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Development And Evaluation Of A Transdermal Drug Delivery System For Pain Management

Sunidhi Kumari[1], Saurav Kumar[2], Soham Koley[3], Syed Mohammad Abdulah[4*]

[1234*]Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Jharkhand Rai University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, 834010

ABSTRACT

For centuries, there have been all sorts of preparations applied to the skin for aesthetic and medicinal effects. However, until the 20th century, the skin had not yet become an acceptable avenue for drug delivery. Even the word "transdermal" was only coined in 1944 and can be considered rather a modern word in medical and pharmaceutical use.

Transdermal drug delivery systems, or TDDS, are a self-contained dosage form that enables the delivery of medication through the skin, thereby producing systemic effects without the usual fluctuations in drug concentrations that are seen with oral administration. The direct application of therapeutic agents to the skin has several advantages over the traditional methods of oral ingestion or invasive treatments. drug One of the significant advantages is a steady, controlled release of the over a long period that enhances the therapeutic effect in general.

This review discusses several advantages of TDDS the various routes through which drugs are transported into the skin, and components that constitute a transdermal patch. Besides, it shows the manufacturing method of these patches, evaluation techniques to assess its performance, clinical considerations, and limitations that would affect its application and effectiveness.

Keywords: Transdermal, Permeation pathways, Drug delivery, Matrix, Reservoir

INTRODUCTION

As is commonly understood, standard approaches to drug delivery systems lead to an inappropriate distribution of the drug volume. Oftentimes, varied concentrations contain a high or low mean plasmatic concentration, which can resume in respective concentration side effects. Such issues bring into consideration the multiplicity of issuing and absorption doses, however rewarding the shift towards a controlled drug delivery mechanism, also widely termed as a therapeutic system. Such systems are capable of administering a drug of interest in precisely in a scheduled timeframe over a course or after a target area is met. By reducing the frequency of doses and ensuring decent levels of plasma drug concentration, such mechanisms help enhance the safety, efficacy, and most importantly patient compliance towards a drug.

A TTS is an independent entity that, upon contact with the intact skin, facilitates the infiltration of the therapeutic agent into the bloodstream in a regulated manner. It is worth leaning that the first TTS was launched in 1980, and was dubbed Transdermal-Scop and included scopolamine for motion sickness. This particular device employed a membrane-moderated system which uses a microporous polypropylene film for

a membrane. The medication is held within a reservoir made of poly-isobutylene and mineral oil and enables a consistent release of the drug for a period of three days.

The transdermal drug delivery system embedded with diclofenac sodium and lidocaine is the new potential for pain therapy since it offers improved therapeutic effects with least systemic effects. Diclofenac sodium which is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), has been widely used due to its anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic properties, and these are due to its ability to inhibit the enzymes cyclooxygenase (COX) and therefore reduce prostaglandin synthesis, which is particularly important in pain and inflammation design.

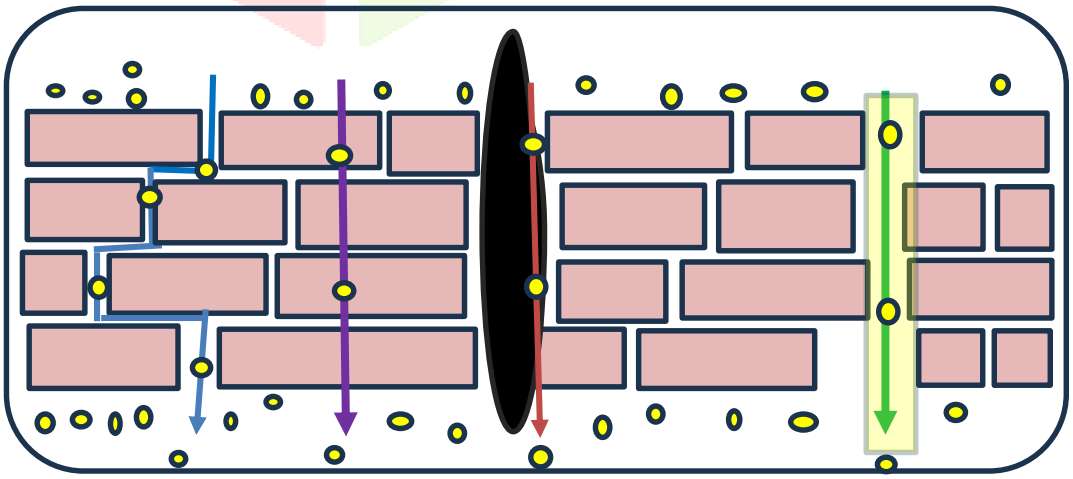
Also, lidocaine is a local anaesthetic that makes it possible to thicken this effect achieved by occluding the sodium channels within the membranes of the neurons so that the transmission of pain sensation is inhibited and as a result achieves localized anaesthesia within short period of time and without much effect at the systemic level.

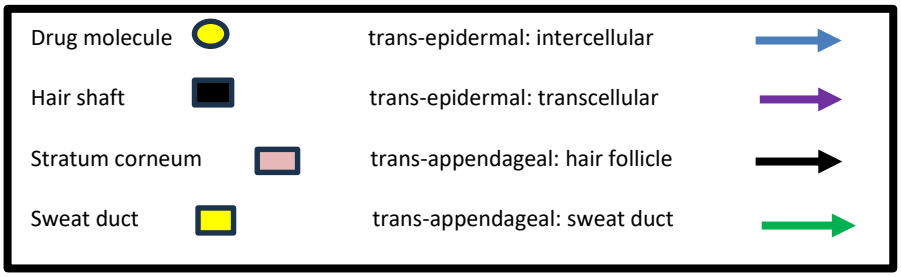
When incorporated in a transdermal patch simultaneously these two drugs have antinociceptive properties which may act at both the inflammatory and the neuropathic pain. This makes the formulation an ideal pain management in the sufferers of arthritis, musculoskeletal tissues damage, soft tissue injuries, and other similar conditions such. To add on, the transdermal route of administration has several benefits including reduction of first pass metabolism, increase in the bioavailability of the drug, controlled and sustained release of the drug, decrease frequency of dosing and increase in the patient compliance due to non-invasive nature of the technique.

Physiology of the skin

An average adult has 2 square meters of skin which contains four blood vessels giving it one-third of the body flow. The outer layer is sandwiched between the basal layer, spiny layer, stratum granulosum and the epidermis. The outermost layer consists of lipids which are ceramides, cholesterol and free fatty acids that cover dead keratinized cells. Hair follicles and sweat glands are incorporated in this organ which makes it easy for drugs to be delivered and accessed.

The stratum corneum and hair follicles alongside sweat glands allows trans-appendageal and trans-epidermal to deliver drugs by using different pathways.





Fig(1): routes of drug administration through skin

In the trans-epidermal pathways through which drugs are delivered, consist mostly of two routes. The first is the transcellular route which is both the lipid layers and the keratin filled corneocytes. The second is the intercellular route through which most drugs travel, going through lipid layers surrounding the cells. Most drugs tend to follow the intercellular route.

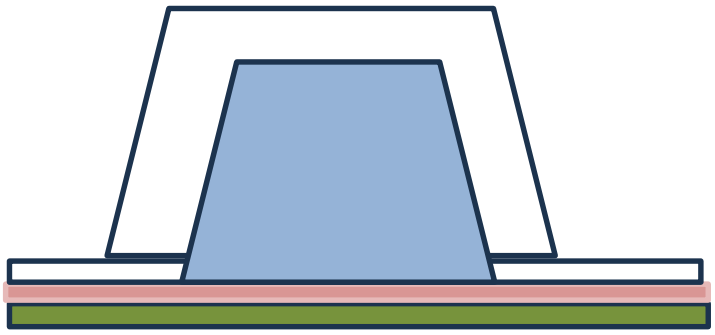
In the trans-appendageal route drugs are administered through hair follicles and sweat gland ducts. Water soluble drugs work well with sweat glands that are hydrophilic, while fat-soluble drugs work well with sebum at hair follicles. The stratum corneum acts as the main barrier, but other molecules as small as water can travel through the transcellular pathway.

Components of a transdermal patch

A transdermal device typically incorporates a number of essential constituents, among which the polymer matrix represents the primary component responsible for release of the drug. The active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) corresponds to the therapeutic administered via this route with an intent for systemic exposure. Permeation enhancers are added to increase drug flux by improving permeability through stratum corneum. These could be solvents like ethanol, dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), and propylene glycol that act by swelling polar pathway of skin and also fluidizing lipids. Surfactants transport hydrophilic drugs through polar pathways; these include anionic surfactants such as sodium lauryl sulphate, cationic surfactants, and non-ionic surfactants such as Pluronic F127.

Adhesives along with other excipients contribute toward structural characteristics that enable securing a patch on to skin surface effectively throughout duration of intended use. Adhesives not only should adhere well but also adhere during physical activity and at various stages of drug having been released from system; they should not cause irritation to sensitive patient population targeted by certain patches, or alternatively have no recorded history of causing dermal sensitization or allergies in users upon chronic exposure over a significant fraction of lifetime considering acceptance in infants, children and adolescents.

The purpose of the liner is to provide protection to both the adhesive and drug layer prior to use of the patch. The liner for TDDS is generally made from materials such as paper, fabric, polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride which are usually coated with a release coating such as silicone or Teflon.



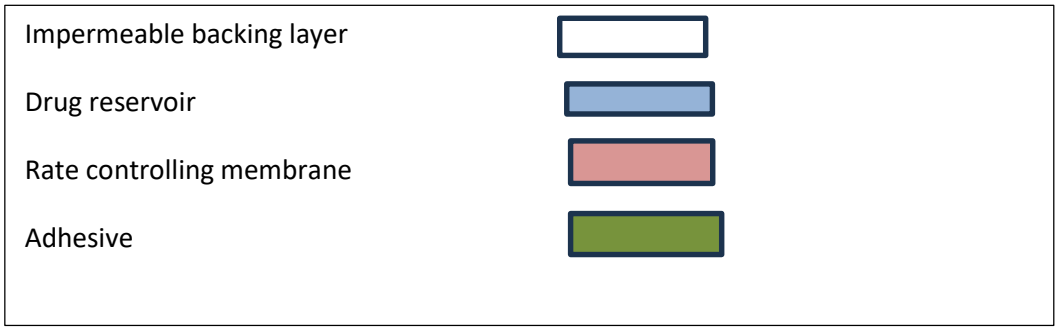


Fig (2): components of a transdermal patch

Types of Transdermal drug delivery systems (TDDS)

TDDS are commonly designed in two different ways, that is matrix or monolithic system where the drug is uniformly distributed and embedded within a polymer matrix that controls its release or reservoir or membrane system where a rate controlling membrane exists between the drug in its reservoir and adhesive layer.

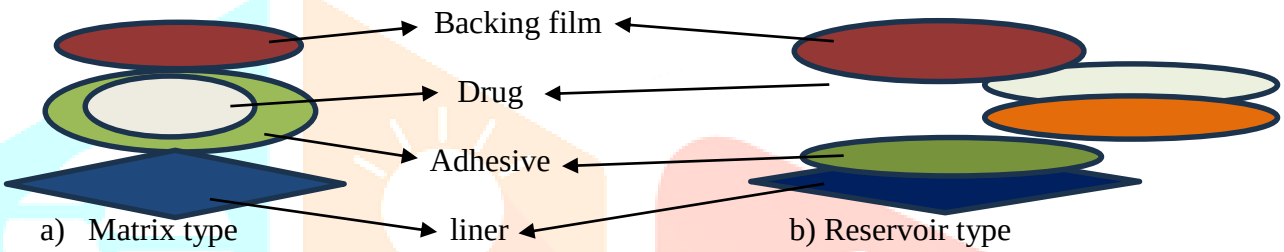


Fig (3): types of transdermal drug delivery system

A good candidate for a transdermal system should have a molecular weight of less than 500 Daltons, balance lipophilic and hydrophilic properties, and have a low melting point. It should be potent enough to be effective at low daily doses, which is usually a few milligrams, and it should have a short half-life so that its levels in the body remain relatively steady. The drug should not cause irritation or allergic reactions to the skin. Drugs that are subject to extensive degradation in the gastrointestinal tract or exhibit high first-pass metabolism are ideal candidates for transdermal delivery. Furthermore, the drug should not produce tolerance over time and should be appropriate for long-term use or conditions with non-target side effects.

Materials and Methods

A polymer solution will be prepared in order to form a transdermal patch combining diclofenac sodium and lidocaine. Use hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC K4M) and polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) and dissolve it in distilled water. Heat the mixture at low temperature, with continuous stirring, to form an uniformly mixed solution that is used as the film-forming base of the patch.

Finally, add propylene glycol into the solution. Propylene glycol is a plasticizer that keeps the patch flexible and prevents it from cracking when dried. Mix eucalyptus oil into the mixture. This will facilitate the entry of the drug into the epidermis. After that add diclofenac sodium and lidocaine to the polymer solution. Stir until both drugs are well mixed.

Pour the prepared mixture into a clean glass Mold or Petri dish. Spread it evenly with a spatula to form a thin layer. Place the Mold in a controlled drying environment, such as a hot air oven, at 40°C. Allow the solution to dry for about 24 hours, until the solvent completely evaporates and leaves behind a uniform film.

The dried film is then carefully removed from the Mold with a cutting tool, and trimmed to size, typically 10 cm × 10 cm.

This formulation provides a combination therapy with lidocaine providing immediate numbing relief and diclofenac sodium delivering prolonged anti-inflammatory action, enhanced by eucalyptus oil's penetration properties.

Table 1: Formulation design

Ingredients	Quantity per patch
Diclofenac sodium	100 mg
Lidocaine	200 mg
HPMC K4M	2 g
Polyvinyl alcohol	1 g
Propylene glycol	0.5 ml
Eucalyptus oil	0.2 ml
Distilled water	10 ml

EVALUATION OF TDDS

The patches are examined for parameters such as thickness, uniformity of weight, drug content, and adhesion. The irritation test is done to check for compatibility of the patch with skin.

Drug Content: The appropriate portion of the patch is carefully cut and weighed to begin the analysis. This piece is then immersed in a suitable solvent that will dissolve the drug. Ultrasonication or stirring is then used to ensure the drug is extracted fully into the solution. The solution is filtered to remove insoluble residues and diluted if necessary. Advanced techniques like UV-Visible spectrophotometry or HPLC are used to quantify the content of the drug. In this case, for analysis, absorbance of the solution is determined at 284 nm wavelength that accurately determines the concentration of the drug and percentage of the drug in the patch.

Weight Homogeneity: Patches with an accurate diameter of 4 cm were cut, and individual weights of five different patches were measured to evaluate the homogeneity and uniformity of their weight distribution. This step is very important to ensure that each patch contains a uniform amount of the active ingredient. This is the most important parameter for accurate and reliable drug delivery. The measurements were taken to ensure that no significant variations existed among the patches, thereby ensuring the reproducibility and quality of the formulation.

Thickness: The uniformity of the thickness is measured with the help of screw gauge, for five locations along each patch. Since the variations in thickness may hamper the performance of the release rate of drug, it must be uniform throughout the patch. Multipoint measurement along the patch confirms that the thickness is uniform at all points which ensures uniformity in the structural arrangement of the patch and this provides excellent reliability in its performance for drug delivery through skin.

Flatness: The patches were gone under analysis to verify an even surface that is uniform, without constrictions and any form of irregularities and roughness in the texture. This checkup is very significant in ascertaining that the patch has consistency in structure and will thus perform satisfactorily with respect to the drug's release and ensure better adhesion on the skin.

Percentage Moisture Uptake: Films prepared were weighed properly and kept inside the desiccators at room temperature for 24 hours. The desiccators contained a saturated solution of potassium chloride, which maintained a relative humidity (RH) of 84%. After the 24-hour period, the films were reweighed, and the percentage of moisture uptake was calculated. This process ensures that the film's ability to absorb moisture under controlled conditions is evaluated accurately, a critical parameter in assessing stability and performance.

Moisture Loss: the percentage of moisture loss is measured over a specific period to assess the patch's ability to retain moisture under various conditions. The patches are initially weighed, and then exposed to controlled environmental factors for a set time. Afterward, they are reweighed to determine how much moisture has been lost. This measurement enables the assessment of the stability of the patch by ensuring that undue moisture loss doesn't impact performance, drug release rate, or skin adhesion. Moisture retention is quite important to sustain the effectiveness of the patch up to its expiration.

Swelling Ability Test: The transdermal patch swells in a water bath over time, wherein the weight is measured. This method assists in estimating how much water is absorbed by the patch and its swelling degree due to that water. This degree of swelling can be determined with the increase in weight and calculated using the method above, and so it would show the extent to which the patch absorbs fluid. This will, therefore, tell the degree to which it influences drug release, adhesion, and its final performance.

Folding Endurance: The folding endurance of the transdermal patch is determined by folding the patch again and again until it finally ruptures. The number of folds a patch can withstand before breaking provides significant information on the strength and endurance properties to withstand bend or distortion. This test therefore can tell how well a patch can withstand rigors of practical applications in the field, ensuring that it is flexible and does not crack while on the skin for the duration of the potential use.

In clinical trials, TDDS are tested on human volunteers to evaluate the efficacy, potential risks, side effects, and the degree to which patients can adhere to the treatment. Such trials are critical in establishing the safety and efficacy of the patches in real-life conditions. Furthermore, stability studies are conducted in accordance with ICH guidelines. In these studies, TDDS samples are stored under controlled conditions often at 40±0.5°C and 75±5% relative humidity for up to six months. This will test how the patches perform over time, ensuring that they remain stable and consistent in the drug content throughout their shelf life, which is critical for long-term reliability and safety.

CONCLUSION

A combination therapy for diclofenac sodium with lidocaine in a transdermal patch is promising, and effective in pain management. The formulation deals with both inflammation and neuropathy components of the pain through its anti-inflammatory actions of diclofenac sodium and local anaesthesia of lidocaine.

With the controlled delivery system, release of the drugs is sustained throughout, thus allowing for higher bioavailability and diminished systemic side effects. This is also a non-invasive and user-friendly formulation that allows for better patient compliance. In fact, challenges in formulation development, such as drug compatibility and adequate skin permeation, still pose a barrier, but the combination therapy still holds great promise for improving musculoskeletal disorders, localized soft tissue injuries, and other pain-related conditions. This innovative approach not only improves patient outcomes but also opens doors to more advanced transdermal drug delivery systems.

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