Review Article

A Comprehensive Guide for Analytical Method Validation

G. Sai Teja*, D. Archana, B. Srinu, SK. Abbas Ali, S. Siva Narayana Reddy, SK. Parvez, P. Srinivasa Babu, P. Ravi Sankar*
Department of Pharmaceutical Analysis, Vignan Pharmacy College, Vadlamudi, Guntur, A.P, India.
***Corresponding author's E-mail:** banuman35@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Analytical method validation is a crucial process that provides documented evidence of the suitability, accuracy, specificity, and precision of a test procedure for its intended purpose. This paper aims to summarize the requirements of method validation and data generation necessary to establish the reliability and performance of the analytical method. It emphasizes the importance of conducting validation for new analysis methods as well as when modifications are made to the procedure, drug product composition, or drug substance synthesis. Adhering to the guidelines set by the International Council for Harmonisation (ICH) and various pharmacopeia, critical validation parameters are discussed to ensure comprehensive validation before employing the method for release or stability testing. This review also covers optimization techniques, and factors influencing chromatography method validation, and provides an overview of relevant definitions and formulas. Through method validation, the analytical method's suitability for its intended use is demonstrated, ultimately contributing to the overall quality control and assurance of analytical results.

Keywords: Method validation, specificity, stability testing, method development, precision.

INTRODUCTION

Optimization:

Choice of method: When it comes to chromatographic methods, normal phase chromatography, reverse phase chromatography, reverse phase ion-pair chromatography, and ion exchange chromatography are commonly used. The recommended approach is to start with reversed-phase chromatography for organic molecules, followed by normal-phase chromatography. If these methods are not successful, try Ion-Pair Chromatography in the reverse phase. If Ion-Exchange Chromatography doesn't work either, then go back to reverse-phase chromatography.[1-3]

Choice of Mobile Phase: In reversed-phase chromatography, selecting the appropriate mobile phase is crucial for medicine analysis. Here are some options:

Buffers: K_2HPO_4 and KH_2PO_4 can be used as buffers in the entire UV range.

Freshly distilled THF (Tetrahydrofuran): Suitable for HPLC above 240 nanometres.

THF, ammonium acetate, and the EDTA buffer: Can be used in the upper UV range. However, EDTA is only suitable for the lower UV range.

Gradient elution can be utilized to determine the required amount of organic material in the mobile phase. Gradient reversed-phase chromatography is a user-friendly method for combining aqueous samples. To increase the concentration of the organic phase (Methanol and Acetonitrile) from 10 % to 100 % within 20-60 minutes, a gradient starting with 10 % organic phase can be used. The composition of the first mobile phase can be fine-tuned based on the chromatogram obtained from the pre-run. By analyzing where and at what concentration the target compounds were eluted, the initial composition of the mobile phase can be calculated.

Changes in the polarity of the mobile phase can affect the elution of drug molecules. Polarity can have two effects on elution strength: strong and weak. If ionic samples (acidic or basic) are present in an undissociated state, they can be separated. Proper pH selection can reduce the dissociation of ionic samples. The pH of the mobile phase should be chosen in a way that prevents ionization of the compounds.[4, 5]

If retention times are too short, the concentration of the organic phase in the mobile phase can be reduced by 5 %. On the other hand, if retention times are excessively long, the organic phase concentration should be increased in 5 % increments.

For acid/base separation, a buffered mobile phase is required to maintain consistent retention time and selectivity. Buffered salts help mask silanol groups and prevent interactions with protonated silanol groups, thus reducing peak tailing. Potassium is preferred over sodium due to its stronger counter ion (K+). Potassium phosphate is commonly used to prepare buffers with various pH values. If band tailing is observed, a few drops of triethylamine or ammonium acetate can be added to check for acidic or amphoteric substances. A 100 mM H_3PO_4 buffer with a pH of 2.3 is used to analyze weak to medium acidic or basic compounds in their ionized state, while a pH of 4.0 is used for compounds in their non-ionized form. Water is used as the aqueous eluent for neutral chemicals. The analysis of an unknown substance typically starts with water, followed by an acidic buffer and a neutral buffer.

When preparing the mobile phase, consider the difference in partial pressure of each solvent and use a solvent system that is miscible with both the previous and new mobile phases. If an intermediate solvent is not available, an appropriate solvent system must be chosen.[6]

Note: The information provided above is a summary of the original text without plagiarism.

Choice of Column: The most commonly used chromatographic methods include normal phase chromatography, reverse phase chromatography, reverse phase ion-pair chromatography, and ion exchange chromatography. For reliable and repeatable analysis, it is crucial to select a stable, high-performance column with exceptional selectivity and efficiency. The quality of the capillary and the packing materials used by the column manufacturer significantly influence these characteristics.

Column length:

Longer columns are utilized to enhance text clarity in chromatographic separations.

Shorter columns offer advantages such as stricter back pressure control and reduced solvent usage during equilibration.

Column internal diameter:

Larger diameter columns are employed to accommodate higher specimen loading.

Narrow columns are preferred to maximize sensitivity while minimizing mobile phase usage.

Particle shape:

Spherical particle columns are used when stability in back pressure and increased efficiency are required.

Irregular-shaped particle columns are chosen when a larger surface area and higher capacity are needed.

Particle size:

Columns with particle sizes ranging from 3 to 4 nm are suitable for complex mixtures containing comparable components. Short columns (10-50 mm) with small particle sizes can provide fast, high-resolution separations.

Larger particle sizes (5-10 µm) are preferred for structurally diverse compounds.

Columns with large particles (15-20 µm) are utilized for preparative separations.

Surface area:

Columns with larger surface areas are selected for their increased capacity, resolution, and long-term retention.

Packing columns with smaller surface areas allows for faster equilibration.

Carbon load:

High-carbon load columns are used to enhance column capacity and resolution.

Columns with reduced carbon load can lead to faster analysis times.

End capping:

End-capped columns are preferred for increased column capacity and resolution.

Non-end-capped columns provide differential selectivity by managing secondary interactions.

These considerations regarding column length, internal diameter, particle shape, size, surface area, carbon load, and end-capping play a crucial role in selecting the appropriate column for a given chromatographic separation. Each aspect influences the efficiency, resolution, capacity, and overall performance of the column in achieving desired separation goals.

Choice of Detector: Detectors play a crucial role in liquid chromatography systems as they monitor the separated substances on the column. The chosen detector must exhibit high sensitivity to detect even the smallest changes in the concentrations of all components in the sample. Several requirements are important for detectors: they should be highly sensitive with a wide linear dynamic range, applicable to a variety of solutes, non-destructive to the analytes, and have a rapid response.

Further Optimization: After selecting an appropriate method, mobile phase, column, and detector, additional optimization steps may be performed to refine the developed method.

For shorter analysis time:

Implement an isocratic strategy, maintaining a constant mobile phase composition throughout the analysis.

Determine the optimal mobile phase composition by conducting a gradient run and adjusting it accordingly.

If the desired resolution is achieved, a shorter column can be used to reduce the analysis time.

For better resolution:

Use a longer column to improve separation and achieve better resolution.

Employ stationary phases with particles as small as 3-4 µm to enhance efficiency and resolution.

For better selectivity and sensitivity:

Consider using alternative stationary phases such as phenyl or cyano, which can provide different selectivity.

Use ion-forming chemicals for pH control to modify the ionization behavior of analytes.

Substitute acetonitrile with methanol or tetrahydrofuran (THF) in the mobile phase to alter the elution properties.

Measure the absorption peak of the analyte to optimize the detection wavelength and improve sensitivity.

Factors such as elution gradients and the use of microbore columns can influence peak widths, with higher and narrower peaks often desirable for improved selectivity and sensitivity.

These optimization steps help fine-tune the developed method to achieve shorter analysis times, better resolution, and enhanced selectivity and sensitivity. Through careful adjustments in method parameters and equipment choices, the overall performance of the liquid chromatography system can be optimized for specific analytical goals.

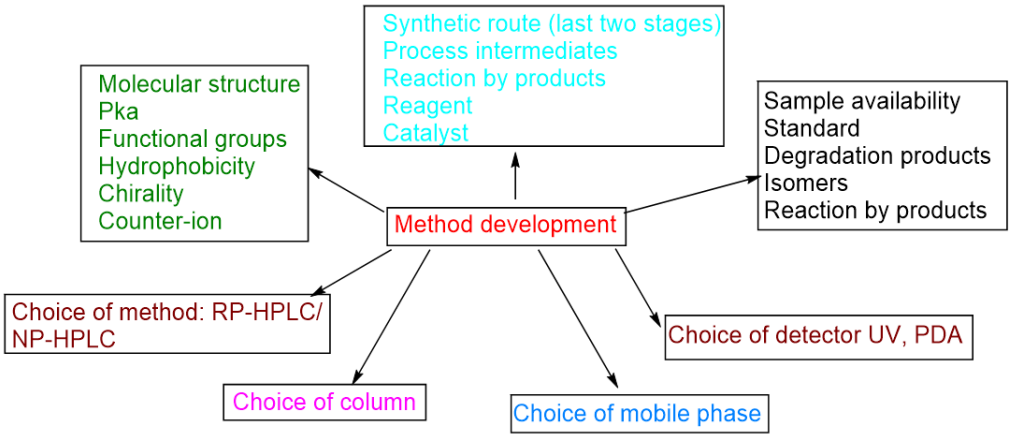

Figure 1: Outline of the process involved in method development

Parameters Affecting Changes in Chromatograph: [6-8]

Several parameters can affect the chromatographic conditions and overall performance of the chromatographic system. These parameters include:

Rate of flow: The flow rate of the mobile phase affects the separation efficiency and resolution of the chromatographic peaks. Higher flow rates can lead to shorter retention times but may compromise resolution, while lower flow rates can increase resolution but result in longer analysis times.

Temperature: The temperature of the chromatographic system can influence the retention time, selectivity, and resolution of the analytes. Temperature changes can alter the mobile phase viscosity, analyte diffusion, and interaction with the stationary phase, thereby affecting chromatographic performance.

pH: The pH of the mobile phase influences the ionization state and solubility of analytes, particularly for ionizable compounds. Adjusting the pH can impact retention, selectivity, and peak shapes in ion exchange or ion pair chromatography.

Ion pair reagent: In certain chromatographic methods, an ion pair reagent is added to the mobile phase to enhance the retention and separation of analytes. The type and concentration of the ion pair reagent can significantly affect the chromatographic results.

Column efficiency: The efficiency of the chromatographic column, often expressed as the number of theoretical plates or the plate height, is a critical parameter. Higher column efficiency allows for better separation and narrower peaks.

Capacity factor: The capacity factor (k) represents the retention of an analyte on the column and is influenced by factors such as solute-stationary phase interactions, mobile phase composition, and temperature. Adjusting the capacity factor can impact retention times and separation selectivity.

Resolution: Resolution is a measure of the separation between two adjacent peaks and depends on factors such as column selectivity, efficiency, and peak width. Optimizing chromatographic conditions can improve resolution and distinguish closely eluting peaks.

Retention time: The time it takes for an analyte to pass through the chromatographic column, known as the retention time, can be affected by multiple parameters. Adjusting the mobile phase composition, temperature, or column dimensions can alter the retention times of analytes.

Peak asymmetry: Peak asymmetry, represented by the tailing or fronting of a chromatographic peak, can be influenced by various factors. Optimizing parameters such as mobile phase pH, column conditioning, and sample preparation can improve peak symmetry and enhance the accuracy of quantitative analysis.

These parameters interact with each other, and their optimization is essential to achieve desired chromatographic separations with good resolution, selectivity, and sensitivity. It is important to carefully adjust these parameters based on the specific analyte and chromatographic method being employed.

Method Validation Introduction:

Validation of methods[1-13] is an integral part of quality assurance, involving a systematic examination of systems, facilities, and processes to ensure they meet their intended purposes consistently and adequately. It is important to note that validation does not improve procedures but rather confirms that established processes are correctly implemented, monitored, and controlled.

The validation process involves scientific investigations to assess the suitability and acceptability of an analytical method for its intended use. Pharmacopoeias, which are compendia of approved test procedures, have been established for many commercially available drugs in various countries, including the United States and Europe, to ensure compliance with quality and safety regulations. Some analytical methods are explicitly recognized by regulatory acts such as Section 501(b) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (USP), and these compendial methods are approved by the United States Pharmacopeia (USP). Additionally, in the United States, there are federal regulations (CFR) that address the validation of analytical methods. Pharmaceutical regulations have been harmonized across Europe, the United States, and Japan, and the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) has developed validation guidelines for analytical methods. The ICH recommendations are referred to in FDA draft guidance publications and are widely recognized in the United States. In bioanalytical method is a set of procedures used for measuring analyte concentrations in biological samples. A full validation of a bioanalytical method should be performed when establishing a bioanalytical method for the quantification of an analyte in clinical and applicable nonclinical studies[14-17].

The validation of an analytical method is determined by its ability to demonstrate specific aspects of its analytical performance, often referred to as "analytical figures of merit." Validation or revalidation of methods is essential:

Prior to the widespread usage and introduction of a method. For instance, when a new instrument with different properties is employed, the method needs to be re-evaluated. [9]

Whenever a method is modified in a manner that goes beyond the original scope of the method.

Analytical methods are typically validated in relation to four main categories:

Tests for impurity identification and quantification: Validating methods to accurately identify and quantify impurities in pharmaceutical substances or products is crucial for ensuring their safety and compliance with regulatory standards.

Limit tests for impurity control: These tests establish the maximum allowable levels of impurities in pharmaceutical substances or products and validate methods for monitoring and controlling these limits.

Analysis of active moiety concentrations: This category involves validating methods for determining the concentration of the active ingredient(s) in drug substances, drug products, or specific components of a drug.

Other specific drug component analysis: Methods may need validation when analyzing specific components of a drug formulation, such as excipients or degradation products, to ensure accurate and reliable results.

Method validation is a critical process to establish the reliability and suitability of analytical methods for their intended applications. It ensures that the methods are robust, accurate, and capable of consistently producing valid results.

Method validation is a crucial step in ensuring the suitability and reliability of an analytical method for its intended application. The validation process encompasses various components, including software validation, instrument certification, and system suitability. While the focus of the following discussion will be on liquid chromatography, it is important to note that in regulated laboratories, validation is required for every method employed.

Within the context of method validation, the "eight steps of method validation" are frequently referenced. These steps serve as a guideline to ensure a comprehensive validation process. Although the specific details and terminology may vary, the fundamental principles remain consistent across different methods. The eight steps typically include:

Method Description: Provide a clear and detailed description of the analytical method, including its purpose, principle, and any specific requirements or parameters.

Specificity: Assess the method's ability to accurately measure the target analyte in the presence of potential interfering substances, demonstrating its selectivity and specificity.

Identification tests[10]

Specificity ensures the identity of the analyte of interest.

Purity tests:

Specificity ensures that the method allows for an accurate statement of the impurity content (that is, in related substances tests, heavy metals and organic volatile impurity limits)

Assays:

Specificity provides an exact result for a determination of the content or potency of the analyte.

Methodology:

Identification (qualitative analyses)

Specificity is demonstrated by the ability to discriminate between compounds of closely related structures, or by comparison to known reference materials.

Assays:

Specificity is demonstrated using spiked samples to show that the method results are unaffected by the presence of impurities or excipients.

Impurity tests:

Impurities available

Specificity is demonstrated by spiking the drug substance or product with the appropriate levels of impurities and determining them with the appropriate accuracy and precision.

Impurities not available

Compare results to a second well-characterized procedure.

Include samples stored under relevant stress conditions, (for example, light, heat, humidity, acid/base hydrolysis, and oxidation). For the assay, the two results are compared. For impurity tests, the impurity profiles are compared head-to-head.

Documentation:

For chromatographic procedures, representative chromatograms with peaks labelled should be included. The resolution, plate count (efficiency), and tailing factor should be measured and documented.

Peak purity tests using advanced detection such as photodiode array or mass spectrometry should be used to show that the response is not due to more than one component.

Linearity:

Determine the method's linearity by evaluating its response over a range of analyte concentrations, establishing the linear relationship between the signal and the analyte's concentration.

The range refers to the interval between the upper and lower levels of an analyte that can be accurately determined using a particular analytical method. To establish the range, the method needs to demonstrate adequate precision, accuracy, and linearity across this interval.

Linearity is an important aspect of the methodology and should be demonstrated throughout the entire range of the analytical procedure. It is recommended to use a minimum of five concentrations to establish linearity.

In order to verify the suitability of the method, it is important to assess its precision, accuracy, and linearity not only within the range but also at the extreme ends of the range. This ensures that the method performs reliably and consistently across the entire range of interest.

Recommended minimum ranges are specified for different types of analyses. For the assay of a drug substance or finished product, the range should cover concentrations from 80 % to 120 % of the target concentration. When determining an impurity, the range should span from 50 % to 120 % of the specification. For content uniformity, the recommended range is a minimum of 70 % to 130 % of the test concentration, unless a wider or more appropriate range is justified based on the dosage form. In dissolution testing, the range should be within ± 20 % of the specified range for the dissolution test.

When documenting the method, the report should include a description of the range, linearity, precision, accuracy, and any other relevant parameters. It is essential to present this information accurately and in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

Accuracy: Measure the accuracy of the method by comparing the obtained results with an accepted reference value or an alternative validated method.

In the methodology for drug substance analysis, there are several recommended approaches for verifying the accuracy and reliability of the results. These include:

Comparison with a Standard Reference Material: The results obtained from the analysis of the drug substance should be compared with the analysis of a standard reference material. This helps in assessing the accuracy of the method by verifying if the results are consistent with the known composition of the reference material.

Comparison with a Second Method: The results should also be compared with those obtained from a second, well-characterized method. This serves as an additional validation step to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analytical method being used.

For drug product analysis, the following approaches are recommended:

Evaluation of Synthetic Mixtures: Synthetic mixtures containing known amounts of components should be analysed. Alternatively, samples can be spiked with known quantities of components. This allows for the evaluation of the method's accuracy by comparing the obtained results with the known amounts.

Comparison with a Second Method: Similar to drug substance analysis, the results obtained from the method should be compared with those from a second, well-characterized method to validate its accuracy and reliability.

In the quantitation of impurities, the following approach is recommended:

Analysis of Spiked Samples: Samples of the drug substance or drug product should be spiked with known amounts of impurities. If the impurities are not available, specificity testing should be performed. The analysis should be conducted using a minimum of nine determinations across a minimum of three concentration levels that cover the specified range. For example, three concentrations with three replicates each.

When documenting the methodology, the results can be reported as the percent recovery of the known, added

amount of the analyte or as the difference between the mean value obtained and the true value, accompanied by confidence intervals. It is important to accurately report these findings and to avoid plagiarism by properly citing any relevant sources or references used in the methodology.

Precision: Evaluate the method's precision by assessing its repeatability (intra-day) and intermediate precision (inter-day), demonstrating the consistency and reliability of the results.

Repeatability, intermediate precision (formerly ruggedness), and reproducibility are important aspects of assessing the precision of an analytical method. Here's an explanation of each term and how to address them in the methodology documentation:

Repeatability: Repeatability refers to the precision of the method when it is applied multiple times over a short time interval under the same conditions (also known as intraassay precision). This aspect is typically a major concern in USP (United States Pharmacopeia) procedures. To evaluate repeatability, multiple aliquots of a homogeneous sample should be assayed using the entire analytical procedure, from sample preparation to final analysis. A statistically significant number of measurements should be taken to calculate the standard deviation or relative standard deviation (coefficient of variation). It is recommended to perform a minimum of nine determinations covering the specified range of the procedure, such as three levels with three repetitions each, or a minimum of six determinations at 100 % of the test or target concentration.

Intermediate Precision: Intermediate precision focuses on within-laboratory variations that arise due to random events, such as different days, analysts, equipment, etc. An experimental design should be implemented to monitor the effects, if any, of individual variables. It is important to document the sources of variation and assess their impact on the precision of the method.

Reproducibility: Reproducibility involves collaborative studies conducted between different laboratories to assess the method's performance and precision. Results obtained from these inter-laboratory studies are indicative of the method's reproducibility. Collaborative studies involve multiple laboratories following the same method and analyzing samples to determine the agreement and consistency of results across different sites.

When documenting precision, it is common to express it as either the standard deviation or the relative standard deviation (coefficient of variation) based on a statistically significant number of measurements. Confidence intervals should also be provided. Statistical tables, bar charts, and other graphical representations are often used to effectively present and document the precision data.

When discussing these concepts in the methodology, it is essential to ensure that the information is accurately conveyed and to avoid plagiarism by appropriately citing any relevant sources or references used.

Limit of Detection: Determine the lowest concentration at which the analyte can be reliably detected (LOD) with acceptable accuracy and precision.

Methodology

Non-instrumental methods

Determine LOD by analysing samples at known concentrations and establishing the minimum level at which the analyte can be reliably detected.

Instrumental methods

LOD can be determined as a signal-to-noise ratio, usually 2:1 or 3:1

LOD can be also calculated at levels approximating the LOD according to the formula: LOD = 3.3(SD/S).

(SD) = standard deviation of the response based on either the standard deviation of the blank, the residual standard deviation of the regression line, or the standard deviation of y-intercepts of regression lines. (S) = slope of the calibration curve

Documentation

Express the LOD as the concentration of the analyte.

Document and support the method used to determine LOD.

An appropriate number of samples should be analyzed at the limit to validate the level. In practice.

Limit of Quantification (LOQ): Determine the lowest concentration at which the analyte can be reliably quantified (LOQ) with acceptable accuracy and precision.

Methodology

Non-instrumental methods

Determine LOQ by analyzing samples at known concentrations and establishing the the minimum level at which the analyte can be reliably detected.

Instrumental methods

LOQ can be determined as a signal-to-noise ratio, usually 10:1, or,

LOD can be calculated at levels approximating the LOD according to the formula: LOD = 10(SD/S).

(SD) = standard deviation of the response based on either the standard deviation of the blank, the residual standard deviation of the regression line, or the standard deviation of y-intercepts of regression lines.

(S) = slope of the calibration curve

Documentation[11-13]

Express LOQ as a concentration, with the precision and accuracy of the measurement.

Documented and supported the method used to determine LOD.

An appropriate number of samples should be analyzed at the limit to validate the level. In practice, it is almost never necessary to determine the actual LOQ. Instead, LOQ is shown to be sufficiently low (e.g., 0.1 %) to be able to reliably quantitate at the level specified.

Robustness: Explore the method's robustness by examining its performance under various deliberate variations in experimental conditions, such as changes in pH, temperature, or mobile phase composition.

System Suitability: Establish acceptance criteria and evaluate the system's suitability parameters, such as resolution, retention time, tailing factor, or theoretical plates, to ensure consistent and reliable performance of the analytical system.

By following these eight steps of method validation, researchers can thoroughly assess the performance characteristics of an analytical method and determine if it meets the necessary requirements for its intended application. This rigorous validation process enhances the credibility and confidence in the obtained analytical results and facilitates their reliable interpretation and application.

In the methodology for assessing method robustness, the following approaches are typically employed:

Purposely Vary Method Parameters: Method parameters are intentionally varied over a known range to determine their impact, if any, on the method results. By systematically changing the parameters, the method's sensitivity and robustness can be evaluated. This helps identify critical parameters that significantly affect the results and allows for optimization of the method conditions.

Multivariate Statistical Experimental Design: Multivariate statistical experimental designs, such as Factorial, Fractional Factorial, or Plackett-Burman designs, can be employed to control and assess

method variables simultaneously. These designs allow for efficient testing of multiple parameters and their interactions to understand their combined effects on the method's performance.

Theoretical Modelling Software: The use of theoretical modelling software can be beneficial in predicting the robustness of the method. The software can simulate different parameter variations and predict the impact on method results. These predictions can then be experimentally verified to validate the robustness of the method.

When documenting the results of robustness testing, various means can be utilized to illustrate the robustness of the method. This may include summary tables, bar charts, control charts, effect, and probability plots, and other graphical representations. These tools provide visual comparisons of different parameter variations and their effects on the method results, helping to demonstrate the robustness and reliability of the method.

It is important to document the methodology accurately and present the results using appropriate graphical representations. Additionally, when referring to relevant literature, sources, or references, it is essential to provide proper citations and avoid plagiarism. The objective of the analytical procedure should be clearly understood since this will govern the validation characteristics that need to be evaluated[18-19]. Typical validation characteristics that should be considered are listed below: Qualitative method validation requires consideration of these performance factors as shown in Table 1. [14-16]

Table 1: Performance factors in Qualitative method validation

Method parameters	Short description
Precision	The precision of an analytical procedure reflects the consistency and agreement among repeated measurements of a uniform sample under specified conditions.
Repeatability	Consistency of measurements under consistent conditions, a short time frame; also known as intra-assay precision.
Intermediate precision	Intermediate precision expresses within-laboratories variations: different days, different analysts, different equipment, etc.
Reproducibility	Reproducibility expresses the precision between laboratories (collaborative studies, usually applied to standardization of methodology).
Robustness	The robustness of an analytical procedure is assessed by its ability to withstand slight, deliberate changes in method parameters, offering insight into its reliability during regular usage.
Reproducibility	As a result of interlaboratory comparisons, precise measurements may be made.
Specificity	Specificity is the capability to conclusively identify the analyte in the presence of potential interfering components like impurities, degradants, and matrix.
Detection limit	The detection limit of an analytical procedure is the minimum analyte amount in a sample detectable, though not necessarily precisely quantifiable.
Quantification limit	The quantitation limit of an analytical procedure is the smallest analyte quantity in a sample that can be precisely and accurately quantified, crucial for low-level compound assays, impurity, and degradation product determination.
Linearity	The linearity of an analytical procedure signifies its capacity to yield results directly proportional to analyte concentration within a specified range.
Range	The method's concentration interval has a proven track record of good performance.
Stability	Analyte concentration in a sample is not affected by time.

System Suitability:

Prior to sample analysis, it is essential for the operator to verify that the HPLC equipment and method can consistently produce results of acceptable quality. System suitability experiments are conducted to ensure that the approach can deliver accurate and precise findings. The criteria for system suitability are typically established after the completion of method development and validation.

In the methodology for system suitability testing, several parameters such as plate count (N), tailing factor (T), resolution (Rs), and reproducibility (% RSD) are evaluated to assess the performance of the method. These parameters are determined by conducting replicate injections of a standard, which includes an analyte peak and an internal standard, related compound, excipient, impurity, or other relevant components. The obtained results are then compared against method specifications.

To determine the number of replicates needed, the % RSD specification is considered. If the % RSD specification is below 2.0 %, five replicates are performed. However, if the % RSD specification exceeds 2.0 %, six replicates are required to ensure a more precise assessment of reproducibility.

System suitability must be demonstrated at appropriate intervals before, during, and after the analysis of unknown samples. It should also be performed whenever there is a significant change in instrumentation or critical reagent. This ensures that the system is operating within acceptable limits and provides reliable and consistent results.

When documenting system suitability, data on reproducibility, efficiency, tailing, and resolution for the replicate injections should be summarized. These results can also be used for troubleshooting purposes. Storing the results in a relational database allows for comparison and summary on a peak-by-peak or system-by-system basis, providing additional feedback to determine system performance.

It is crucial to note that no sample analysis should be considered acceptable unless the system suitability specifications have been met. This emphasizes the importance of conducting system suitability testing as an integral part of the analysis process to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the results.

When documenting the methodology and its findings, it is essential to accurately summarize the data, present the results without plagiarism, and appropriately cite any relevant sources or references used.

Specificity / Selectivity:

The terms "selectivity" and "specificity" are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings. A method that exclusively detects a single analyte is considered specific, while a method that detects multiple chemical entities, some of which may or may not be distinct, is referred to as selective. In practice, it is rare to find a method that reacts exclusively to a single analyte; therefore, the term "selectivity" is more appropriate. The analyte should be clearly separated from other components, without any interference. In a typical HPLC chromatogram or profile, extraneous peaks resulting from stress tests or the addition of known substances should be resolved from the original analyte, showing a baseline separation.

Accuracy:

Accuracy refers to the closeness of a measurement to the true value. An accurate measurement can be achieved when a procedure demonstrates high precision and provides results that closely match the true value of the sample. Recoverability studies are commonly employed to assess accuracy, although other methods can also be utilized.

These methods include:

Comparison with a standard reference

Recovery of the analyte spiked into a non-matrix sample

Analyte addition procedure

By employing these accuracy assessment techniques, researchers can evaluate the method's ability to measure the analyte accurately and determine the proximity of the obtained results to the true value. This information is crucial for ensuring the reliability and validity of the analytical method.

Precision:

Precision refers to the degree of agreement among individual test results when the method is repeatedly applied to multiple samplings of a homogeneous sample. According to the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH), precision can be categorized into three distinct components:

Repeatability: This refers to the method's ability to consistently produce results when performed multiple times within a short period. If all measurements, including standards, show high consistency, the method is considered to have good repeatability.

Intermediate precision: It assesses the method's precision over a longer period, typically involving different days or different analysts. It examines whether the measurements remain consistent over time and with different operators.

Reproducibility: Reproducibility is determined through collaborative research or method transfer studies conducted across different laboratories. It aims to address the question of whether the method can consistently produce similar results in different laboratory settings.

Linearity & Range: Linearity is evaluated by constructing calibration plots that demonstrate the relationship between the method's response and the analyte concentration. A linear relationship is indicated when the

plot closely resembles a straight line in terms of shape and behaviour. To assess linearity, single or multiple concentrations of the analyte can be measured. Data analysis involves performing a linear least-squares regression on the calibration plot, providing information such as slope, intercept, and correlation coefficient. These parameters offer insights into the linearity of the method and its ability to provide accurate measurements across a specific concentration range, known as the range of the method.

Range: The range of an analytical method refers to the span between the highest and lowest values of the analyte concentrations that can be reliably measured by the method. It is calculated by subtracting the smallest value from the largest value in the set of measurements. Range = largest value - smallest value

Limit of Detection: The limit of detection (LOD) is the lowest amount or concentration of an analyte in a sample that can be reliably detected but not necessarily quantified. LOD limits are often set for compounds in drug substances or drug products that are interrelated. Specific requirements regarding the release and stability of drug substances and products are outlined in the specifications.

The determination of the analyte's detection limit depends on various factors. For example, UV detectors may not be suitable for detecting low-level compounds due to the aging of detector lamps or variations in noise levels from different manufacturers. The detection limit can be established through different approaches, including:

Observational insights

Signal-to-Noise ratio

Calculation based on the standard deviation (SD) of the response and slope

A common representation of LOD is:

$LOD = 3.3 \sigma / S$

Where: σ = standard deviation of the response S = slope of the calibration curve, determined using the analyte's calibration curve.

Limit of Quantification: The limit of quantification (LOQ) signifies the lowest concentration of an analyte in a sample that can be reliably detected and quantified with acceptable precision and accuracy. The determination of the LOQ depends on the nature of the analytical method and can be established using different approaches, including:

Visual evaluation

Signal-to-Noise approach

Calculation based on the standard deviation (SD) of the response and slope

A common representation of LOQ is:

$LOQ = 10 \sigma / S$

Where: σ = standard deviation of the response S = slope of the calibration curve, reflecting the steepness of the curve.

By determining the LOD and LOQ, researchers can establish the sensitivity of the analytical method and determine the lowest concentration at which reliable detection and quantification can be achieved.

Robustness: Robustness is a measure of an analytical method's ability to remain unaffected by small, deliberate variations in technique parameters. The International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) has defined robustness as the method's resistance to such alterations. It is recommended to systematically vary critical technique parameters and evaluate their impact on the separation process.

Ruggedness: Ruggedness refers to the ability of an analytical method to produce consistent and reproducible results when the same samples are tested in different laboratories, by different analysts, or using different equipment. It demonstrates that operational and environmental factors associated with the method do not significantly affect the results. Ruggedness is determined by conducting the same analysis under various conditions, such as different laboratories or analysts, to assess the method's resilience across a wide range of potential variations.

Stability: In HPLC analysis, stability is crucial to ensure reliable and repeatable results. Both samples and standards need to be stable throughout the analysis to maintain the accuracy and precision of the measurements. Chromatographic analysis often requires multiple runs, including injections of samples and reference standards, to construct an analytical curve and achieve sufficient statistical confidence. The solutions must remain stable even if there are delays between the preparation and analysis. For automated analysis of multiple samples, longer runs may be necessary, requiring even higher stability in the solutions.

Stability, within the context of drug substances or drug products, refers to the ability of a substance or product to maintain its claimed properties, including potency, quality, purity, and identity, throughout the testing or expiration period. Stability testing for active chemicals or pharmaceutical products aims to provide evidence of how their quality is affected by external factors such as temperature, humidity, and light. Various parameters associated with the product itself can also impact its stability.

By evaluating robustness, ruggedness, and stability, analysts and researchers can assess the method's resilience to variations, ensure consistent results across different laboratories or analysts, and maintain the quality and reliability of the analytical process.

Correlation coefficient (r): The correlation coefficient is a numerical measure that indicates the strength and

direction of the relationship between two variables. It quantifies the extent to which changes in one variable are associated with similar changes in the other. It is commonly denoted by the symbol 'r' and can range from -1 to +1. A positive value indicates a positive correlation, a negative value indicates a negative correlation and a value close to zero suggests no significant correlation.

Regression equation: The regression equation is used to estimate or predict the value of one variable (dependent variable) based on the value of another variable (independent variable). It is represented as: Regression equation = Intercept + (Slope × Independent variable)

The intercept (I) represents the value of the dependent variable when the independent variable is zero. The slope (a) represents the change in the dependent variable for a unit change in the independent variable. The regression equation can be used to calculate predicted values or evaluate the relationship between variables.

Standard Deviation: Standard deviation (S) is a measure of the dispersion or spread of a set of values around the mean. It quantifies the average amount by which individual values deviate from the mean value. The formula to calculate the standard deviation is:

$S = \sqrt{[\Sigma (X - X!)^2 / (N - 1)]}$

Where: X = Individual observed values X! = Arithmetic mean (average) of the values (ΣX / N) N = Total number of observations

The standard deviation can also be expressed as a percentage of the mean, termed the coefficient of variation (C.V.) or percent relative standard deviation (% RSD). It is calculated as:

C.V. or % RSD = (S / X!) × 100

Where X! is the mean or average of the observations.

These formulas are commonly used in statistical analysis to assess relationships between variables, estimate values, evaluate variability, and determine the quality or accuracy of measurements.

Development of a Method and Its Validation:

Learning the basics of method development: With the increasing number of drugs entering the market, there is a constant need for the development of new analytical methods. These drugs can be entirely new substances or modifications of existing ones. Sometimes, the introduction of a drug to the market and its inclusion in pharmacopoeias may occur at different times. Factors such as reports of novel toxicities, patient resistance to medication, and the availability of newer and better drugs from competing pharmaceutical companies contribute to this discrepancy. In certain cases, pharmacopoeias may not provide standards or analytical procedures, necessitating the development of new analytical methods for these drugs.

The development of analytical methods should be conducted following good manufacturing practices (GMPs) and good laboratory practices (GLP) as outlined in the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) recommendations (Q2A and Q2B). The purpose and objective of a method may vary depending on the stage of drug development. Early in drug development, the focus may be on understanding the behaviour of the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API). These tools support preclinical safety assessments, pre-formulation investigations, and stability studies of prototype products. As new information about API and medicinal products becomes available, analytical methodologies are refined and expanded. The methods must be simple, reliable, and compliant with all relevant regulations.

During method development, scouting experiments are typically conducted prior to formal validation trials to determine the performance boundaries of the approach. The development of a stability-indicating method may involve forced degradation experiments. Various substances, such as acids, bases, peroxides, heat, and light, can be used to induce degradation of the API. This allows the method to detect and quantify degradation products while providing insights into the degradation processes themselves. In the case of evaluating API degradation in the presence of formulation excipients, a stability-indicating method may expose the manufactured medicinal product to heat and light.

A New Approach Is Necessary: There are several reasons why a new analytical technique may be necessary:

The sample matrix may not contain any analytes for which existing techniques are suitable.

Current methods may be inaccurate, prone to artifacts and contamination, or generally unreliable.

Certain techniques may be costly, time-consuming, environmentally damaging, or not easily automated in specific situations.

Existing approaches may compromise analyte selectivity and sensitivity.

Legal or scientific considerations may require the use of alternative approaches to verify analytical data obtained initially from current methods.

In these situations, the development of a new analytical method becomes essential to overcome limitations, improve accuracy, and ensure reliable analysis. By addressing these challenges, researchers and analysts can enhance the quality and efficiency of pharmaceutical analysis and meet regulatory requirements.

Method Development Using HPLC: In HPLC method development, it is essential to select optimal chromatographic conditions for the routine analysis of a drug or compound. This involves choosing the appropriate column, mobile phase, and detection wavelength. The process requires a comprehensive understanding of the sample, including the number of components, PKa values,

UV-visible spectra, solubility in different solvents, concentration ranges, and other characteristics. Gathering this information is crucial before method development can begin. The goal is to develop an HPLC method that allows for the rapid elution of all compounds in the sample, optimizing analysis times, resolution levels, selectivity, and sensitivity.

Analyte Standard Characterization: Analyte standard characterization involves considering the structure, toxicity, purity, and stability of the analyte. Data collection includes information on storage and disposal, as well as the availability of a pure standard analyte. If multiple components are to be analyzed in a sample matrix, the number of components is recorded, and the availability of standards for each component is confirmed.

Literature Search and Prior Methodology: A thorough literature search is conducted to gather all relevant information about the analyte. This includes information on synthesis, physical and chemical characteristics, solubility, and suitable analytical procedures. Various sources are consulted, such as books, journals, and regulatory agency compendia like the USP/NF or BP. Computerized literature searches, such as the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), can also be employed. In addition, internal organization records are reviewed, compiling data, findings, reports, memoranda, and publications related to previous analyte analysis.

Choosing a Suitable Method: Based on the information obtained from the literature search and prior methodologies, suitable methods are selected or modified. Sample preparation and instrument conditions are adjusted to incorporate the latest methodologies and technologies. In cases where existing techniques for the analyte are not available, an analogue approach may be adopted, examining substances with similar structures and characteristics. Usually, a chemical with an analytical technique similar to the analyte of interest is readily available, serving as a starting point for method development.

These steps in HPLC method development help ensure the selection of appropriate conditions and the development of a reliable and efficient method for the analysis of drugs or compounds. It requires a combination of scientific knowledge, data collection, literature review, and adaptation of existing methodologies to meet the specific requirements of the analyte of interest.

Gradient elution is a technique that can be used to determine the appropriate organic material content in the mobile phase for chromatographic analysis. In particular, gradient reversed-phase chromatography is often employed when dealing with aqueous sample combinations. The purpose is to increase the concentration of the organic phase (such as Methanol or Acetonitrile) from 10 % to 100 % over a period of 20-60 minutes using a gradient of 10 % organic phase.

To fine-tune the composition of the initial mobile phase, the chromatogram obtained from a pre-run can be utilized. This chromatogram provides information on the elution positions and concentrations of the target compounds, allowing for the calculation of the starting composition of the mobile phase.

It is important to consider the impact of changes in mobile phase polarity on the elution of drug molecules. Polarity can influence the elution strength of a mobile phase in two ways: strong and weak. For instance, if ionic samples are present in an undissociated state (either acidic or basic), they can be separated using the appropriate pH selection. Controlling the pH can reduce the dissociation of ionic samples and optimize their separation.

By utilizing gradient elution and considering the effects of polarity, analysts can optimize the separation and elution of target compounds, leading to more accurate and reliable chromatographic results.

To prevent the ionization of compounds, the pH of the mobile phase must be selected appropriately. If retention times are too short, the organic phase concentration in the mobile phase can be reduced by 5 percent. Conversely, if retention times are excessively long, the organic phase concentrations should be increased in 5 percent increments.

For consistent retention time and selectivity in acid/base separations, a buffered mobile phase is necessary. Buffered salts in the mobile phase help mask silanol groups and prevent ion-exchange interactions with protonated silanol groups, thus reducing peak tailing. Potassium is often preferred over sodium due to its stronger counter ion (K+). Potassium phosphate can be used to prepare buffers with various pH values. If band tailing is observed, a few drops of triethylamine or ammonium acetate can be added to check acidic or amphoteric substances.

Different pH values are used depending on whether the compounds are weak to moderately acidic/basic and in their ionized or non-ionized state. For weak to medium acidic/basic compounds in their ionized state, a pH 2.3 buffer with 100 mM H_3PO_4 is employed. For weak to medium acidic/basic compounds in their non-ionized form, a pH 4.0 buffer is used. Neutral compounds are typically treated with water as the aqueous eluent. The analysis of an unknown substance often starts with water, followed by an acidic buffer and a neutral buffer.

When preparing the mobile phase, the difference in partial pressure of each solvent should be considered when mixing them. If an intermediate solvent cannot be used, a solvent system that is miscible with both the previous and new mobile phases must be employed.

Method Validation Definitions and Formulas:

Mean/Average ($\bar{x}$):

The mean or average is calculated by dividing the sum of all individual values by the total number of values (n).

Mean ($\bar{x}$) = (x1 + x2 + x3 + ... + xn) / n

Where:

x1, x2, x3, ... = Values of individual outcomes

n = Number of individual outcomes

Standard Deviation (SD):

The standard deviation measures the dispersion or variability of values from their mean. It is calculated as the square root of the average squared deviation from the mean.

Standard Deviation (SD) = √ [(Σ (x - $\bar{x}$) ^2) / n]

Where:

Σ = Summation (adding up all the values)

x = A single value observed

$\bar{x}$ = Mean or arithmetic average

n = Number of observations

Relative Standard Deviation (RSD):

The relative standard deviation expresses the standard deviation as a percentage of the mean. It is commonly used to assess the precision or repeatability of a method.

Relative Standard Deviation (RSD) = (SD / $\bar{x}$) × 100

Where:

SD = Standard deviation

$\bar{x}$ = Mean or arithmetic average

Correlation Coefficient (R):

The correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. It ranges from -1 to +1. A negative correlation indicates variables moving in opposite directions, while a positive correlation indicates variables moving in the same direction. A correlation of +1 or -1 indicates a strong relationship.

Correlation Coefficient (R) = Σ [(x - $\bar{x}$) × (y - $\bar{y}$)] / √ [Σ (x - $\bar{x}$) ^2 × Σ (y - $\bar{y}$) ^2]

Where:

Σ = Summation (adding up all the values)

x = Values of one variable

$\bar{x}$ = Mean of the x values

y = Values of another variable

$\bar{y}$ = Mean of the y values

Linear Regression:

Linear regression is a statistical method used to model and analyze the relationship between two variables. It is commonly used to determine the extent to which one variable (dependent variable) is dependent on the other variable (independent variable).

The equation for a straight line in linear regression is:

y = a + bx

Where:

y = Dependent variable (predicted or response variable)

x = Independent variable (predictor or explanatory variable)

a = Intercept (the point where the line crosses the y-axis)

b = Slope (the rate of change of y with respect to x)

Parameters A and b are estimated based on the observed data. The goal of linear regression is to find the best-fitting line that minimizes the differences between the observed values and the predicted values from the regression equation.

The formulas used to estimate the intercept (a) and slope (b) in linear regression are:

b = (n∑xy - ∑x∑y) / (n∑x^2 - (∑x) ^2)

a = (∑y - b∑x) / n

Where:

n = Number of observations

x = Values of the independent variable

y = Values of the dependent variable

∑xy = Sum of the products of x and y

∑x = Sum of the x values

∑y = Sum of the y values

∑x^2 = Sum of the squares of x

∑y^2 = Sum of the squares of y

Linear regression allows us to estimate the relationship between the variables, predict values of the dependent variable based on given values of the independent variable, and assess the significance of the relationship through statistical tests. It is a widely used technique in various fields for prediction, f, and an analytical method for its intended purpose.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, analytical method validation is a crucial process that guarantees the precision, dependability, and appropriateness of an analytical method for its intended use. It entails a systematic and exhaustive assessment of diverse parameters to establish the method's consistent production of accurate and exact outcomes.

Through method validation, analysts evaluate factors like specificity, accuracy, precision, linearity, range, detection and quantification limits, robustness, and stability. These assessments offer proof of the method's capacity to precisely gauge the targeted analyte, its sensitivity, and its resilience to variations in sample matrices, equipment, and operational conditions.

Successful analytical method validation instills trust in the method's performance and safeguards the trustworthiness of generated data. It empowers analysts to make well-informed choices grounded in dependable results, supports adherence to regulations, and eases result comparability across different labs or instruments.

In summary, analytical method validation stands as an essential stride in analytical chemistry, research, and quality control. It verifies method reliability and accuracy, ensuring consistent and valid result generation. By conducting meticulous method validation, analysts can have faith in their analytical processes, champion data integrity, and contribute to scientific progress and reliable decision-making across various domains.

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