

# Synthesis and antibacterial activity of some novel 2-Aroylimino-3-aryl-thiazolidin-4-ones

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## ABSTRACT

An efficient, regioselective synthesis of some 2-arylimino-3-aryl-thiazolidin-4-ones (**2a-j**) involving base-catalyzed cyclization of 1-arylimino-3-aryl thioureas with chloroacetyl chloride in dioxane is reported. The structures were confirmed by spectroscopic data, elemental analyses and in one case (**2j**) by single crystal X-ray diffraction data. Compounds (**2a-j**) were assayed *in vitro* for their antimicrobial activity against Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria and were found to exhibit promising activity towards the tested microorganisms, comparable to and in some cases better than those of the standard drugs.

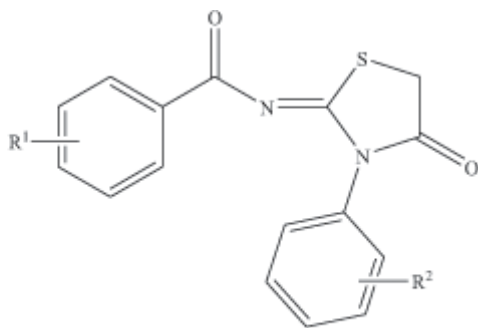
**Keywords:** iminothiazolidin-4-one, 1-arylimino-3-aryl-thioureas, crystal structure, antibacterial

## Introduction

The extensive use of antibiotics has led to the appearance of multi-drug resistant microbial pathogens.<sup>1</sup> This highlights the incessant need for the development of new classes of antimicrobial agents and alteration of known drugs in such way that would allow them to retain their physiological action, but reducing their resistance to the pathogen. The design of novel chemotherapeutic agents is particularly beneficial due to their dissimilar mode of action which can avoid cross resistance to known drugs.

There has been considerable interest in the chemistry of thiazolidin-4-one ring systems, which is a core structure in various synthetic pharmaceuticals displaying a broad spectrum of biological activities.<sup>2</sup> Thiazolidin-4-one ring also occurs in nature; thus actithiazic acid [(–) 2-(5-carboxypentyl) thiazolidin-4-one] isolated from *Streptomyces* strains exhibits highly specific *in vitro* activity against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.<sup>3</sup> Thiazolidin-4-one derivatives are known to exhibit diverse bioactivities such as anticonvulsant,<sup>4</sup> antidiarrheal,<sup>5</sup> antiplatelet activating factor,<sup>6</sup> antihistaminic,<sup>7</sup> antimicrobial,<sup>8</sup> antidiabetic,<sup>9</sup> cyclooxygenase inhibitory,<sup>10</sup> Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel blocker,<sup>11</sup> PAF antagonist,<sup>12</sup> cardioprotective,<sup>13</sup> anti ischemic,<sup>14</sup> anti cancer,<sup>15</sup> anti HIV,<sup>16</sup> non-peptide thrombin receptor antagonist<sup>17</sup> and tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$  antagonist activities.<sup>18</sup> However, the 2-imino derivatives of thiazolidinones are explored to a lesser extent, in spite of the fact that the presence of imino function provides an additional point of structural diversity in a thiazolidinone-based pharmacophore ([Figure 1](#)). It may be due to the lack of efficient synthetic access to iminothiazolidinones, therefore, design of a general, simple and efficient method for rapid synthesis of thiazolidin-4-ones would be greatly valuable and could warrant further investigations in drug discovery. Recently, different protocols have been developed allowing the synthesis of imino thiazolidin-4-one skeletons.<sup>19-21</sup> In this connection, herein we report the synthesis of some new 2-iminothiazolidin-4-ones and their biological screening. Ten 2-arylimino-3-aryl-thiazolidin-4-ones (**2a-j**) were synthesized and tested for their *in vitro* antimicrobial properties against Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria. All the new compounds (**2c-j**) were characterized by physical data, elemental analyses and spectroscopic data (<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR, MS and IR) and in case of **2j** by single crystal X-ray diffraction data.

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**Figure 1.** 2-Arylimino-3-arylthiazolidin-4-ones.

## Results and Discussion

### Chemistry

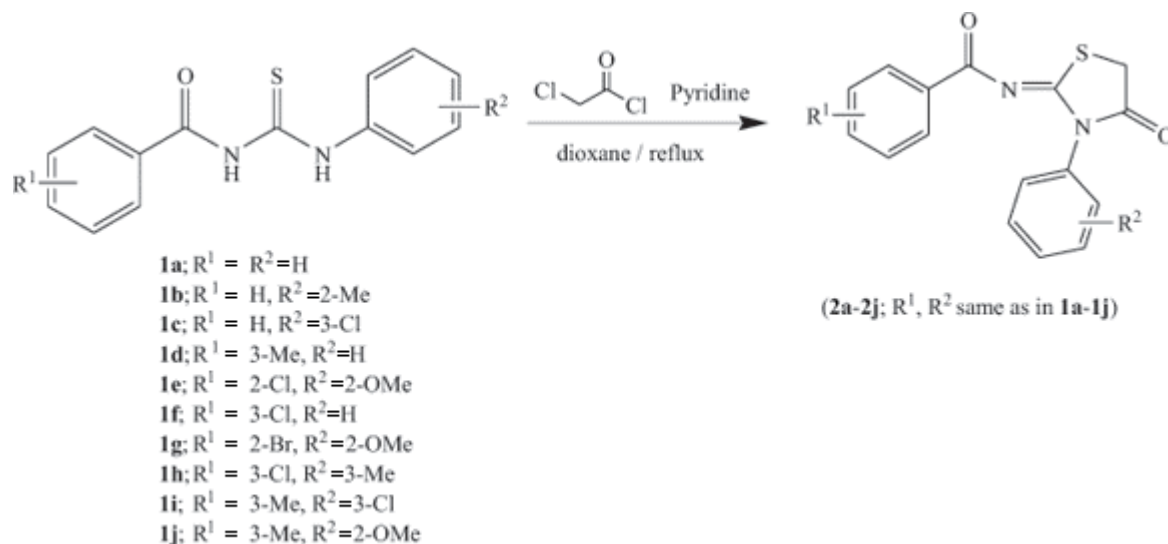
1-Aroyl-3-arylthiourea derivatives (**1a-j**) were synthesized using procedure reported earlier,<sup>22</sup> starting from reaction of suitable aroyl chlorides with potassium thiocyanate in acetone followed by treatment with appropriate anilines. Typically, aroyl thioureas are characterized by IR absorptions at 3350-3320, 3250-3200 for the free and associated NH, at 1650-1670 for carbonyl and at 1230-1250  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for thiocarbonyl groups respectively. The characteristic broad singlets at *ca.*  $\delta$  9 and 12 for HN(1) and HN(3) and peaks at *ca.*  $\delta$  170 and 179 for carbonyl and thiocarbonyl were observed in the  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectra respectively.

The next step involving the base-catalyzed cyclization of 1-aryoyl-3-arylthioureas with chloroacetyl chloride may lead to different condensation products by S or N intramolecular cyclization by a slight variation of conditions; therefore, it is important to first unearth the set of optimized conditions. The results of reaction optimization under different conditions varying the solvent, the reagent and the base are summarized in [Table 1](#) using **1j** as a model compound. It can be seen that the use of a strong base like  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}$  or polar aprotic solvent like DMF noticeably reduced the reaction time (entries 1, 2 vs. 3) but leads to a mixture of regioisomers **2** and **3** obtained by initial S-attack followed by N1 or N3 cyclization besides, the N-attack cyclization products (thiohydantoin)s.<sup>23</sup> By applying the optimized conditions, involving use of chloroacetyl chloride, dry dioxane as solvent in the presence of pyridine as base (entry 4) the 2-imino-4-thiazolidinones with various substituents (**2a-j**) were synthesized ([Scheme 1](#)) from the corresponding 1-aryoyl-3-aryl thioureas (**1a-j**) in good yields ([Table 2](#)). Under these conditions, in majority of the cases a ratio of 9:1 was obtained for regioisomers **2** and **3** as shown by the relative intensities of their signals in the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra and/or separation of **3** by thick layer chromatography ([Table 2](#)). The yields, the physicochemical properties and the spectroscopic data of **2a-j** are given, respectively, in [Tables 2](#) and [3](#). The compounds were characterized by the absence of both NH absorptions of the thiourea moiety and the appearance of the characteristic C=O and C=N absorptions of the thiazolidin-4-one ring in the regions 1680-1700 and 1560-1590  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , respectively in addition to the ArC=O, C=C and C-S absorptions in the IR spectra. The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra of compounds **2a-j** displayed the characteristic singlet for  $\text{CH}_2$ -4 methylene group deshielded by the adjacent C=O and sulfur atom, at  $\delta$  3.8-4.3 and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR showed the analogous peaks at  $\delta$  29-33, besides the signals for aromatic protons. In the mass spectrum, in addition to the molecular ion peaks, the base peaks originated from the aroyl cation fragment was observed. The regioisomer **3** was also isolated and characterized spectroscopically in some of the cases. The regioisomers **2** and **3** have closely related  $R_f$  values and parallel set of the characteristic signals in the IR and NMR spectra. In general, regioisomer **2** has slightly lower  $R_f$  but slightly higher  $\delta$  values compared to those of **3** ([Table 3](#)). Thus, in a typical case the characteristic methylene singlets were found at  $\delta$  4.14 and 4.02 for **2h** and **3h** respectively in the NMR and the absorptions for aroyl and ring carbonyls were found at 1732, 1707 and 1735, 1697  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  respectively in the IR spectra.

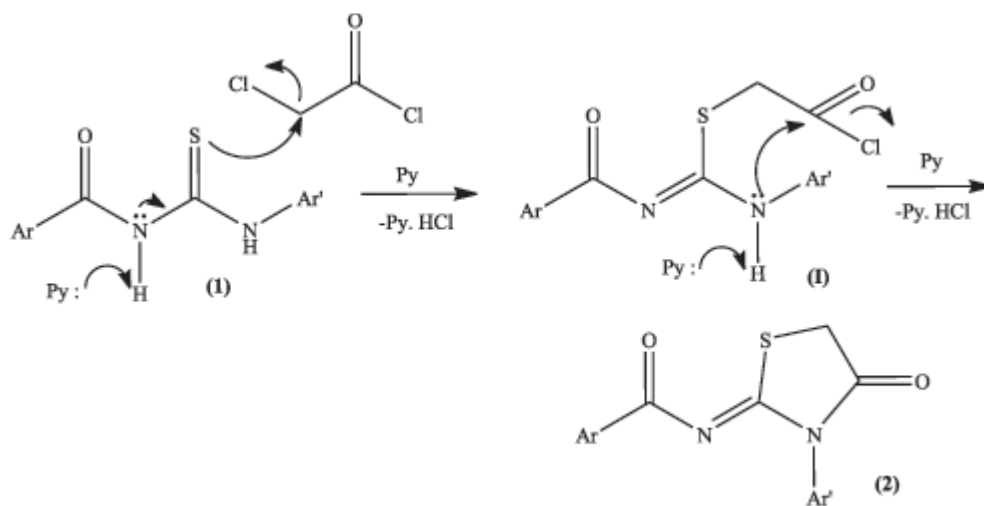
**Table 1.** Synthesis of **2j** from **1j** using various conditions

Entry	Base	Solvent	Reaction time	Reagent*	Ratio (%) 2:3
1	Et <sub>3</sub> N	Dioxane	0.5-1h	A/B	50:50
2	Et <sub>3</sub> N	DMF	1h	A/B	60:40
3	Pyridine	Dioxane	2-5h	A	96:4.0
4	Pyridine	Dioxane	0.5-2h	B	92:08
5	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	—	2-3 min <sup>a</sup>	B	50:50+others

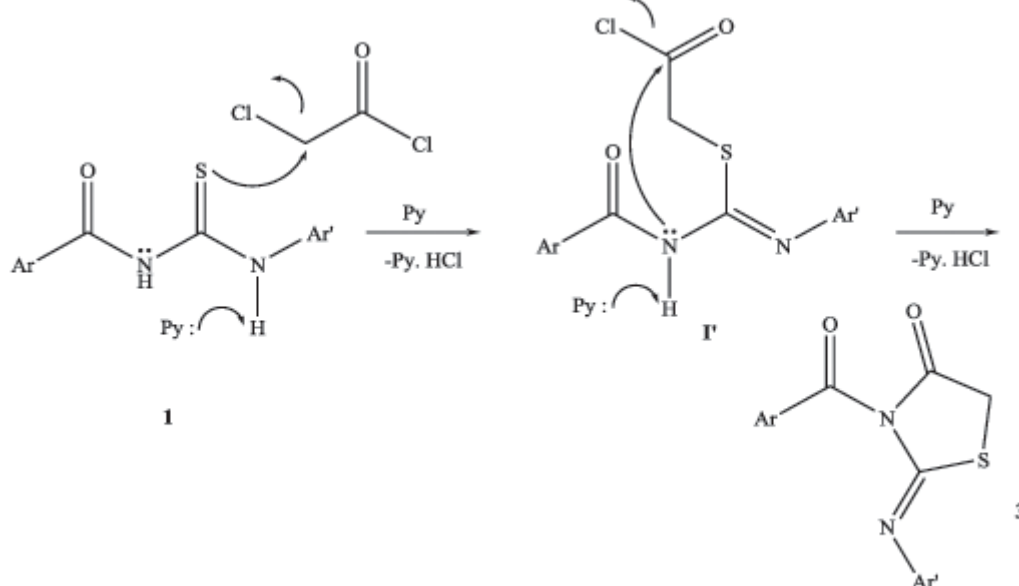
\*A Chloroacetic acid; B chloroacetyl chloride; <sup>a</sup>microwave irradiation.

**Scheme 1.** Synthesis of 2-arylimino-3-arylthiazolidin-4-ones from 1-aryl-3-arylthioureas.

The mechanism of cyclization involves the attack of sulfur in the resonance stabilized anion generated by loss of proton from N-1 by base, to the  $\alpha$ -carbon of the chloroacetyl chloride followed by the attack of anion from N-3 to the carbonyl of chloroacetyl intermediate species (**I**) and ensuing cyclization to yield (**2**) as the predominant regioisomer ([Scheme 2](#)). The formation of acyclic intermediate of type I is supported by the NMR and IR spectra of a spot of decreasing intensity with time in the reaction mixture having R<sub>f</sub> value in between those of the thiourea and the cyclized product(s). Thus, in case of **1h** the broad singlet at  $\delta$  12.0 for NH-1 had disappeared while that at  $\delta$  9.0 was intact and singlet for a methylene group flanked by carbonyl and sulphur atom was also observed at  $\delta$  4.23, in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR and similar changes were noticed in IR spectrum. The formation of less stable regioisomer 2-arylimino-3-aryl-thiazolidin-4-ones **3** can be visualized by a similar pathway initiating from S-attack followed by cyclization from the direction of less stable anion (N-3) ([Scheme 3](#)). The predominance of isomer **2** over **3** can be explained by the extended conjugative stabilization of aroyl carbonyl with the imine and ring nitrogen. The regiocontrol in the cyclization of thioureas bearing an aroyl and an aryl substituent is typically influenced by thermodynamic stability of regioisomer **2** over **3**. This has also been supported by the bond length of 1.3775 for N2-C9 compared to a bond length of 1.3827 for N2-C11 showing a partial double bond nature of the former.



**Scheme 2.** Mechanistic pathway for conversion of thioureas into thiazolidin-4-ones.



**Scheme 3.** Mechanistic pathway for formation of regioisomer 3 from same precursor thiourea 1

### Biology

*In vitro* evaluation of antibacterial activity was carried out by disk diffusion method (Kirby-Bauer method) against different bacterial strains.<sup>26</sup> The tests were repeated thrice and the results are reported as averages of at least three determinations. Antibacterial activity of the compounds tested is shown in [Table 4](#). The figures represent the zone of inhibition in millimeters. All of the compounds **2a-2i** exhibited promising inhibitory activity against the four bacterial strains compared to standard drugs at the tested concentrations. The presence of halogen groups results in enhancement of inhibitory activity. It may also be interesting to compare the activity of isomeric compounds **2h** and **2i** having 3-chloro and 3-methyl substituents interchanged on the aroyl and aryl rings.

**Table 4.** Antibacterial bioassay screening of 2-imino-thiazolidin-4-ones (**2a-j**)

Compound	Concentration (mmol $\times 10^3$ per mL)	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
<b>2a</b>	6.7	24	23	20	38
<b>2b</b>	6.4	26	24	27	36
<b>2c</b>	6.0	24	21	15	35
<b>2d</b>	6.4	29	20	19	34
<b>2e</b>	5.5	26	27	29	33
<b>2f</b>	6.0	25	24	30	31
<b>2g</b>	4.9	25	34	33	32
<b>2h</b>	5.8	29	30	24	33
<b>2i</b>	5.8	35	21	25	38
<b>2j</b>	5.9	30	28	23	30
Tetracycline		35	29	19	22
Penicillin		35	29	-	-
Metronidazole		22	24	-	-

Figures indicate the diameter of inhibition (mm); key – = no activity; Concentration: 2 mg mL<sup>-1</sup>

## Conclusion

An efficient cyclization protocol for 1-aryl-3-aryl thioureas with chloroacetyl chloride to novel 2-aryliminothiazolidin-4-ones has been developed. Regiochemistry is controlled by relative stability of the two regioisomers **2** and **3** with **2** as the predominant isomer. The simplicity of the experimental procedure and high yields render this approach particularly attractive. From antimicrobial activity data, it is revealed that, the compounds **2c-i** may serve as promising antimicrobial agents for therapeutic use. However, further biological evaluation, including the determination of MIC values is essentially required for the series of promising compounds.

## Experimental

Melting points were recorded using a digital Gallenkamp (SANYO) model MPD.BM 3.5 apparatus and are uncorrected. <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>CNMR spectra were determined in CDCl<sub>3</sub> at 300 and 100 MHz respectively using a Bruker AM-300 spectrometer. FTIR spectra were recorded on an FTS 3000 MX spectrophotometer. Mass Spectra (EI, 70eV) on a MAT 312 instrument, and elemental analyses were conducted using a LECO-183 CHNS analyzer. Bioactivities were carried out at the department of microbiology, Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was conducted on 0.25 mm silica gel plates (60F254, Merck). Visualization was made with ultraviolet light. Reagents were obtained commercially and used as received.

### *General procedures for the synthesis of 2-arylimino-3-arylthiazolidin-4-ones (2a-j)*

To a stirred solution of 1-aryl-3-arylthiourea (0.01 mol) in pyridine and 20 mL dry dioxane was added, dropwise, chloroacetyl chloride (1 mmol) under nitrogen and the reaction mixture was refluxed for 0.5-2h. After the reaction was completed the contents were cooled and poured into ice-cold water. The solid mass was separated, filtered, washed with water and then purified by recrystallization from suitable solvents.

The physicochemical and spectral data are given in tables 2 and 3 respectively. All compounds gave satisfactory elemental analyses.

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