

Green Spectrophotometric Determination of Amoxicillin Anti-Biotic Drug in Pure Form and Pharmaceuticals Using Ninhydrin

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Abstract

An inexpensive, accurate, and simple green spectrophotometric assay was developed and validated for the determination of the antibiotic drug, Amoxicillin (AMX), in pure drug and tablet using ninhydrin (NIH). The method relied on the condensation reaction between the drug and Ninhydrin reagent (NIH) in the presence of NaHCO₃, and then the colored product was measured at 420 nm. The colored product absorbance that was measured was related to the concentration of AMX. Different experimental conditions of assay were studied, and optimized. Beer's law for the method is obeyed over the concentration ranges 30-180 µg mL⁻¹. The value of molar absorptivity was 1.76 × 10³ L mol⁻¹ cm⁻¹. The values of limits of detection (LOD) and quantification (LOQ) were 0.9 and 2.73 µg mL⁻¹. The method was validated according to ICH guidelines. The relative standard deviation (%RSD) intraday and inter-day values for precisions were found to be 1.53 to 2.62%, whereas the values of respective relative error (%RE) for accuracy were best than 2.25%. Robustness and ruggedness were tested, and the values of %RSD in both instances were within acceptable limits. Also, placebo blank and synthetic mixture analysis was applied for method selectivity. The results showed that there is no interference resulting from co-formulated materials in the developed assay, which was successfully applied for AMX determination in tablets and capsules with reliable, satisfactory results, and indicated that the developed assay was as accurate and precise as the official methods. Hence, the developed assay can be used in pharmaceutical laboratories for quality analysis.

Keywords: Amoxicillin, Ninhydrin, Condensation reaction, Spectrophotometry, Pharmaceuticals.

1. Introduction

Amoxicillin (AMOX) is in the penicillin group of antibiotics. It is used to treat diseases resulting from bacterial infections, such as infections of the respiratory tract, as well as to treat infections of the middle ear, tonsillitis and throat, urinary tract, and skin. According to IUPAC, Amoxicillin known as (2S,5R,6R)-6-[[[(2R)-2-amino-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl) acetyl] amino]-3,3-dimethyl-7-oxo-4-thia-1-azabicyclo[3.2.0] heptane-2-carboxylic acid [1], with the empirical formula C₁₆H₁₉N₃O₅S, that corresponding to a molecular weight of 365.41 (Figure 1). It is soluble in water, and alcohol such as ethanol, and methanol, while it is insoluble in hexane, benzene, and acetone. Officially, the drug described HPLC method in the United States Pharmacopoeia (USP) with column (4-mm × 25-cm; 10-µm packing L1) as stationary phase and monobasic potassium phosphate buffer, pH 5 ± 0.1, acetonitrile and Diluent (buffer) (1:24) as mobile phase with gradient elution at a flow rate of 1.5 mL min⁻¹ with UV- detection at 230 nm [2]. Also, the drug described a similar HPLC method in British Pharmacopoeia (BP) with column (4.6-mm × 25-cm); octadecyl silyl silica gel for chromatography R (5 µm) as stationary phase and potassium dihydrogen phosphate buffer, pH 5. The mobile phase consists of two parts, acetonitrile and buffer solution pH 5 (1:99 v/v) as mobile phase A; and acetonitrile and buffer solution pH 5 (20:80 v/v) as mobile phase B, with a ratio of (8:92 v/v; A:B). A flow rate of 1.0 mL min⁻¹ and UV- detection at 254 nm [1]. In addition to the official BP and USP methods, AMOX has been reported in bulk and formulations in multiple reported assays, including chromatography techniques, such as UPLC, HPLC-DAD, RP-HPLC, HPLC-MS/MS, HPLC, LC-MS, LC[3-14], electrochemical techniques [15-19], Raman, near-infrared and

FTIR spectroscopy [20-22], Spectrofluorimetric techniques [23-26],

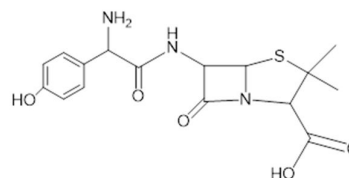


Figure 1. Chemical structure of amoxicillin (AMX).

UV spectrophotometry [27-30], and spectrophotometric techniques serving various chromogenic agents reagent such as iodate-iodide mixture [31], potassium permanganate [32-35], Cerium ammonium nitrate [36], Sulphanilamides [37], bromocresol green [38,39], potassium iodate [40], Folin-Ciocalteu [41], 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine [42], p-N, N-dimethyl phenylenediamine and sulphanilamide [43], and o-nitroaniline [44].

The last reported spectrophotometric methods for AMX are not green or simple, which require difficult experimental conditions, such as a pre-hydrolysis step at elevated temperature, scrupulously anhydrous medium, liquid-liquid extraction step, and too many reagents. As well as the literature survey presented above indicates no spectrophotometric reported for the determination of AMX drug in formulations relied on condensation reaction using ninhydrin reagent. Also, the literature on the analytical applications of ninhydrin revealed that this reagent has been widely used for the quantitative analysis of many pharmaceutical formulations drugs such as

famotidine [45], Baclofen [46], Pregabalin [47,48], cefaclor [49], glucosamine [50], heptaminol [51], acyclovir [52], Cephalexin [53] Memantine Hydrochloride [54], and hydrazine and hydroxylamine [55], to mention few. This prompted the author to use ninhydrin as a condensation agent to develop a green and simple spectrophotometric assay for amoxicillin determination in pure drug and dosage forms. The assay has relied on the formation of colored products following the reaction between AMX and ninhydrin dye, in the presence of sodium bicarbonate; and the colored species being measured at 420 nm.

2. Experimental

2.1. Apparatus

For absorbance measurements, a UV-Visible spectrophotometer Systronics model 166 with matched 1-cm quartz cells (Gujarat, India) was used.

2.2. Materials and methods

All chemicals used were of analytical reagent grade and distilled water was used throughout the study. Tablets (Perssmox) and capsules (Bigmex) both containing 250 mg AMX, were purchased from local commercial stores. A standard stock AMX solution (300 g mL^{-1}) AMX was prepared by dissolving accurately weighed 30 mg of the pure drug (AstraZeneca, Bangalore, India) in water and diluting to volume with the same solvent in a 100 mL calibrated flask. Ninhydrin (0.5%) (Merck, Mumbai, India) was prepared in water. Sodium bicarbonate (Saturated solution), was prepared by placing approximately 25 g of the chemical (Loba Chemie, Mumbai, India) in a hundred ml of distilled water and stirring for 20 minutes, and filtering.

2.3. General procedures

2.3.1. Preparation of the standard graph

Into a series of 10 ml calibrated flasks, different aliquots of 300 g mL^{-1} AMX solution equivalent to the concentrations in the range 10-200 g mL^{-1} were accurately transferred, and the volume was completed to 6 ml with distilled water and added 2 ml of 0.5% ninhydrin followed by 1.5 ml of a saturated solution of NaHCO_3 to each flask and completed volume to 10 ml with distilled water. Used a boiling water bath to keep the flasks for five minutes. The flasks were cooled, and the absorbance was measured at 420 nm against the reagent blank prepared. Using the regression equation derived using Beer's law data, the concentration of the unknown was computed.

2.3.2. Procedure for formulations

An amount of tablet or capsule powder equivalent to 30 mg of the sample of AMX was shaken with about 50 mL of water in a glass-stoppered bottle. The solution product was filtered, and the filtrate was collected in a 100 ml calibrated flask and diluted to the mark with water to obtain a solution of $300 \text{ }\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ AMX and mixed well. Five mL aliquots of tablet/capsule extract were analyzed in five replicates as described under section 2.3.1.

2.3.3. Procedure for placebo and synthetic mixture analyses

A placebo blank that consists of a mixture of talc (10 mg), magnesium stearate (10 mg), Starch (10 mg), lactose (10 mg), and methylcellulose (5 mg) was mixed well, ten mg of it was dissolved and extracted as the same in the section 2.3.2. Five milliliters of the extract were taken for analysis as described in general procedures. 30 mg of pure drug was added to 10 mg of the last placebo, mixed well, and followed the steps in section 2.3.2.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Chemistry and absorption spectra

Ninhydrin forms colored products with amino groups, which served as the basis for the quantitative determination of compounds that contain primary amino groups [44-55]. All these methods used different organic solvents such as Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) and Dimethylformamide (DMF). One of the most important advantages of this study is the use of an aqueous medium, unlike previous studies that used organic solutions that are not associated with the environment. In the present study we found that in the presence of a saturated solution of NaHCO_3 , ninhydrin produces a yellow-colored product with AMX. The

reaction took place in a water bath for 5 minutes, because the reaction between the drug and the reagent is very slow at room temperature. The colored species product was measured at 420 nm against the reagent blank (Figure 2).

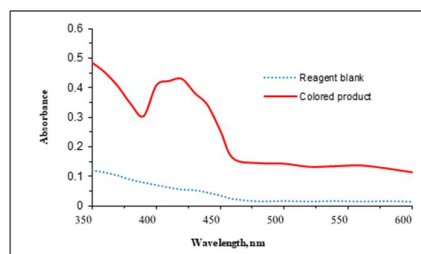


Figure 2. Absorption spectra of (—) Colored product; (.....) Reagent blank.

3.2. Optimization of reaction conditions

The reaction of NIH with AMX is needed to NaHCO_3 and heating to get a new product. The concentration of NIH, volume of NaHCO_3 , and boiling time conditions were studied and optimized. We found through experiments that 1.5 mL of a saturated NaHCO_3 , and 2 mL of NIH reagent solutions in a volume of 10 mL, were ideal as they gave an ideal yellow-colored reaction product between the drug and NIH, and absorbs at 420 nm (Figures 3 and 4).

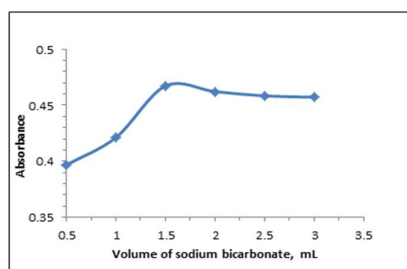


Figure 3. Effect of NaHCO_3 . (AMX: $90 \text{ }\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$).

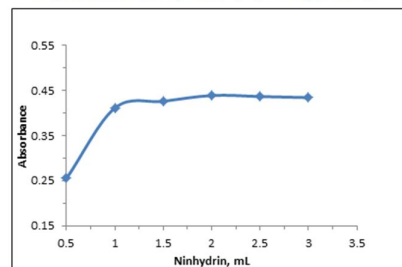


Figure 4. Effect of ninhydrin concentration (AMX: $90 \text{ }\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$).

A contact time in a water bath of 5 min was found to be optimum for the completely developed yellow color product and was stable for 60 min thereafter.

4. Method validation

After the experimental variables were optimized for optimum conditions for yellow color formation, the developed method was validated using a standard solution of AMX by investigation of several analytical parameters such as sensitivity, accuracy and precision, and others.

4.1. Linearity and Sensitivity

A standard calibration graph for AMX determination was plotted between the concentration versus absorbance. The concentration range was found to be $30\text{-}180 \text{ }\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ (Figure 5). The molar absorptivity, Sandell sensitivity, limits of detection (LOD) and quantification (LOQ) values, and the regression analysis of Beer's law were computed and summarized in Table 1.

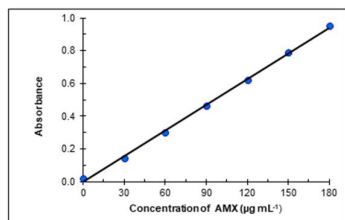


Figure 5. Calibration curve for AMX determination through condensation with ninhydrin.

4.2. Selectivity

The absorbance of the extract of the placebo blank, which was analyzed under the developed method, was equal to the reagent blank reading, which indicated the selectivity of the proposed assay. Also, when subjected to the synthetic mixture to be analyzed under the proposed method, the results shown in Table 2 indicate accepted recoveries percent, as well as indicate no interference by additives or excipients with the proposed method.

Table 1: Regression parameters and sensitivity

Parameter	Value
λ_{\max} , nm	420
Color stability, min	60
Linear range, $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	30-180
Sandell sensitivity*, $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$	0.2079
Molar absorptivity (ϵ), $\text{l mol}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$	1.76×10^3
Limit of detection (LOD), $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	0.9
Limit of quantification (LOQ), $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	2.73
Regression equation	$Y = -0.0212 + 0.0054 X$
Intercept (a)	-0.0212
Slope (b)	0.0054
The standard deviation of a (S_b)	9.98×10^{-2}
The standard deviation of b (S_m)	0.00056
Regression coefficient (r)	0.9999

Table 2. Results of analysis of a synthetic mixture

AMX concentration, $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	Percent recovery \pm SD (n=5)
40	103.6 \pm 2.58
80	98.76 \pm 1.85
120	101.3 \pm 1.76

4.3. Precision and accuracy

The precision of the proposed method as indicated by the percent of relative standard deviation (%RSD), and the accuracy by percent relative error (%RE), both were evaluated using three concentration levels (Table 3) with good results for precision and accuracy.

Table 3: Results of intra-day and inter-day accuracy and precision study

AMX taken $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	Intra-day accuracy and precision (n=7)			Inter-day accuracy and precision (n=5)		
	AMX found ^a $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	RSD %	RE %	AMX found $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	RSD %	RE %
50	50.88	1.53	1.76	50.98	2.43	1.96
100	102.00	2.24	1.98	101.8	1.89	1.85
150	153.40	2.62	2.25	153.1	2.16	2.04

^aMean value of seven determinations.

4.4. Robustness and ruggedness

For the evaluation of method robustness, some parameters such as the amount of ninhydrin reagent and heating time were slightly varied; the effect of these changes on the absorbance of colored systems was studied. Method ruggedness was demonstrated by having the analysis done by three analysts using the same instrument, and also by a single analyst performing analysis on three different instruments in the same laboratory. The intermediate precision values (%RSD) of this study were in the range of 0.78-2.16% (Table 4).

4.5. Application to dosage forms analysis

The proposed and official USP methods [2] were applied to amoxicillin determination AMX in tablets/capsules for comparison. The results indicate a good compatibility between the developed method and the USP method, the accuracy of the method is evident through the t-test and F-test values indicated in Table 5.

Table 4: Method robustness and ruggedness results

AMX taken ($\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$)	Robustness		Ruggedness	
	Parameters altered		Inter-analysts' (%RSD) (n=3)	Inter-instruments' (%RSD) (n=3)
	*Heating time	Volume of Ninhydrin		
40	2.46	0.98	1.95	1.39
80	1.62	1.06	0.78	2.16
120	2.22	0.95	1.74	1.25

*In this study, the heating time were: 5 and 5 \pm 1 min. volume of ninhydrin were: 2.0 and 2.0 \pm 0.25 mL.

Table 5: Results comparison of formulations analysis by proposed method and USP method

Formulation analyzed	Nominal amount	Found* (% of nominal amount \pm SD)	
		Official USP assay	Proposed assay
^a Perssmox tablets	250 mg	98.46 \pm 1.63	97.18 \pm 2.55 t = 0.95 F = 2.45
^b Bigmex capsules	250 mg	101.7 \pm 1.55	102.1 \pm 1.85 t = 0.37 F = 1.42

*Mean value of five determinations.

Tabulated t-value = 2.77 for four degrees and 95% confidence level. Tabulated F-value = 6.39 for four degrees and 95% confidence level. ^a(Polaris Health Care, India), ^b(Astra Zeneca, Bangalore, India) both containing 250 mg AMX,

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4.7. Accuracy by recovery study

The accuracy of the developed method was confirmed using a recovery experiment and following the procedure of the standard addition method. Pure AMX at 50, 100, and 150% of the level found in the tablet/capsule was added to a known amount of AMX in the tablet/capsule powder and the total amount was estimated by the proposed method. (Table 6). The results indicated that no interference by co-formulated substances with the assay.

Table 6: Results of the recovery experiment

Formulation studied	AMX in formulations $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	Pure AMX Added $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	Total found $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$	Pure AMX recorded (Percent \pm SD*)
Perssmax tablets (250 mg)	58.31	30	85.07	96.33 \pm 2.16
	58.31	60	116.74	98.67 \pm 1.98
	58.31	90	150.53	101.5 \pm 1.78

*Mean value of three determinations

5. Conclusion

The use of ninhydrin presents a novel analytical method for the spectrophotometric assay of AMX. The method is simple to perform compared to reported methods, as it used a single available reagent in addition to the few steps to complete the reaction, unlike the previous multi-step methods and reagents. Also, the proposed method seldom uses organic solvent or extraction processes and suffers from the disadvantages of elevated temperature and longer reaction time. As well as the wide range applied by the method led to the possibility of determining the drug at different concentration levels. In addition to these advantages, the developed method used cheap and available chemicals and simple devices, which made the method suitable for use in quality control laboratories, especially in developing countries, which cannot afford expensive techniques such as chromatography (HPLC).

Data Availability

No data were used to support this study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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