



## Formulation and Evaluation of Sustained Release Matrix Tablets of Boswellia and Liquorice

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### ABSTRACT

Various conventional dosage forms are available in the market of the plants boswellia and liquorice. The drawbacks associated with their conventional dosage forms which are fluctuation in drug blood level, patient's inconvenience, poor patient compliance, increased chances of missing the dose of a drug high dose potency etc. can be solved by formulating sustained release formulations of these herbal drugs. Different formulations of boswellia and liquorice sustained release tablets were formulated using wet granulation method. The tablets were subjected to physicochemical studies, *in vitro* drug release studies, kinetic modeling and stability studies to find out the best formulation. Drug content was carried out by HPLC fitted with a C18 column using UV detector. The *in vitro* release studies were conducted for 24h using USP type 2 apparatus. The dissolution profile comparison of the prepared batches was done. The dissolution data profile was fitted into zero order, first order, Higuchi and Korsmeyer-Peppas models to identify the pharmacokinetics and mechanism of drug release. *In vivo* anti-inflammatory effects of the optimized formulations were evaluated by carrageenan-induced hind paw edema method. The results of the accelerated stability study for six months revealed that storage conditions were not found to have made any significant changes. The release of formulation F-4 of boswellic acid and F-6 of liquorice was prolonged for 24h and once daily matrix tablet was formulated.

**Keywords:** Sustained drug delivery, Wet granulation, Anti-inflammatory, Matrix tablets, Release kinetics etc.

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Received 19 December 2014, Accepted 08 January 2015

## INTRODUCTION

Oral route has been the most popular and successfully used for sustained delivery of drugs due to convenience and ease of administration, greater flexibility in dosage form design, ease of production and low cost. Sustained drug delivery overcome the drawbacks associated with conventional dosage forms which are poor patient compliance and increased chances of missing the dose of a drug with short half-life for which frequent administration is necessary<sup>1,2,3</sup>. Inflammation is a key feature in autoimmune disease. Inflammation occurs as the immune system reacts to injury, infection, environmental agents, malignancy, and cellular changes.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup> Any assault to living tissue, whether due to physical, chemical or microbiological origin results in inflammation, manifests by redness, heat, pain, swelling and loss of function. Ayurvedic medicines are gaining popularity among physicians and patients for better therapeutic value, effective, stable, and safe.<sup>8,9,10,11</sup> *Boswellia serrata* (Salai guggul), is a moderate to large sized branching tree of family Burseraceae. Gum-resin extracts of *Boswellia serrata* have been traditionally used in folk medicine for centuries to treat various chronic inflammatory diseases.<sup>12,13,14</sup> The major active constituent which is present in *Boswellia serrata* extract as  $\alpha$ -boswellic acid,  $\beta$ -boswellic acid.<sup>15,16,17</sup> Liquorice (syn. licorice) is an esteemed crude drug that originates from the dried roots of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* family Leguminosae. The most important compounds in Liquorice is 18- $\beta$ -Glycyrrhetic acid, has been proposed as being useful for anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, antitumour and expectorant properties.<sup>18</sup> *Boswellia* has shown to be effective against a large number of inflammatory diseases such as arthritis, bronchial asthma, chronic colitis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and cancer. *Boswellia* has shown to be a specific inhibitor of leukotrienes. It acts by blocking the synthesis of leukotrienes, inhibits cyclooxygenase activity and prostaglandin formation therefore, inhibiting inflammation and shrinking the inflamed tissue which is the primary cause of pain and discomfort in many cases. *Boswellia Serrata*, via its active boswellic acids, appears to be a novel inhibitory of a pro-inflammatory enzyme called 5-Lipoxygenase and may possess other anti-inflammatory effects (such as nF-kB inhibition). These anti-inflammatory effects have been investigated for their benefits in osteoarthritis<sup>19,20,21</sup>. Researchers concluded that the anti-inflammatory effect liquorice is through the prevention of the NF-kappa B and STAT-3 activation pathways, interleukins, transcription factors, cytokines, hyaluronidase and collagenase enzymes, tumor necrosis factor (TNF) and interleukin (IL). It is reported that glycyrrhetic acid in liquorice extract gives anti-inflammatory effect similar to glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids<sup>22,23</sup>.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

Boswellia serrata gum resin powder and liquorice root were purchased from local market. Boswellic acid and 18- $\beta$ -Glycyrrhetic acid was procured from Sigma Aldrich, USA. HPLC-grade methanol and acetonitrile were obtained from Merck India. HPMC, ethyl cellulose, carbopol 971P, eudragit RS100, talc, magnesium, lactose, isopropyl alcohol and polyvinyl pyrrolidone K-30 were purchased Shree Ram Chemicals, Ghaziabad. The water used was double-distilled. All other chemicals used were of analytical grade.

### **Preparation and standardization of boswellia extract**

500gm crushed lumps of the gum exudate were extracted in 1.5lit methanol for 12 hrs. The extraction process was repeated twice with 1.5lit of methanol and residue was discarded. The total extract after filtration was concentrated. The red brown syrupy mass was obtained which was treated with 3% solution of potassium hydroxide till the pH of 9 was attained. The solution was vigorously stirred till a uniform emulsion was formed. The emulsion was then extracted with dichloromethane. The lower solvent layer is separated and discarded. To the upper aqueous fraction is added dilute hydrochloric acid solution (5%) till the pH of 3 was achieved. The precipitated acids was filtered out and washed several times with water till free of mineral acid. The product was then dried in an air oven at 40-45° to a creamish yellow powder. The amount of boswellic acid in the extract was determined by HPLC.<sup>27</sup>

### **Preparation and standardization of liquorice extract**<sup>29</sup>

The powdered liquorice root was extracted with distilled water. The extraction temperature was maintained at 90°C with constant shaking. After boiling, the preparation was cooled for 10 min. The extract was filtered and concentrated to get a thick paste. The amount of glycyrrhetic acid in the extract was determined by HPLC.

### **Preformulation Study of Boswellia and Liquorice extract-**

#### **U.V Spectrophotometric analysis**<sup>27,19</sup>

The identity was established by comparing  $\lambda_{\max}$  of the sample solutions with those of standard solution exhibit maxima at 210 and 252nm for boswellia extract and liquorice extract respectively.

#### **HPLC analysis**<sup>27,26</sup>

The chromatogram of the Sample solution exhibits peaks for boswellic acid and glycyrrhetic acid at retention times that correspond to those of Standard solutions.

### **THIN LAYER CHROMATOGRAPHY**

**Thin layer chromatography of boswellia extract<sup>2</sup>**

Solvent system was prepared by taking Toluene: Ethyl acetate: Hexane: Formic acid in the proportion of 8:2:0.5:0.3 respectively on methanol extract of boswellia. The spots obtained from the extract were examined under ultra violet light of wavelength 254nm and 366nm. The resolution factor ( $R_f$ ) was calculated by using the formula  $R_f = \text{Distance travelled by solute} / \text{Distance travelled by solvent}$ . The  $R_f$  value was found to be 0.34 same as standard.

**Thin layer chromatography of liquorice extract<sup>30</sup>**

0.3 gr of licorice extract was dissolved in 20ml methanol. The mixture was shaken for 30minutes. The supernatant was centrifuged and decanted. The residue was taken up with 20 ml methanol and decanted after 30minutes. The supernatants were added together and evaporated to a concentrated solution. For TLC fingerprint upto 10  $\mu$ l of the test solution and 5  $\mu$ l of the standard solution (0.25 mg/ml) were applied manually on TLC aluminum sheet silica gel. Solvent system was development in glass chamber, saturated for 20 minutes, with a mixture of 20 volumes of petroleum ether, 40 volume of benzene, 14 volume of ethyl acetate and 1 volume of acetic acid. The plate was allowed to dry for 10 minutes, then it was sprayed with sulphuric acid reagent and evaluated in visible. The  $R_f$  of 18 $\beta$ -glycyrrhetic acid in both extract and standard samples was the same equal ( $R_f=0.12$ ).

**Physico-Chemical Properties**

Solubility determination in different pH, Solubility determination in different solvents, Partition Coefficient determination were determined.

**Formulation**

Compatibility study for screening potential excipients was carried out using TLC, HPLC and UV visible spectroscopy. All the polymers and active ingredients were passed through sieve no. 80 separately. Accurately weighed amount of polymers and excipients were thoroughly mixed in glass mortar pestle. The granules were prepared by wet granulation technique using isopropyl alcohol as solvent and passed them to sieve no. 20 and dried in hot air oven at 45°C. The granules were then mixed properly with magnesium stearate, talc and punched with the help of automatic punching machine to a desired hardness, shape, and size (Table-1 and 2).

**EVALUATION****Flow Properties of granules**

The granules were evaluated for their flow properties such as angle of repose, bulk density, tapped density, angle of repose and compressibility index.

**Tablet evaluation**

The Formulated tablets were evaluated for different physicochemical properties like hardness, friability, weight variation, thickness, in vitro release studies and drug content. Hardness test- Randomly sampled 5 tablets in each batch of formulation were used for the determination of hardness with the help of Pfizer tester. Determination of friability- Sample of 10 tablets of each prepared formulation dedusted prior to testing. Accurately weight tablets sample was placed in Roche friabilator, in which tablets were subjected to 100 free falls of 6 inches in rotating drum at 25 rpm and then reweighed. The percentage losses were calculated for each batch of the tablets. Determination of weight variation- 20 tablets were selected at random and weighed accurately; the average weight of the tablet was calculated. Then the deviation of individual weight from the drug weight was calculated. Determination of thickness and diameter of tablets-The individual crown to crown thickness of ten tablets was determined using vernier calipers for each batch.

### ***In vitro* dissolution study**

Dissolution studies of each formulation was carried out using USP type 2 dissolution apparatus for 24 hours apparatus in 900 ml of simulated pH1.2 for the first 2 h and then in phosphate buffer (pH 6.8) from 3 to 24h at 100 rpm maintaining the temperature at  $37 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ . Samples of 5ml of each were collected at 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 20 and 24hrs intervals over a period of 24h. The withdrawn sample was immediately replaced by equal volume of fresh buffer. Collected samples were analyzed spectrophotometrically carried out on a UV-Vis spectrophotometer (Shimadzu 1700 Double beam) at measured wavelength of 210nm for bowellia and 252nm for liquorice, and cumulative percent drug release was calculated. The dissolution studies were performed in triplicate for all the batches. A plot of cumulative % drug release versus time in hours was plotted(Figure 1 and 2).

### **Kinetic analysis of dissolution data-**

The release data were fitted to five kinetic models, viz, zero-order, first-order, Higuchi, Korsmeyer-Peppas and Hixson-Crowell to determine drug release mechanism with the aid of Expert 7.0.3 trial software, GraphPad InStat® (GraphPad Software Inc., San Diego, CA).<sup>24, 25</sup>

### **Drug Content-**

Twenty tablets of each formulation containing was accurately weighed to find out the average weight and powdered. Suitably diluted drug solutions were run on HPLC fitted with a C<sub>18</sub> column using UV detector. Drug content was carried out by measuring the peak area of standard and sample solutions at 210nm and 252nm for boswellia and liquorice respectively.

### **Preparation of standard solutions of boswellic acid and glycyrrhetic acid**

The standard stock solution was prepared by dissolving accurately weighed 5mg of standard boswellic acid, 5mg of standard glycyrrhetic acid were separately dissolved in 5 ml of methanol obtaining stock concentrations of 1000 µg/ml. Working standard solution are prepared by suitable dilutions in the range of 1-20 µg/ml in methanol. The peak areas were recorded and calibration curve was prepared by plotting peak areas versus concentration applied.

#### **HPLC analysis of boswellia**

HPLC system with UV detector by using mobile phase consisting of 5 % acetonitrile solution in water buffered to pH 2.7 by 10 % ortho-phosphoric acid (90:10 v/v) on using a C18 as a stationary phase with a flow rate of 1 mL/min . The peak was detected at 210nm.<sup>27</sup>

#### **HPLC analysis of liquorice**

The analysis have been carried out by HPLC with UV detector at 252nm were analyzed by a column C-18, with a mobile phase consisting of methanol-water (70:30, v/v, containing 1% acetic acid) and the flow rate was 1mL/min.

#### ***In vivo* anti-inflammatory effects-**

The sustained anti-inflammatory effects of the optimized formulations (F-4 and F-5) of boswellia and (F-5 and F-6) of liquorice were evaluated by carrageenan-induced hind paw edema method developed in Wistar rats by Winter et al. 1965.<sup>26</sup> Wistar rats weighing 200– 250 g were randomly divided into groups: control, formulation (F- 4 and F-5) of boswellia and formulation (F-5 and F-6) of liquorice each containing 6 rats. The animals were kept under standard laboratory conditions, at a temperature of  $25 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$  and relative humidity of  $55 \pm 5\%$ . Paw edema was induced by injecting carrageenan in distilled water. Dose for the rats was calculated based on the weight of the rats. Formulations were given to all animals (except in control group) half an hour before subplantar injection of carrageenan in right paw. The amount of paw swelling was determined using plethysmometer time to time and expressed as percent edema.

#### **Stability studies**

Stability studies were performed as per the guidelines of the International Conference on Harmonization after storage at  $40^\circ\text{C}/75\% \text{RH}$  0, 3 and 6 months. Physical appearance, drug content and dissolution pattern were determined after storage.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Prepared all formulations of boswellia extract granules bulk density and tapped density were found in the range of  $0.45 \pm 0.04$  to  $0.51 \pm 0.02$  and  $0.48 \pm 0.03$  to  $0.57 \pm 0.04$  respectively. The angle of repose was in the range  $25.34^\circ \pm 0.52$  to  $27^\circ.16 \pm 0.36$ . The compressibility index was within the

range of 10-25 hence indication of good flow property. All the tablets of each formulations of boswellia extract showed acceptable results with respect to diameter, thickness, hardness, drug content uniformity, friability and average weight. The diameter of all the formulations was found in the range of  $10.42 \pm 0.26$  to  $10.61 \pm 0.29$ . All formulations showed less than 1% friability, which was within the prescribed limit. The average weight deviation percentage of 20 tablets taken from each formulation was less than  $\pm 5\%$ . Drug content was more than 95% and within the limits. Hence all the formulations complied with the official specifications (Table-3). Prepared all formulations of liquorice extract granules bulk density and tapped density were found in the range of  $0.45 \pm 0.04$  to  $0.50 \pm 0.02$  and  $0.47 \pm 0.03$  to  $0.56 \pm 0.02$  respectively. The compressibility index was within the range of 10-25 hence indication of good flow property. All the tablets of each formulations of boswellia extract showed acceptable results with respect to diameter, thickness, hardness, drug content uniformity, friability and average weight. The diameter of all the formulations was found in the range of  $10.20 \pm 0.48$  to  $10.32 \pm 0.43$ . All formulations showed less than 1% friability, which was within the prescribed limit. The average weight deviation percentage of 20 tablets taken from each formulation was less than  $\pm 5\%$ . Drug content was more than 95% and within the limits (Table-4). By observing the *in vitro* release data it may be concluded that the release rate of drug from matrix formulations largely depends upon type of polymer and its amount. The results of dissolution studies of boswellia formulations F-1, F-2 and F-3 were given relatively rapid and complete release within 20h. The higher concentration of ethyl cellulose and eudragit RS100 showed better sustained release properties (F-4 and F-5) than HPMC (F-6). The results of dissolution studies of formulations F-6 was not considered for further studies since inadequate amount of drug (6.03%) was released at 2 h. The drug release from the tablets prepared using formulation F-4 and F-5 was slow and spread over 24h. The drug release data of formulations were subjected to different models of kinetics viz. zero order, first order, Higuchi and Korsmeyer-Peppas. Regression analysis was performed and the values of  $R^2$  suggest that the drug release follows first order kinetics and fits into Higuchi model. Drug release from formulation F-4 and F-5 was governed by diffusion through the matrix. Formulation F-4 and F-5 ( $n < 0.45$ ) indicates Fickian type of release. Release studies of liquorice illustrate that formulation F-1 and F-2 complete the drug release within 16h, F-3 sustained drug release was upto 20h and incomplete drug release with formulation F-4 at the end of 24h. Regression analysis was performed and the values of  $R^2$  suggest that in-vitro release profiles of drugs from the formulations F-5 and F-6 of liquorice showed good fit in the Korsmeyer-Peppas model compared to other kinetics model (zero order, first order and Higuchi). Values of n between 0.5 and 1.0 can

be regarded as an indicator for the non-Fickian (anomalous transport) diffusion. For all formulations, the value of *n* was in the range 0.646- 0.738 indicating non-Fickian (anomalous transport) wherein the drug release mechanism is controlled by both diffusion and dissolution. Percent inhibition of edema produced by formulation treated group was calculated against the respective control group. Results of these studies were compared using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

$$\% \text{ Inhibition} = \frac{\% \text{ Edema (Control)} - \% \text{ Edema (Formulation)}}{\% \text{ Edema (Control)}} \times 100$$

Statistical analysis was performed. P-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The results obtained from *in-vivo* study shows that the formulation F-4 of boswellia and formulation F-6 of liquorice are good source for anti-inflammatory activity. (Table-5 and 6) After storage at 40°C/75% RH for 3 and 6 months there was no considerable changes found in physical change (appearance, friability and hardness), drug content and in-vitro drug release profiles of formulation F-4 of boswellia and formulation F-6 of liquorice. The results obtained from accelerated stability studies indicate that F-4 tablets of boswellia drug content was obtained 100.26 % at 0 month, 99.89 % at 3 month and 98.19 % at 6 month. Furthermore, drug content of formulation F-6 of liquorice was found 99.82 % at 0 month, 99.70 % at 3 month and 98.42 % at 6month.

**Table 1: Composition of formulation of sustained release matrix tablets of Boswellia (mg/tablet)**

S. No	Name of ingredient	F-1	F-2	F-3	F-4	F-5	F-6
1	Boswellia extract	250	250	250	250	250	250
2	Ethyl cellulose	125	--	--	150	--	--
3	Eudragit RS100	--	125	--	--	150	--
4	HPMC K15M	--	--	125	--	--	150
5	Microcrystalline cellulose	20	20	20	--	--	--
6	PVP K30	63	63	63	63	63	63
7	Magnesium stearate	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	Talc	5	5	5	5	5	5
9	Isopropyl alcohol	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s
	<b>Total wt(mg)</b>	475	475	475	475	475	475

**Table 2: Composition of formulation of sustained release matrix tablets of Liquorice (mg/tablet)**

S. No	Name of ingredient	F-1	F-2	F-3	F-4	F-5	F-6
1	Liquorice extract	250	250	250	250	250	250
2	Carbopol 971P	100	--	--	120	--	--
3	Sodium CMC	--	100	--	--	120	--

4	HPMC K15M	--	--	100	--	--	120
5	Lactose	20	20	20	--	--	--
6	PVP K30	70	70	70	70	70	70
7	Magnesium stearate	5	5	5	5	5	5
8	Talc	5	5	5	5	5	5
9	Iso propyl alcohol	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s	q.s
	Total wt(mg)	450	450	450	450	450	450

**Table 3: Parameters of Boswellia matrix tablets formulations**

Formulation	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Hardness (Kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Friability (%)	Drug Content (%)	Avg. Weight (mg)
F1	10.46±0.13	4.24±0.04	6.82±0.21	0.20±0.01	98.68±1.02	474.24±0.97
F2	10.50±0.17	4.12±0.03	6.73±0.24	0.22±0.01	98.62±0.95	476.21±1.18
F3	10.45±0.14	4.32±0.03	7.01±0.21	0.38±0.02	99.17±0.41	473.14±0.67
F4	10.42±0.26	4.22±0.02	6.94±0.40	0.21±0.04	100.26±0.97	476.10±0.97
F5	10.53±0.21	4.17±0.08	7.04±0.04	0.21±0.03	99.05±0.63	475.93±1.96
F6	10.61±0.29	4.17±0.06	7.13±0.24	0.24±0.02	100.59±0.22	472.99±1.63

**Table 4: Parameters of Liquorice matrix tablets formulations**

Formulation	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Hardness (Kg/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Friability (%)	Drug Content (%)	Avg. Weight (mg)
F1	10.20±0.48	4.10±0.18	7.01±0.12	0.20±0.01	99.61±0.83	451.09±0.78
F2	10.24±0.63	4.96±0.16	7.19±0.12	0.23±0.03	98.22±1.04	448.91±0.49
F3	10.32±0.43	4.13±0.31	6.98±0.14	0.17±0.02	99.10±0.74	449.33±1.75
F4	10.25±0.25	4.11±0.24	7.36±0.18	0.13±0.04	99.96±1.34	452.35±1.36
F5	10.24±0.29	4.26±0.17	6.87±0.26	0.21±0.02	100.10±0.94	450.91±0.57
F6	10.30±0.92	4.24±0.13	7.41±0.22	0.30±0.04	99.82±0.97	448.86±0.98

**Table 5: Percent inhibition of edema produced by formulation F-4 and F-5 of boswellia**

% Inhibition of edema								
Formula	1h	3h	6h	9h	12h	16h	20h	24h
F-4	29.12±0.35	42.69±0.56	65.02±0.25	65.30±1.21	68.82±0.84	67.89±0.32	67.91±0.46	67.81±0.98
F-5	16.34±1.41	36.91±0.83	51.61±0.79	50.18±1.93	50.19±1.63	49.97±0.68	49.05±0.74	49.00±1.07

**Table 6: Percent inhibition of edema produced by formulation F-5 and F-6 of liquorice**

% Inhibition of edema								
Formula	1h	3h	4h	9h	12h	16h	20h	24h
F-5	22.19±0.97	44.79±1.63	65.93±1.35	66.93±0.83	65.82±0.47	65.65±1.35	65.36±0.64	65.04±0.36
F-6	28.77±0.83	46.37±0.73	70.64±1.03	68.44±1.31	69.04±0.93	69.01±0.78	69.15±0.35	68.88±1.92

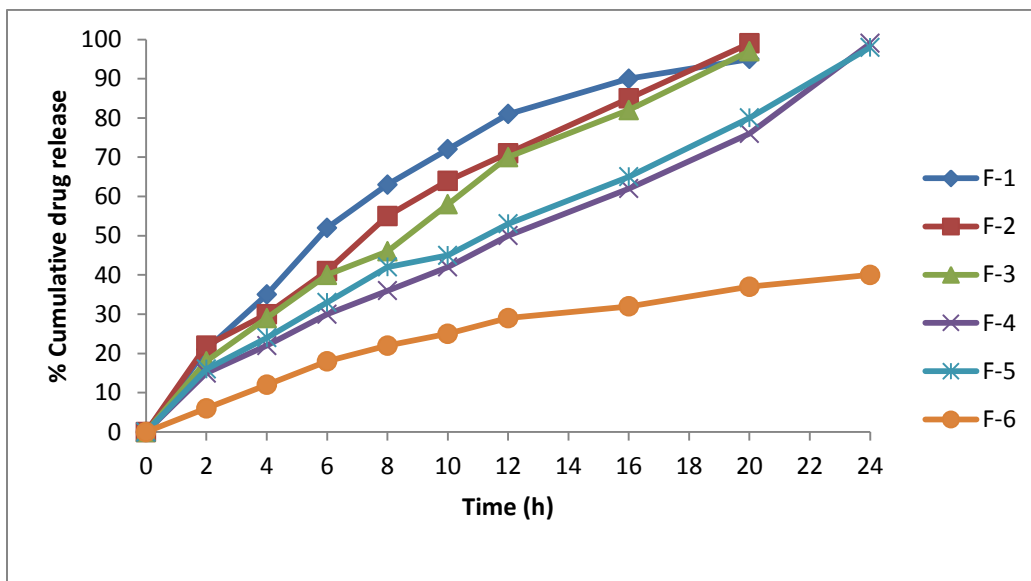


Figure 1: Comparison of in-vitro drug release study of boswellia sustained release formulations F-1 to F-6.

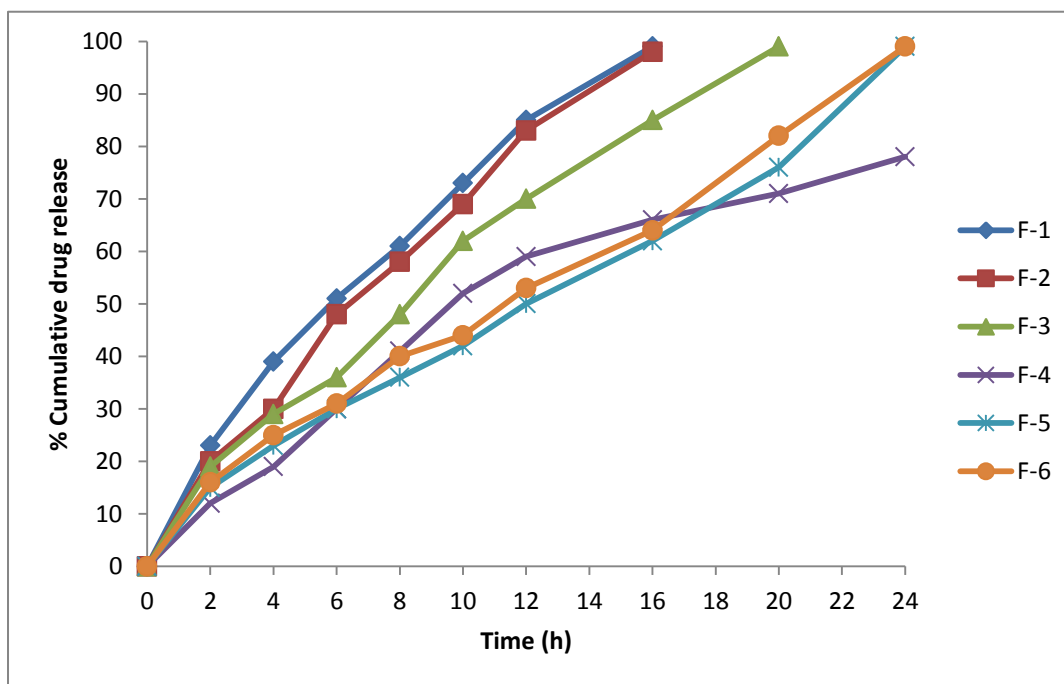


Figure 2: Comparison of in-vitro drug release study of liquorice sustained release formulations F-1 to F-6.

## CONCLUSION

Studies revealed that all the physicochemical parameters comply with the official standards. The in vitro release studies exhibits the release up to 98%, over a prolonged period of time which confirms the extended release profile of formulation, having better bioavailability as well as decreased dosing frequency with reduced doses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are thankful to honorable director and head of department (pharmacy) of the Vishveshwarya Institute of Engineering and Technology, Greater Noida (U.P) for providing the all facilities to carry out this research work.

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