

## § 320.24

## 21 CFR Ch. I (4-1-01 Edition)

intentional and are reflected in the labeling, are not essential to the attainment of effective body drug concentrations on chronic use, and are considered medically insignificant for the particular drug product studied.

[57 FR 17999, Apr. 28, 1992]

### § 320.24 Types of evidence to establish bioavailability or bioequivalence.

(a) Bioavailability or bioequivalence may be determined by several *in vivo* and *in vitro* methods. FDA may require *in vivo* or *in vitro* testing, or both, to establish the bioavailability of a drug product or the bioequivalence of specific drug products. Information on bioequivalence requirements for specific products is included in the current edition of FDA's publication "Approved Drug Products with Therapeutic Equivalence Evaluations" and any current supplement to the publication. The selection of the method used to meet an *in vivo* or *in vitro* testing requirement depends upon the purpose of the study, the analytical methods available, and the nature of the drug product. Applicants shall conduct bioavailability and bioequivalence testing using the most accurate, sensitive, and reproducible approach available among those set forth in paragraph (b) of this section. The method used must be capable of demonstrating bioavailability or bioequivalence, as appropriate, for the product being tested.

(b) The following *in vivo* and *in vitro* approaches, in descending order of accuracy, sensitivity, and reproducibility, are acceptable for determining the bioavailability or bioequivalence of a drug product.

(1)(i) An *in vivo* test in humans in which the concentration of the active ingredient or active moiety, and, when appropriate, its active metabolite(s), in whole blood, plasma, serum, or other appropriate biological fluid is measured as a function of time. This approach is particularly applicable to dosage forms intended to deliver the active moiety to the bloodstream for systemic distribution within the body; or

(ii) An *in vitro* test that has been correlated with and is predictive of human *in vivo* bioavailability data; or

(iii) An *in vivo* test in animals that has been correlated with and is predictive of human bioavailability data.

(2) An *in vivo* test in humans in which the urinary excretion of the active moiety, and, when appropriate, its active metabolite(s), are measured as a function of time. The intervals at which measurements are taken should ordinarily be as short as possible so that the measure of the rate of elimination is as accurate as possible. Depending on the nature of the drug product, this approach may be applicable to the category of dosage forms described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section. This method is not appropriate where urinary excretion is not a significant mechanism of elimination.

(3) An *in vivo* test in humans in which an appropriate acute pharmacological effect of the active moiety, and, when appropriate, its active metabolite(s), are measured as a function of time if such effect can be measured with sufficient accuracy, sensitivity, and reproducibility. This approach is applicable to the category of dosage forms described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section only when appropriate methods are not available for measurement of the concentration of the moiety, and, when appropriate, its active metabolite(s), in biological fluids or excretory products but a method is available for the measurement of an appropriate acute pharmacological effect. This approach may be particularly applicable to dosage forms that are not intended to deliver the active moiety to the bloodstream for systemic distribution.

(4) Well-controlled clinical trials in humans that establish the safety and effectiveness of the drug product, for purposes of establishing bioavailability, or appropriately designed comparative clinical trials, for purposes of demonstrating bioequivalence. This approach is the least accurate, sensitive, and reproducible of the general approaches for determining bioavailability or bioequivalence. For dosage forms intended to deliver the active moiety to the bloodstream for systemic distribution, this approach may be considered acceptable only when analytical methods cannot be developed to permit use of one of the approaches

outlined in paragraphs (b)(1)(i) and (b)(2) of this section, when the approaches described in paragraphs (b)(1)(ii), (b)(1)(iii), and (b)(3) of this section are not available. This approach may also be considered sufficiently accurate for determining the bioavailability or bioequivalence of dosage forms intended to deliver the active moiety locally, e.g., topical preparations for the skin, eye, and mucous membranes; oral dosage forms not intended to be absorbed, e.g., an antacid or radiopaque medium; and bronchodilators administered by inhalation if the onset and duration of pharmacological activity are defined.

(5) A currently available *in vitro* test acceptable to FDA (unusually a dissolution rate test) that ensures human *in vivo* bioavailability.

(6) Any other approach deemed adequate by FDA to establish bioavailability or bioequivalence.

(c) FDA may, notwithstanding prior requirements for establishing bioavailability or bioequivalence, require *in vivo* testing in humans of a product at any time if the agency has evidence that the product:

(1) May not produce therapeutic effects comparable to a pharmaceutical equivalent or alternative with which it is intended to be used interchangeably;

(2) May not be bioequivalent to a pharmaceutical equivalent or alternative with which it is intended to be used interchangeably; or

(3) Has greater than anticipated potential toxicity related to pharmacokinetic or other characteristics.

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**§ 320.25 Guidelines for the conduct of an *in vivo* bioavailability study.**

(a) *Guiding principles.* (1) The basic principle in an *in vivo* bioavailability study is that no unnecessary human research should be done.

(2) An *in vivo* bioavailability study shall not be conducted in humans if an appropriate animal model exists and correlation of results in animals and humans has been demonstrated. If an appropriate animal model does not exist, however, an *in vivo* bioavailability study shall ordinarily be

done in normal adults under standardized conditions.

(3) In some situations, an *in vivo* bioavailability study in humans may preferably and more properly be done in suitable patients. Critically ill patients shall not be included in an *in vivo* bioavailability study unless the attending physician determines that there is a potential benefit to the patient.

(b) *Basic design.* The basic design of an *in vivo* bioavailability study is determined by the following:

(1) The scientific questions to be answered.

(2) The nature of the reference material and the dosage form to be tested.

(3) The availability of analytical methods.

(4) Benefit-risk considerations in regard to testing in humans.

(c) *Comparison to a reference material.* *In vivo* bioavailability testing of a drug product shall be in comparison to an appropriate reference material unless some other approach is more appropriate for valid scientific reasons.

(d) *Previously unmarketed active drug ingredients or therapeutic moieties.* (1) The purpose of an *in vivo* bioavailability study involving a drug product containing an active drug ingredient or therapeutic moiety that has not been approved for marketing is to determine:

(i) The bioavailability of the formulation proposed for marketing; and

(ii) The essential pharmacokinetic characteristics of the active drug ingredient or therapeutic moiety, such as the rate of absorption, the extent of absorption, the half-life of the therapeutic moiety *in vivo*, and the rate of excretion and/or metabolism. Dose proportionality of the active drug ingredient or the therapeutic moiety needs to be established after single-dose administration and in certain instances after multiple-dose administration. This characterization is a necessary part of the investigation of the drug to support drug labeling.

(2) The reference material in such a bioavailability study should be a solution or suspension containing the same quantity of the active drug ingredient or therapeutic moiety as the formulation proposed for marketing.