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Tabarak Mohammed

Department of Chemistry, College of Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq.,
tabarkchemist@gmail.com

Hind Hadi

Department of Chemistry, College of Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq.,
hind.h@sc.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Normal and Reverse Flow Injection-Spectrophotometric Determination of Doxycycline Hyclate in Bulk and Pharmaceutical Samples

Tabarak Mohammed^{ID}*, Hind Hadi^{ID}

Department of Chemistry, College of Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq

ABSTRACT

The present paper reports the development and validation of an analytical method for doxycycline hyclate (DOX) quantification in pure and dosage forms by normal and reverse flow injection analysis (FIA) techniques. Two types of FIA approaches were employed to automate a diazotization coupling reaction of DOX with diazotized benzidine dihydrochloride. Red azo dye was formed rapidly and measured at maximum wavelength of 488 nm. Calibration curves were prepared over different DOX concentrations with linearity ranges of 10–250 and 1–180 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ for normal and reverse FIA systems respectively with the limits of detection of 2.95 and 0.46 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ and limits of quantitation of 9.83 and 1.55 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, respectively. The developed approaches were then used to determine DOX in pharmaceutical dosage forms with high percentage recoveries and low %RSD. In concordance with the standard method, the proposed techniques demonstrated rapid detection and applicability in pharmaceutical analysis.

Keywords: Benzidine dihydrochloride, Doxycycline hyclate, Diazotization, Flow injection analysis, Spectrophotometry

Introduction

Doxycycline hyclate (DOX), chemically named, hydrochloride hemiethanol hemihydrate of (4S,4aR,5S,5aR,6R,12aS)-4-(dimethylamino)-3,5,10,12,12a-pentahydroxy-6-methyl-1,11-dioxo-1,4,4a,5,5a,6,11,12a-octa-hydrotetracene-2-Carboxamide, is an antibiotic derived from the tetracycline family and has broad-spectrum bacteriostatic action against prokaryotes and protozoan parasites.^{1,2} DOX, is effective against a variety of gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria in a broad spectrum.^{3–5} Due to its high absorption and extended half-life, DOX is preferred over other tetracyclines in some illnesses. It is commonly used to treat pelvic inflammatory disease, syphilis, sinusitis, chlamydia, and chronic prostatitis.⁶ A review of the literature revealed that numerous analytical techniques were used for the determination DOX

in biological and pharmaceutical samples including micellar electrokinetic capillary chromatography,⁷ UV-visible spectrophotometry,^{8–10} high-performance liquid chromatography,^{11–13} flow injection analysis (FIA)^{14–17} and liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry.¹⁸ The FIA technique combined with spectrophotometry has received a lot of attention among other analytical techniques. This technique is widely used because of its excellent reproducibility, ease of use, and low cost of apparatus.^{19–21} The two most commonly used forms of flow injection analysis techniques are normal FIA, which includes injecting a small quantity of sample into a stream of reagent that travels through a small hole tube to a spectrophotometer for measuring the analyte.^{22–24} While in reverse flow mode, the reagent is injected into the sample stream.^{25–27} The main advantages of using the reverse mode are reduced reagent consumption (especially expensive or hazardous

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: tabarkchemist@gmail.com (T. Mohammed), hind.h@sc.uobaghdad.edu.iq (H. Hadi).

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reagents),^{28,29} improved sample sensitivity, and the determination of many analytes on the same sample by injecting various reagents.^{30–32}

In this study, Flow injection methods were used to automate a sensitive diazotization and coupling reaction between DOX and diazotized benzidine dihydrochloride (DBZ). A red azo dye with a maximum wavelength of 488 nm was created and quantified using spectrophotometry.

The aim of the present work estimation of doxycycline hyclate in bulk and pharmaceutical forms using conventional and reverse FIA and comparative study was established between the two forms of FIA after they had been optimized.

Materials and methods

Experimental

Instruments and manifold design

The absorbance was measured using a single-beam UV-Vis spectrophotometer (Shimadzu 1240) equipped with a cell made of quartz (50 μ L and 1-cm path length). FIA manifold contained peristaltic pump (Ismatec, Switzerland) utilized for pumping solutions, and an injection valve (Rheodyne, USA) utilized to supply precise amounts of sample solution with different injection volumes. The components of the manifold were connected by transport lines made of polytetrafluoroethylene tubes with an inner diameter of 0.8 mm, while the reaction coil (RC) was constructed using Teflon tubes with a 0.5 mm inner diameter. Two types of double channels FIA manifolds (normal and reverse) were used for the investigation of DOX in its pure and pharmaceutical forms, Fig. 1.

The normal FIA manifold involved injecting 100 μ L of DOX solution into the sodium hydroxide solution

stream via the injection valve, then combined with the reagent stream (DBZ) at the Y-link, and mixed inside the reaction coil. On the other side, in the reverse FIA manifold, 100 μ L of DBZ solution was injected into the DOX solution stream through the injection valve, then combined with the base stream and mixed inside the reaction coil. For the nFIA and rFIA methods, the solutions were pumped into FIA manifolds at a rate of 5.8 and 4 mL/min respectively, using a peristaltic pump. Finally, the red azo dye produced from the coupling reaction of DOX and DBZ, was measured spectrophotometrically at 488 nm.

Reagents and solutions

All reagents used were of analytical grade, and all solutions were prepared using distilled water. Doxycycline hyclate standard (99.9% w/w) was supplied by the general pharmaceutical manufacturing company (Samarra/Iraq). Benzidine dihydrochloride and hydrochloric acid (36 % w/w) were obtained from Merck (Germany). Sodium hydroxide and sodium nitrite were obtained from DBZ (UK). Pharmaceutical products of doxycycline purchased from local pharmacies included: VIBRAMYCIN®/pfizer-USA, capsules-100 mg, and Accord®/UK, capsules-100 mg of doxycycline monohydrate. Stock standard solution of DOX (500 μ g/mL) was prepared by dissolving 0.05 g of standard drug in 100 mL distilled water. Working standard solutions of DOX were prepared by simple dilution of stock solution with distilled water. Diazotized benzidine dihydrochloride (DBZ, 1 mM) solution was prepared by weighing 0.0257 g reagent and dissolving it in 5 mL of distilled water before transferring it to a 100 mL volumetric flask. Next, 3 mL of HCl (1M) was added, and the mixture was placed in an ice bath. Finally, 0.0069 g of NaNO₂ was added, and the flask was completed to the mark with distilled water. A stock solution of 0.1 M sodium hydroxide was prepared by dissolving an accurate weight of the base in distilled water.

Preparation of the solution for pharmaceutical applications

Twenty commercial pharmaceutical forms (tablets and/or capsules) with an active ingredient of 100 mg of doxycycline monohydrate were accurately weighed and powdered. An accurately weighted amount equivalent to 50 mg of DOX was dissolved in distilled water and transferred to a 100 mL volumetric flask, then diluted with distilled water and filtered by filter paper. The filtrate was diluted with distilled water to obtain the needed diluted solutions. Lastly, the DOX assay was completed according to the suggested FIA methods.

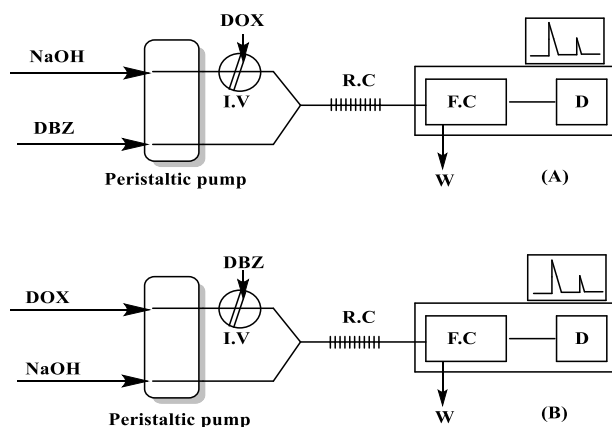


Fig. 1. FIA manifolds: normal (A) and reverse (B) for determination of DOX. (DBZ: diazotized benzidine; W; waste; D; detector; F.C; flow cell; I.V; injection valve; R.C; reaction coil).

Procedure for normal FIA and reverse FIA

The general procedure for nFIA was performed as follows: A 100 μL amount of standard solution of DOX range from 10–250 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ was injected by injection valve to the stream of 0.2 M sodium hydroxide solution, then combined with a stream of 1 mM of DBZ at the Y-link. Later, the solutions of two streams were mixed inside the reaction coil (75 cm) with a total flow rate of 5.8 mL/min. In contrast, the reverse FIA includes injecting 100 μL of 4 mM of DBZ into a stream of DOX solution ranging from 1–180 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ then combined with the stream of 0.1 M sodium hydroxide and mixed at 4 mL/min flow rate in a 50 cm reaction coil. For both methods, the red azo dye product was measured spectrophotometrically at 488 nm. All chemical and physical variables were optimized using 75 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ of DOX.

Results and discussion

Batch investigations demonstrated that when DOX was reacted and combined with the diazotized reagent in an alkaline medium, a red azo dye was developed. The reaction product formed in less than five seconds and remained stable for at least two hours. The aromatic amino group in the benzidine dihydrochloride molecule is diazotized in the presence of nitrous acid, resulting in the formation of diazonium ions. The coupling reaction between doxycycline and diazonium salt occurs at the para position of the phenolic group in doxycycline. The absorption spectrum of the colored product against the reagent blank displayed a distinctive wavelength at 488 nm as shown in Fig. 2.

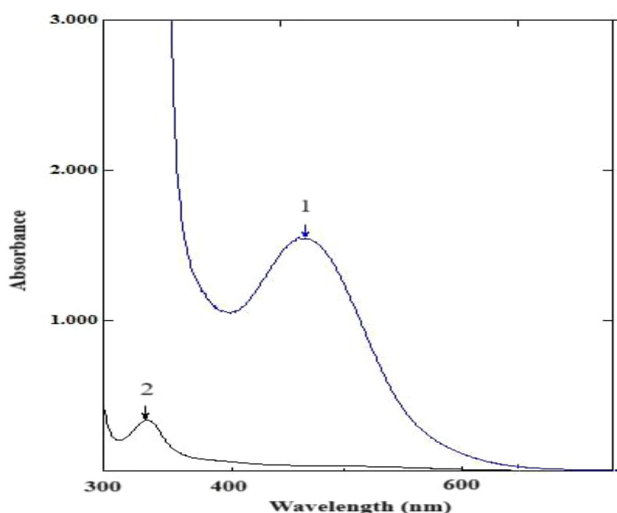


Fig. 2. Absorption spectra of (1) the red dye formed by reacting 50 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ of DOX with DBZ measured versus the blank, and (2) the blank versus distilled water.

Optimization of flow injection parameters

A thorough investigation was conducted on the chemical and physical parameters that were most affecting the red dye product's development and the stability of the analytical signals for both FIA systems.

Selection of the manifold design

The reaction medium and reagent are the two main components of the reaction used for the DOX analysis. As a result, different double-channel manifold designs were examined for both normal and reverse FIA techniques to carry out different reaction pathways. For nFIA and rFIA, manifold B in Fig. 3 offered the highest absorption intensity and good precision, and it was selected to continue utilization.

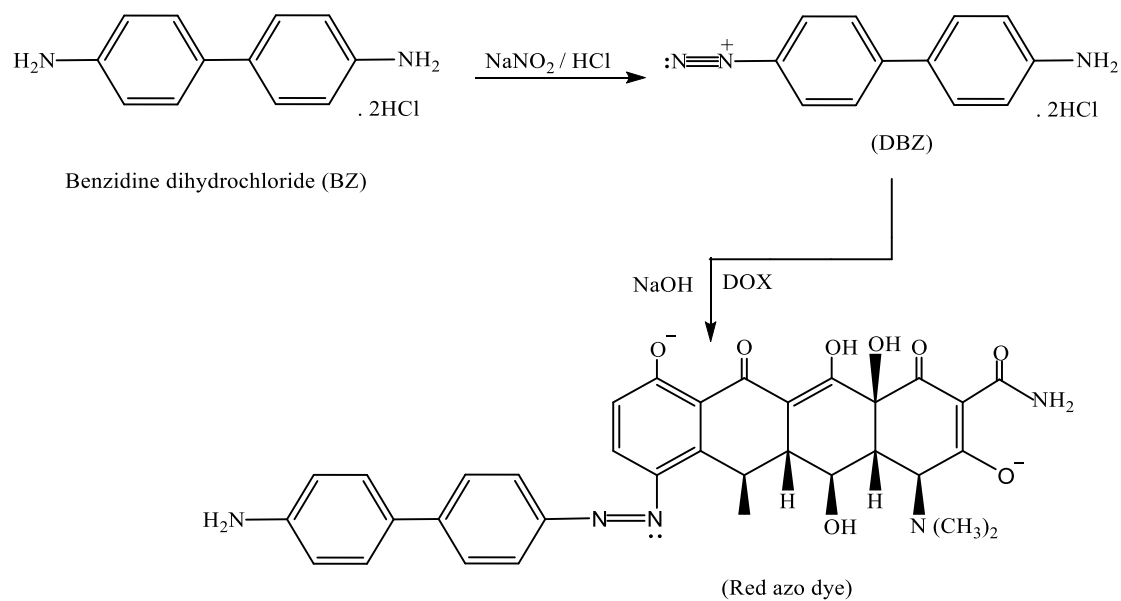
Study of the chemical parameters

The effect of different concentrations of the reagent (DBZ) on the sensitivity of the colored product in normal and reverse FIA systems was examined within ranges of 0.1–6.0 and 1.0–7.0 mM for normal and reverse FIA systems, respectively. Maximum analytical signals were obtained for the concentrations 1 and 4 mM for the normal and reverse systems, respectively, Fig. 4A, and were used for further work. DOX molecule has several phenolic groups. Previous research showed that the presence of an alkaline medium is required for the coupling reaction to convert the Ar-OH group of BZ to a reactive phenoxide group.³³ As a result, the influence of various bases was examined. According to the results in Fig. 4B, the greatest analytical signal was achieved when sodium hydroxide was utilized in both FIA systems. Additionally, for nFIA and rFIA methods, the concentrations of NaOH were examined between 0.01–1 and 0.02–1 M, respectively. The highest absorbance intensities were obtained at 0.2 M for normal and 0.1 M for reverse FIA systems, Fig. 4C.

Study of the physical parameters

Total flow rate

Flow rate is a significant physical factor since it affects the time necessary for the production of the colored product and, as a result, the sampling rate. Therefore, the effect of the total flow rate for the normal and reverse flow systems was investigated in the range of 1.77–10.73 mL/min. As shown in Fig. 5A, the analytical signals were increased as the flow rate increased to 5.83 and 4.0 mL/min for nFIA and rFIA systems, respectively, and then gradually decreased. The dispersion effect and shortened residence time may be responsible for the reduced analytical signal



Scheme 1. Proposed reaction pathway.

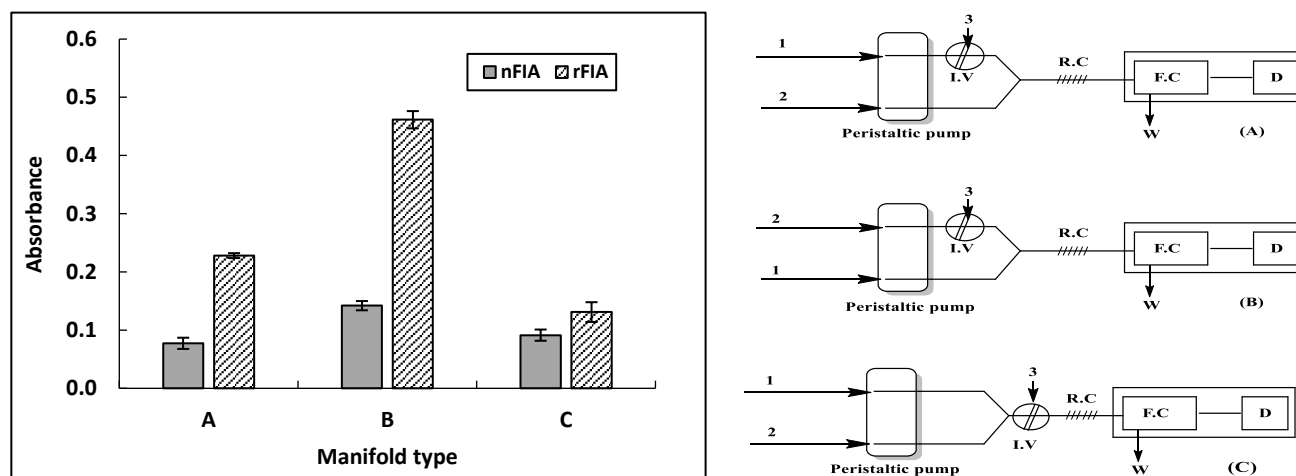


Fig. 3. Effect of manifold design (left) and the manifold designs (right). [For nFIA (1) DBZ, (2) NaOH, and (3) DOX, for rFIA (1) NaOH, (2) DOX, and (3) DBZ].

Table 1. Selected FIA factors for the assay of DOX using normal and reverse FIA methods.

| FIA factors | Studied range | | Optimum value | |
|------------------------------|--|---------|---------------|------|
| | nFIA | rFIA | nFIA | rFIA |
| Chemical factors | | | | |
| Conc. of DBZ (mM) | 0.1–6.0 | 1.0–7.0 | 1 | 4 |
| Type of base | NaOH, KOH, NH ₄ OH, Na ₂ CO ₃ | | NaOH | NaOH |
| Conc. of NaOH (M) | 0.02–1 | | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Physical factors | | | | |
| Total flow rate (mL/min) | 1.77–10.73 | | 5.83 | 4.0 |
| Length of reaction coil (cm) | 0–250 | | 75 | 50 |
| Injected volume (μL) | 50–250 | | 100 | 100 |

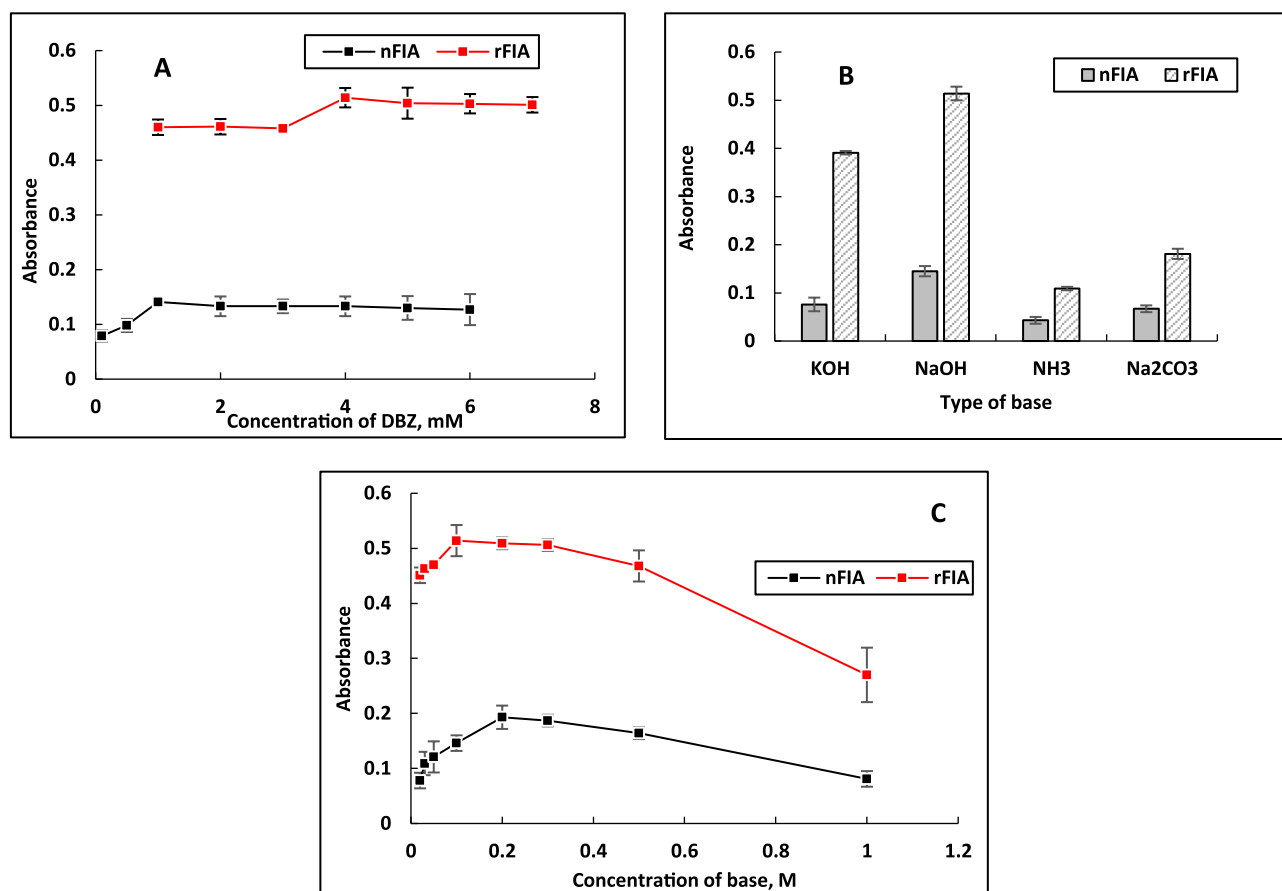


Fig. 4. Study of (A) conc. of DBZ, (B) type of base, (C) conc. of NaOH.

Table 2. Analytical characteristics of the suggested methods.

| Parameter | Value | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| | nFIA | rFIA |
| Regression equation | $y = 0.0025x + 0.0314$ | $y = 0.0055x + 0.1149$ |
| Linear range ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) | 10–250 | 1–180 |
| Correlation coefficient, r | 0.9995 | 0.9992 |
| Detection limit ($S/N = 3$) ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) | 2.95 | 0.46 |
| Limit of quantification ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) | 9.83 | 1.55 |
| Molar absorptivity, ϵ (L/mol cm) | 1.28×10^3 | 2.82×10^3 |
| Sandell's sensitivity, S ($\mu\text{g/cm}^2$) | 0.40 | 0.18 |
| Reproducibility, % | <1.70 | <1.12 |
| Recovery, % | 99.11–99.73 | 98.15–99.90 |
| Slope, b ($\text{mL}/\mu\text{g}$) | 0.0025 | 0.0055 |
| Intercept, a | 0.0314 | 0.1149 |
| Standard deviation of residuals, $S_{y/x}$ | 9.16×10^{-3} | 1.50×10^{-2} |
| Standard deviation of slope, S_b | 3.39×10^{-5} | 7.64×10^{-5} |
| Standard deviation of intercept, S_a | 4.84×10^{-3} | 7.78×10^{-3} |

at high flow rates. As a result, it was determined that 5.83 and 4.0 mL/min, respectively, were the optimal rates for nFIA and rFIA systems.

Reaction coil and injected sample volume

To investigate the effect of reaction coil length, several lengths of reaction coil ranging from 0–200 cm

were used. For normal and reverse FIA methods, the reaction response reached the highest value at 75 and 50 cm, respectively. Due to the rise in dispersion, the response of both FIA systems began to steadily diminish as the length of the reaction coil increased by more than 75 and 50 cm, for both FIA systems respectively, Fig. 5B. As a result, 75 and 50 cm coil lengths

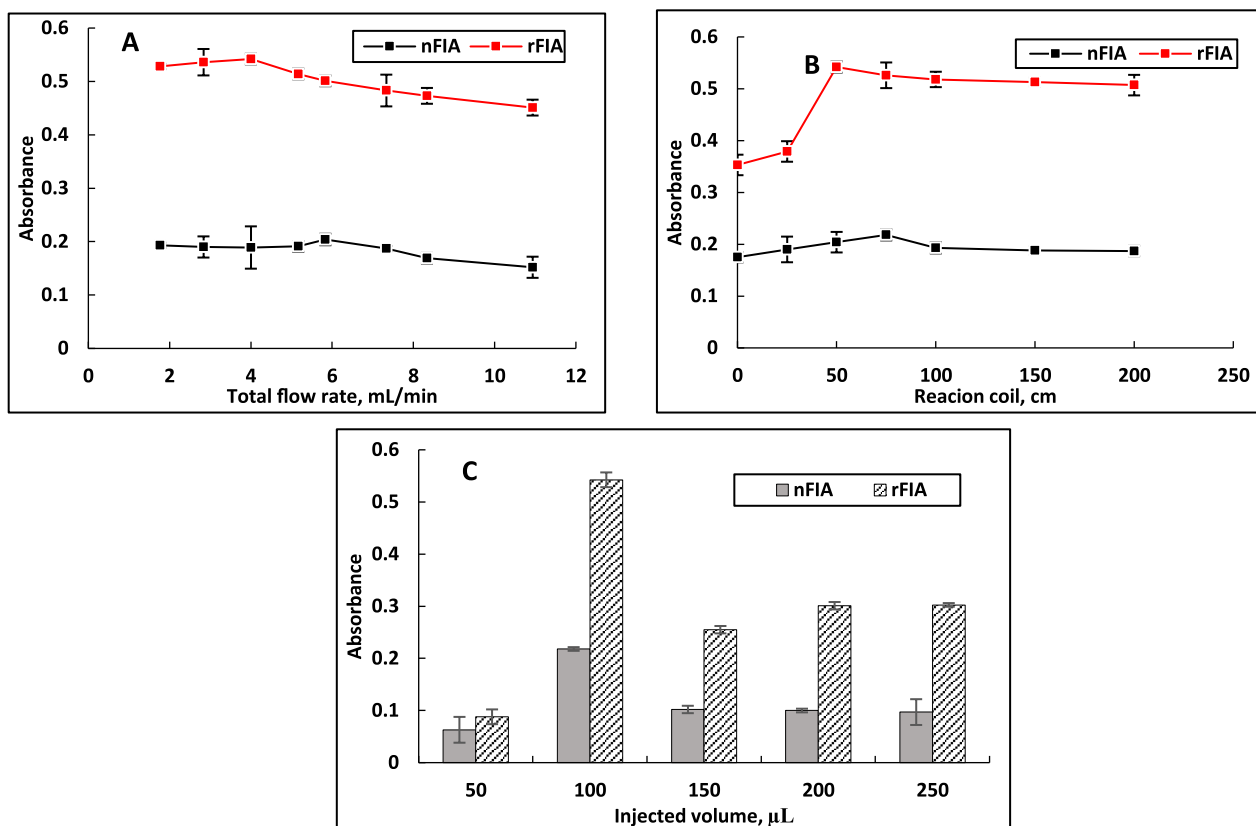


Fig. 5. Influence of (A) flow rate; (B) reaction coil length; and (C) injected volume.

Table 3. Intra and inter-day accuracy and precision for determination of DOX using FIA systems.

| Method | Taken conc. (μg/mL) | Intra-day (n = 5) | | | | Inter-day (n = 15) | | | |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
| | | Found conc. (μg/mL) | Relative error (%) | Recovery (%) | RSD (%) | Taken conc. (μg/mL) | Relative error (%) | Recovery (%) | RSD (%) |
| nFIA | 60 | 59.84 | -0.27 | 99.73 | 1.70 | 59.68 | -0.53 | 99.47 | 1.85 |
| | 90 | 89.20 | -0.89 | 99.11 | 0.81 | 89.76 | -0.27 | 99.73 | 1.26 |
| | 150 | 149.44 | -0.37 | 99.63 | 0.67 | 150.05 | 0.03 | 100.03 | 1.43 |
| rFIA | 60 | 60.56 | 0.93 | 100.93 | 0.79 | 61.21 | 2.02 | 102.02 | 0.78 |
| | 90 | 91.07 | 1.19 | 101.19 | 0.54 | 90.99 | 1.10 | 101.10 | 0.48 |
| | 150 | 149.80 | -0.13 | 99.87 | 0.40 | 149.99 | -0.01 | 99.99 | 0.36 |

were selected as optimum lengths. The optimal volume of analyte or reagent injected for both the normal and reverse FIA manifolds was investigated. In this study, several lengths of loop connected to the

injection valve with volumes ranging from 50–250 μL were used. The results in Fig. 5C showed that, for both methods, 100 μL of injected volume produced the maximum absorbance with good precision. Due to the

Table 4. Analysis of DOX in the presence of common excipients using nFIA.

| Excipients (1000 μg/mL) | Amount of DOX (μg/mL) | | (Rec. ± SD) % (n = 5) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| | Added | Found | |
| Glucose | 75 | 75.84 | 101.12 ± 0.42 |
| Polyvinylpyrrolidone | | 74.52 | 99.36 ± 0.31 |
| Talc | | 74.31 | 99.08 ± 0.16 |
| Mg stearate | | 76.13 | 101.51 ± 0.38 |
| Starch | | 74.93 | 99.91 ± 0.26 |
| All additives | | 74.38 | 99.17 ± 0.53 |

high sample-to-reagent volume ratio and increased dispersion, absorbance drops over 100 μL . Table 1 contains an overview of the optimal values for the investigated FIA variables.

Validation of the suggested methods

After examining all physical and chemical variables of both FIA systems, the calibration curves were produced under optimal conditions. Several standard DOX solutions were injected and/or pumped to determine the calibration graphs' linearity for normal and reverse FIA systems, respectively. Several statistical values are included in Table 2, together with the regression equations, slope, correlation coefficient, and molar absorptivity values. The results indicated sufficient accuracy, good linearity, and high sensitivity for DOX estimation.³⁴ The linearity of the calibration curve ranges from 10–250 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ (LOD 2.95 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, % RSD < 1.70, $n = 5$) for the nFIA method and 1–180 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ (LOD 0.46 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, %RSD < 1.12, $n = 5$) for rFIA. The small values of the standard deviation of the residuals, slope, and intercept revealed the precision of the proposed approaches as well as the minimal scattering of calibration curve points.

Reproducibility and accuracy of methods

The accuracy and precision of both normal and reverse FIA systems were tested by assaying three different concentrations of DOX solutions five replicates on the same day and over six consecutive days (intra and inter-day variation, respectively). For both methods, the results in Table 3 showed good precision (low values of RSD 0.67–1.70 and 0.40–0.79%, respectively) and a high accuracy (recovery values within the range of 99.11–99.73 and 99.87–101.19%, respectively).

Interferences effect

To evaluate the suitability of the proposed FIA methods, 75 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ of doxycycline was spiked with an excess concentration of various excipients (1000 $\mu\text{g/mL}$), which frequently accompany the medication in its dosage forms.³⁵ A good percentage of recoveries were obtained indicating no interference was observed from any of these excipients, indicating a high selectivity for determining the DOX in its dosage forms Table 4.

Sampling rate

The sampling frequency or sampling rate can be computed theoretically by observing the time interval between the injection of the sample and the appearance of the maximum absorbance. This duration was

equivalent to 42 and 49 seconds for nFIA and rFIA, respectively, and hence a sample rate of 85 and 73 samples per hour could be achieved for both normal and reverse FIA, respectively.

Assay of DOX in pharmaceutical forms

Two different types of commercial pharmaceutical forms (tablets and capsules) containing doxycycline monohydrate as active ingredient were analyzed to determine the applicability of the recommended FI methods. By spiking pharmaceutical applications at three concentration levels with varying amounts of DOX and analyzing them using the two FIA systems,³⁶ recovery tests proved the reliability of the presented procedures. Table 5 shows that the obtained spiking recoveries (calculated as the mean value of five determinations) ranged from 99.70–99.82 % and 99.19–99.49 % for normal and reverse FIA respectively, demonstrating the high accuracy of the methods and independence from the effect of the matrix. A statistical comparison was additionally conducted between the proposed FIA methods and UV method (measured at wavelength 278 nm)³⁷ using student's t and F tests,³⁸ and the results indicated a non-significant difference in accuracy and precision between the two methods.

Conclusion

The current study developed two types of FIA methods (normal and reverse) for sensitive determination of DOX in bulk and dosage forms without involving temperature control or a separation step. FIA methods provided a high sampling frequency (85 and 73 samples sample/h for nFIA and rFIA, respectively) as well as a wide range of linearity (10–250 and 1–180 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ for both systems respectively) when compared to the conventional batch methods. In addition, FIA procedures are regarded as economical and inexpensive when compared to other techniques such as GC, HPLC, and CE. In addition, when compared to other FIA-spectrophotometric methods, the reverse flow injection approach provided great sensitivity (LOD was less than 0.5 $\mu\text{g/mL}$) and suitability when utilizing toxic or costly chemicals. Acceptable recoveries (99.70–99.82% and 99.19–99.49% for nFIA and rFIA, respectively) and relative standard deviation values (RSD less than 2% for both methods) obtained from DOX analysis in various applications confirmed the accuracy and precision of both FIA methods. The suggested procedures were used successfully in the assessment of various pharmaceutical forms containing DOX.

Authors' declaration

- Conflicts of Interest: None.
- We hereby confirm that all the Figures and Tables in the manuscript are ours. Furthermore, any Figures and images, that are not ours, have been included with the necessary permission for re-publication, which is attached to the manuscript.
- No animal studies are present in the manuscript.
- No human studies are present in the manuscript
- Ethical Clearance: The project was approved by the local ethical committee at University of Baghdad.

Authors' contribution statement

H.H designed the study, performed the interpretation, drafting the MS, revision and proofreading. T.M. performed the experiments and analyzed the data, wrote the paper with input from all authors.

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التقدير الطيفي بطريقة الحقن الجرياني العادي والعكوس للدوكسي سايكلين هايكلت في صيغته النقية والمستحضرات الصيدلانية

تبارك محمد، هند هادي

قسم الكيمياء، كلية العلوم، جامعة بغداد، بغداد، العراق.

المستخلص

يتضمن هذا البحث تطوير وتقييم طريقة تحليلية لتقدير الدوكسي سايكلين هايكلت (DOX) في شكله النقي والادوية الصيدلانية عن طريق تقنيات التحليل الحقن الجرياني العادي (nFIA) و العكوس (rFIA). تم استخدام نوعين من طرق الحقن الجرياني عن طريق إتمام تفاعل الأزوتة والأزواج للدوكسي سايكلين (DOX) مع ثنائي هيدروكلوريد البنزدين المؤزوت حيث تتكون صبغة حمراء حساسة يتم قياسها عند الطول الموجي 488 نانومتر. تم اعداد منحنيات المعايرة لتراكيز مختلفة للدوكسي سايكلين (DOX) ضمن مدى خطي يتراوح بين 10-250 و 1-180 ميكروغرام/مل لكلا النظامين العادي والعكوس على التوالي. مع حدود الكشف 2.95 و 0.46 ميكروغرام/مل وحدود التقدير 9.83 و 1.5 ميكروغرام/مل. لكلا النظامين على التوالي. تم استخدام الطرق المطورة لتحديد الدوكسي سايكلين في اشكال الجرعات الصيدلانية مع نسبة استرداد عالية (Rec) ونسبة انحراف قياسي نسبي (RSD) منخفضة بالمقارنة مع الطريقة الطيفية. أظهرت التقنيات المقترحة كشفاً سريعاً وقابلية للتطبيق في تحليل المستحضرات الصيدلانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ثنائي هيدروكلوريد البنزدينو الدوكسي سايكلين هايكلت، أزوتة، تحليل الحقن الجرياني، القياس الطيفي.