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Wednesday  
March 1, 1995

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**Part VIII**

**Department of  
Health and Human  
Services**

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**Food and Drug Administration**

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**International Conference on  
Harmonisation; Guideline on Validation of  
Analytical Procedures: Definitions and  
Terminology Availability; Notice**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Food and Drug Administration**

[Docket No. 94D-0016]

**International Conference on Harmonisation; Guideline on Validation of Analytical Procedures: Definitions and Terminology; Availability**

**AGENCY:** Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is publishing a final guideline entitled "Text on Validation of Analytical Procedures." This guideline was prepared under the auspices of the International Conference on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH). The guideline is intended to present topics that should be considered during the validation of the analytical procedures included as part of registration applications for pharmaceuticals.

**DATES:** Effective on March 1, 1995. Submit written comments at any time.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments on the guideline to the Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, rm. 1-23, 12420 Parklawn Dr., Rockville, MD 20857. Copies of the guideline are available from CDER Executive Secretariat Staff (HFD-8), Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration, 7500 Standish Pl., Rockville, MD 20855.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Regarding the guideline: Roger L. Williams, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-4), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-594-6740.

Regarding ICH: Janet J. Showalter, Office of Health Affairs (HFY-20), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-443-1382.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In recent years, many important initiatives have been undertaken by regulatory authorities and industry associations to promote international harmonization of regulatory requirements. FDA has participated in many meetings designed to enhance harmonization and is committed to seeking scientifically based harmonized technical procedures for pharmaceutical development. One of the goals of harmonization is to identify

and then reduce differences in technical requirements for drug development among regulatory agencies.

ICH was organized to provide an opportunity for tripartite harmonization initiatives to be developed with input from both regulatory and industry representatives. FDA also seeks input from consumer representatives and others. ICH is concerned with harmonization of technical requirements for the registration of pharmaceutical products among three regions: The European Union, Japan, and the United States. The six ICH sponsors are the European Commission; the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations; the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare; the Japanese Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association; the Centers for Drug Evaluation and Research and Biologics Evaluation and Research, FDA; and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. The ICH Secretariat, which coordinates the preparation of documentation, is provided by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (IFPMA).

The ICH Steering Committee includes representatives from each of the ICH sponsors and IFPMA, as well as observers from the World Health Organization, the Canadian Health Protection Branch, and the European Free Trade Area.

Harmonization of the validation of analytical procedures for pharmaceuticals was selected as a priority topic during the early stages of the ICH initiative. In the **Federal Register** of March 1, 1994 (59 FR 9750), FDA published a draft tripartite guideline entitled "Draft Guideline on Validation of Analytical Procedures." The notice gave interested persons an opportunity to submit comments by May 16, 1994.

After consideration of the comments received and revisions to the guideline, a final draft of the guideline was submitted to the ICH Steering Committee and endorsed by the three participating regulatory agencies at the ICH meeting held in October 1994.

The guideline presents a discussion of the characteristics that should be considered during the validation of the analytical procedures included as part of registration applications submitted in Europe, Japan, and the United States. The guideline discusses common types of analytical procedures and defines basic terms, such as "analytical procedure," "specificity," and "precision." These terms and definitions are meant to bridge the differences that often exist between

various compendia and regulators of the European Union, Japan, and the United States.

In the past, guidelines have generally been issued under § 10.90(b) (21 CFR 10.90(b)), which provides for the use of guidelines to state procedures or standards of general applicability that are not legal requirements but are acceptable to FDA. The agency is now in the process of revising § 10.90(b). Therefore, this guideline is not being issued under the authority of § 10.90(b), and it does not create or confer any rights, privileges, or benefits for or on any person, nor does it operate to bind FDA in any way.

As with all of FDA's guidelines, the public is encouraged to submit written comments with new data or other new information pertinent to this guideline. The comments in the docket will be periodically reviewed, and, where appropriate, the guideline will be amended. The public will be notified of any such amendments through a notice in the **Federal Register**.

Interested persons may, at any time, submit written comments on the guideline to the Dockets Management Branch (address above). Two copies of any comments are to be submitted, except that individuals may submit one copy. Comments are to be identified with the docket number found in brackets in the heading of this document. The guideline and received comments may be seen in the office above between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The text of the guideline follows:

**Text on Validation of Analytical Procedures**

**1. Introduction**

This document presents a discussion of the characteristics for consideration during the validation of the analytical procedures included as part of registration applications submitted within the European Union, Japan, and the United States. This document does not necessarily seek to cover the testing that may be required for registration in, or export to, other areas of the world. Furthermore, this text presentation serves as a collection of terms, and their definitions, and is not intended to provide direction on how to accomplish validation. These terms and definitions are meant to bridge the differences that often exist between various compendia and regulators of the European Union, Japan, and the United States.

The objective of validation of an analytical procedure is to demonstrate that it is suitable for its intended purpose. A tabular summation of the characteristics applicable to identification, control of impurities, and assay procedures is included. Other analytical procedures may be considered in future additions to this document.

## 2. Types of Analytical Procedures to be Validated

The discussion of the validation of analytical procedures is directed to the four most common types of analytical procedures:

- Identification tests.
- Quantitative tests for impurities' content.
- Limit tests for the control of impurities.
- Quantitative tests of the active moiety in samples of drug substance or drug product or other selected component(s) in the drug product.

Although there are many other analytical procedures, such as dissolution testing for drug products or particle size determination for drug substance, these have not been addressed in the initial text on validation of analytical procedures. Validation of these additional analytical procedures is equally important to those listed herein and may be addressed in subsequent documents.

A brief description of the types of tests considered in this document is provided below.

- Identification tests are intended to ensure the identity of an analyte in a sample. This is normally achieved by comparison of a property of the sample (e.g., spectrum, chromatographic behavior, chemical

reactivity, etc.) to that of a reference standard.

- Testing for impurities can be either a quantitative test or a limit test for the impurity in a sample. Either test is intended to accurately reflect the purity characteristics of the sample. Different validation characteristics are required for a quantitative test than for a limit test.

• Assay procedures are intended to measure the analyte present in a given sample. In the context of this document, the assay represents a quantitative measurement of the major component(s) in the drug substance. For the drug product, similar validation characteristics also apply when assaying for the active or other selected component(s). The same validation characteristics may also apply to assays associated with other analytical procedures (e.g., dissolution).

The objective of the analytical procedure should be clearly understood since this will govern the validation characteristics which need to be evaluated. Typical validation characteristics which should be considered are listed below:

Accuracy;  
Precision:

Repeatability;  
Intermediate precision;  
Specificity;  
Detection limit;  
Quantitation limit;  
Linearity;  
Range.

Each of these validation characteristics is defined in the attached Glossary. The table lists those validation characteristics regarded as the most important for the validation of different types of analytical procedures. This list should be considered typical for the analytical procedures cited but occasional exceptions should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It should be noted that robustness is not listed in the table but should be considered at an appropriate stage in the development of the analytical procedure.

Furthermore revalidation may be necessary in the following circumstances:

- Changes in the synthesis of the drug substance;
- Changes in the composition of the finished product;
- Changes in the analytical procedure.

The degree of revalidation required depends on the nature of the changes. Certain other changes may require validation as well.

TABLE

Type of analytical procedure; characteristics	Identification	Testing for impurities		Assay; dissolution (measurement) only; content/potency
		Quantitation	Limit	
Accuracy	—	+	—	+
Precision				
Repeatability	—	+	—	+
Intermediate Precision	—	+ <sup>1</sup>	—	+ <sup>1</sup>
Specificity <sup>2</sup>	+	+	+	+
Detection Limit	—	— <sup>3</sup>	+	—
Quantitation Limit	—	+	—	—
Linearity	—	+	—	+
Range	—	+	—	+

Note—signifies that this characteristic is not normally evaluated; + signifies that this characteristic is normally evaluated.

<sup>1</sup> In cases where reproducibility (see Glossary) has been performed, intermediate precision is not needed.

<sup>2</sup> Lack of specificity of one analytical procedure could be compensated by other supporting analytical procedure(s).

<sup>3</sup> May be needed in some cases.

## Glossary

### 1. Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure refers to the way of performing the analysis. It should describe in detail the steps necessary to perform each analytical test. This may include but is not limited to: The sample, the reference standard and the reagents preparations, use of the apparatus, generation of the calibration curve, use of the formulae for the calculation, etc.

### 2. Specificity

Specificity is the ability to assess unequivocally the analyte in the presence of components which may be expected to be present. Typically these might include impurities, degradants, matrix, etc.

Lack of specificity of an individual analytical procedure may be compensated by other supporting analytical procedure(s).

This definition has the following implications:

Identification: To ensure the identity of an analyte.

Purity Tests: To ensure that all the analytical procedures performed allow an accurate statement of the content of impurities of an analyte, i.e., related substances test, heavy metals, residual solvents content, etc.

Assay (content or potency): To provide an exact result which allows an accurate statement on the content or potency of the analyte in a sample.

### 3. Accuracy

The accuracy of an analytical procedure expresses the closeness of agreement between the value which is accepted either as a conventional true value or an accepted reference value and the value found.

This is sometimes termed trueness.

### 4. Precision

The precision of an analytical procedure expresses the closeness of agreement (degree of scatter) between a series of measurements

obtained from multiple sampling of the same homogeneous sample under the prescribed conditions. Precision may be considered at three levels: Repeatability, intermediate precision and reproducibility.

Precision should be investigated using homogeneous, authentic samples. However, if it is not possible to obtain a homogeneous sample it may be investigated using artificially prepared samples or a sample solution.

The precision of an analytical procedure is usually expressed as the variance, standard deviation, or coefficient of variation of a series of measurements.

#### 4.1. Repeatability

Repeatability expresses the precision under the same operating conditions over a short interval of time. Repeatability is also termed intra-assay precision.

#### 4.2. Intermediate precision

Intermediate precision expresses within laboratories' variations: Different days, different analysts, different equipment, etc.

#### 4.3. Reproducibility

Reproducibility expresses the precision between laboratories (collaborative studies, usually applied to standardization of methodology).

#### 5. Detection Limit

The detection limit of an individual analytical procedure is the lowest amount of analyte in a sample which can be detected but not necessarily quantitated as an exact value.

#### 6. Quantitation Limit

The quantitation limit of an individual analytical procedure is the lowest amount of analyte in a sample which can be quantitatively determined with suitable precision and accuracy. The quantitation limit is a parameter of quantitative assays for low levels of compounds in sample matrices, and is used particularly for the determination of impurities and/or degradation products.

#### 7. Linearity

The linearity of an analytical procedure is its ability (within a given range) to obtain test results which are directly proportional to the concentration (amount) of analyte in the sample.

#### 8. Range

The range of an analytical procedure is the interval between the upper and lower

concentration (amounts) of analyte in the sample (including these concentrations) for which it has been demonstrated that the analytical procedure has a suitable level of precision, accuracy, and linearity.

#### 9. Robustness

The robustness of an analytical procedure is a measure of its capacity to remain unaffected by small, but deliberate, variations in method parameters and provides an indication of its reliability during normal usage.

Dated: February 23, 1995.

**William B. Schultz,**

*Deputy Commissioner for Policy.*

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