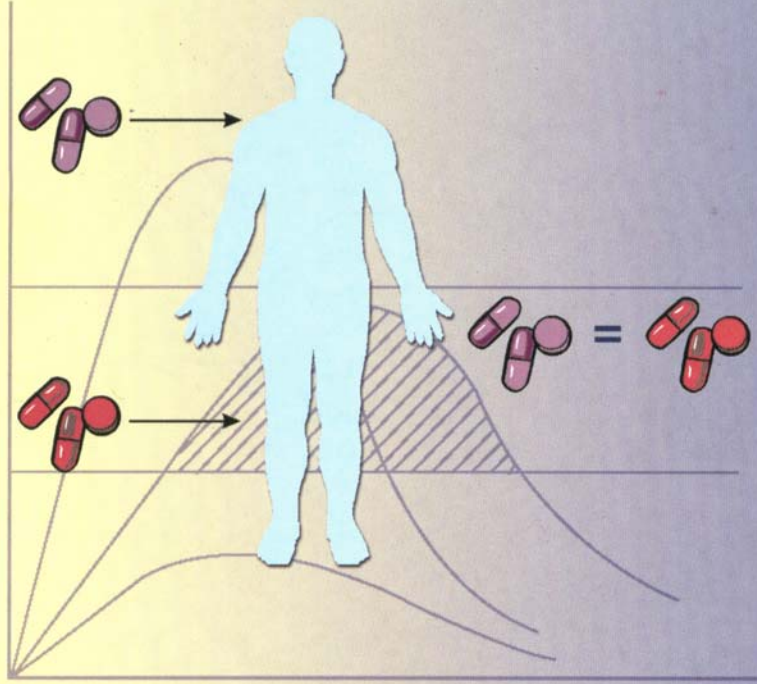




وزارة الصحة

دليل الإمارات العربية المتحدة
للإختبارات التكافؤ الحيوي
للمستحضرات الصيدلانية المثلثة



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الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة الصحة

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Bioavailability

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Bioequivalence

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Dosage Form

Therapeutic Equivalence

Generic Product

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**Innovator
Pharmaceutical Product**

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**Interchangeable
Pharmaceutical Product**

**Multisource
Pharmaceutical Products**

**Pharmaceutical
Equivalence**

Reference Product

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يجب على الإدارة التي تضطلع بالرقابة الدوائية أن تقوم بمراجعة شاملة؛ لكل المستحضرات الصيدلانية، من حيث : مدى تطابقها مع المقاييس المعتمدة في النوعية، سلامة الاستخدام، كفاءة التأثير الدوائي، ويمتد ذلك ليشمل المواقع المستخدمة لتصنيع أو تخزين، و توزيع هذه المنتجات والتي يجب أن تخضع لشروط التصنيع الجيد.

1-1

من المسلم به أن من الأمور الأساسية التي يجب التثبت منها: عند دراسة أي ملف لمستحضر صيدلاني متعدد المصادر، أو ما يمكن تسميته المثلل الصيدلاني: هو احتوائه على نفس الكمية من المادة الفعالة الذي يجب أن تتطابق مواصفاته مع المعايير المذكورة في دساتير الأدوية، في حالة توفر تلك المعايير. في كل الأحوال لا يمكن تحقيق التطابق الكامل ما بين المستحضر المثلل مع المستحضر الأصيل، و هذا قد يشمل الكفاءة العلاجية. وربما تشكل الفوارق في الشكل، اللون، والطعم مصدراً للقلق لدى المرضى، إلا إنها قد لا تؤثر على الكفاءة العلاجية للمستحضر الصيدلاني. ولكن الأمر يختلف في حالة إثارة المستحضر للحساسية في المريض والتي قد تنشأ من الاختلاف: في نوع المواد غير الفعالة، والمضافة إلى التركيبة. كما أن الاختلافات في ثباتية المستحضر، أو إتاحتها الحيوية قد تؤدي إلى تأثيرات سلبية على الكفاءة العلاجية. غير أن ما تقدم قد يتجاوز ما ذكر عن التأثيرات الحاصلة نتيجة التغييرات في محتوى، أو شكل الجرعة.

♦
♦
ان تقييم التكافؤ يحتاج عادة إلى دراسة داخل النظام الحيوي, أو تبريراً معقولاً يوضح لماذا, تم تجاوز هذا النوع من التقييم للحالات التي تستثنى من هذا الشرط. والدراسات التي تجرى داخل النظام الحيوي تشمل التكافؤ الحيوي, الدراسات الخاصة بحركة و تأثير الدواء على الجسم (ديناميكية الدواء), و دراسات المقارنة الخاصة بالتقييم الطبي. في بعض الحالات تكون الدراسات التي تجرى خارج النظام الحيوي مثل: اختبارات التحلل المائي كافية لبيان حالة التكافؤ.

2-1

نذكر في أدناه العناصر المعلوماتية التي يجب أن يحتويها التوثيق الخاص بالمنتجات الصيدلانية, والتي تصرف لأغراض الاستخدامات, التي تم التأكد من نتائجها, وتحتوي على مكونات ذات تأثير دوائي معروف, ومثبت.

- ♦ اسم المنتج.
- ♦ المادة أو المواد الفعالة المعرفة بالأسماء المتفق عليها دولياً, ومصدرها مع وصف طرق التصنيع, والوسائل المستخدمة في الرقابة أثناء مرحلة التصنيع.
- ♦ نوع الشكل الصيدلاني.
- ♦ طريقة إعطاء الجرعة.
- ♦ التصنيف العلاجي.
- ♦ التركيبة, الكمية الكاملة مع بيان طريقة التصنيع الخاصة بالشكل الصيدلاني, حسب شروط التصنيع الجيد المعلنة من قبل منظمة الصحة العالمية.

- ◆ مواصفات السيطرة النوعية على المواد الأولية, المواد نصف المصنعة, و المنتج النهائي, وذلك من خلال تطبيق طرق تحليل كان قد تم تقييمها.
- ◆ نتائج الفحص المختبري للتشغيلة مع بيان رقمها, وتاريخ صنعها بحيث تشمل (إذا كان ذلك مناسباً) النتائج الخاصة بالتشغيلات المستخدمة في دراسات التكافؤ الحيوي.
- ◆ الاستطبابات, الجرعة, وطريقة الاستخدام.
- ◆ مضادات الاستعمال, المحاذير, والتفاعلات مع الأدوية الأخرى.
- ◆ استخدامات الدواء أثناء فترة الحمل, ومجموعات المرضى من ذوي الحالات الخاصة.
- ◆ التأثيرات الجانبية.
- ◆ الجرعة المضاعفة.
- ◆ نتائج التكافؤ الذي شمل الإتاحة الحيوية والحركية الدوائية, أو الدراسات الإكلينيكية, واختبارات التحليل الدوائي التي تجرى خارج النظام الحيوي أو الجسم.
- ◆ النتائج الخاصة بالثباتية, والفترة الزمنية المقترحة لديمومة الفعالية الدوائية, مع ظروف الخزن المطلوبة.
- ◆ الحاوية, التغليف, بطاقات التعريف بالدواء, وذلك يشمل أيضاً المعلومات الخاصة بالمنتج.
- ◆ الطريقة المقترحة لتوزيع الدواء, ويعني ذلك إن كان الدواء يصرف تحت الرقابة, أو كونه يصرف بموجب وصفة طبية, ومع اقتصار بيعه على الصيدلية, أو السماح ببيعه في المتاجر الكبيرة.
- ◆ المعلومات عن المصنع, إن كان مرخصاً (ويشمل ذلك تاريخ آخر زيارة تفتيشية و تاريخ الرخصة, و الجهة التي قامت بالترخيص).
- ◆ المستورد / الموزع.

♦ الوضع التنظيمي للدواء في البلد المصدر, ومع الوثائق الوصفية
بالتقييم في ذلك البلد, بحيث يشمل ذلك أيضاً الوضع التنظيمي في
البلدان الأخرى.

إذا كان الشكل الصيدلاني, قد ابتكر ليحور طريقة إيصال الدواء مثل: إطالة الفترة
الزمنية التي يتم من خلالها إطلاق المادة الدوائية إلى النظام الحيوي, بعد تناول القرص,
أو إذا اقترحت طريقة أخرى في إعطاء الجرعات. فيجب توفير البيانات الداعمة, و التي
تشمل الدراسات الإكلينيكية.

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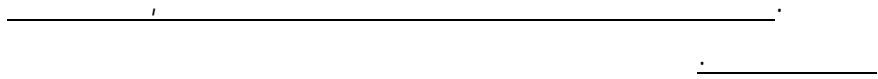
يجب توفير المعلومات الخاصة بالأدوية المثيلة للأطباء, المرضى. لكل المنتجات التي
تم ترخيصها للتسويق, كما يجب تحديث هذه المعلومات بحيث يكون الوصف, وسائل
الإيضاح لأغراض التعريف بالدواء منسجماً مع المعلومات المثبتة و الخاصة به.

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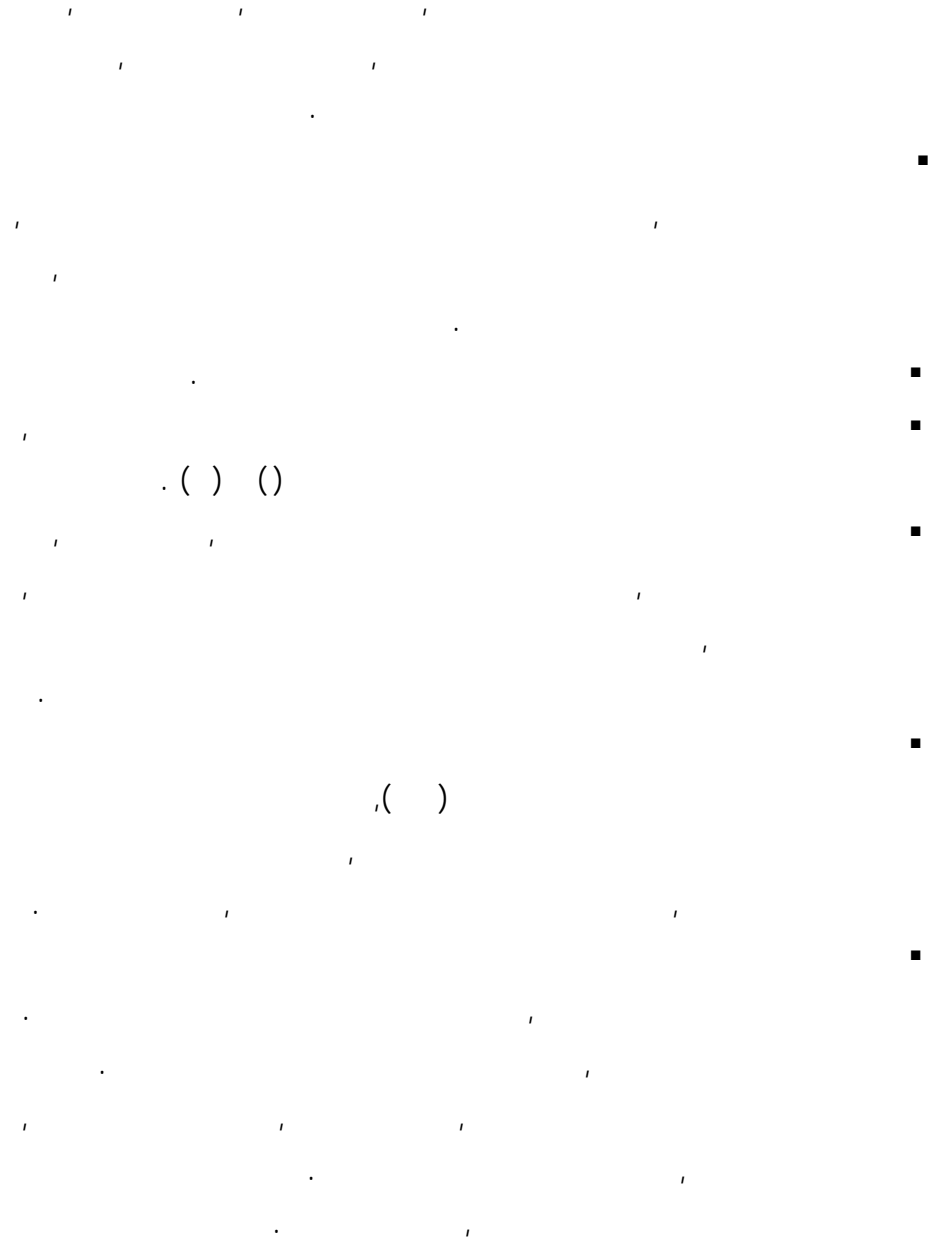
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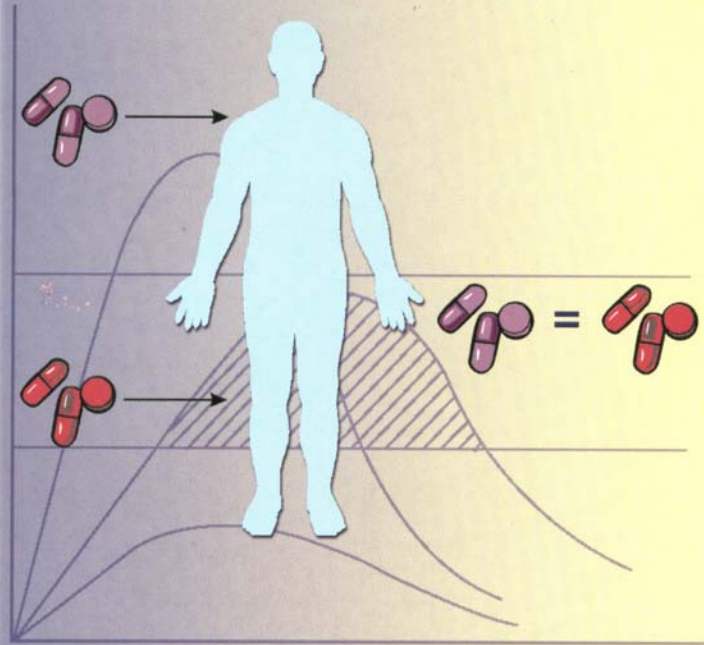
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UAE Guidelines of Bioequivalence Testing for Generic Pharmaceutical Products

UAE
UAE



2001

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Thanks to the work of the Department of Drug control at the Ministry of Health, citizens and residents of the UAE are assured of good quality medicine in the many pharmacies.

Generic medicines benefit the patient as they stimulate competition among suppliers. The use of generic medicines has been shown to be an effective way of making medicine available at a lower cost.

Before the ministry can approve a generic medicine the company is required to provide detailed evidence that their product is expected to be equally safe and effective to the original product. These guidelines describe those data requirements and the rigorous analysis that our drug registration experts make of the data.

These guidelines are based upon the very latest international opinion and are augmented by the rich experience of the UAE Drug Control authorities.

This should encourage companies to register generic medicines in the UAE that meet only the highest international standards. They should reassure the public that we only approve medicines that meet international standards of quality and that a generic drug on sale in the UAE has been proven to be equivalent to the original medicine.

I congratulate the Drug Control department on their policy of communicating the required standards clearly and concisely.

Hamad Abdul Rahman Al-Madfa

Minister of Health

Generic medicines are a vital part of the pharmaceutical market in the region. They sustain a flourishing regional pharmaceutical industry and provide consumers with low cost versions of established, effective medicines.

For these medicines to be safe and effective it is important to demonstrate that they can be used interchangeably with the original medicine. There is international consensus on the methodology to be used when demonstrating interchangeability and these are described in the U.A.E guidelines for interchangeability testing.

The information and guidelines included here are sufficient to encompass a wide variety of different practical scientific situations and the types of medicine used in the UAE.

These guidelines provide technical guidance to MOH staff and to drug manufacturers on how proof of interchangeability can be provided. It also creates awareness that in some instances failure to assure interchangeability can prejudice the health and safety of patients.

Dr. Easa bin Jakka Al Mansoori

Director of Drug Control

Acknowledgement

Many international guidelines are available on the subject of interchangeability, or bioequivalence as it is technically called. The guidelines produced by the WHO, EMEA, USFDA and ICH provide excellent information and the most relevant parts of these documents have been used in this document¹.

These guidelines have been compiled and reviewed by a technical committee chaired by **Dr. Easa bin Jakka Al Mansoori**, Director of the department of Drug Control and consisting of the following Drug Control personnel whose hard work and professionalism have made these guidelines possible.

- **Dr. Fatima Ali Al Braiki**
- **Dr. Michael Fahey**
- **Dr. Fadel Jelad**
- **Dr. Haider El Khair**
- **Dr. Khalid Ibrahim**
- **Dr. Ehab Abu Eida**
- **Dr. Khalil Shawan**
- **Dr. Mahasin Abdulla**

¹ See the References section (Page 29) for a full list of references

Glossary

Definitions given below apply specifically to the terms used in this guide. They *may* have different meanings in other contexts.

bioavailability

The rate and extent of availability of an active drug ingredient from a dosage form as determined by its concentration/time curve in the systemic circulation or by its excretion in urine.

bioequivalence

Two pharmaceutical products are bioequivalent if they are pharmaceutically equivalent and their bioavailabilities (rate and extent of availability) after administration in the same molar dose are similar to such a degree that their effects, can be expected to be essentially the same.

dosage form

The form of the completed pharmaceutical product, e.g., tablet, capsule, elixir, injection, suppository.

therapeutic equivalence

Two pharmaceutical products are therapeutically equivalent if they are pharmaceutically equivalent and after administration in the same molar dose their effects, with respect to both efficacy and safety, will be essentially the same as can be derived from appropriate studies (bioequivalence, pharmacodynamic, clinical or *in vitro* studies).

generic product

The term "generic product" has somewhat different meanings in different situations and in this document use of the term is avoided as much as possible, and the term "multisource pharmaceutical product" (see definition below) has been applied. Generic products may be marketed either under the nonproprietary approved name or under a new brand (proprietary) name. They may sometimes be marketed in dosage forms and/or strengths different from those of the innovator

products. However, where the term "generic product" had to be used in this document it means a pharmaceutical product, usually intended to be interchangeable with the innovator product, which is usually manufactured without a licence from the innovator company and marketed after expiry of patent or other exclusivity rights.

innovator pharmaceutical product

Generally, the innovator pharmaceutical product is that which was first authorized for marketing, (normally as a patented drug) on the basis of documentation of efficacy, safety and quality (according to contemporary requirements). When drugs have been available for many years, it may not be possible to identify an innovator pharmaceutical product.

interchangeable pharmaceutical product

An interchangeable pharmaceutical product is one that is therapeutically equivalent to a reference product.

multisource pharmaceutical products

Multisource pharmaceutical products are pharmaceutically equivalent products that may or may not be therapeutically equivalent. Multisource pharmaceutical products that are therapeutically equivalent are interchangeable.

pharmaceutical equivalence

Products are pharmaceutical equivalents if they contain the same amount of the same active substance(s) in the same dosage form that meet the same or comparable standards and are intended to be administered by the same route. However, pharmaceutical equivalence does not necessarily imply therapeutic equivalence as differences in the excipients and/or the manufacturing process can lead to differences in product performance.

reference product

A reference product is a pharmaceutical product with which the new product is intended to be interchangeable in clinical practice. The reference product would normally be the innovator product for which efficacy, safety and quality have been established. Where the innovator

product is not available the product which is the market leader may be used as a reference product, provided it has been authorized for marketing and its efficacy, safety and quality has been established and documented.

1. Regulatory assessment of interchangeable multisource Pharmaceutical products

1.1 Multisource products and interchangeability

Nominally equivalent interchangeable (generic) pharmaceutical products should contain the same amount of the same therapeutically active ingredients in the same dosage form and should meet required pharmacopoeial standards. However, they are usually not identical and in some instances their clinical interchangeability may be in question. Although differences in colour, shape and flavour are obvious and sometimes disconcerting to the patient, they are often inconsequential to the performance of the pharmaceutical product. However differences in sensitising potential due to the use of different excipients and differences in stability and bioavailability could have obvious clinical implications. Regulatory authorities consequently need to consider the quality, efficacy and safety of such pharmaceutical products, and also their interchangeability. This concept of interchangeability applies not only to the dosage form but also to the instructions for use and even to the packaging specifications, when these are critical to stability and shelf life.

The UAE Drug Control department requires that documentation of a generic pharmaceutical product address three sets of criteria. These relate to:

- manufacturing (GMP) and quality control;
- product characteristics and labelling; and
- therapeutic equivalence.

Assessment of equivalence will normally require an *in vivo* study, or a justification that such a study should not be required in a particular case. *In vivo* study approaches include bioequivalence studies, pharmacodynamic studies, and comparative clinical trials (Sections 4& 5). In selected cases *in vitro* dissolution studies may be sufficient to provide some indication of equivalence.

1. 2 Technical data for regulatory assessment

For pharmaceutical products indicated for standard, well-established uses and that contain established ingredients, the following elements of information should be contained among others in documentation for marketing authorization and for a computerized data retrieval system:

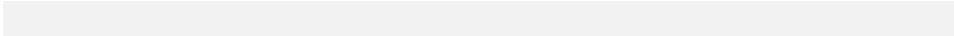
- name of the product;
- active ingredient(s) (by international non-proprietary name(s)); their source; description of manufacturing methods and in-process controls;
- type of dosage form;
- route of administration;
- main therapeutic category;
- complete quantitative formula with justification and method of manufacture of the dosage form in accordance with WHO GMP;
- quality control specifications for starting materials, intermediates and the final dosage form product with validated analytical method;
- results of batch testing with batch number, manufacturing date, including, where appropriate, the batch(es) used in bioequivalence studies;
- indications, dosage, method of use;
- contraindications, warnings, precautions, drug interactions;
- use in pregnancy and other special groups of patients;
- adverse effects;
- overdose;
- equivalence data (comparative bioavailability, pharmacodynamic or clinical studies and comparative *in vitro* dissolution tests);
- stability data, proposed shelf-life, recommended storage conditions;
- container, packaging, labelling including proposed product information;
- proposed method of distribution: controlled drug; prescription item; pharmacy sale; general sale;
- manufacturer; licensing status (date of most recent inspection, date of licence and who issued the licence);
- importer/distributor;

- regulatory status in the exporting country and, where available, summary documents of regulatory assessment from the exporting country; regulatory status in other countries.

If the dosage form is a novel one intended to modify the drug delivery, such as a prolonged-release tablet, or if a different route of administration is proposed, supporting data, including clinical studies, will normally be required.

1.3 Product information and promotion

The product information intended for prescribers and end users should be available for all generic products authorised for marketing. The content of this information should be approved as a part of the marketing authorisation. This information should be updated based on current information. The wording and illustrations used in subsequent promotion of the product should be fully consistent with this approved product information.



2. Equivalence studies needed for marketing authorisation

2.1 Documentation of equivalence for marketing authorisation

Pharmaceutically equivalent multisource pharmaceutical products must be shown to be therapeutically equivalent to one another in order to be considered interchangeable. Several test methods are available to assess equivalence, including:

- (a) Comparative bioavailability (bioequivalence) studies, in which the active drug substance or one or more metabolites is measured in an accessible biologic fluid such as plasma, blood or urine.
- (b) Comparative pharmacodynamic studies in humans / comparative clinical trials.
- (d) *In vitro* dissolution tests.

2.2 When equivalence studies are not necessary

For certain formulations and circumstances, equivalence between two pharmaceutical products may be considered self-evident with no further requirement for documentation. Examples include:

- (a) When multisource pharmaceutical products are to be administered parenterally (e.g., intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, intrathecal administration) as aqueous solutions and contain the same active substance(s) in the same concentration and the same excipients in comparable concentrations;
- (b) When multisource pharmaceutical products are solutions for oral use, contain the active substance in the same concentration, and do not contain an excipient that is known or suspected to

affect gastro-intestinal transit or absorption of the active substance;

- (c) When multisource pharmaceutical products are a gas;
- (d) When the multisource pharmaceutical products are powders for reconstitution as a solution and the solution meets either criterion (a) or criterion (b) above;
- (e) When multisource pharmaceutical products are otic or ophthalmic products prepared as aqueous solutions and contain the same active substance(s) in the same concentration and essentially the same excipients in comparable concentrations;
- (f) When multisource pharmaceutical products are topical products prepared as aqueous solutions and contain the same active substance(s) in the same concentration and essentially the same excipients in comparable concentrations;
- (g) When multisource pharmaceutical products are inhalation products or nasal sprays, tested to be administered with or without essentially the same device, prepared as aqueous solutions, and contain the same active substance(s) in the same concentration and essentially the same excipients in comparable concentrations. Special in vitro testing should be required to document comparable device performance of the multisource inhalation product.

For points (e), (f) and (g) above, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the excipients in the multisource product are essentially the same and in comparable concentrations as those in the reference product. In the event that the applicant cannot provide this

information about the reference product, and the drug control department does not have access to these data, *in vivo* studies should be performed.

2.3 When equivalence studies are necessary and types of studies required

Except for the examples above, the drug control department requires documentation of equivalence for all multisource pharmaceutical products. The equivalence must be demonstrated in comparison to the reference pharmaceutical product. Studies must be carried out using the formulation intended for marketing (see also Section 8, "Choice of reference product").

2.3.1 In vivo studies

For certain drugs and dosage forms, *in vivo* documentation of equivalence, through either a bioequivalence study, a comparative clinical pharmacodynamic study, or a comparative clinical trial, is regarded as especially important. Examples are listed below.

- (a) Oral immediate release pharmaceutical products with systemic action when one or more of the following criteria apply:
 - (i) indicated for serious conditions requiring assured therapeutic response;
 - (ii) narrow therapeutic window/safety margin; steep dose-response curve;
 - (iii) pharmacokinetics complicated by variable or incomplete absorption or absorption window, nonlinear pharmacokinetics, presystemic elimination/high first-pass metabolism >70%;
 - (iv) unfavourable physicochemical properties, e.g., low solubility, instability, metastable modifications, poor permeability, etc.;
 - (v) documented evidence for bioavailability problems related to the drug or drugs of similar chemical structure or formulations;
 - (vi) where a high ratio of excipients to active ingredients exists.

- (b) Non-oral and non-parenteral pharmaceutical products designed to act by systemic absorption (such as transdermal patches, suppositories, etc.).
- (c) Sustained or otherwise modified release pharmaceutical products designed to act by systemic absorption.
- (d) Fixed combination products with systemic action.
- (e) Non-solution pharmaceutical products which are for non-systemic use (oral, nasal, ocular, dermal, rectal, vaginal, etc. application) and are intended to act without systemic absorption. In these cases, the bioequivalence concept is not suitable and comparative clinical or pharmacodynamic studies are required to prove equivalence. This does not, however, exclude the potential need for drug concentration measurements in order to assess unintended partial absorption.

In cases (a) to (d) plasma concentration measurements over time (bioequivalence) are normally sufficient proof for efficacy and safety. In case (e) the bioequivalence concept is not suitable and comparative clinical or pharmacodynamic studies are required to prove equivalence.

2.3.2 In vitro studies

In certain circumstances, equivalence may be assessed by the use of *in vitro* dissolution testing. Examples where dissolution testing may be considered acceptable include:

- (a) Drugs not defined under Section 2.3.1 above;
- (b) Different strengths of a multisource formulation, when the same manufacturer at the same manufacturing site manufactures the pharmaceutical products, where:
 - ◆ the qualitative composition between the strengths is essentially the same;
 - ◆ the ratio of active ingredients and excipients between the strengths is essentially the same, or, in the case of small strengths, the ratio between the excipients is the same;
 - ◆ an appropriate equivalence study has been performed on at least one of the strengths of the formulation (usually the highest

- strength unless a lower strength is chosen for reasons of safety);
and
- ◆ in case of systemic availability pharmacokinetics have been shown to be linear over the therapeutic dose range.

Although this guideline comments primarily on registration requirements for multisource pharmaceutical products, it is to be noted that *in vitro* dissolution testing may also be suitable to confirm unchanged product quality and performance characteristics with minor formulation or manufacturing changes after approval. Such changes include changes in (i) formulation; (ii) site of manufacture; (iii) process of manufacture; and (iv) manufacturing equipment.

The types and extent of further testing required depend on the magnitude of the changes made. If a major change is made, the product might become a new pharmaceutical product.

With all pharmaceutical products, in case of post-marketing changes extensive *in vitro* and/or *in vivo* testing may be required.

The drug registration section will require wish to consider such cases on an individual basis before making a recommendation about the type of equivalence study required.

3. Tests for equivalence

The bioequivalence studies, pharmacodynamic studies and clinical trials should be carried out in accordance with the provisions and prerequisites for a clinical trial, as outlined in the WHO Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice (GCP) for Trials on Pharmaceutical Products, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Good Laboratory Practice (GLP).

3.1 Bioequivalence studies in humans

Bioequivalence studies are designed to compare the *in vivo* performance of a test pharmaceutical product (multisource) compared to a reference pharmaceutical product. A common design for a bioequivalence study involves administration of the test and reference products on two occasions to volunteer subjects, with each administration separated by a washout period. The washout period is chosen to ensure that drug given in one treatment is entirely eliminated prior to administration of the next treatment. Just prior to administration and for a suitable period afterwards, blood and/or urine samples are collected and assayed for concentration of the drug substance and/or one or more metabolites. The rise and fall of these concentrations over time in each subject in the study provide an estimate of how the drug substance is released from the test and reference products and absorbed into the body. To allow comparisons between the two products, these blood (to include plasma or serum) and/or urine concentration time curves are used to calculate certain bioequivalence metrics of interest. Commonly used metrics are the area under the blood (plasma or serum) concentration time curve (AUC) and peak concentration. These metrics are calculated for each subject in the study and the resulting values are compared statistically. Details of the general approach are provided in the following sections.

3.2 Selection of subjects

The subject population for bioequivalence studies should be as homogenous as possible and therefore studies should generally be performed with healthy volunteers in order to reduce variability other than in the pharmaceutical products. Clear criteria for inclusion/exclusion should be stated. If feasible, they should belong to both genders (however, the risk to women will need to be considered on an individual basis and, if necessary, a warning issued to them about

any possible dangers to the foetus if they should become pregnant). They should normally be in the age range of 18-55 years with a weight within the normal range according to accepted life tables. The subjects should preferably be non-smokers and without a history of alcohol or drug abuse problems. If smokers are included they should be identified as such. The suitability of the volunteers should be screened using standard laboratory tests, a medical history, and a physical examination. If necessary, special medical investigations may be carried out before and during studies depending on the pharmacology of the individual drug being investigated.

In case the aim of the bioequivalence study is to address specific questions (e.g., bioequivalence in a special population) the selection criteria have to be adjusted accordingly.

Genetic phenotyping

Phenotyping and/or genotyping of subjects may be considered for safety reasons.

Patients versus healthy volunteers

If unacceptable pharmacological effects or risk may ensue because of known adverse effects of the active substance for healthy volunteers, it may be necessary to use patients under treatment rather than healthy volunteers. This must be fully justified by the company performing the equivalence test (see section 3.5).

Monitoring the health of subjects during the study

During the study, the health of volunteers should be monitored so that onset of side effects, toxicity, or any intercurrent disease may be recorded, and appropriate measures taken.

Health monitoring before, during and after the study must be carried out under the supervision of a qualified medical practitioner licensed in the jurisdiction in which the study takes place.

3.3 General study design

The study should be designed so as to set test conditions, which reduce intra, and inter-subject variability and avoid biased results.

Standardization (exercise, diet, fluid intake, posture, restriction of the intake of alcohol, caffeine, certain fruit juices, and concomitant drugs in the time period before and during the study) is important to minimize the magnitude of variability other than in the pharmaceutical products.

A cross-over design with randomized allocation of volunteers to each leg is the first choice for bioequivalence studies. The design of studies should, however, depend on the type of drug, and other designs may be more appropriate for specific cases, for example, highly variable drugs and those with a long half-life. In cross-over studies a wash-out period between administration of the test product and the reference product of more than five times the dominant and/or terminal drug half-life is usual, but special consideration will need to be given to extending this period if active metabolites with longer half-lives are produced and under other circumstances.

The administration of the product should be standardized with a defined time of day for ingestion, volume of fluid (150 ml is usual) and usually in the fasting state.

3.4 Parameters to be assessed

In bioavailability studies the shape of, and the area under, the plasma concentration curve, or the profile of cumulative renal excretion and excretion rate are mostly used to assess extent and rate of absorption. Sampling points or periods should be chosen such that the time *versus* concentration profile is adequately defined to allow calculation of relevant parameters. From the primary results the bioavailability parameters desired are derived, such as AUC_{∞} , AUC_{tr} , C_{max} , t_{max} , Ae_{∞} , Ae_{tr} , dAe/dt , or any other justifiable parameters. The method of calculating AUC-values should be specified. AUC_{∞} and C_{max} are considered to be the most relevant parameters for assessment of bioequivalence. In case of use of urine excretion data this corresponds to Ae_{∞} and dAe/dt_{max} . For additional information $t_{1/2}$ and MRT can be calculated. For steady-state studies AUC_{tr} and % peak trough fluctuation can be calculated. The exclusive use of modelled parameters is not recommended unless the pharmacokinetic model has been validated for the active substance and the products.

3.5 Additional considerations for complicated drugs

Drugs, which would show unacceptable pharmacological effects in volunteers (e.g., serious adverse events, or where the drug is toxic or particularly potent or the trial necessitates a high dose), may require crossover studies in patients or sometimes parallel group design studies in patients.

Drugs with long half-lives may require a parallel design or the use of truncated Area Under Curve (AUC_t) data or a multi-dose study. The truncated area should cover the absorption phase.

Drugs for which the rate of input into the systemic circulation is important may require the collection of more samples around the time of the t_{max} .

Multi-dose studies may be helpful to assess bioequivalence for:

- drugs with non-linear kinetics (including those with saturable plasma protein binding);
- cases where the assay sensitivity is too low to cover a large enough portion of the AUC_{∞} ;
- drug substance combinations, if the ratio of plasma concentrations of the individual drug substances is important;
- controlled-release dosage forms;
- highly variable drugs.

3.6 Number of subjects

The number of subjects required for a sound bioequivalence study is determined by the error variance associated with the primary parameters to be studied (as estimated from a pilot experiment, from previous studies or from published data), by the significance level desired, and by the deviation from the reference product compatible with bioequivalence and with safety and efficacy.

There are many guidelines on this subject. In most of the cases 18-24 subjects are needed. If complete data is not available for at least 18 subjects then a detailed explanation must be given.

Investigational products

Test products (samples) used in the bioequivalence studies for registration purposes should be identical to the projected commercial pharmaceutical product. Therefore not only the composition and quality characteristics (including stability) but also manufacturing methods should copy those in the future routine production runs.

Samples ideally should be taken from batches of industrial scale. When this is not feasible, pilot or small-scale production batches may be used provided that they are not smaller than one tenth (10%) of expected full production batches.

It is recommended that potency and *in vitro* dissolution characteristics of the test and reference pharmaceutical products be ascertained prior to performance of an equivalence study. Contents of the active drug substance(s) between the two products should not differ by more than +/-5%. If the potency of the reference material deviates from the declared content of 100% by more than 5%, this difference may be used subsequently to dose-normalise certain bioavailability metrics in order to facilitate comparisons between the test and reference pharmaceutical products.

3.7 Studies of metabolites

Use of metabolite data in bioequivalence studies requires careful consideration. Generally, evaluation of bioequivalence will be based upon the measured concentrations of the pharmacologically active drug substance and its active metabolite(s) if present. If it is impossible to measure the active drug substance, a major biotransformation product may be used. The measurement of concentrations of biotransformation product is essential if the substance studied is a prodrug. If urinary excretion (rate) is measured, the product determined should represent a major fraction of the dose. Although measurement of a major active metabolite is usually acceptable, measurement of inactive metabolite can only rarely be justified.

3.8 Validation of analytical test methods

All analytical test methods must be well characterised, fully validated and documented. They should meet requirements of specificity, accuracy, sensitivity and precision. Knowledge of the stability of the active substance and/or its biotransformation product in the sample

material is a prerequisite for obtaining reliable results. For this item reference is made to international guidelines on validation, such as the ICH monograph on analytical validation 2000. Some important points are:

- Validation comprises before-study and within-study phases;
- Validation must cover the intended use of the assay;
- the calibration range must be appropriate to the study samples;
- if an assay is to be used at different sites, it must be validated at each site and cross-site comparability established;
- an assay which is not in regular use requires sufficient revalidation to show that it is performed according to the original validated test procedures. The revalidation study must be documented, usually as an appendix to the study report;
- Within a study, the use of two or more methods to assay samples in the same matrix over a similar calibration range is strongly discouraged;
- If different studies are to be compared and the samples from the different studies have been assayed by different methods and the methods cover a similar concentration range and the same matrix, then the methods should be cross-validated.

Sufficient samples of each batch of the pharmaceutical products used in the studies, and a record of their analyses and characteristics, must be kept for reference under appropriate storage conditions as guided by national regulations. When specifically requested these reserve samples may be required by the authorities to recheck the products.

3.9 Statistical analysis and acceptance criteria

General consideration

The primary concern in bioequivalence assessment is to limit the risk of a false declaration of equivalence. Thus the risk (α) is that which the regulatory agencies are willing to accept for erroneously concluding equivalence.

The statistical methods of choice at present are the two-one-sided test procedure or to derive a parametric or non-parametric 100 (1-2 α)% confidence interval for the quotient μ_T/μ_R of the test and the reference pharmaceutical product. Alpha is set at 5% leading, in the parametric

case, to the shortest (conventional) 90% confidence interval based on an analysis of variance or, in the non-parametric case, to the 90% confidence intervals.

The statistical procedures should be specified before the data collection starts. The procedures should lead to a decision scheme which is symmetrical with respect to the two formulations (i.e., leading to the same decision whether the new formulation is compared to reference product or reference product to the new formulation).

Concentration and concentration-related quantities e.g., AUC and C_{\max} , should be analysed after logarithmic transformation. t_{\max} will usually be analysed without such transformation.

For t_{\max} normally descriptive statistics should be given. If t_{\max} is to be subjected to a statistical analysis this should be based on non-parametric methods. Other parameters may also be evaluated by non-parametric methods, in which case descriptive statistics should be given that do not require specific distributional assumptions, e.g., medians instead of means.

Assumptions of the design or analysis should be addressed, and the possibility of differing variations in the formulations should be investigated. This covers investigation of period effects, sequence or carry-over effects, and homogeneity of variance (homoscedascity).

Outlying observations should be reviewed for their impact on the conclusions. Medical or pharmacokinetic explanations for such observations should be sought.

Acceptance ranges

Regarding AUC, the 90% confidence interval should generally be within the acceptance range 80 to 125%. For drugs with a particularly narrow therapeutic range, the AUC acceptance range may need to be smaller, and this should be justified clinically.

C_{\max} does not characterize the rate of absorption particularly well in many cases and there is no consensus on any other concentration-based

parameter which might be more suitable. The acceptance range for C_{\max} may be wider than for the AUC.

3. 10 Reporting of results

The report of a bioequivalence study should give the complete documentation of its protocol, conduct and evaluation complying with Good Clinical Practice rules. The responsible investigator(s) should sign for their respective sections of the report. Names and affiliations of the responsible investigator(s), site of the study and period of its execution should be stated. The names and batch numbers of the pharmaceutical products used in the study as well as the composition(s) of the tests product(s) should be given. The analytical validation report should be attached. Results of *in vitro* dissolution tests should be provided. In addition, the applicant should submit a signed statement confirming the identity of the test product with the pharmaceutical product that is submitted for registration.

All results should be presented clearly. The procedure for calculating the parameters used (e.g., AUC) from the raw data should be stated. Deletion of data should be justified. If results are calculated using pharmacokinetic models, the model and the computing procedure used should be justified. Individual plasma concentration/time curves should be drawn on a linear/linear, and facultatively also on a lin/log scale. All individual data and results should be given, also of eventually dropped-out subjects. Dropout and withdrawal of subjects should be reported and accounted for. Test results of representative samples should be included. The statistical report should be sufficiently detailed, so as to enable the statistical analyses to be repeated if necessary. If the statistical methods applied deviate from those specified in the trial protocol, the reasons for the deviations should be stated.

3. 11 Choice of reference product

The innovator pharmaceutical product is usually the most logical reference product for related generics because, in general, its quality will have been well assessed and its efficacy and safety will have been securely established in clinical trials and post-marketing monitoring schemes. There is, however, currently no global agreement on the selection of a reference product. The selection is made variably at

national level by the drug regulatory authority having regard either to the most widely used "leading" product within the market or the pharmaceutical product that was first to be approved within that market. The possibility exists for significant differences to emerge between reference products adopted in different countries.

This being so, consideration needs to be given to the feasibility of developing reference materials on a global basis. Representative bodies of the pharmaceutical industry and other interested parties should be invited to collaborate in the preparation, maintenance and international acceptance of a system of international reference standards for pharmaceutical products with defined quality and bioavailability characteristics.

4. Pharmacodynamic studies

Studies in healthy volunteers or patients using pharmacodynamic measurements may be used for establishing equivalence between two pharmaceutical products. These studies may become necessary if quantitative analysis of the drug and/or metabolite(s) in plasma or urine cannot be made with sufficient accuracy and sensitivity. Furthermore, pharmacodynamic studies in humans are required if measurements of drug concentrations cannot be used as surrogate endpoints for the demonstration of efficacy and safety of the particular pharmaceutical product e.g., for topical products without an intended absorption of the drug into the systemic circulation.

If pharmacodynamic studies are to be used they must be performed as rigorously as bioequivalence studies, and the principles of GCP must be followed.

The following requirements must be recognised when planning, conducting and assessing the results of a study intended to demonstrate equivalence by means of measuring pharmacodynamic drug responses.

- ◆ The response that is measured should be a pharmacological or therapeutic effect that is relevant to the claims of efficacy and/or safety.
- ◆ The methodology must be validated for precision, accuracy, reproducibility and specificity.
- ◆ Neither the test nor the reference product should produce a maximal response in the course of the study, since it may be impossible to distinguish differences between formulations given in doses which give maximum or near-maximum effects. Investigation of dose-response relationships may be a necessary part of the design.
- ◆ The response should be measured quantitatively under double blind conditions and be recordable in an instrument-produced or instrument-recorded fashion on a repetitive basis to provide a record of the pharmacodynamic events that are substitutes for plasma concentrations. In those instances where such measurements are not possible, recordings on visual analog scales

may be used. In other instances where the data are limited to qualitative (categorized) measurements appropriate special statistical analysis will be required.

- ◆ Non-responders should be excluded from the study by prior screening. The criteria by which responders *versus* non-responders are identified must be stated in the protocol.
- ◆ In instances where an important placebo effect can occur, comparison between pharmaceutical products can only be made by *a priori* consideration of the placebo effect in the study design. This may be achieved by adding a third phase with placebo treatment in the design of the study.
- ◆ The underlying pathology and natural history of the condition must be considered in the study design. There should be knowledge of the reproducibility of base-line conditions.
- ◆ A cross-over design can be used. Where this is not appropriate a parallel group study design should be chosen.

In studies in which continuous variables are recorded, the time course of the intensity of the drug action can be described in the same way as in a study in which plasma concentrations are measured. Parameters can be derived which describe the area under the effect-time curve, the maximum response and the time when maximum response occurred.

The statistical considerations for the assessment of the outcome of the study are in principle, the same as outlined for the bioequivalence studies. However, a correction for the potential non-linearity of the relationship between the dose and the area under the effect-time curve should be performed on the basis of the outcome of the dose-ranging study as mentioned above. However, it should be noted that the conventional acceptance range as applied for bioequivalence assessment is not appropriate (too large) in most of the cases but should be defined on a case-by-case basis and described in the protocol.

5. Clinical trials

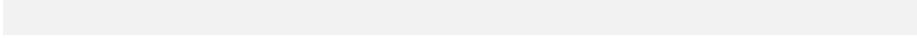
In several instances plasma concentration time-profile data are not suitable to assess equivalence between two formulations. Furthermore, pharmacodynamic studies cannot be performed because of lack of meaningful pharmacodynamic parameters that can be measured. In these cases a comparative clinical trial has to be performed in order to demonstrate equivalence between two formulations.

However, if a clinical study is considered as being undertaken to prove equivalence the same statistical principles apply as for the bioequivalence studies. The number of patients to be included in the study will depend on the variability of the target parameters and the acceptance range, and is usually much higher than the number of subjects in bioequivalence studies.

The following items are important and need to be defined in the protocol in advance:

The methodology issues for establishing equivalence between pharmaceutical products by means of a clinical trial in patients with a therapeutic endpoint have not yet been discussed as extensively as for bioequivalence trials. However, important items can be identified which need to be defined in the protocol:

- (a) The target parameters which usually represent relevant clinical endpoints from which the intensity and the onset, if applicable and relevant, of the response are to be derived.
- (b) The size of the acceptance range has to be defined case by case taking into consideration the specific clinical conditions. These include, among others, the natural course of the disease, the efficacy of available treatments and the chosen target parameter. In contrast to bioequivalence studies (where a conventional acceptance range is applied) the size of the acceptance range in clinical trials cannot be based on a general consensus on all the therapeutic classes and indications.

- (c) The presently used statistical method is the confidence interval approach. The main concern is to rule out that the test product is inferior to the reference pharmaceutical product by more than the specified amount. Hence, a one-sided confidence interval (for efficacy and/or safety) may be appropriate. The confidence intervals can be derived from either parametric or non-parametric methods.
 - (d) Where appropriate, a placebo leg should be included in the design.
 - (e) In some cases, it is relevant to include safety endpoints in the final comparative assessments.
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6. In Vitro dissolution studies

Comparative *in vitro* dissolution studies may be useful in the documentation of equivalence between two multisource pharmaceutical products. Because of many limitations associated with the use of *in vitro* dissolution in the documentation of equivalence these guidelines recommend that its application for this purpose be kept to a minimum. Hence, *in vitro* dissolution testing as the sole documentation of equivalence is not applicable to drugs that fall within the criteria of the pharmaceutical products listed in section 2.3.1 from (a) to (e). *In vitro* testing should also be reserved for rapidly dissolving drug products.² When such multisource test and reference products, both dissolve with sufficient rapidity (e.g., >80% in 15 minutes), their *in vivo* equivalence may be presumed. Approval of multisource formulations using comparative *in vitro* dissolution studies should be based on generation of comparative dissolution profiles rather than single point dissolution tests, such as are described in various compendia. Multiple dissolution test conditions and physiologically relevant media are recommended.

In vitro dissolution tests are valuable in product development and to monitor batch to batch consistency of the manufacturing process following approval to market. *In vitro* dissolution test results are also used to test release characteristics of a dosage form in storage, i.e., to measure stability of the release rate.

The following data should be recorded and included in the documentation for marketing authorization:

- (a) Comparative dissolution results for test and reference pharmaceutical products after intervals appropriate for products

² Where a drug substance and drug product do not dissolve with sufficient rapidity, as noted above, *in vitro* dissolution methods might still be used to document equivalence using appropriately validated dissolution methodology to include a *in vitro*/*in vivo* correlation. Such methodology should derive from development and application of specifications and statistical methods to define non-equivalence. This development may require formulations with different *in vivo* performance characteristics. With such formulations, discriminating *in vitro*

and conditions under investigation (normally a minimum three sampling times).

- (b) For each sampling time, the observed data, individual values, the range and the coefficient of variation (relative standard deviation) should be reported.
- 7.** Clinically important variations in bioavailability leading to non-approval of the product

A new formulation with a bioavailability outside the acceptance range compared to an existing pharmaceutical product is not interchangeable by definition. A marketing authorisation for a formulation with a lower bioavailability may be non-approved on the basis of efficacy concerns.

A marketing authorisation for a formulation with a higher bioavailability ("suprabioavailability") may be non-approved on the basis of safety concerns. In the latter case there are two options:

A new formulation with increased bioavailability compared to an existing pharmaceutical product is defined as being "suprabioavailable". Options in this situation are:

- (i) The dosage form, if reformulated to be bioequivalent with the existing pharmaceutical product could be accepted as interchangeable with the existing pharmaceutical product. This may not be ideal as dosage forms with low bioavailability tend to be variable in performance.
- (ii) A dosage form with the content of active substance reduced to allow for the increased bioavailability could be accepted as a new (improved) dosage form. This would normally need to be supported by clinical trial data. Such a pharmaceutical product must not be accepted as interchangeable with the existing pharmaceutical product, and would normally become the reference product for future interchangeable pharmaceutical products. The name of the new pharmaceutical product should preclude confusion with the older approved pharmaceutical product(s).

References

The following references have been studied before preparing these guidelines.

- 1.** Multisource (Generic) Pharmaceutical Products: Guidelines on Registration requirements to establish interchangeability
Manual on Marketing Authorisation of Pharmaceutical Products. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2000
- 2.** Guide to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for manufacturers of medicinal products 2000. United Arab Emirates Ministry of Health
- 3.** Guidelines for good clinical practice (GCP) for trials on pharmaceutical products. In: *The use of essential drugs. Sixth report of the WHO Expert Committee.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1995:97-137 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 850).
- 4.** Good laboratory practices in governmental drug control laboratories. In: *WHO Expert Committee on Specifications for Pharmaceutical Preparations. Thirtieth report.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1987: 20-35 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 748).
- 5.** Arab guidelines on bioequivalence testing of pharmaceutical products (Draft one 27.5.1998) Arab Union of the Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Appliances (AUPAM)
- 6.** Notes for guidance on the investigation of bioavailability and bioequivalence – Final draft. *Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products, (CPMP/EWP/QWP/1401/98) European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products* 2000
- 7.** Bioavailability and Bioequivalence studies for orally administered drug products – General considerations *US Dept of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration* 2000