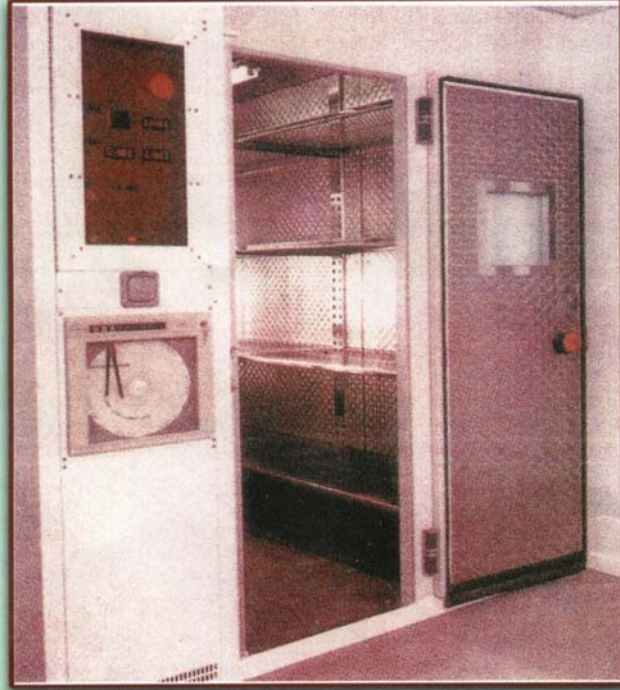


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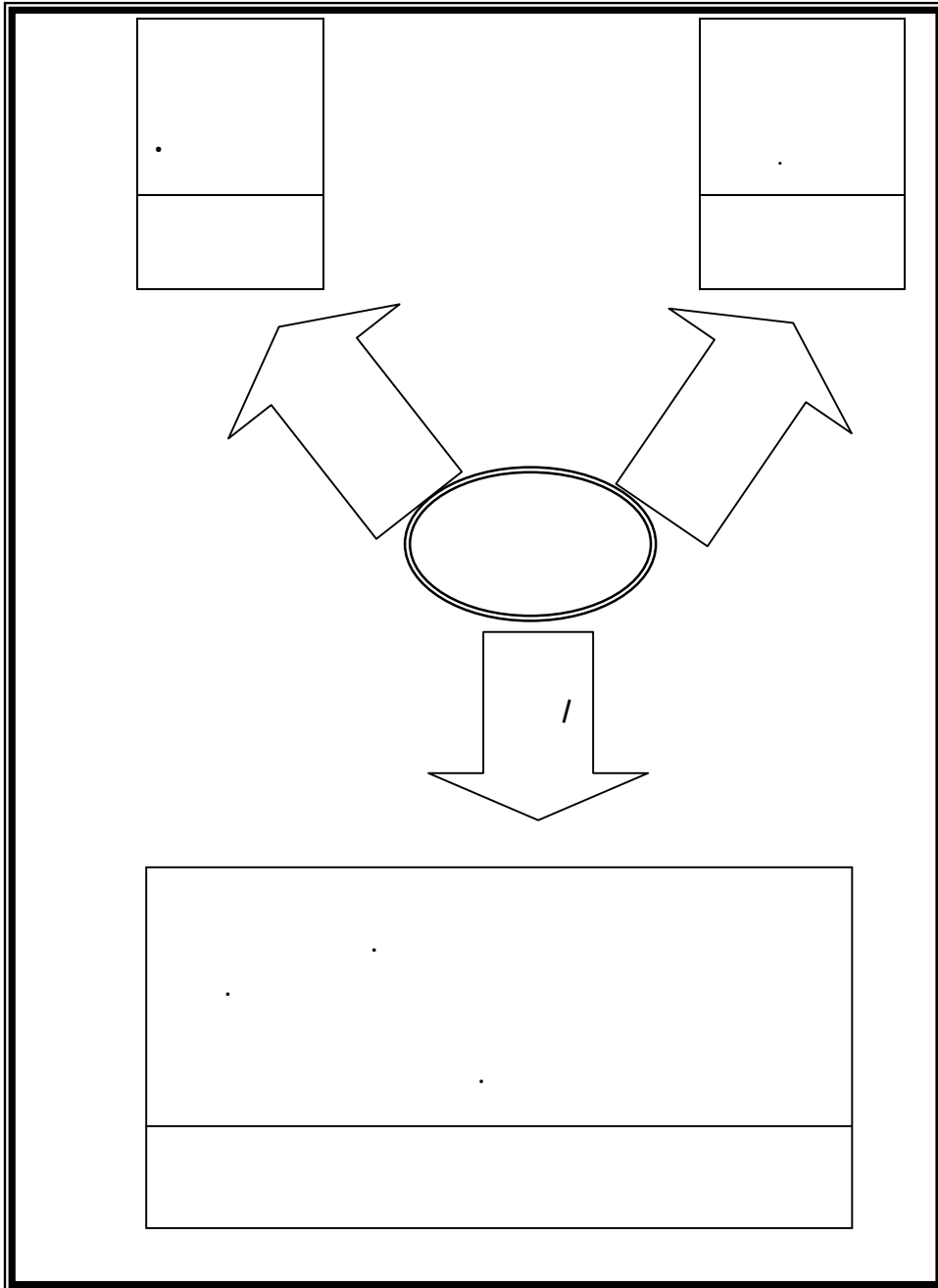
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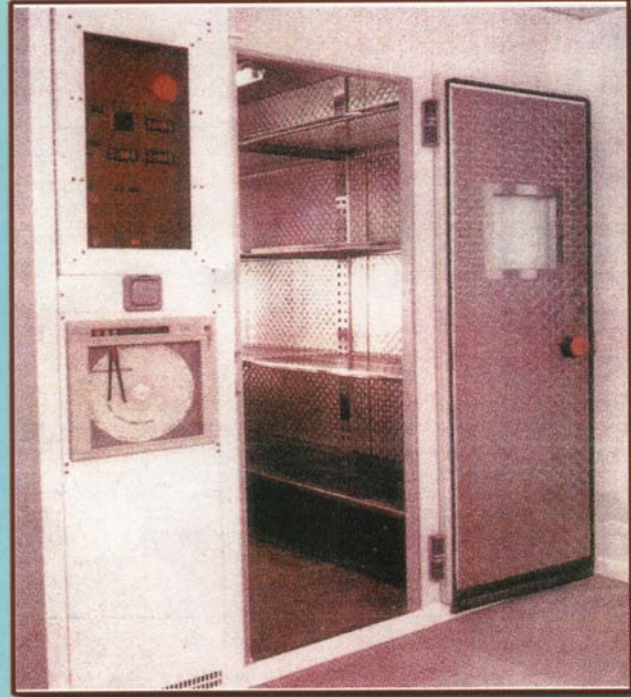
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UAE Guidelines of Stability Testing for Pharmaceutical Products



2001

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With the direction and support of His Highness the UAE president, the United Arab Emirates has been seeking to extend the infrastructure of drug processing in UAE, in conformity with latest technical means, and in a manner to guarantee a high efficacy and effectiveness of the manufactured drugs products, for which a control system as per approved international regulation has been stated.

The specifications of medicines must comply with international standards wherever manufactured in respect with their effectiveness and stability, which must be guaranteed against drastic climatic conditions, and if they stored according to the approved climatic conditions.

Through the great efforts exerted by the Drug Control Department of the Ministry of Health, these goals have been achieved, by insisting on establishing a standard regulations on stability testing of the pharmaceutical products in line with approved international principles, together with its constant follow up and control in this field. For achievement and maintain patient confidence in the locally available medicines from both inside and outside UAE., by which, these medicines will be of high quality, therapeutically effective and conforming to the best international standards.

I hereby congratulate the Drug Control Department for listing these requirements and controls system, which are to be implemented in all pharmaceuticals industry throughout UAE. Wishing you future success progress.

Hamad Abdul Rahman Al-Madfa
Minister of Health

The stability and shelf life of medicine can be affected by many factors during and after production. Several international bodies have issued their own guidelines on the this subject, including the World Health Organization (WHO), US Food & Drug Administration (FDA), the UK Medicine Control Agency (MCA), International Conference Harmonization (ICH) and GCC countries regulations.

The UAE's Ministry of Health has issued their own regulations regarding drug stability to ensure a high quality of the drug products. When correctly applied, stability testing provides a guarantee for quality of medicines in our local market.

The stability testing reveals many drug defects and problems, and its is an indispensable step that is taken to develop and improve drug products, which is considered as one of the basic steps in GMP.

The Ministry of Health, represented by Drug Control Department, considers stability testing to be on important part of pharmaceutical production and in any application to register medicine in the UAE. To ensure that the consumer receives only the medicines of high quality, which are essential to save lives and cure and preserve man's health.

Dr. Easa bin Jakka Al Mansoori

Director of Drug Control Department

Acknowledgements

Many international guidelines are available on the subject of stability. The guidelines produced by the WHO, EMEA, USFDA, ICH and AUPAM

provide excellent references and the most relevant parts of these documents have been used in this text.

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.

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

GLOSSARY

The definitions given below apply to the terms used in these guidelines. They may have different meanings in other contexts

Accelerated stability testing. Studies designed to increase the rate of chemical degradation and /or physical change of a drug product by using exaggerated storage conditions. The purpose of monitoring degradation reactions, to evaluate the impact of short-term excursions outside the labelled storage conditions which might occur during shipping and help in predicting the shelf life under normal storage conditions. The design of accelerated studies may include elevated temperature, high humidity and intense light, low temperature and freezing/thaw cycling, as appropriate. Such test conditions are also applied to provide comparative evidence in short term experiments of the equivalence of pharmaceutical products from various sources, such as those made by different manufacturers, processes, procedures, packaging, or where volumes and strengths of drug products are changed

Batch (Lot). A defined quantity of starting material, packaging material or product manufactured in one process or series of process so that it could be expected to be homogeneous. In the case of continuous manufacture, the batch must correspond to a defined fraction of the production, characterised by its intended homogeneity.

Bracketing. The designs of stability schedule so that at any time points only the samples on the extremes, for examples, of container size and /or dosage strengths, are tested. The design assumes that the stability of the samples tested under intermediate conditions is represented by those at the extreme. Where a range of dosage strengths is to be tested, bracketing design may be particularly applicable if the strengths are very closely related in composition. For example, for a tablet range made with different compression forces of a similar basic granulation, or a capsule range made by filling different plug fill weights of the same basic composition into different size capsule shells. Where a range of sizes of immediate containers is to be evaluated, bracketing design may be applicable if the material of composition of the container and the type of closure are the same throughout the range.

Climatic zone. The concept of dividing the world into four zones based on defining the prevalent annual climatic conditions. Four climatic zones can be distinguished for the purpose of world-wide stability testing.

Table 1 A description of climatic zones referred to for purposes of stability testing

Climatic Zone	Description	Storage Condition	
		Temperature	Relative Humidity
I	Temperate	21°C	45%
II	Subtropical & Mediterranean	25°C	60%
III	Hot, dry	30°C	35%
IV	Hot, humid	30°C	60%

Commitment batches. Production batches of a drug product for which the stability studies will be initiated or completed post approval through a commitment made in the registration application.

Commitment A signed statement accompanying an application for product registration to conduct or complete prescribed studies and date to provide data on commercial production batches after approval of an application.

Dosage Form. A pharmaceutical product type, for example tablet, capsule, solution, cream etc. that contains an active ingredient generally, but not necessarily, in association with excipients.

Drug Product / Finished Product. The dosage form in the final immediate packaging intended for marketing.

Drug substance. The unformulated drug substance, which may be subsequently formulated with excipients to produce the drug product.

Excipient. Anything other than the drug substance in the dosage form.

Long-Term (Real-Time) Stability Testing. Stability evaluation of the physical, chemical, biological and microbiological characteristics of a

drug product covering the expected duration of the shelf life which is claimed in the submission and will appear on the labelling.

Mass balance. The process of adding together the assay value and levels of degradation products to see how closely these add up 100% of the initial value, with due consideration of the margin of analytical error.

Matrixing. The statistical design of stability schedule so that only a fraction of the total number of samples is tested at any specified sampling point. At a subsequent sampling point, different sets of samples of the total number would be tested. The design assumes that the stability of the samples tested represents the stability of all samples. The differences in the samples for the same drug product should be identified as, for example, covering different batches, different strengths, different sizes of the same container and closure and possibly, in some cases, different container/closure systems. Matrixing can cover reduced testing when more than one variable is being evaluated. Thus the design of the matrix will be dictated by the factors needing to be covered and evaluated. This potential complexity precludes inclusion of specific details and examples, In every case, it is essential that all batches be tested initially and at the end of the long-term testing plus, and it may be desirable to discuss design in advance with the regulatory authority, where this is possible. .

Mean Kinetic Temperature. A single derived temperature which when maintained over a defined period would afford the same thermal challenge to a drug product as would have been experienced over a range of both higher and lower temperature for an equivalent defined period. The mean kinetic temperature is higher than the arithmetic mean temperature and takes into account the Arrhenius equation. When establishing the mean kinetic temperature for a definite period the formula of J.D. Haynes can be used.

On-Going Stability Testing. It is the post marketing stability testing carried out by the manufacturer on production batches according to pre-determined schedule in order to confirm the projected shelf life of the product.

Photostability. The intrinsic photostability characteristics of drug products should be evaluated to demonstrate that, where appropriate, light exposure does not result in unacceptable change. Normally,

Photostability testing is carried out on a single batch of material selected.

Pilot Scale. The manufacture of a drug product by a procedure that is fully representative of and simulating that to be applied on a production batch. For oral solid dosage forms this is generally taken to be at a minimum scale of one-tenth that of the full production scale.

Primary batch. A batch of drug product used in a formal stability study, from which stability data are submitted in a Registration Application for the purpose of establishing a shelf life, respectively. Two of the primary batches should be at least pilot scale and the third may be a production batch.

Semi-permeable Container. Containers that allow the passage of solvents, usually water, while preventing solute loss. The mechanism for solvent transport occurs by absorption into one container surface, diffusion through the bulk of the container material and resorption from the other surface. Transport is driven by a partial pressure gradient. Examples of semi permeable containers include plastic bags or semi-rigid, low density polyethylene (LDPE) pouches for large volume parenterals (LVPs), LDPE ampoules, bottles, and vials.

Shelf life; Expiration Dating Period. The time period through which a drug product is expected to remain within the approved shelf-life specification provided that it is stored under the conditions defined on the label in the proposed container and closure.

Specification - Release. The combination of physical, chemical, biological and microbiological acceptance criteria and test requirements that determine a drug product is suitable for release at the time of its manufacture.

Specification – stability (end of Shelf life). The physical, chemical, biological and microbiological acceptance criteria and test requirements that a drug product must meet at the end of its shelf life.

Stability Indicating Method. Quantitative analytical methods that distinguish drug substance from its degradation products and from interfering excipients in drug products so that the drug substance content can be accurately measured.

Stability study protocol. The detailed plan to generate and analyse acceptable stability data in support of the expiration-dating period. It may also be used in developing similar data to support an extension to the expiration-dating period.

Stability Tests. Stability tests are a series of tests designed to obtain information on the stability of a drug product for the determination of its shelf life and utilisation period under specified packaging and storage conditions.

Stability. The ability of a drug product to retain its properties within specified limits throughout its shelf life. The chemical, physical and microbiological aspects of stability are to be considered.

Strength. The concentration of the drug substance (for example weight in weight, weight in volume, or unit-dose in volume basis) and/or the potency, that is , the therapeutic activity of the drug product as indicated by appropriate laboratory test or by adequately developed and controlled clinical data (expressed for example, in terms of units by reference to a standard.).

Stress testing. Stress testing helps determine the intrinsic stability of the molecule by establishing degradation pathways in order to identify the likely degradation products and to validate the stability indicating power of the analytical procedures used. Stress testing is conducted to provide data on forced decomposition products and decomposition mechanisms. Stress testing can cover the severe conditions that may be encountered during distribution. These studies should establish the inherent stability characteristics of the molecule, such as the degradation pathways, and lead to identification of degradation products and hence support the suitability of the proposed analytical procedures. The detailed nature of the studies will depend on the individual drug substance and type of drug product. This testing is likely to be carried out on a single batch of material. It will include the effect of temperatures in 10°C increments above the accelerated temperature test condition (e.g.50°C, 60°C, etc.). It will test the response to humidity (if appropriate, e.g. 75% RH or greater); oxidation and photolysis on the drug substance plus its susceptibility to hydrolysis across a wide range of pH values when in solution or suspension. Photostability testing should be an integral part of stress testing (The standard conditions for photostability testing are defined in ICH Q1B). It

is recognised that some degradation pathways can be complex and that under extreme conditions decomposition products may be observed which are unlikely to be formed under accelerated or long term testing. This information may be useful in developing and validating suitable analytical methods, but it may not always be necessary to examine specifically for all degradation products, if it has been demonstrated that in practice these are not formed. Results from these studies will form an integral part of the information provided to regulatory authorities.

Supporting Stability Data. Supplementary data, such as stability data on small-scale batches, related formulations or higher temperature, products presented in container other than those proposed for marketing and other scientific rationale that support the analytical procedures, the proposed shelf life and storage conditions.

Tentative Expiration Dating Period (Tentative shelf life). A provisional expiration-dating period determined by extrapolating data from accelerated studies for the drug product to be marketed in the proposed container-closure.

Utilisation period. The period of time during which a preparation can be used following reconstitution or the opening of a multidose container.

1. OBJECTIVES:

The most important factors that may influence the degree and rate of deterioration of drug products are:

- ◆ **Environmental factors such as radiation, heat, moisture, light, oxygen and physical stress (vibration, freezing)**
- ◆ **Product related factors, these includes:**
 - a- The chemical and physical properties of the active drug substance and the excipients used.
 - b- The dosage form and its composition.
 - c- The manufacturing process.
- ◆ **The nature of the packaging.**

The objectives of stability testing are to provide evidence on how the qualities of drug products vary under all circumstances and enable us to recommend storage conditions, re-test periods and shelf life.

2. THE MAIN REQUIREMENTS OF STABILITY TESTING

See also figure 1 page 14

2.1 In The Development Phase.

Accelerated stability tests are short-term experiment carried out to compare alternative formulation, packaging material and/or the manufacturing process. After establishing the manufacturing process, the manufacturer will carry out a series of accelerated stability studies, which allow prediction of stability, predetermine the shelf life and storage conditions. Real-time stability tests are a confirmatory measure, Utilisation period should be established for preparation in multidose container.

2.2 For registration dossier.

The information submitted by the manufacturer to the drug regulatory authority, regarding the stability of the drug must be derived from tests performed on the final dosage form, in its final container and packaging. The tests can be accelerated or real-time studies. Published and/or recently obtained experimental supporting stability data may also be submitted.

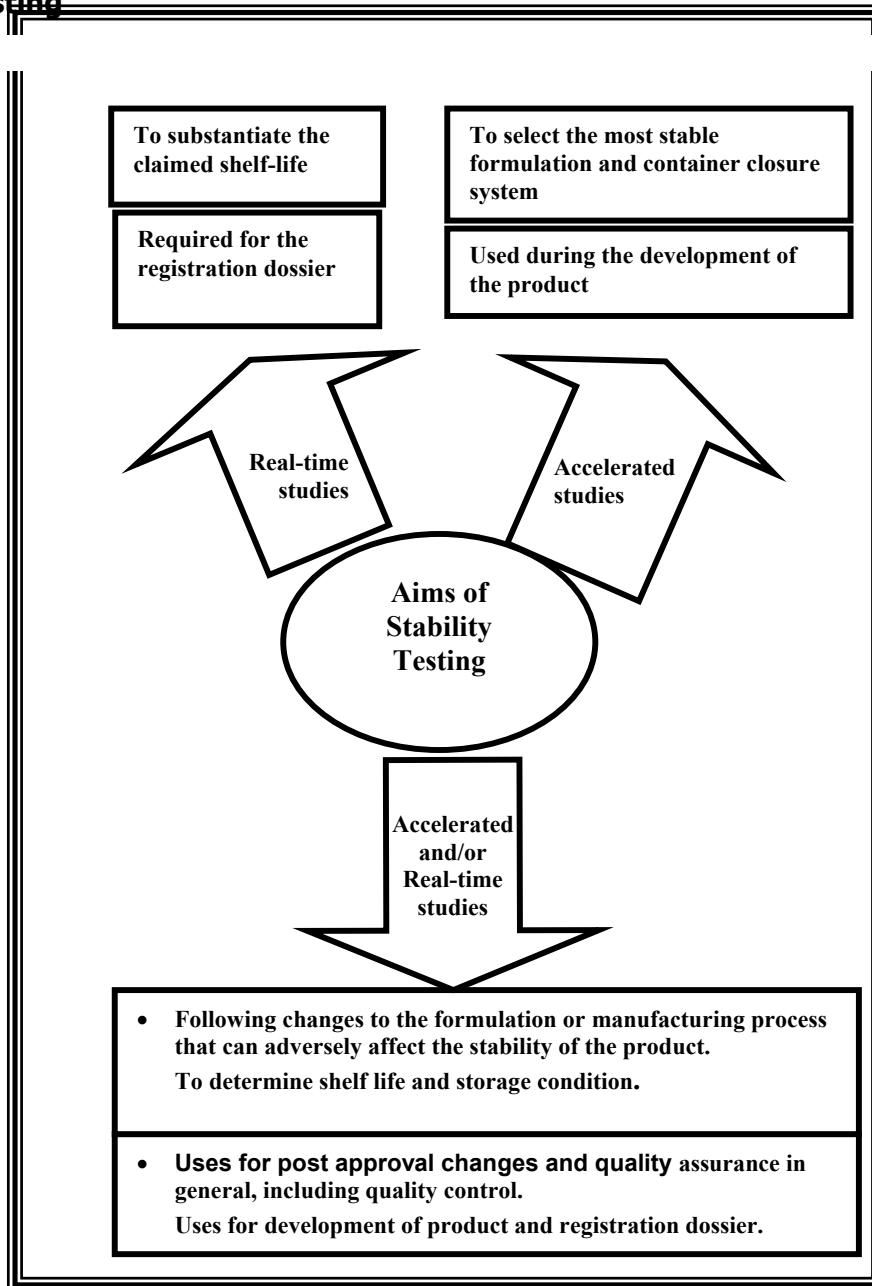
A preliminary shelf life is obtained provided the manufacturer will submit additional information data from the first 3 production batches after registration .

2.3 In the Post- Registration Period.

To establish expiry data and the previously projected storage condition, the manufacturer should carry out long term stability studies. Stability data has to be submitted by the applicant and may be required at any time by the national health authorities. In the course of good manufacturing practice (GMP) inspection, their availability and validity are normally verified. To ensure the quality and safety of products with particular reference to degradation, national health authorities will monitor the stability and quality of preparations on the market through a follow-up inspection and testing programme.

Once the product has been registered, additional stability studies are required whenever major modifications are made to e.g. formulation, manufacturing process, packaging or method of preparation and site of manufacture. These results should/must be communicated to the respective drug regulatory authorities.

Figure 1 - **The main uses of real-time and accelerated stability testing**



3. STABILITY STUDY PROTOCOL.

The pharmaceutical industry is urged to adopt study protocols for accelerated, long term and on-going stability testing taking into account the followings:

- A.** The design of stability studies for the drug product should be based on the knowledge of properties and stability characteristics of drug substance(s).
- B.** The design of the stability-testing programme needs to take into consideration the intended market and the climatic conditions of the area in which the drug product will be used.

A stability study is based on varying degrees of temperature, time, humidity, and light intensity and partial vapour pressure and their effects on the product in question. It should be pointed out that the effective or mean kinetic temperature reflects the actual situation more precisely than measured mean temperature, i.e. there is a difference between a product being kept for one month at 20°C and one month at 40°C, or two months at 30°C. Moreover, storage conditions often represent a higher temperature than the average meteorological data indicated for a country.

The testing should cover those features susceptible to change during storage and likely to influence quality, safety and/or efficacy. Analytical test procedures should be fully validated and the assay should be stability indicating. The need for the extent of replication will depend on the results of validation studies.

The range of studies should cover not only chemical and biological stability but also loss of preservative, physical properties and characteristics, organoleptic properties and where required, microbiological attributes. Preservative efficacy testing and assay of stored sample should be carried out to determine the content and efficacy of antimicrobial preservative.

For some dosage forms, especially liquid and semi-solid dosage forms, the study design may also need to consider low temperatures, e.g. below zero (freezer, -10°C to -20°C), freeze-thaw cycles and

temperature between 2°C - 8°C (refrigerator). For certain preparation it is important to observe effects caused by their exposure to light.

3. 1 Selection of Batches

For registration purposes, stability information from accelerated and long term studies is to be provided for three batches of the same formulation and dosage form in the container and closure proposed for marketing. Two of the three batches should be at least pilot scale; the third batch may be smaller (Data on laboratory scale batches are not acceptable for formal stability studies).

The manufacturing process to be used should meaningfully simulate one which would be applied to large scale batches for marketing. The process should provide a product of the same quality intended for marketing and meeting the same specifications as to be applied for the drug product to be released (release specifications). Where possible, batches of the finished product should be manufactured using identification of different batches of drug substance. Photostability testing should be conducted on at least one batch of the product if appropriate.

For on-going studies, batches from current production should be sampled in accordance with a predetermined schedule. An example would be: one batch every other year may be stability tested (otherwise one batch per year); unless a major product change has been made, e.g. the formulation or the method of manufacture.

3. 2 Storage conditions.

Storage conditions are determined by the intended climatic zone in which the drug products will be distributed and used, as well as by the type of dosage form.

Stability of the drug product after reconstituting or diluting according to labelling should be addressed to provide appropriate and supportive information.

Long term, accelerated and where appropriate intermediate storage conditions for solid drug products (Tablets, Capsules, Powders, and Lyophilisate) are detailed in the sections below and table 1. Alternative storage conditions are allowable if justified.

**Table 1 Stability studies required at the time of registration
solid dosage forms**

Type of Study	Storage Conditions	Minimum time for registration application	
		Generic	Innovator
Long term	25 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H. (Zone I, II)	6 months	12 months
	30 ± 2°C; 35% ± 5% R.H. (Zone III)		
	30 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H. (Zone III, IV)		
Intermediate	30 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H.	6 months	6 months
Accelerated	40 ± 2°C; 75% ± 5% R.H. (Zone II)	3 months	3 months
	45 ± 2°C; 75% ± 5% R.H. (Zone IV)	6 months	6 months

Since there are few countries in zone I, the manufacturer would be advised to apply climatic zone II conditions if he intends to market in temperate climates. For countries where certain regions are situated in zones III or IV, and also with the view to the global market, it is recommended that the stability-testing programme be based on conditions corresponding to climatic zone IV.

3.3 Reference limits

Where significant change(s) occur(s) in the course of accelerated studies, additional tests at intermediate conditions should be conducted, e.g. 30 ± 2°C and 60 ± 5% RH. The initial registration application should then include a minimum of 6 months data from intermediate stability, and 12 months from long-term stability data.

In general, significant change is defined as:

- A 5% change from the initial assay value.

- Any specified degradation exceeding its acceptance criteria.
- Failure to meet acceptance criteria for appearance and physical properties (e.g., colour, phase separation, re-suspendibility, delivery per actuation, caking, hardness, etc.) and as appropriate to the product type.
- pH exceeding its acceptance criteria.
- Dissolution exceeding the acceptance criteria for 12 solid dosage units.

If any parameter undergoes "significant change" criteria during the accelerated stability study, testing of all parameters during the intermediate stability study should be performed.

If stability samples have been put into the intermediate conditions, but have not been tested, testing these samples may begin as soon as the accelerated study shows significant change in the drug product. Alternatively, the study at the intermediate condition would be started from the initial time point.

Limits of acceptance should relate to the release limits (where applicable), to be derived from consideration of all the available stability information. The shelf life specification could allow acceptable and justifiable deviation from the release specification based on the stability evaluation and the changes observed on storage. It will need to include specific upper limits for degradation products, the justification for which should be influenced by the level observed in material used in preclinical studies and clinical trials if applicable.

The justification for the limits proposed for certain other tests such as particle size and /or dissolution rate will require reference to the results observed for batches used in bioavailability, bioequivalence and /or clinical studies. Preservative efficacy testing should support any differences between the release and shelf life specification for antimicrobial preservatives.

3. 4 Special considerations

3-4-1- Products packed in impermeable containers.

Stability studies for drug products packed in impermeable containers may be conducted under any relative humidity however, the same range and temperature should be applied. e.g. semisolids in sealed aluminium tubes and solutions in sealed glass ampoules.

3-4-2- Products packed in semipermeable containers.

Low relative humidity can adversely affect products packed in semipermeable containers. This includes a wide range of products e.g. large volume parenterals (LVPs), small volume parenterals (SVPs) ophthalmics, otics, nasal sprays, semi-rigid plastic containers. For these as well as ampoules, vials and bottles with or without droppers/applicators, which may be susceptible to water loss, the following stability storage conditions are suggested and other similarly justified storage conditions are acceptable.

Table 2 Stability data required at the time of registration for semisolids and liquid products packed in semi permeable containers

Type of Study	Storage Conditions	Minimum time for registration application	
		Generic	Innovator
Long term	25 ± 2°C; 40% ± 5% R.H. (Zone I, II)	6 months	12 mths
	30 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H. (Zone III, IV)		
Intermediate	30 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H.	6 months	12 mths
Accelerated	40 ± 2°C; ≤25% ± 5% R.H.	6 months	6 months

3-4-3- Products intended for storage in a Refrigerator

Long term and accelerated storage conditions for refrigerated drug products are detailed in table below.

Table 3 Stability data required at the time of registration for products stored in a refrigerator

Type of Study	Storage Conditions	Minimum time for registration application	
		Generic	Innovator
Long term	5 ± 3°C	3 - 6 months	
Accelerated	25 ± 2°C; 60% ± 5% R.H. Solid 25 ± 2°C; 40 % ± 5% R.H. Liquid	3 - 6 months	

If significant change occurs between 3 and 6 months testing at the accelerated storage conditions, the proposed shelf life should be based on the real time data available from the long-term storage condition.

If significant change occurs within the first 3 months testing at the accelerated storage conditions, data should be supplied to cover use of the drug product outside of the label storage condition. It is not necessary to continue to test a product to 6 months when an obvious significant change has occurred within the first 3 months.

3-4-4- Products intended for storage in a freezer

Type of Study	Storage Conditions	Minimum time for registration application
Long term	-20 ± 5°C	12 months

For drug product intended for storage in a freezer, the shelf life should be based on the real time data presented at the long-

term storage condition. In the absence of an accelerated storage condition for drug products intended to be stored in a freezer, data from elevated temperature on a single batch should be conducted to support use of the drug product outside of the proposed label storage condition.

3-4-5- Products intended for storage below -20 °C

Drug products intended for storage below -20 °C should be treated on a case by case basis.

3. 5 Post-marketing follow-up

When available long-term stability data on primary batches do not cover the proposed shelf life granted at the time of approval, the studies should be continued post marketing approval in order to firmly establish the shelf life. This is referred to as a commitment.

Where the submission includes long-term storage data from three production batches covering the proposed shelf life, no post approval commitment is necessary. Otherwise the appropriate alternatives from those shown below should be followed:

- a- If the submission includes stability data on at least three production batches, a commitment should be made to continue these studies through the proposed shelf life.
- b- If the submission includes stability data on fewer than three production batches, a commitment should be made to continue these studies through the proposed shelf life and to place additional production batches, to a total of at least three, on long term stability studies through the proposed shelf life.
- c- If the submission does not include stability data on production batches, a commitment should be made to place the first three production batches on long term stability studies through the proposed shelf life.

3. 6 Frequency of Testing.

Schedules for the withdrawal of samples for analysis must be determined on the basis of prior knowledge and experience of the physicochemical stability properties of the active drug substance as

evidenced by its time degradation profile. Hence, determination of the sampling schedule must be done so as to assure that significant measurements are not missed. Failing to do so would result in poor characterisation of the drug's stability profile.

In the development phase and for studies in support of an application for registration, a reasonable frequency of testing is considered to be:

- for accelerated (storage conditions) studies 0,1,2,3 and 6 months;
- for intermediate (storage conditions) studies 0 ,3 , 6 , 9 and 12 months.
- For real-time (storage conditions) studies 0, 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 months and beyond that, once a year (the use of matrixing or bracketing can be applied if justified).
- For on going studies samples may be tested less frequently e.g. at six-month intervals for the confirmation of provisional shelf life or every 12 months for well established products.
- Highly stable formulation may be tested after the first 12 month and at the end of the shelf life.

3.7 Packaging Materials

The stability testing should be conducted on the dosage form stored in the packaging proposed for marketing. Additional testing of unprotected drug product can form a useful part of the stress testing and pack evaluation, also studies can be carried out in other related packaging materials in supporting the definitive pack(s).

4. MICROBIAL TESTING

4.1 Sterility

- a- Sterile dosage forms packaged in sealed glass ampoules:

The stability studies for this dosage form should include data from a sterility test of each batch at the beginning of the test period. For long term (real-time) stability studies it is recommended to perform the sterility test at the end of shelf life.

- b- Other sterile drug products:

- ◆ The accelerated stability studies for these products should include data from a sterility test of each batch at the beginning and at the end of the test period.
- ◆ For long-term (real-time) stability studies, the sterility test should be performed initially and at the expiry, and it is recommended to do the test annually.

4.2 Preservative Effectiveness)

Both sterile and non-sterile drug products may contain preservative(s) or preservative system(s) to control bacteria and fungi that may be inadvertently introduced during manufacturing.

- ◆ For accelerated stability study, data should include results from microbial challenge test conducted initially and at the end of study.
- ◆ For long-term stability study, data from microbial challenge test should be included initially and at the expiry and at appropriate intervals during the stability period.
- ◆ Chemical assays of preservative content should be also performed at appropriate intervals.

4.3 Microbiological Limits for Non-sterile Drug Products

Non-sterile drug products that have specified microbial limits for drug product release should be tested for conformance to the specified limits.

- ◆ Accelerated stability studies should include data from a microbial limit test conducted initially, one month, 3 month and at the end of the study.
- ◆ Long-term stability studies should include data from a microbial limit test conducted initially, annually, and at the expiry date.

4. 4 Pyrogens and Bacterial Endotoxins (LAL)

Drug products with specified limits for pyrogens and bacterial endotoxins should be tested for conformance to the specified limits.

4-4-1- Sterile dosage form packaged in sealed glass ampoules:

The stability studies for this dosage form should include data from the test for pyrogens and/or bacterial endotoxins of each batch at the beginning of the test period. For long-term (real-time) stability studies it is recommended to perform the pyrogens and/or LAL test at the end of shelf life.

4-4-2- Other drug products:

The stability studies for these products should include data from the test for pyrogens and/or bacterial endotoxins of each batch at the beginning of the test period.

For long-term stability studies, conduct the test at the beginning and the end of the stability period.

4. 5 Sampling Considerations

At least three batches and preferably more should be tested to allow estimation of batch to batch variability and to establish a single expiration dating period and label storage instructions applicable to all future batches of the dosage form manufactured and packed under similar circumstances.

Samples from the batches selected for stability studies should be taken in the final packaging form (bottles, packs, vials etc) by means of randomisation to ensure that the samples represent the batch as a whole.

Samples to be assayed at a given sampling time are preferably combined from more than one container, where at least two units must be assayed at any sampling time.

5. EVALUATION OF STABILITY DATA

5.1 General

A systematic approach should be adopted in the presentation and evaluation of the stability information which should cover as appropriate physical, chemical, biological, microbiological quality attributes, including particular properties of the dosage form (for example dissolution rate for solid oral dosage forms).

Where the data shows so little degradation and so little variability that it is apparent from looking at the data that the requested shelf life will be granted, it is normally unnecessary to go through the formal statistical analysis; providing a justification for the omission should be sufficient.

The design of the stability study is to establish, based on testing a minimum of three batches of the drug product, a shelf life and label storage instructions applicable to all future batches of the drug product manufactured and packed under similar circumstances. The degree of variability of individual batches affects the confidence that a future production batch will remain within specification throughout its shelf life.

acceptable approach for quantitative characteristics that are expected to change with time is to determine the time at which the 95% one-sided confidence limit for the mean degradation curve intersects the acceptance criterion. If analysis shows that the batch to batch variability is small, then it is advantageous to combine the data into one overall estimate. This can be done by first applying appropriate statistical tests (e.g., p values for level of significance of rejection of more than 0.25) to the slopes of the regression lines and zero time intercepts for the individual batches. If it is inappropriate to combine data from several batches, the overall shelf life may depend on the minimum time a batch may be expected to remain within acceptable and justified limits.

The nature of the degradation relationship will determine the need for transformation of the data for linear regression analysis. Usually the relationship can be represented by a linear, quadratic or cubic function on an arithmetic or logarithmic scale. Statistical methods

should be employed to test the goodness of fit for the slopes of all batches individually and combined batches (where appropriate) to the assumed degradation line or curve.

Limited extrapolation of the real data presented from the long-term storage condition beyond the observed range to extend the shelf life at approval time, particularly where the accelerated data support this may be undertaken. However, this assumes that the same degradation relationship will continue to apply beyond the observed data. Hence the use of extrapolation should always be justified in terms of what is known about the mechanisms of degradation, the goodness of fit of any mathematical model, batch size, existence of supportive data etc.

Any evaluation should consider not only the assay, but also the levels of degradation products and appropriate attributes. Where appropriate, attention should be paid to reviewing the adequacy of the mass balance, different stability and degradation performance.

The stability of the drug products after reconstituting or diluting according to labelling should be addressed to provide appropriate and supportive information.

5. 2 Stability Report

A stability report must be established for internal use, registration purposes etc. dealing with the design and the concept of the study, as well as results, data analysis and conclusions.

The results should be presented as a table and a graph if applicable. For each batch, results of testing should be given both at the time of manufacture and at different period during storage. A standard form should be prepared containing a summary of the results for each pharmaceutical preparation.

The stability of a given product, i.e. the proposed shelf life and storage conditions, must be determined on the basis of these results.

5. 3 Shelf-life

Shelf life should always be determined in relation to storage conditions. A tentative shelf life of up to 24 to 36 months, at the labelled storage condition, may be established based on satisfactory

accelerated stability data (with no significant change) carried out on three batches selected as mentioned under (3.1), and tested as described under (3.2)

The adequate accelerated stability results combined with available long-term data are used at the registration time as the basis for the proposed tentative expiration-dating period.

Other supportive data related to the drug product or the drug substance stability may also be submitted.

The application should include a commitment from the manufacturer to conduct long-term stability testing on the first three production batches and annual batches until the tentative expiration-dating period is verified, or appropriate expiration dating period is determined.

Based on what had been mentioned under (5.1), data evaluation should be done at the end of the long term testing (covering the tentative shelf life), to confirm the shelf life of all future batches with a high degree of confidence.

Products with less stable drug substances and formulations that do not tolerate storage for testing at elevated temperatures (e.g. suppositories) will need more extensive real time stability studies. The proposed shelf life in this case should not exceed twice the time period covered by real time studies.

The counting of the computed shelf life (expiration dating) of the drug product should generally not exceed 30 days from the production date, regardless of the packaging date.

5. 4 Recommended descriptions of storage conditions

A Storage temperature range may be used based on the stability evaluation of the drug product. There should be a direct linkage between the label statement and the demonstrated stability characteristics of the drug product.

The use of terms such as ambient conditions or room temperature is unacceptable.

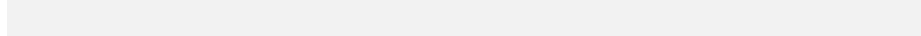
Where applicable a single set of uniform storage statements is recommended to avoid different labelling:

- ◆ Room temperature storage statement: the label should state "Store up to 30°C" or "Store up to 25 °C" if appropriate.
- ◆ "Store in a Cool place between 8 – 15°C
- ◆ Refrigerator storage statement: "Store in a refrigerator, between 2 - 8°C"
- ◆ Freezer storage statement: "Store in a freezer between –20°C and -10°C"

Specific requirements may be stated, but should not be used for the purpose to cover stability problems:

- ◆ For drug products that cannot tolerate refrigerating "Do not refrigerate".
- ◆ For drug products that cannot tolerate freezing: "Do not freeze".
- ◆ For light sensitive drug products: "Protect from light".
- ◆ For drug products sensitive to humidity: "Store in a dry place".

Certain recommendation may also be given regarding the utilization period after opening and dilution, or reconstitution of the powders.



6. REFERENCES

1. The Arab Good Manufacturing Practice Guidelines "GMP" 1995 by The Arab Union of the Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals & Medical Appliances (AUPAM).
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6. The Arab Guidelines on stability testing of pharmaceutical products-Draft 2 oct.2000 by the Arab Union of the Manufacturers of pharmaceutical and Medical Appliances (AUPAM)
7. United States Pharmacopoeia USP 95(1196) page no.1959-1963