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Assay of Tretinoin using Safranine-O as a Chromogenic Reagent in Bulk and Dosage Forms

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Abstract: A new, economical and accurate analytical technique was developed for the assay of tretinoin (TTN) in bulk and formulations. While developing the method, it was found that the reaction was carried out due to the formation of ion-pair association complex involving the carboxyl group in the side chain of the TTN with safranine-O. The colored species formined was stable up to 60 minutes. The optical density of color species was measured at 520 nm. All the variables were optimized. The linearity range lies for the developed method within the concentration ranges of 2-10 μ g mL⁻¹.The linear correlation coefficient (r) and molar absorptivity (ϵ_{max})values were found as 0.9999 and 1.66 x 10⁴ L mol⁻¹cm⁻¹. Percentage recoveries were found from 99.2 \pm 1.8 to 100.2 \pm 0.7.The method was validated as per ICH guidelines.

Keywords: Bioactive compounds, tretinoin, safranine-O(SFN-O), Ion-pair association complex, spectrophotometry.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bioactive compounds are found in both plant and animal products and can also be synthetically produced. Drugs are an important class of bioactive compounds. The estimation based on the reactions with suitable chromogenic agents are simple and inexpensible. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs used for skin care are classified as dry skin products, acne products, sunscreen and suntan products and foot care products. Acne occurs most commonly during adolescence and found in 80-90% of teenagers due to hormonal changes. The acne product namely tretinoin works by replacement of skin cells. Acne vulgaris is considered as common skin related problem that was treated with combination therapy using topical drug clindamycin and tretinoin (TTN)

(1). Literature survey revealed that there is an evidence about the determination TTN by HPLC (2-6), RP-HPLC (7-12), UPLC (13), LC (14), and GC (15). Studies on phototoxicity of tretinoin (16), UVspectrophotometry (17-22), and UV-derivative spectroscopy (23-25) were also carried out by the previous authors. Most of the analytical methods involve sophisticated instruments which are expensive, and require maintenance and are not within the reach of most of the laboratories. Visible spectrophotometry can be chosen as an alternative technique. It is a highly preferable method for routine analysis because of its simplicity, low time and economical advantages. The novelty of this technique lies in its sensitivity and further depends on the nature of reaction and not on the sophistication of the instrument. No evidence is found in the literature for the determination of TTN by visible spectrophotometry. Hence the authors made an attempt to develop simple and sensitive visible spectroscopic method for the assay TTN in bulk and formulations using safranine-O (SFN-O) as a chromogenic reagent. Figure 1 shows the structural molecule for tretinoin.



Figure 1: Chemical structure of Tretinoin (2E,4E,6E,8E)-3,7-Dimethyl-9-(2,6,6-trimethylcyclo-hex-1-enyl) nona-2,4,6,8-all-trans-tetraenoic acid).

2. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

2.1. Materials and Methods

2.1.1. Instrumentation

Shimadzu UV double beam spectrophotometer has been chosen for obtaining precise and accurate optical density measurements. In addition a digital pH meter (equiptronics, India) was used to measure the pH of the samples. An electrical balance (Dhona 200 D, India) was used to weigh all the materials.

2.1.2. Chemicals and Reagents

TTN (Biophore India), Formulations namely Retino-A(EthnorJanssencilag), Airol (Piramal Health care). Avita, Bertek pharmaceutical Inc.) and Eudyna, (German Remdies.) were procured from the registered pharmacy.

Reagents namely SFN-O (Fluka, Mumbai, India, 98% purity), Sodium hydroxide (Qualigens Mumbai, India, 99% purity) and solvent CHCl₃ (Qualigens

Mumbai, India, 99% purity) were procured for this study are of analytical grade.

Aqueous solutions of SFN-O (Fluka; 0.01%, 2.86×10^{-4} M) was prepared by dissolving 10 mg of safranin-O in 100 mL of distilled water and washed with CHCl₃ to remove chloroform-soluble impurities. Buffer solution was prepared by mixing 50 mL of 0.025 M borax solution with 15 mL of 0.1 M of sodium hydroxide and diluted to 100 mL with distilled water and pH was adjusted to 9.8.

2.1.3. Bulk sample solution

Stock solution (mg mL⁻¹) for bulk drug sample was prepared in 100 mL of chloroform by dissolving 100 mg of tretinoin. Working standard solutions of concentration of 40 μ g mL⁻¹ were prepared from the above stock solution. Further dilution was done using chloroform.

2.1.4. Formulations

Cream equivalent to 50 mg was dissolved in 30 mL of aqueous methanol (3:1). The resulting solution was extracted with solvent CHCl₃ (3 x 25.0 mL portions) followed by filtration. The total chloroform extract was kept for drying with 5 g of anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and then filtered. This filtrate was made up to 200 mL with chloroform to obtain the stock solution of (250 μ g mL⁻¹). The stock solution was further diluted to a concentration of 40 μ g mL⁻¹.

2.1.5. Calibration curve - UV method (Reference method)

Stock solution (mg mL⁻¹) was prepared by dissolving100 mg of bulk drug sample in 100 mL isopropanol. From this stock solution, working standard solution of concentration 10 μ g mL⁻¹ was prepared using the same solvent. The absorption spectrum of bulk drug sample was recorded against a reagent blank within the UV region using Shimadzu double beam spectrophotometer (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Absorption spectrum of tretinoin ($[TTN] = 4.99 \times 10^{-7}M$) against (blank).

A series of solutions were prepared by taking 0.5-2.5 mL standard drug solution (10 μ g mL⁻¹) into 20.0 mL calibrated tubes. These are diluted to 10.0 mL with double distilled water. The optical densities of all the sample solutions were measured at 352 nm against

reagent blank (isopropanol). The concentration of the drug was deduced from its calibration curve drawn between optical density and concentration of TTN (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Calibrated curve of tretinoin ([TTN] = 4.99×10^{-7} M).

2.1.6. Method development

A series of solutions were prepared by taking aliquots of standard drug solution (0.5 – 2.5 mL, 40 μ g mL⁻¹), 2.0 mL of 2.85 x 10⁻⁴ M safranine solution and 1.0 mL of buffer solution (pH 9.8) into 50.0 mL separating funnels. The volume of each sample was diluted to 15.0 mL with distilled water and 10.0 mL chloroform was added. The contents of the separating funnel were shaken for two minutes. The

two layers were separated and the absorbance of organic layer was measured at 520 nm against blank. The optical density of colored species was observed to decrease after 60 min indicating the decomposition of colored complex. The concentration of the drug was deduced from its calibration curve drawn between optical density and concentration of TTN (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Calibrated curve of TTN - SFN-O method.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Selection of Analytical Wavelength

The sample solution containing fixed amount of TTN, SFN-O (basic dye), buffer and other furnished

variables as mentioned in the procedure has been scanned in the visible region (350 – 750 nm) against the reagent blank. The absorption spectrum of the colored species formed on the basis of ion-pair association complex showed maximum absorbance at 520 nm and this wavelength has been selected for the analysis. The spectrum of the safranine-O (basic dye) showed maximum absorbance whereas blank solution against chloroform showed negligible absorbance at this wavelength (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Absorption spectrum of TTN-SFN-O method.

3.2. Optimum Conditions

The responses of several factors like concentration of SFN-O (0.29 - 0.72×10^{-4} mol L⁻¹) the volume of extracting solvent chosen, time of stability of ionpair association complex formation (1-60 minutes), intenseness of colored species produced, the ratio aqueous to $CHCl_3$ were studied (26). The of following optimum conditions were fixed for the proposed technique are; 2.0 mL (0.57×10⁻⁴ molL⁻¹) SFN-O,1.0 mL borax buffer (pH=9.8) with 2 min agitation time at 28 \pm 2 °C. The ion pair association complex is stable up to 60 minutes afterwards the slowly decreased indicating absorbance the decomposition of the complex.

3.3. Mechanism of Ion-pair Association Complex

In TTN, the carboxyl group in the side chain involved in the formation of the ion pair association complex with SFN-O in alkaline medium. Based on the analogy studies, the ion-pair association complex formation mechanism is explained. The negative charge appeared on the carboxylate anion of the drug (TTN) molecule and the positive charge of SFN-O held together through electrostatic force of attraction. The obtained product behaved as a single molecule. The probable sequence of mechanism of the reaction is given in Scheme 1.



Scheme 1: Ion pair association complex of tretinoin with safranine-O at pH 9.8.

3.4. Validation of Analytical Data

Following (ICH) requirements (27), the TTN-SFN-O system developed was validated statistically. Validation parameters like slope (b),intercept (a),linear correlation coefficient (r),inter and intraday precision (%RSD) were studied. Optical and regression characteristics like ε_{max} (Lmol⁻¹cm⁻¹) and λ_{max} (nm) values were found to be 1.66 x10⁴ and 520, respectively. The limits of linearity range for TTN-SFN-O system was found to have 2 – 10 µg mL⁻¹. The calibrated curve drawn at specified

concentration levels consisting of linearity with linear correlation coefficient(r) value 0.9999. Limit of detection (LOD) and Limit of quantification (LOQ) for the developed method were calculated. Sensitivity of developed method is explained on the basis of molar absoptivity values. Precision was explained in terms of relative standard deviation (%RSD) considering from six (n=6) determinations of the sample solution under optimum conditions. The results are given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Optical conditions for the proposed technique.

Optical condition		TTN-SFN-O method
Wavelength (λ_{max})		520 nm
Molar absorptivity (e _{max})		1.66 ×10 ⁴ L mol ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹
Limits of linearity range		2-10 μg mL ⁻¹
LOD		7.19 ×10 ⁻³ μg mL ⁻¹
LOQ		2.18 ×10 ⁻² µg mL ⁻¹
Standard error	of	1.23 ×10 ⁻³
estimation (S _e)		
Sandell's Sensitivity		1.81 ×10 ⁻² μg cm- ²

Table 2: Validation parameters for the proposed technique.

Validation parameter	TTN-SFN-O method
Slope (b)	5.51 ×10 ⁻²
Standard deviation on slope (S _b)	2.00 ×10 ⁻⁴
Intercept (a)	1.80 ×10 ⁻⁴
Standard deviation on intercept (S _a)	1.20 ×10 ⁻⁴
Linear correlation coefficient (r)	0.9999
Intra -day precision (%RSD)*	0.65
Inter- day precision (%RSD)*	0.68
0.01 Level of confidence limits	1.07
0.05 Level of confidence limits	0.68

y = a + bC where C is the concentration of analyte in $\mu g/mL$ and y is the absorbance unit. Calculated from six determinations.

The accuracy of the analytical procedure was checked in terms of % recovery. Recovery experiments were carried out by introducing a calculated quantity of drug to the pre-analyzed formulations at different levels and determining the accuracy of the techniques proposed. Values of % Recovery were found to be 99.2 - 100.2% (\pm 0.8 to ± 0.7) for considering three determinations (n=3). The results of proposed method (formulations) and UV reference method were compared through student t- and F- tests. It was observed that no significant difference was noticed in between developed and UV reference methods as the results are found within the acceptable limits (Based on 95% confidence limit values for student "t"- test and "F"-test respectively. The results are given in Table 3. The proposed method was compared with literature method (20) and found to be more sensitive with reference to molar absoptivity, linear correlation coefficient (r), LOD and LOQ values.

Precision and accuracy was calculated in terms of relative standard deviation (%RSD) and %Recovery values. The results are given in Table 4.

4. CONCLUSION

An accurate analytical technique developed for the assay of TTN in bulk and formulations. The developed technique is found to be best among the literature methods in terms of stability, sensitivity and cost. The sensitivity of developed method lies only in the reaction's nature with the reagent chosen but not on the instrument's sophistication. The excipients commonly found in formulations did not intervene in the assay. Hence the developed method is specific and suitable and found as an alternative to instrumental methods such as LC-MS, HPLC, GLC and GC-MS, in quality control laboratories.

Formulation Proprietary name	Labeled Amount (g)	Amount found by proposed method (g)(n=6)°	95% Confidence limit values F -Test [®]	95% Confidence limit values t-Test ^c	Quantity found by UV absorption method (g)(n=3)	% Recovery developed method ^a
Cream (Retino-A)	20.0	20.04	0.15	1.55	20.1 ± 0.1	100.2 ± 0.7
Cream	20.0	20.03	3.07	1.19	20.1 ± 0.2	100.1 ± 0.7
Cream	20.0	19.84	2.99	0.03	19.9 ± 0.2	99.2 ± 1.8
Cream (Eudyna)	20.0	19.94	1.07	0.90	19.9 ± 0.1	99.7 ± 0.6

Table 3: Assay of TTN in Pharmaceutical Formulations (TTN-SFN-O Method).

^aAverage value of six observations. ^bTabulated value of 5.05 for "F" -Test. ^cTabulated value of 2.57 for student "t" -Test. ^dAverage value of three measurements (n=3).

Table 4: Comparison of proposed method with literature (20) method.

Reagent used	lodine (l₂)	SFN-O	
Wavelength(λ_{max}) nm	295	520	
Molar absorptivity(e _{max}) L mol ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹	1.31×10^{4}	1.66×10^{4}	
Limits of linearity range(µg mL ⁻¹)	9.04 - 29.71	2-10	
Linear correlation coefficient (r)	0.9974	0.9999	
Relative standard deviation (%RSD)	1.95-0.88	Intraday(0.65)	
		Interday(0.68)	
% Recovery	97.84 - 102.80	99.7 - 100.2	
LOD µg mL ⁻¹	4.35	0.007	
LOQ µg mL ⁻¹	13.17	0.022	
Method	Zayed MA and Abdel-	Present method	
	Basset MH (20)		

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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