Formulation and Evaluation of Controlled Release Aspirin Tablets

Aspirin is known to be effective in primary and secondary prevention of myocardial infarction. For this purpose aspirin release should be such that it prevents platelet thromboxane (TXA₂) generation without interfering with vascular prostacyclin (PGI₂) production. Hence controlled release tablets were prepared to meet the requirements. Both in vitro dissolution and in vivo urinary excretion studies were done to ensure the effectiveness of the formulations. The study proves the usefulness of Carabopol resins for formulating aspirin tablets for minimum risk and maximum therapeutic benefit to the patient.

Aspirin has always occupied a prominent place in health care as an analgesic and anti-pyretic in treatment regimens because of its high efficacy, low cost, its generally low toxicity and its availability to the patient as a non-prescription drug. It is now known to be effective in reducing myocardial infarction, stroke and mortality in high-risk patients because it prevents platelet aggregation.

The objective for undertaking this work was to prepare a controlled release formulation of low dose aspirin for prevention of myocardial infarction. A controlled release formulation results in selective inhibition of platelet thromboxane A₃ (TXA₂) generation in the portal circulation without interfering with vascular prostacyclin PGI₂. It also helps to prevent gastric irritation and/or bleeding. Both in vitro and in vivo release evaluation were done to ensure the effectiveness of the formulation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials used in this study were aspirin from Alta Laboratories, Carabopol 971P from B.F.Goodrich, polyvinyl acetate phthalate (PVAP) from Colorcon India Ltd. and talc from S.D. Fine Chemicals.

Aspirin and Carabopol 971P were sieved through 80# mesh and talc through 120# mesh. They were properly mixed and tablets were prepared by direct compression.

TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF VARIOUS BATCHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspirin</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbopol 971P</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talc</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVAP (%) rise in wt of tablet</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using various drug–polymer ratios. Composition of various batches are mentioned in Table 1. Coating was done with an enteric polymer polyvinyl acetate phthalate (PVAP) to obtain the desirable release profile for 12 h.

In vitro release evaluation:

In vitro release testing of these tablets was performed employing USPXXIII dissolution test apparatus I using 900 ml of 0.1 N HCl (pH 1.2) for 2 h followed by 900 ml phosphate buffer (pH 6.8) for 8 h as the dissolution media. The aliquots were withdrawn at half an hour intervals till 2 h and then hourly till next 8 h. The aliquots were analyzed for aspirin content spectrophotometrically.

In vivo release evaluation:

In vivo release evaluation was done using one of the...
above formulation (C3) and compared with the marketed formulation (only enteric coated) by conducting urinary excretion studies. [The formulation C3 shows the desired release profile of 5-10% of aspirin in 0.1 N HCl and about 85% release in phosphate buffer after 10 h thus showing a 12 h release pattern]. Six healthy male and female subjects weighing between 50-60 kg with no history of gastrointestinal, liver or kidney disease were selected for this study. Each volunteer was instructed to abstain from all medication for one week before each administration and also during the day of experiment. After an overnight fast, each subject was instructed to void his/her bladder and 0 h urine sample was taken as control. The marketed formulation was administered orally with 100 ml of water. No food or liquids other than water were permitted for 4 h following ingestion of the dose. Drug excretion was monitored as a function of time. Urine samples were collected after ½ h, 1 h, and then hourly for next 3 h, every two hourly for the next 8 h and finally cumulative urine was collected for the next 12 h. Each subject was instructed to drink 100 ml of water after each urine collection for the first 3 h and a simple standard meal was served after the 4 h sampling. The same procedure was applied to the formulated controlled release tablet. The studies were conducted in a cross-over design fashion.

Urine was assayed for the total salicylic acid content, after acid hydrolysis, using Levy's modified method. In a sealed glass ampoule, 3 ml of urine sample and 3 ml of concentrated hydrochloric acid were incubated at 100° for 16 h to hydrolyze completely all metabolites to salicylic acid. After cooling, 2 ml of the above and 0.5 ml of 6 N HCl were extracted with 30 ml of carbon tetrachloride in a glass-stoppered bottle. Centrifugation was done for 5 min and the aqueous phase aspirated out. The organic solvent phase was removed and assayed colorimetrically after complexing with ferric nitrate in the acidic medium. The total salicylate assayed included aspirin, salicylic acid and all other metabolites. To calculate the concentration of total salicylate in urine specimens, a calibration curve was constructed using a range of known concentrations of sodium salicylate in distilled water and with the same incubation and extraction procedures.

The pharmacokinetic parameters were determined and the in vitro-in vivo correlation was found out. The elimination rate constant was determined by the log ARE (amount remaining to be excreted) method. Statistical evaluation of data was done at 95% confidence interval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reproducible results were obtained throughout the study. From fig.1, it was seen that tablets with 15% Carbopol 971P and 2% enteric coating (C3) gave the desired 12-hour release pattern. It could be calculated that 1 unit of absorbance corresponds to 0.93 mg/ml of sodium salicylate and 1.04 mg/ml of aspirin. Results of the in vivo testing showed that these tablets had a uniform excretion rate compared to the marketed formulation (fig. 4). The in vitro-in vivo correlation was found to be good and hence in vitro release can be a measure for testing future batches. This study thus proves the usefulness of Carbopol resins for formulating aspirin tablets with minimum risk in addition to an effective therapy for the patient.

The two products for which excretion studies were done were found to be significantly different from each
Fig. 3: Cumulative excretion of aspirin
Per cent cumulative excretion of aspirin from Marketed product (●) and C3 (■) have been shown.

Fig. 4: Urinary excretion rate
Mean urinary excretion rate of Marketed product (●) and C3 (■).

Fig. 5: In vitro – In vivo correlation
The equation of the line is Y = 0.873x − 2.9048. The correlation coefficient R² = 0.9919. (●) stands for the % cumulative In vitro and In vivo release of formulation C3.

Fig. 6: Determination of elimination constant.
(-O-) and (■) stands for the amount to be excreted (log) of Marketed product and C3 respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pharmacokinetic parameters</th>
<th>Marketed product</th>
<th>Controlled release tablet (C3)</th>
<th>T -value</th>
<th>S / N.S*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C max (mg/h)</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>16.075</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tmax (h)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kel (elimination constant)</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1/2 (elimination half life h)</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.5575</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*S signifies that the t-value is significant and N.S signifies that the t-value is insignificant at the chosen interval.

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF IN VIVO TESTING

Other when analysis of variance was performed. The pharmacokinetic parameters of the two products were also found to be significantly different by the t-test. (Results as in Table 2). However there was no significant variation observed in the responses of the volunteers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The authors sincerely wish to thank Alta Labs Ltd. and Pioma Chemicals for supplying the required raw materials.

REFERENCES

FORM (IV SEE RULE (8))

Statement of ownership and other particulars as required under rule 8 of the Registration of Newspaper's (Central) Rules 1958.

1. Place of Publication : Indian Pharmaceutical Association, Kalina, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400 098.
2. Periodicity of its publication : Once in every two months
3. Printer's Name : Dr. Rao V.S.V. Vadlamudi, for the Indian Pharmaceutical Association
(Whether citizen of India) : Yes
4. Address : C/o. Indian Pharmaceutical Association, Kalina, Santacruz (E), Mumbai 0 400 098.
5. Editor's Name : Dr. Rao V.S.V. Vadlamudi
(Whether citizen of India) : Yes
6. Address : C/o. Indian Pharmaceutical Association, Kalina, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400 098.
7. Name and Address of individuals who own the Newspaper and partners of shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital

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Dated 30 March, 2001