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3.01 Determination of Bulk and Tapped Densities

Change to read:

This determination is harmonized with the European Pharmacopoeia and the U.S. Pharmacopeia. The parts of the text that are not harmonized are marked with symbols (◆ ◆).

◆Determination of Bulk and Tapped Densities is a method to determine the bulk densities of powdered drugs under loose and tapped packing conditions respectively. Loose packing is defined as the state obtained by pouring a powder sample into a vessel without any consolidation, and tapped packing is defined as the state obtained when the vessel containing the powder sample is to be repeatedly dropped a specified distance at a constant drop rate until the apparent volume of sample in the vessel becomes almost constant.◆

Bulk density

The bulk density of a powder is the ratio of the mass of an untapped powder sample and its volume including the contribution of the interparticulate void volume. Hence, the bulk density depends on both the density of powder particles and the spatial arrangement of particles in the powder bed. The bulk density is expressed in grams per milliliter (g/mL) although the international unit is kilogram per cubic meter (1 g/mL = 1000 kg/m^3) because the measurements are made using cylinders. It may also be expressed in grams per cubic centimeter (g/cm^3).

The bulking properties of a powder are dependent upon the preparation, treatment and storage of the sample, i.e. how it was handled. The particles can be packed to have a range of bulk densities and, moreover, the slightest disturbance of the powder bed may result in a changed bulk density. Thus, the bulk density of a powder is often very difficult to measure with good reproducibility and, in reporting the results, it is essential to specify how the determination was made.

The bulk density of a powder is determined by measuring the volume of a known mass of powder sample, that may have been passed through a screen, into a graduated cylinder (Method 1), or by measuring the mass of a known volume of powder that has been passed through a volumeter into a cup (Method 2) or a measuring vessel (Method 3). Method 1 and Method 3 are favoured.

Method 1: Measurement in a Graduated Cylinder

Procedure

Pass a quantity of powder sufficient to complete the test through a sieve with apertures greater than or equal to 1.0 mm, if necessary, to break up agglomerates that may have formed during storage; this must be done gently to avoid changing the nature of the material. Into a dry graduated cylinder of 250 mL (readable to 2 mL), gently introduce, without compacting, approximately 100 g of the test sample (m) weighed with 0.1 per cent accuracy. Carefully level the powder without compacting, if necessary, and read the unsettled apparent volume (V_0) to the nearest graduated unit. Calculate the bulk density in g per mL by the formula m/V_0. Generally, replicate determinations are desirable for the determination of this property.

If the powder density is too low or too high, such that the test sample has an untapped apparent volume of either more than 250 mL or less than 150 mL, it is not possible to use 100 g of powder sample. Therefore, a different amount of powder has to be selected as test sample, such that its untapped apparent volume is 150 mL to 250 mL (apparent volume greater than or equal to 60 per cent of the total volume of the cylinder); the mass of the test sample is specified in the expression of results.

For test samples having an apparent volume between 50 mL and 100 mL a 100 mL cylinder readable to 1 mL can be used; the volume of the cylinder is specified in the expression of results.

Method 2: Measurement in a Volumeter

Apparatus

The apparatus$^{(1)}$ (Fig. 3.01-1) consists of a top funnel fitted with a 1.0 mm sieve. The funnel is mounted over a baffle box containing four glass baffle plates over which the powder slides and bounces as it passes. At the bottom of the baffle box is a funnel that collects the powder and allows it to pour into a cup mounted directly below it. The cup may be cylindrical (25.00 ± 0.05 mL volume with an inside diameter of 30.00 ± 2.00 mm) or a square (16.39 ± 2.00 mL volume with inside dimensions of 25.4 ± 0.076 mm).

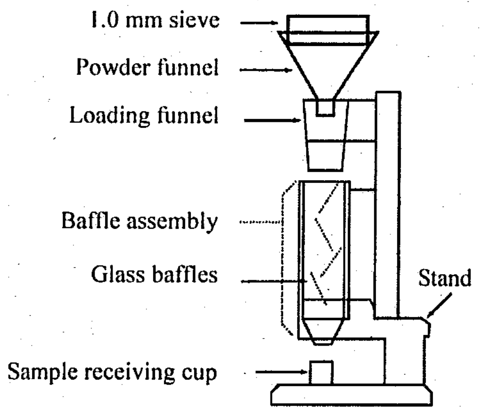


Fig. 3.01-1 Volumeter

Procedure

Allow an excess of powder to flow through the apparatus into the sample receiving cup until it overflows, using a minimum of 25 cm^3 of powder with the square cup and 35 cm^3 of powder with the cylindrical cup. Carefully, scrape excess powder from the top of the cup by smoothly moving the edge of the blade of spatula perpendicular to and in contact with the top surface of the cup, taking care to keep the spatula perpendicular to prevent packing or removal of powder from the cup. Remove any material from the side of the cup and determine the mass (m) of the powder to the nearest 0.1 per cent. Calculate the bulk density in g per mL by the formula m/V_0 in which V_0 is the volume of the cup and record the average of 3 determinations using 3 different powder samples.

(I) The apparatus (the Scott Volumeter) conforms to the dimensions in ASTM 329 90.

Method 3: Measurement in a Vessel

Apparatus

The apparatus consists of a 100 mL cylindrical vessel of stainless steel with dimensions as specified in Fig. 3.01-2.

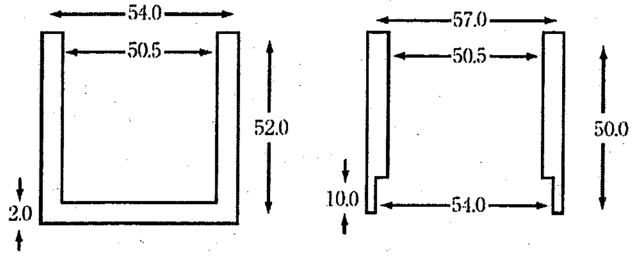


Fig. 3.01-2. Measuring vessel (left) and cap (right)
Dimensions in mm

Procedure

Pass a quantity of powder sufficient to complete the test through a 1.0 mm sieve, if necessary, to break up agglomerates that may have formed during storage and allow the obtained sample to flow freely into the measuring vessel until it overflows. Carefully scrape the excess powder from the top of the vessel as described for Method 2. Determine the mass (m_0) of the powder to the nearest 0.1 per cent by subtraction of the previously determined mass of the empty measuring vessel. Calculate the bulk density (g/mL) by the formula $m_0/100$ and record the average of 3 determinations using 3 different powder samples.

Tapped density

The tapped density is an increased bulk density attained after mechanically tapping a container containing the powder sample.

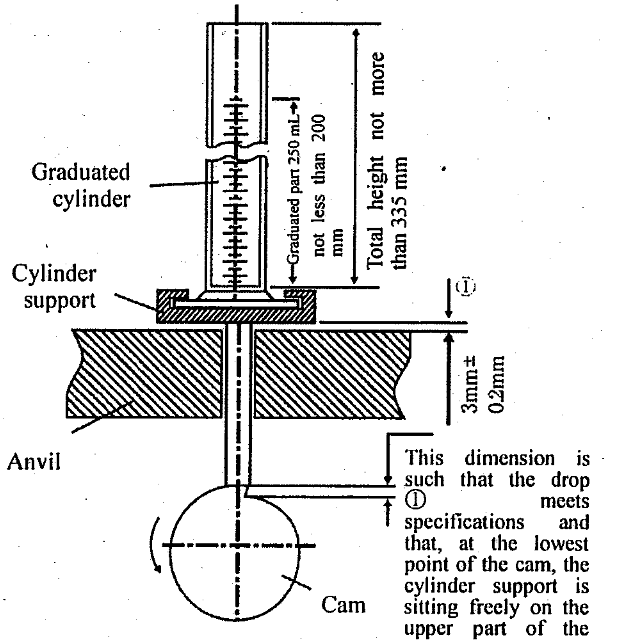
The tapped density is obtained by mechanically tapping a graduated measuring cylinder or vessel containing the powder sample. After observing the initial powder volume or mass, the measuring cylinder or vessel is mechanically tapped, and volume or mass readings are taken until little further volume or mass change is observed. The mechanical tapping is achieved by raising the cylinder or vessel and allowing it to drop, under its own mass, a specified distance by either of 3 methods as described below. Devices that rotate the cylinder or vessel during tapping may be preferred to minimize any possible separation of the mass during tapping down.

Method 1

Apparatus

The apparatus (Fig. 3.01-3) consists of the following:

- a 250 mL graduated cylinder (readable to 2 mL) with a mass of 220 ± 44 g.
- a settling apparatus capable of producing, in 1 min, either nominally 250 ± 15 taps from a height of 3 ± 0.2 mm, or nominally 300 ± 15 taps from a height of 14 ± 2 mm. The support for the graduated cylinder, with its holder, has a mass of 450 ± 10 g.



This dimension is such that the drop ① meets specifications and that, at the lowest point of the cam, the cylinder support is sitting freely on the upper part of the anvil.

Fig. 3.01-3.

Procedure

Proceed as described above for the determination of the bulk volume (V_0).

Secure the cylinder in the holder. Carry out 10, 500 and 1250 taps on the same powder sample and read the corresponding volumes V_{10}, V_{500} and V_{1250} to the nearest graduated unit. If the difference between V_{500} and V_{1250} is less than 2 mL, V_{1250} is the tapped volume. If the difference between V_{500} and V_{1250} exceeds 2 mL, repeat in increments such as 1250 taps, until the difference between succeeding measurements is less than 2 mL. Fewer taps may be appropriate for some powders, when validated. Calculate the tapped density (g/mL) using the formula m/V_f in which V_f is the final tapped volume. Generally, replicate determinations are desirable for the determination of this property. Specify the drop height with the results.

If it is not possible to use a 100 g test sample, use a reduced amount and a suitable 100 mL graduated cylinder (readable to 1 mL) weighing 130 ± 16 g and mounted on a holder weighing 240 ± 12 g. The modified test conditions are specified in the expression of the results.

Method 2

Procedure

Proceed as directed under Method 1 except that the mechanical tester provides a fixed drop of 3 ± 0.2 mm at a nominal rate of 250 taps per minute.

Method 3

Procedure

Proceed as described in the method for measuring the bulk density using the measuring vessel equipped with the cap shown in Fig. 3.01-2. The measuring vessel with the cap is lifted 50-60 times per minute by the use of a suitable tapped density tester. Carry out 200 taps, remove the cap and carefully scrape excess powder from the top of the measuring vessel as described in Method 3 for measuring the bulk density. Repeat the procedure using 400 taps. If the difference between the 2 masses obtained after 200 and 400 taps exceeds 2 per cent, carry out a test using 200 additional taps until the difference between succeeding measurements is less than 2 per cent. Calculate the tapped density (g/mL) using the formula $m_f/100$ where m_f is the mass of powder in the measuring vessel. Record the average of 3 determinations using 3 different powder samples.

Measures of Powder Compressibility

Because the interparticulate interactions influencing the bulking properties of a powder are also the interactions that interfere with powder flow, a comparison of the bulk and tapped densities can give a measure of the relative importance of these interactions in a given powder. Such a comparison is often used as an index of the ability of the powder to flow, for example the Compressibility Index or the Hausner Ratio.

The Compressibility Index and Hausner Ratio are measures of the propensity of a powder to be compressed as described above. As such, they are measures of the powder ability to settle and they permit an assessment of the relative importance of interparticulate interactions. In a free-flowing powder, such interactions are less significant, and the bulk and tapped densities will be closer in value. For poorer flowing materials, there are frequently greater interparticulate interactions, and a greater difference between the bulk and tapped densities will be observed. These differences are reflected in the Compressibility Index and the Hausner Ratio.

Compressibility Index:

$$100\,(V_0 - V_f)/V_0$$

V_0: unsettled apparent volume
V_f: final tapped volume

Hausner Ratio:

$$V_0/V_f$$

Depending on the material, the compressibility index can be determined using V_{10} instead of V_0.

3.02 Specific Surface Area by Gas Adsorption

Change to read:

This test is harmonized with the European Pharmacopoeia and the U.S. Pharmacopeia. The parts of the text that are not harmonized are marked with symbols (◆ ◆).

◆The specific surface area determination method is a method to determine specific surface area (the total surface area of powder per unit mass) of a pharmaceutical powder sample by using gas adsorption method.◆ The specific surface area of a powder is determined by physical adsorption of a gas on the surface of the solid and by calculating the amount of adsorbate gas corresponding to a monomolecular layer on the surface. Physical adsorption results from relatively weak forces (van der Waals forces) between the adsorbate gas molecules and the adsorbent surface of the test powder. The determination is usually carried out at the temperature of liquid nitrogen The amount of gas adsorbed can be measured by a volumetric or continuous flow procedure.

1.1 MULTI-POINT MEASUREMENT

When the gas is physically adsorbed by the powder sample, the following relationship (Brunauer, Emmett and Teller (BET) adsorption isotherm) holds when the relative pressure (P/P_0) is in the range of 0.05 to 0.30 for pressure P of the adsorbate gas in equilibrium for the volume of gas adsorbed, V_a.

$$1/[V_a\{(P_0/P)-1\}] = \{(C-1)/(V_mC)\} \times (P/P_0) + (1/V_mC) \qquad (1)$$

P: Partial vapour pressure of adsorbate gas in equilibrium with the surface at -195.8°C (b.p. of liquid nitrogen), in pascals,

P_0: Saturated pressure of adsorbate gas, in pascals,

V_a: Volume of gas adsorbed at standard temperature and pressure (STP) [0°C and atmospheric pressure (1.013×10^5 Pa), in milliliters,

V_m: Volume of gas adsorbed at STP to produce an apparent monolayer on the sample surface, in milliliters,

C: Dimensionless constant that is related to the enthalpy of adsorption of the adsorbate gas on the powder sample.

A value of V_a is measured at each of not less than 3 values of P/P_0. Then the BET value,

$$1/[V_a\{(P_0/P)-1\}]$$

is plotted against P/P_0 according to equation (1). This plot should yield a straight line usually in the approximate relative pressure range 0.05 to 0.3. The data are considered acceptable if the correlation coefficient, r, of the linear regression is not less than 0.9975; that is, r^2 is not less than 0.995. From the resulting linear plot, the slope, which is equal to $(C-1)/(V_mC)$, and the intercept, which is equal to $1/(V_mC)$, are evaluated by linear regression analysis. From these values, V_m is calculated as $1/(slope + intercept)$, while C is calculated as $(slope/intercept) + 1$. From the value of V_m so determined, the specific surface area, S, in m^2g^{-1}, is calculated by the equation:

$$S = (V_mNa) / (m \times 22400) \qquad (2)$$

N: Avogadro constant (6.022×10^{23} mol^{-1}),

a: Effective cross-sectional area of one adsorbate molecule, in square metres (0.162×10^{-18} m^2 for nitrogen and 0.195×10^{-18} m^2 for krypton),

m: Mass of test powder, in grams,

22400: Volume, in milliliters, occupied by one mole of the adsorbate gas at STP allowing for minor departures from the ideal.

A minimum of 3 data points is required. Additional measurements may be carried out, especially when non-linearity is obtained at a P/P_0 value close to 0.3. Because non-linearity is often obtained at a P/P_0 value below 0.05, values in this region are not recommended. The test for linearity, the treatment of the data, and the calculation of the specific surface area of the sample are described above.

1.2 SINGLE-POINT MEASUREMENT

Normally, at least 3 measurements of V_a each at different values of P/P_0 are required for the determination of specific surface area by the dynamic flow gas adsorption technique (*Method I*) or by volumetric gas adsorption (*Method II*). However, under certain circumstances described below, it may be acceptable to determine the specific surface area of a powder from a single value of V_a measured at a single value of P/P_0 such as 0.300 (corresponding to 0.300 mole of nitrogen or 0.001038 mole fraction of krypton), using the following equation for calculating V_m:

$$V_m = V_a\{1-(P/P_0)\} \qquad (3)$$

The single-point method may be employed directly for a series of powder samples of a given material for which the material constant C is much greater than unity. These circumstances may be verified by comparing values of specific surface area determined by the single-point method with that determined by the multiple-point method for the series of powder samples. Close similarity between the single-point values and multiple-point values suggests that $1/C$ approaches zero. The single-point method may be employed indirectly for a series of very similar powder samples of a given material for which the material constant C is not infinite but may be assumed to be invariant. Under these circumstances, the error associated with the single-point method can be reduced or eliminated by using the multiple-point method to evaluate C for one of the samples of the series from the BET plot, from which C is calculated as (1 + *slope/intercept*). Then V_m is calculated from the single value of V_a measured at a single value of P/P_0 by the equation:

$$V_m = V_a\{(P_0/P)-1\}[(1/C) + \{(C-1)/C\} \times (P/P_0)] \qquad (4)$$

2. SAMPLE PREPARATION

Before the specific surface area of the sample can be determined, it is necessary to remove gases and vapors that may have become physically adsorbed onto the surface during storage and handling. If outgassing is not achieved, the specific surface area may be reduced or may be variable because some parts of surface area are covered with molecules of the previously adsorbed gases or vapors. The outgassing conditions are critical for obtaining the required precision and accuracy of specific surface area measurements on pharmaceuticals because of the sensitivity of the surface of the materials. The outgassing conditions must be demonstrated to yield reproducible BET plots, a constant weight of test powder, and no detectable physical or chemical changes in the test powder.

The outgassing conditions defined by the temperature, pressure and time should be so chosen that the original surface of the solid is reproduced as closely as possible.

Outgassing of many substances is often achieved by applying a vacuum, by purging the sample in a flowing stream of a non-reactive, dry gas, or by applying a desorption-adsorption cycling method. In either case, elevated temperatures are sometimes applied to increase the rate at which the contaminants leave the surface. Caution should be exercised when outgassing powder samples using elevated temperatures to avoid affecting the nature of the surface and the integrity of the sample.

If heating is employed, the recommended temperature and time of outgassing are as low as possible to achieve reproducible measurement of specific surface area in an acceptable time. For outgassing sensitive samples, other outgassing methods such as the desorption-adsorption cycling method may be employed.

The standard technique is the adsorption of nitrogen at liquid nitrogen temperature.

For powders of low specific surface area ($<0.2\ m^2g^{-1}$) the proportion adsorbed is low. In such cases the use of krypton at liquid nitrogen temperature is preferred because the low vapor pressure exerted by this gas greatly reduces error. All gases used must be free from moisture.

Accurately weigh a quantity of the test powder such that the total surface of the sample is at least 1 m^2 when the adsorbate is nitrogen and 0.5 m^2 when the adsorbate is krypton. Lower quantities of sample may be used after appropriate validation.

Because the amount of gas adsorbed under a given pressure tends to increase on decreasing the temperature, adsorption measurements are usually made at a low temperature. Measurement is performed at -195.8°C, the boiling point of liquid nitrogen.

Adsorption of gas should be measured either by Method I or Method II.

3.1 Method I: the dynamic flow method

In the dynamic flow method (see Fig. 3.02-1), the recommended adsorbate gas is dry nitrogen or krypton, while helium is employed as a diluent gas, which is not adsorbed under the recommended conditions. A minimum of 3 mixtures of the appropriate adsorbate gas with helium are required within the P/P_0 range 0.05 to 0.30.

The gas detector-integrator should provide a signal that is approximately proportional to the volume of the gas passing through it under defined conditions of temperature and pressure. For this purpose, a thermal conductivity detector with an electronic integrator is one among various suitable types. A minimum of 3 data points within the recommended range of 0.05 to 0.30 for P/P_0 is to be determined.

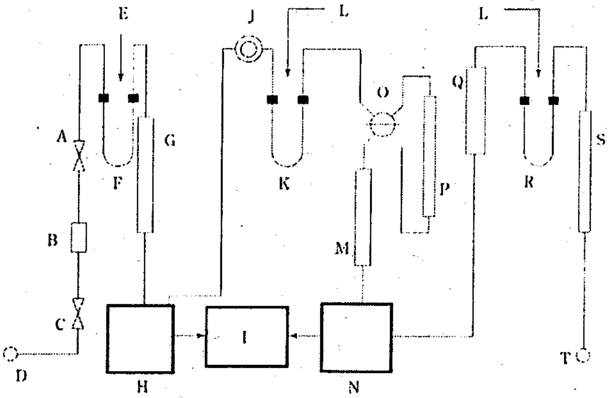
A known mixture of the gases, usually nitrogen and helium, is passed through a thermal conductivity cell, through the sample again through the thermal conductivity cell and then to a recording potentiometer. Immerse the sample cell in liquid nitrogen, then the sample adsorbs nitrogen from the mobile phase. This unbalances the thermal conductivity cell, and a pulse is generated on a recorder chart.

Remove from the coolant; this gives a desorption peak equal in area and in the opposite direction to the adsorption peak.

Since this is better defined than the adsorption peak, it is the one used for the determination.

To effect the calibration, inject a known quantity of adsorbate into the system, sufficient to give a peak of similar magnitude to the desorption peak and obtain the proportion of gas volume per unit peak area.

Use a nitrogen/helium mixture for a single-point determination and several such mixtures or premixing 2 streams of gas for a multiple-point determination. Calculation is essentially the same as for the volumetric method.



A: Flow control valve
B: Differential flow controller
C: On-off valve
D: Gas inlet
E: O ring seals
F: Cold trap
G: Thermal equilibration tube
H: Detector
I: Digital display
J: Calibrating septum
K: Sample cell
L: Self seals quick connection
M: Short path ballast
N: Detector
O: Path selection valve
P: Long path ballast
Q: Flow meter
R: Outgassing station

S: Diffusion baffle
T: Vent

Fig. 3.02-1 Schematic diagram of the dynamic flow method apparatus

3.2 Method II: the volumetric method

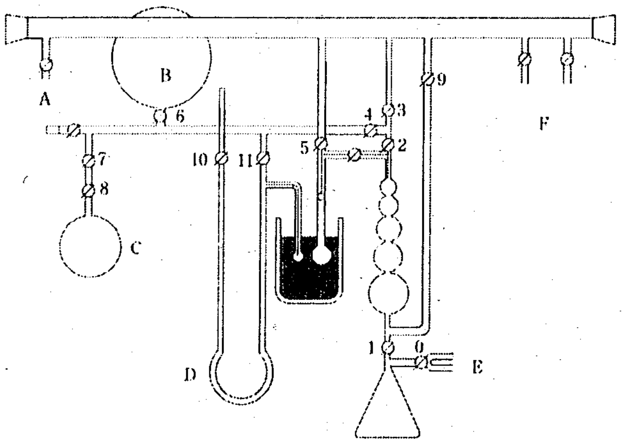
In the volumetric method (see Fig. 3.02-2), the recommended adsorbate gas is nitrogen which is admitted into the evacuated space above the previously outgassed powder sample to give a defined equilibrium pressure, P, of the gas. The use of a diluent gas, such as helium, is therefore unnecessary, although helium may be employed for other purposes, such as to measure the dead volume.

Since only pure adsorbate gas, instead of a gas mixture, is employed, interfering effects of thermal diffusion are avoided in this method.

Admit a small amount of dry nitrogen into the sample tube to prevent contamination of the clean surface, remove the sample tube, insert the stopper, and weigh it. Calculate the weight of the sample. Attach the sample tube to the volumetric apparatus. Cautiously evacuate the sample down to the specified pressure (e.g. between 2 Pa and 10 Pa). Alternately, some instruments operate by evacuating to a defined rate of pressure change (e.g. less than 13 Pa/30 s) and holding for a defined period of time before commencing the next step.

If the principle of operation of the instrument requires the determination of the dead volume in the sample tube, for example, by the admission of a non-adsorbed gas, such as helium, this procedure is carried out at this point, followed by evacuation of the sample. The determination of dead volume may be avoided using difference measurements, that is, by means of reference and sample tubes connected by a differential transducer.

Raise a Dewar vessel containing liquid nitrogen at -195.8°C up to a defined point on the sample cell. Admit a sufficient volume of adsorbate gas to give the lowest desired relative pressure. Measure the volume adsorbed, V_a. For multipoint measurements, repeat the measurement of V_a at successively higher P/P_0 values. When nitrogen is used as the adsorbate gas, P/P_0 values of 0.10, 0.20, and 0.30 are often suitable.



A: Vacuum gauge
B: Nitrogen reservoir
C: Helium reservoir
D: Vapour pressure manometer
E: Vacuum air
F : To cold traps and vacuum pumps

Fig. 3.02-2 Schematic diagram of the volumetric method apparatus

4. REFERENCE MATERIALS

Periodically verify the functioning of the apparatus using appropriate reference materials of known surface area, such as α-alumina for specific surface area determination, which should have a specific surface area similar to that of the sample to be examined.

3.04 Particle Size Determination

Change the Method 2 to read:

Method 2. Analytical Sieving Method

◆The analytical sieving method is a method to estimate the particle size distribution of powdered pharmaceutical drugs by sieving. The particle size determined by this method is shown as the size of a minimum sieve opening through which the particle passes. "Powder" here means a gathering of numerous solid particles.◆

Sieving is one of the oldest methods of classifying powders and granules by particle size distribution. When using a woven sieve cloth, the sieving will essentially sort the particles by their intermediate size dimension (i.e., breadth or width). Mechanical sieving is most suitable where the majority of the particles are larger than about 75 µm. For smaller particles, the light weight provides insufficient force during sieving to overcome the surface forces of cohesion and adhesion that cause the particles to stick to each other and to the sieve, and thus cause particles that would be expected to pass through the sieve to be retained. For such materials other means of agitation such as air-jet sieving or sonic sifting may be more appropriate. Nevertheless, sieving can sometimes be used for some powders or granules having median particle sizes smaller than 75 µm where the method can be validated. In pharmaceutical terms, sieving is usually the method of choice for classification of the coarser grades of single powders or granules. It is a particularly attractive method in that powders and granules are classified only on the basis of particle size, and in most cases the analysis can be carried out in the dry state.

Among the limitations of sieving method are the need for an appreciable amount of sample (normally at least 25 g, depending on the density of the powder or granule, and the diameter of test sieves) and difficulty in sieving oily or other cohesive powders or granules that tend to clog the sieve openings. The method is essentially a two-dimensional estimate of size because passage through the sieve aperture is frequently more dependent on maximum width and thickness than on length.

This method is intended for estimation of the total particle size distribution of a single material. It is not intended for determination of the proportion of particles passing or retained on one or two sieves.

Estimate the particle size distribution as described under *Dry Sieving Method*, unless otherwise specified in the individual monograph. Where difficulty is experienced in reaching the endpoint (i.e., material does not readily pass through the sieves) or when it is necessary to use the finer end of the sieving range (below 75 µm), serious consideration should be given to the use of an alternative particle-sizing method.

Sieving should be carried out under conditions that do not cause the test sample to gain or lose moisture. The relative humidity of the environment in which the sieving is carried out should be controlled to prevent moisture uptake or loss by the sample. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, analytical test sieving is normally carried at ambient humidity. Any special conditions that apply to a particular material should be detailed in the individual monograph.

Principles of Analytical Sieving—Analytical test sieves are constructed from a woven-wire mesh, which is of simple weave that is assumed to give nearly square apertures and is sealed into the base of an open cylindrical container. The basic analytical method involves stacking the sieves on top of one another in ascending degrees of coarseness, and then placing the test powder on the top sieve.

The nest of sieves is subjected to a standardized period of agitation, and then the weight of material retained on each sieve is accurately determined. The test gives the weight percentage of powder in each sieve size range.

This sieving process for estimating the particle size distribution of a single pharmaceutical powder is generally intended for use where at least 80% of the particles are larger than 75 µm. The size parameter involved in determining particle size distribution by analytical sieving is the length of the size of the minimum square aperture through which the particle will pass.

TEST SIEVES

Test sieves suitable for pharmacopoeial tests conform to the most current edition of International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) Specification ISO 3310-1; Test sieves—Technical requirements and testing (see Table 3.04-1). Unless otherwise specified in the monograph, use those ISO sieves listed in the Table 3.04-1 as recommended in the particular region.

Sieves are selected to cover the entire range of particle sizes present in the test specimen. A nest of sieves having a $\sqrt{2}$ progression of the area of the sieve openings is recommended. The nest of sieves is assembled with the coarsest screen at the top and the finest at the bottom. Use micrometers or millimeters in denoting test sieve openings. [Note—Mesh numbers are provided in the table for conversion purposes only.] Test sieves are made from stainless steel or, less preferably, from brass or other suitable non-reactive wire.

Calibration and recalibration of test sieves is in accordance with the most current edition of ISO 3310-1[2)]. Sieves should be carefully examined for gross distortions and fractures, especially at their screen frame joints, before use. Sieves may be calibrated optically to estimate the average opening size, and opening variability, of the sieve mesh. Alternatively, for the evaluation of the effective opening of test sieves in the size range of 212 to 850 µm, Standard Glass Spheres are available. Unless otherwise specified in the individual monograph, perform the sieve analysis at controlled room temperature and at ambient relative humidity.

Cleaning Test Sieves—Ideally, test sieves should be cleaned using only an air jet or a liquid stream. If some apertures remain blocked by test particles, careful gentle brushing may be used as a last resort.

Test Specimen—If the test specimen weight is not given in the monograph for a particular material, use a test specimen having a weight between 25 and 100 g, depending on the bulk density of the material, and test sieves having a 200 mm diameter. For 76 mm sieves the amount of material that can be accommodated is approximately 1/7th that which can be accommodated on a 200 mm sieve. Determine the most appropriate weight for a given material by test sieving accurately weighed specimens of different weights, such as 25, 50, and 100 g, for the same time period on a mechanical shaker. [Note—If the test results are similar for the 25-g and 50-g specimens, but the 100-g specimen shows a lower percentage through the finest sieve, the 100-g specimen size is too large.] Where only a specimen of 10 to 25 g is available, smaller diameter test sieves conforming to the same mesh specifications may be substituted, but the endpoint must be re-determined. The use of test samples having a smaller mass (e.g. down to 5 g) may be needed. For materials with low apparent particle density, or for materials mainly comprising particles with a highly iso-diametrical shape, specimen weights below 5 g for a 200 mm screen may be necessary to avoid excessive blocking of the sieve. During validation of a particular sieve analysis method, it is expected that the problem of sieve blocking will have been addressed.

If the test material is prone to picking up or losing significant amounts of water with varying humidity, the test must be carried out in an appropriately controlled environment. Similarly, if the test material is known to develop an electrostatic charge, careful observation must be made to ensure that such charging is not influencing the analysis. An antistatic agent, such as colloidal silicon dioxide and/or aluminum oxide, may be added at a 0.5 percent (m/m) level to minimize this effect. If both of the above effects cannot be eliminated, an alternative particle-sizing technique must be selected.

Agitation Methods—Several different sieve and powder agitation devices are commercially available, all of which may be used to perform sieve analyses. However, the different methods of agitation may give different results for sieve analyses and endpoint determinations because of the different types and magnitude of the forces acting on the individual particles under test. Methods using mechanical agitation or electromagnetic agitation, and that can induce either a vertical oscillation or a horizontal circular motion, or tapping or a combination of both tapping and horizontal circular motion are available. Entrainment of the particles in an air stream may also be used. The results must indicate which agitation method was used and the agitation parameters used (if they can be varied), since changes in the agitation conditions will give different results for the sieve analysis and endpoint determinations, and may be sufficiently different to give a failing result under some circumstances.

Endpoint Determination—The test sieving analysis is complete when the weight on any of the test sieves does not change by more than 5% or 0.1 g (10% in the case of 76 mm sieves) of the previous weight on that sieve. If less than 5% of the total specimen weight is present on a given sieve, the endpoint for that sieve is increased to a weight change of not more than 20% of the previous weight on that sieve.

If more than 50% of the total specimen weight is found on any one sieve, unless this is indicated in the monograph, the test should be repeated, but with the addition to the sieve nest of a more coarse sieve intermediate between that carrying the excessive weight and the next coarsest sieve in the original nest, i.e., addition of the ISO series sieve omitted from the nest of sieves.

SIEVING METHODS

Mechanical agitation

Dry Sieving Method—Tare each test sieve to the nearest 0.1 g. Place an accurately weighed quantity of test specimen on the top (coarsest) sieve, and place the lid. Agitate the nest of sieves for 5 minutes. Then carefully remove each from the nest without loss of material. Reweigh each sieve, and determine the weight of material on each sieve. Determine the weight of material in the collecting pan in a similar manner. Reassemble the nest of sieves, and agitate for 5 minutes. Remove and weigh each sieve as previously described. Repeat these steps until the endpoint criteria are met (see *Endpoint Determination* under *Test Sieves*). Upon completion of the analysis, reconcile the weights of material. Total losses must not exceed 5% of the weight of the original test specimen.

Repeat the analysis with a fresh specimen, but using a single sieving time equal to that of the combined times used above. Confirm that this sieving time conforms to the requirements for endpoint determination. When this endpoint had been validated for a specific material, then a single fixed time of sieving may be used for future analyses, providing the particle size distribution falls within normal variation.

If there is evidence that the particles retained on any sieve are aggregates rather than single particles, the use of mechanical dry sieving is unlikely to give good reproducibility, a different particle size analysis method should be used.

Air Entrainment Methods

Air Jet and Sonic Sifter Sieving—Different types of commercial equipment that use a moving air current are available for sieving. A system that uses a single sieve at a time is referred to as *air jet* sieving. It uses the same general sieving methodology as that described under the *Dry Sieving Method*, but with a standardized air jet replacing the normal agitation mechanism. It requires sequential analyses on individual sieves starting with the finest sieve to obtain a particle size distribution. Air jet sieving often includes the use of finer test sieves than used in ordinary dry sieving. This technique is more suitable where only oversize or undersize fractions are needed.

In the *sonic sifting* method, a nest of sieves is used, and the test specimen is carried in a vertically oscillating column of air that lifts the specimen and then carries it back against the mesh openings at a given number of pulses per minute. It may be necessary to lower the sample amount to 5 g, when sonic sifting is employed.

The air jet sieving and sonic sieving methods may be useful for powders or granules when mechanical sieving techniques are incapable of giving a meaningful analysis.

These methods are highly dependent upon proper dispersion of the powder in the air current. This requirement may be hard to achieve if the method is used at the lower end of the sieving range (i.e., below 75 μm), when the particles tend to be more cohesive, and especially if there is any tendency for the material to develop an electrostatic charge. For the above reasons endpoint determination is particularly critical, and it is very important to confirm that the oversize material comprises single particles and is not composed of aggregates.

INTERPRETATION

The raw data must include the weight of test specimen, the total sieving time, and the precise sieving methodology and the set values for any variable parameters, in addition to the weights retained on the individual sieves and in the pan. It may be convenient to convert the raw data into a cumulative weight distribution, and if it is desired to express the distribution in terms of a cumulative weight undersize, the range of sieves used should include a sieve through which all the material passes. If there is evidence on any of the test sieves that the material remaining on it is composed of aggregates formed during the sieving process, the analysis is invalid.

1) Additional information on particle size measurement, sample size, and data analysis is available, for example, in ISO 9276.

2) International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Specification ISO 3310-1; Test sieves-Technical requirements and testing

Table 3.04-1. Sizes of Standard Sieve Series in Range of Interest

ISO Nominal Aperture			US Sieve No.	Recommended USP Sieves (microns)	European Sieve No.	Japan Sieve No.
Principal sizes	Supplementary sizes					
R 20/3	R 20	R 40/3				
11.20 mm	11.20 mm	11.20 mm			11200	
	10.00 mm					
		9.50 mm				
	9.00 mm					
8.00 mm	8.00 mm	8.00 mm				
	7.10 mm					
		6.70 mm				
	6.30 mm					
5.60 mm	5.60 mm	5.60 mm			5600	3.5
	5.00 mm					
		4.75 mm				4
	4.50 mm					
4.00 mm	4.00 mm	4.00 mm	5	4000	4000	4.7
	3.55 mm					
		3.35 mm	6			5.5
	3.15 mm					
2.80 mm	2.80 mm	2.80 mm	7	2800	2800	6.5
	2.50 mm					
		2.36 mm	8			7.5
	2.24 mm					
2.00 mm	2.00 mm	2.00 mm	10	2000	2000	8.6
	1.80 mm					
		1.70 mm	12			10
	1.60 mm					
1.40 mm	1.40 mm	1.40 mm	14	1400	1400	12
	1.25 mm					
		1.18 mm	16			14
	1.12 mm					
1.00 mm	1.00 mm	1.00 mm	18	1000	1000	16
	900 µm					
		850 µm	20			18
	800 µm					
710 µm	710 µm	710 µm	25	710	710	22
	630 µm					
		600 µm	30			26
	560 µm					
500 µm	500 µm	500 µm	35	500	500	30
	450 µm					
		425 µm	40			36
	400 µm					
355 µm	355 µm	355 µm	45	355	355	42
	315 µm					
		300 µm	50			50
	280 µm					
250 µm	250 µm	250 µm	60	250	250	60
	224 µm					
		212 µm	70			70
	200 µm					
180 µm	180 µm	180 µm	80	180	180	83
	160 µm					
		150 µm	100			100
	140 µm					
125 µm	125 µm	125 µm	120	125	125	119
	112 µm					
		106 µm	140			140
	100 µm					
90 µm	90 µm	90 µm	170	90	90	166
	80 µm					
		75 µm	200			200
	71 µm					
63 µm	63 µm	63 µm	230	63	63	235
	56 µm					
		53 µm	270			282
	50 µm					
45 µm	45 µm	45 µm	325	45	45	330
	40 µm					
		38 µm			38	391