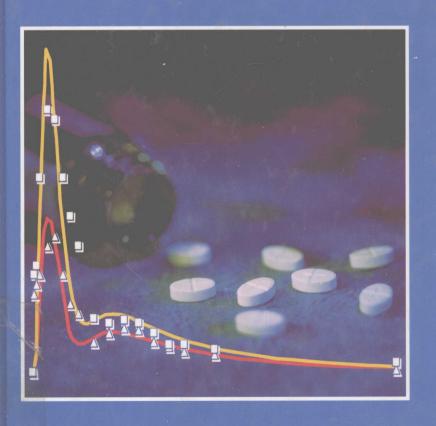




Drug Bioavailability

Estimation of Solubility, Permeability, Absorption and Bioavailability

Edited by H. van de Waterbeemd, H. Lennernäs and P. Artursson



Methods and Principles in Medicinal Chemistry

Volume 18

Edited by R. Mannhold, H. Kubinyi, G. Folkers

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Library of Congress Card No.: applied for British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche
Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at http://dnb.ddb.de

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Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany. Printed on acid-free paper.

Composition Asco Typesetters, Hong Kong Printing betz-druck gmbh, Darmstadt Bookbinding Litges & Dopf Buchbinderei GmbH, Heppenheim

ISBN 3-527-30438-X

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Preface

The processes involved in drug discovery have changed considerably in the past decade. Today we have access to the full human as well as several bacterial genomes offering a rich source of molecular targets to treat diseases. Methods in biology have moved to ultra-high-throughput screening (uHTS) of such precedented and unprecedented targets. Chemistry adapted to this progress by developing methods such as combinatorial and parallel synthesis allowing the rapid synthesis of hundreds to hundreds of thousands molecules in reasonable quantities, purities and timelines.

Historical data on the fate of potential drugs in development indicate that major reasons for attrition include toxicity, efficacy and pharmacokinetics/drug metabolism. Therefore, in today's drug discovery the evaluation of absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination (ADME) of drug candidates is performed early in the process. In the last 10 years drug metabolism and physicochemical *in vitro* screening methods have increasingly been introduced. In recent years these methods more and more became medium to high throughput in order to cope with increasing numbers of compounds to evaluate after HTS.

Although HTS seems to be a very efficient approach, it must be stressed that there is also a high cost associated with it. Interest is thus shifting to prediction and simulation of molecular properties, which might hopefully lead to overall more efficient processes.

The next vague of tools will be around computational or *in silico* ADME approaches. These will allow to include ADME into the design of combinatorial libraries, the evaluation of virtual libraries, as well as in selecting the most promising compounds to go through a battery of *in vitro* screens, possibly even replacing some of these experimental screens. Several of these computational tools are currently under development as will be discussed in this volume.

For reasons of convenience for the patient and compliance to the therapy, most drugs are administered orally. To keep the dose at the lowest possible level, high oral absorption and high bioavailability are prime properties to optimise in a new drug. Drug bioavailability is the outcome of a complex chain of events, and is among others influenced by the drug's solubility, permeability through the gastro-intestinal wall, and its first pass gut wall and liver metabolism. Excluding liver metabolism, all other factors are characterized by the term oral absorption. Per-

meability through the gut wall can be favoured or hindered through the effect of various transporter proteins such as P-glycoprotein. Our increased knowledge and understanding of all of these processes involved in permeability, oral absorption and bioavailability will make predictive tools more robust.

This volume gives an overview of the current status and an outlook to future more reliable predictive approaches. It is subdivided in five sections dealing with studies of membrane permeability and oral absorption, drug dissolution and solubility, the role of transporters and metabolism in oral absorption, computational approaches to drug absorption and bioavailability, and finally with certain drug development issues.

The series editors would like to thank Han van de Waterbeemd, Hans Lennernäs, and Per Artursson for their enthusiasm to put together this book and to work with such a fine selection of authors. We also express our gratitude to Frank Weinreich and Gudrun Walter of Wiley-VCH for their valuable contributions to this project.

March 2003

Raimund Mannhold, Düsseldorf Hugo Kubinyi, Weisenheim am Sand Gerd Folkers, Zürich

Foreword

This book aims at bringing together the strategies and tools currently available to investigate and make predictions about oral absorption and bioavailability of drugs in humans. Ideally, such predictive models can be used in drug discovery from the design of compounds and libraries throughout lead optimisation to clinical candidate selection. This book also aims to discuss more complex *in vivo* aspects of oral drug delivery.

The volume is divided into five sections. Part one looks at the experimental study of membrane permeability and oral absorption. In Part two, problems of measuring and prediction solubility, as one of the key determinants in the absorption process, will be discussed in detail. In the next part, progress in the science around transporter proteins and gut wall metabolism and their effect on the overall absorption process is presented. Part four looks at the *in silico* approaches and models to predict permeability, absorption and bioavailability. In the last part of the book, a number of drug development issues will be highlighted, which could have an important impact of the overall delivery strategies for oral pharmaceutical products.

In summary, progress in predicting oral absorption is based on a much better understanding of the transport processes across the intestinal epithelium along the gastrointestinal tract. The identification of the key physicochemical properties, and in addition the identification of key transporter proteins and metabolising enzymes in the gut wall has led to the development of new *in vitro* and *in vivo* screens that allow reasonably accurate estimates of oral absorption in man to be made. Predicting bioavailability is more challenging, but very promising progress has been made in recent years, both via the combination of several *in vitro* measures, as well as the development of predictive *in silico* tools. In many cases, the validity and the accuracy of the applied methods have been investigated to some extent, but more mechanistic research is needed in order to improve the performance of the various methods used in this field of drug development.

We are very grateful to the many contributors to this book. Their insightful chapters are the body of this book. Some were prepared to stand in at the last minute, and still delivered within the deadline, which is always a relief to the editors. Finally we thank Frank Weinreich for his continuous encouragement and light pressure to get the chapters in press on time.

December 2002, Sandwich Uppsala Uppsala

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Contents

Preface

xvii

	Foreword xix
	List of Authors xxi
1	Studies of Membrane Permeability and Oral Absorption 1
1	Physico-chemical Approaches to Drug Absorption 3
	Han van de Waterbeemd
	Abbreviations 3
	Symbols 3
1.1	Introduction 4
1.2	Drug-like Properties 5
1.3	Dissolution and Solubility 6
1.3.1	Calculated Solubility 7
1.4	Ionization (pK _a) 7
1.5	Lipophilicity 8
1.5.1	Calculated log P 9
1.6	Molecular Size and Shape 9
1.6.1	Calculated Size Descriptors 9
1.7	Hydrogen Bonding 9
1.7.1	Calculated Hydrogen-Bonding Descriptors 10
1.8	Amphiphilicity 11
1.9	Permeability 11
1.9.1	Artificial Membranes 11
1.9.2	IAM, ILC, MEKC, and BMC 12
1.9.3	Liposome Partitioning 13
1.9.4	Biosensors 13
1.9.5	Ghost Erythrocytes and Diffusion Constants 13
	References 14
2	High-throughput Measurement of log D and pK _a 21
	John E. A. Comer
	Abbreviations 21
	Symbols 21

vi	Contents
----	----------

2.1	Introduction 22
2.2	Relationship between Ionization and Lipophilicity 24
2.3	Measuring log D 26
2.3.1	Shake-flask Method 26
2.3.2	pH-metric Method 27
2.3.3	Direct Chromatographic Methods 28
2.3.3.1	Chromatographic Hydrophobicity Index (CHI) 28
2.3.3.2	Microemulsion Electrokinetic Chromatography (MEEKC) 29
2.3.3.3	Chromatography in the Presence of Octanol 29
2.3.3.4	Reversed-Phase Chromatography 30
2.3.3.5	Liquid-Liquid Partition Chromatography 30
2.4	Measuring pK _a 32
2.4.1	Review of Methods 32
2.4.2	The Effect of Co-solvents on pK _a 34
2.4.3	pH-Metric Titration 34
2.4.4	Hybrid pH-Metric/UV Method 35
2.4.5	Other Methods 35
2.4.6	pH Gradient Titration 36
2.5	Some Thoughts about High-throughput Analytical Chemistry 39
	Acknowledgments 41
	References 42
3	High-throughput Measurement of Permeability Profiles 46
	Alex Avdeef
	Abbreviations 46
	Symbols 46
3.1	Introduction 47
3.2	Key Historical Developments in Artificial-Membrane Permeability
	Measurement 47
3.3	The Ideal <i>in vitro</i> Artificial Membrane Permeability Model 52
3.3.1	Lipid Compositions in Biological Membranes 52
3.3.2	Permeability–pH Considerations 53
3.3.3	Role of Serum Proteins 54
3.3.4	Effects of Cosolvents, Bile Acids, and other Surfactants 55
3.3.5	Components of the Ideal 56
3.4	New Directions in PAMPA 56
3.4.1	Concentrated and Charged Phospholipid Membranes 56
3.4.2	Gradient-pH Permeability Equation 57
3.4.3	Permeability Measurements: High-phospholipid in Surfactant-free Solutions 58
3.4.4	Membrane Retention Measurements: High-phospholipid in Surfactant-
3	free Solutions 59
3.4.5	Egg Lecithin and the Degree of Negative Charge 60
3.4.6	Summary: Increasing Phospholipid Content in the Absence of Sink
	Conditions 60

3.4.7	Effects of Surfactant on High-phospholipid Membrane Permeability and Retention 61
3.4.8	Quality and Usefulness of the UV Spectra 63
3.4.9	Iso-pH and Gradient-pH Mapping in 2% DOPC-Dodecane 65
3.4.10	Iso-pH Mapping in 20% Soy Lecithin-Dodecane, with Surfactant 68
3.4.11	Predictions of <i>in vivo</i> Human Jejunal Permeabilities using the Improved 20% Soy Lecithin with Surfactant <i>in vitro</i> PAMPA Technique 68 Acknowledgments 69
	References 69
4	Caco-2 and Emerging Alternatives for Prediction of Intestinal Drug Transport:
	A General Overview 72
	Per Artursson and Staffan Tavelin
	Abbreviations 72
	Symbols 72
4.1	Introduction 72
4.2	Research Opportunities with the Caco-2 Cell Model 73
4.2.1	Transport Mechanisms 73
4.2.2	Prediction of Drug Permeability In Vivo 74
4.3	Limitations of Caco-2 Cells in Predicting Intestinal Drug Transport 76
4.3.1	Technical Issues 76
4.3.2	Limitations Related to Transport Studies and Their Solutions 77
4.3.2.1	Active Transport 77
4.3.2.2	Passive Transport 80
4.4	Conclusion 82
	Acknowledgements 82
	References 82
5	Cell Cultures in Drug Discovery: An Industrial Perspective 90
	Anna-Lena Ungell and Johan Karlsson
	Abbreviations 90
	Symbols 91
5.1	Introduction 91
5.2	Permeability Screening in Different Phases of Discovery 93
5.3	Cell Cultures for Assessment of Intestinal Permeability 94
5.3.1	Caco-2 95
5.3.2	MDCK Cells 97
5.3.3	2/4/A1 Cells 97
5.3.4	HT29 98
5.3.5	Other Cell Lines 99
5.4	Screening for Intestinal Permeability 99
5.4.1	Caco-2 Culture and Transport Experiments 99
5.4.2	Automated Caco-2 Assay 101
5.4.3	Quality Control and Standardization of Caco-2 Assay 103
5.4.4	Correlation to Fraction of Oral Dose Absorbed 104

/iii	Contents	
	5.4.5	Optimization of Experimental Conditions: pH 108
	5.4.6	Optimizing Experimental Conditions: Solubility and BSA 109
	5.5	Mechanistic Use of Cell Models 111
	5.5.1	Paracellular Pathway 111
	5.5.2	Transcellular Pathway 113
	5.5.3	Carrier-mediated Transport 113
	5.5.4	Evaluation of Metabolism During Transport 116
	5.5.5	Evaluation of Toxicity 117
	5.5.6	Computational Models for Prediction of Intestinal Permeability 11
	5.6	Concluding Remarks 120
		References 120
	6	Use of Animals for the Determination of Absorption and Bioavailability
		Chris Logan
		Abbreviations 132
		Symbols 132
	6.1	Introduction 133
	6.1.1	ADME/PK in Drug Discovery 133
	6.1.2	The Need for Prediction 134
	6.2	Consideration of Absorption and Bioavailability 136
	6.3	Choice of Animal Species 138
	6.4	Methods 139
	6.4.1	Radiolabels 139
	6.4.2	Ex vivo Methods for Absorption 140
	6.4.2.1	Static Method 140
	6.4.2.2	Perfusion Methods 140
	6.4.3	In vivo Methods 141
	6.5	In vivo Methods for Determining Bioavailability 141
	6.5.1	Cassette Dosing 141
	6.5.2	Semi-simultaneous Dosing 142
	6.5.3	Hepatic Portal Vein Cannulation 143
	6.6	Inhalation 144
	6.7	Relevance of Animal Models 145
	6.7.1	Models for Prediction of Absorption 145
	6.7.2	Models for Prediction of Volume 145
	6.8	Prediction of Dose in Man 146
	6.8.1	Allometry 146
	6.8.2	Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetics 147
	6.8.3	Prediction of Human Dose 148
	6.9	Conclusion 150
		References 150
	7	In vivo Permeability Studies in the Gastrointestinal Tract of Humans

Niclas Petri and Hans Lennernäs
Abbreviations 155

Symbols 155

7.1	Introduction 156
7.2	Pharmacokinetic Definition of Intestinal Absorption (fa), Presystemic
	Metabolism (E _G and E _H) and Absolute Bioavailability (F) of Drugs
	Administered Orally to Humans 160
7.3	Methodological Aspects on in vivo Intestinal Perfusion
	Techniques 160
7.4	Paracellular Passive Diffusion 165
7.5	Transcellular Passive Diffusion 166
7.6	Carrier-mediated Intestinal Absorption 169
7.7	Jejunal Transport and Metabolism 172
7.7	Regional Differences in Transport and Metabolism of Drugs 179
7.9	Conclusion 180
7.9	
	References 180
	Des B'esta's and Catalities 100
II	Drug Dissolution and Solubility 189
8	Gastrointestinal Dissolution and Absorption of Drugs 191
	Gladys E. Granero, Chandrasekharan Ramachandran, and Gordon L. Amidon
	Abbreviations 191
	Symbols 191
8.1	General Dissolution 192
8.2	Absorption Models 197
8.3	Gastrointestinal Variables 200
8.3.1	Bile Salts 201
8.3.2	Gastric Emptying 201
8.3.2.1	Effect of Volume 202
8.3.2.2	Effect of Size and Density of the Drug Particle 203
8.3.2.3	Effect of pH 203
8.3.3	Gastrointestinal Transit 203
8.3.4	Gastrointestinal pH 204
8.4	Solubilization and Dissolution 205
8.4.1	Surfactants 206
8.4.2	Effect of Surfactants and pH on Dissolution Rate 206
8.4.3	Effect of pH 207
8.4.4	Bio-relevant Dissolution Media 207
8.4.5	Particle Size 208
8.4.6	Biopharmaceutics Classification System: Redefining BSC Solubility Clas
	Boundary 209
	References 210
9	Aqueous Solubility in Discovery, Chemistry, and Assay Changes 215
,	Chris Lipinski
	Abbreviations 215
	Symbols 215
	Introduction 215
9.2	Compound Synthesis 216
1.4	Compound Symulcus 210