Technical Report |
| URL | https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00062898-00000023- 0120 |

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²H Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Studies on Biosynthesis: Stereochemistry of the 5'-Hydrogen Atoms of Griseofulvin derived from Griseophenone B and 4-Demethyldehydrogriseofulvin *

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We report the stereochemical fate of the deuterium atom at C-5' during the biosynthetic transformation of (1a) and (2a) by *Penicillium urticae* as studied by 2 H n.m.r. and mass spectrometry.

The two deuteriated tracer were synthesized as follows. Dehydrogenation of $[5'-{}^{2}H]$ griseofulvin with selenium oxide followed by demethylation as previously described



SCHEME. R¹ and R² correspond to the β - and α -configuration, respectively.

^{*} J.C.S Chem. Comm., 1978, 135.

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gave 4-demethyl[$5'-{}^{2}H$]dehydrogriseofulvin (2b). Tretment of (2b) with zinc-acetic acid afforded [$5'-{}^{2}H$]griseophenone B (1b).

To a suspension in medium 2 (15 40-ml flasks, 15 ml per flask) of the mycelium obtained from 7-day-old shaken cultures of *penicillium urticae* in medium 1 (15 40-ml flasks, 20 ml per flask), was administered 15mg of $[5'-{}^{2}H]$ griseophenone B (1b). After a further 3 days griseofulvin (3b) was isolated from the broth. Similarly a tracer experiment with 4-demethyl $[5'-{}^{2}H]$ dehydrogriseofulvin (2b) afforded another deuteriated griseofulvin (3c) (Scheme). Since the ${}^{2}H$ n.m.r. resonances of (3b) and (3c) are at the same position as that of the $5'\alpha$ -signal of $[5'\alpha, 5'\beta-{}^{2}H]$ griseofulvin (3d), the configuration of the deuterium atoms was unequivocally ascribed as $5'\alpha$.

Accordingly, the present ²H n.m.r. results confirm our previous conclusion that, in the feeding experiments involving $[2-{}^{2}H_{3}]$ acetate, the 5'-deuterium atom in biosynthetic-ally deuteriated griseofulvin has the α -configuration.

The isotopic dilutions of (3b) and (3c), as calculated from mass spectroscopy, were 13 and 8, respectively, consistent with the postulated biosynthetic sequence that (2b) is at a closer stage than (1b) to the final product. Furthermore, it is interesting that the stereochemical course of the 5'-hydrogen atoms is the same as that in the microbial hydrogenation of dehydrogriseofulvin to griseofulvin (3a) by *Streptomyces cinereocrocatus* NRRL 3443, suggesting the existence of similar enzyme systems in both microorganisms.