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PREFACE

In the last 20 years, the manufacture and sales of adrenal cortical hormones and their derivatives have increased sharply. Although the clinical use for the adrenal cortical steroids originally was aimed at combating and relieving the symptoms for rheumatoid arthritis, applications have been extended to a wide variety of anti-inflammatory conditions, such as allergic, dermatologic and ocular diseases. They are also used as anaesthetics and antifertility agents. It is well known that the oestrogenic and androgenic steroids have been used with the same success in treating certain types of cancer.

Since the oxygenation of carbon atom number 11, 17 and 21 of steroids is required for anti-inflammatory activity, the introduction of these biologically necessary oxygen became the main problem economically.

When endeavouring to plan this work, two lines of approach represented themselves. Firstly, several previous communications showed that microorganisms of Rhizopus, Cunninghamella and Mucor hydroxylate strategic carbon atoms (C-11, C-17 and C-21). In this work will be tested the activity of locally isolated Mucorales using a cheap steroid source namely progesterone.