Formulation and Characterization of pH Induced in situ Gels Containing Sulfacetamide Sodium for Ocular Drug Delivery: A Combination of Carbopol®/HPMC Polymer

Ravi Sheshala¹²*, Ng Jun Ming¹, Yong Yee Kok¹, Thakur Raghu Raj Singh³, Kamal Dua⁴⁵

¹School of Pharmacy, International Medical University, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.
²Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor, Puncak Alam Campus, 42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Kuala Selangor, MALAYSIA.
³School of Pharmacy, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, BT9 7BL, UNITED KINGDOM.
⁴Discipline of Pharmacy, Graduate School of Health, University Technology Sydney, Ultimo, New South Wales, AUSTRALIA.
⁵Priority Research Centre for Healthy Lungs, Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) and School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, AUSTRALIA.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Topical delivery of eye drops which currently accounts to 90% of available ocular dosage forms are ideal for the treatment of eye diseases but having limitations of poor therapeutic response and low bioavailability. Objectives: The objectives of present research was to develop and characterize sustained release in situ ocular gels containing sulfacetamide sodium using pH induced gelling polymers for improved therapeutic response and patient compliance. Methods: In situ gel formulations prepared by dispersion method using Carbopol® 940/Carbopol® 934 alone or in combination with hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC E4M). Formulations were evaluated for appearance, pH, viscosity, gelling capacity, drug content and in vitro drug release. The optimized formulation was assessed for sterility and antimicrobial efficacy using disk diffusion technique in comparison to commercial eye drops (Albucid® 10%). Results: The appearance of in situ gels were clear and free flowing in nature however, a viscous clear solution with no flow was produced for formulations consisting of 0.8% w/v Carbopol® 940/Carbopol® 934 and 2% w/v HPMC E4M. pH of all the formulations was within the range of 5.9 to 6.7. In situ gels with Carbopol® 940 demonstrated higher viscosity compared to Carbopol® 934 and drug release was sustained over a period of 8 hr. The selected formulation containing 0.8% w/v Carbopol® 940 and 1.5% w/v HPMC E4M passed sterility test and demonstrated similar antimicrobial efficiency compared to commercial product. Conclusion: Carbopol®/HPMC-based in situ gels have potential to improve patient’s compliance by reducing the dosing frequency and could be a viable alternative to commercial product.

Key words: In situ gel, Ocular, Sulfacetamide sodium, Carbopol®/HPMC, In-vitro release, Antimicrobial efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Ocular drug delivery is one of the most interesting and challenging areas of pharmaceutical research. Topical delivery of eye drops which currently accounts for 90% of accessible ocular formulations is an ideal treatment for ocular diseases especially when the drug needs to produce a localized action. However, topical delivery is not without problems such as the poor bioavailability and therapeutic response. These challenges are attributable to the rapid pre-corneal elimination due to tear secretion, non-productive absorption due to the biological barrier for drug penetration, absorp-
tion into the gastrointestinal tract due to drainage through
nasal lacrimal duct and poor patient’s compliance due
to increasing number of instillations and difficulty in
self-administration.14 Thus, the concept of polymeric
in situ gel forming system was introduced to alleviate
these problems. In situ gels are free flowing solutions
at room temperature that undergo phase transition
from solution-gel (sol-gel) as a result of exposure to
physiological temperature, pH or ionic compositions of
lacrimal fluid.5–7 The gel formed in the eye effectively
prevents the rapid drainage of instilled drug from ocular
site, improves the retention time of dosage form at the
site of administration and sustains the drug release for
a prolonged period of time. It aids to reduce the dosing
frequency and to improve the therapeutic efficiency of
drug. Furthermore, systemic side effects would also be
reduced due to less systemic absorption. Therefore, it
enhances patient’s compliance and convenience.5
Carbopol® is a water soluble pH dependent in situ
polymer. The formulations comprising of Carbopol®
polymer remained as solution at acidic pH and forms
a low viscosity gel when pH raised to alkaline. The pH
difference between the formulations containing
Carbopol® and human tear fluid makes the sol-gel
transition occurs almost instantly. Besides, Carbopol®
has an excellent mucoadhesive property. Therefore,
the polymer is responsible to increase the contact time of
a drug in the eye by adhering to the ocular surface and
thereby release the drug in a controlled fashion. However,
acidic nature of Carbopol® may cause damage to surface
of eye before being neutralized by the lacrimal fluid.
Thus, HPMC, a viscosity enhancing polymer is usually
added to Carbopol® contained formulations to overcome
this problem, which resulted in pH induced polymeric
mixture (Carbopol®/HPMC). This polymeric mixture is
in liquid state at it’s native formulated pH 4 to 6 at room
temperature but rapid transition into gel phase occurs
at the pH of tear fluid (pH 7.4).58–10 To date, many of
the ocular in situ forming gels have been investigated
with a combination of Carbopol® and cellulose deriva-
tives.8,11–15 In addition, these two polymers are already
listed in the FDA’s Inactive Ingredient Guide (IG) and
widely used commercially for various drug applications
including topical ophthalmic solutions.14–16 Therefore,
these polymers are considered to be safe to use.
Sulfacetamide sodium is a sulfonamide with antibacterial
activity. It is commercially available in the dosage forms
of lotion and solution. The ocular dosage form is
commonly used to treat conjunctivitis and other superficial
ocular infections caused by susceptible micro-organisms
such as Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli,
Streptococcus pneumoniae, Klebsiella species and
Enterobacter species. The major drawback of commercial
eye drops, however, is the dosing frequency, which has
to be administered 1 to 2 drops every 2 to 3 hr (8 to
12 times in a day).17 This high frequency of sulfacetamide
sodium eye drops administration is associated with poor
patient compliance and convenience. To overcome all
the aforementioned constrains offered by eye drops,
an alternative approach of in situ gelling system with a
combination of Carbopol® and HPMC was investigated
as a vehicle for the formulation of sustained release
smart eye drops containing sulfacetamide sodium.
Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, till date
there is no published literature on the formulation of
in situ gels containing sulfacetamide sodium.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Sulfacetamide sodium, methyl paraben and propyl paraben
were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich Chemical Co.
(St. Louis, MO, USA). Carbopol® polymers (Carbopol®
940 and Carbopol® 934) were purchased from DCM
personal care Sdn Bhd (Selangor, Malaysia). HPMC
E4M was obtained as a gift sample from Dow Chemical
Co. (Illinois, USA). Muller Hinton agar medium and
fluid thioglycolate medium were purchased from Becton
Dickinson Sdn Bhd (Selangor, Malaysia). All other
solvents and chemicals used were of analytical grade.

Preparation of in situ gel formulations

The composition of in situ gel formulations containing
sulfacetamide sodium is shown in Table 1. In situ gel
formulations containing different concentrations of
Carbopol® 940/Carbopol® 934 in combination with
HPMC E4M were prepared by dispersion method.18–20
Briefly, about 75 mL distilled water was preheated to
70°C to dissolve methyl and propylparaben and then
sodium chloride (NaCl), HPMC and Carbopol® were
incorporated into the solution. The mixture was left
at room temperature overnight to allow the polymer to
hydrate. Sulfacetamide sodium was dissolved in 25mL
distilled water separately. It was added into above
polymeric solution and stirred until a uniform solution
was obtained. The final product was filled into sterile
amber colour bottles and sterilized in autoclave at 121°C
for 15 min. The prepared formulations were stored in
refrigerator at 4°C until further use.

Evaluation of in situ gel formulations

Appearance and clarity, pH and drug content

The appearance and clarity of formulations were
observed visually against a black and white background for
presence of any particulate matter in the formulation.4
The pH of formulations was determined using a digital pH meter (METTLER Toledo, S220 SevenCompact™ pH/Ion) to ensure that the formulations do not cause any ocular irritation to the patient upon administration.

To determine the drug content in the formulations, 1 mL of the formulation was dissolved in 100 mL simulated tear fluid (STF, pH 7.4) and further diluted with same medium to measure the absorbance using UV-Visible spectrophotometer at a wavelength of 257 nm. The composition of STF pH 7.4 is as follows: 0.670 g of NaCl, 0.200 g of NaHCO₃, 0.008 g of CaCl₂·H₂O and distilled water up to 100 mL. The samples were measured in triplicate.

**Viscosity**

The viscosity of the formulations was determined using DV-III ULTRA Programmable Rheometer (Model LV) using a spindle-SC4-18 which is immersed in a formulation to be tested. The spindle speed was set at 20 rpm and the temperature was maintained at 25°C. The viscosity values were calculated using Bingham’s calculation. The samples were measured in triplicate to ensure that the developed formulations having suitable viscosity to avoid the rapid pre-corneal elimination of drug.

**Gelling capacity**

The prepared formulations were evaluated for gelling capacity in order to ascertain the composition suitable for use as *in situ* gelling system. The gelling capacity was determined by placing 1 mL of prepared formulation into a test tube containing 5 mL of STF pH 7.4 at 37°C. The time taken to transition of solution to gel and the time taken for the formed gel to dissolve were visually observed. The congo red dye was added into the formulation to give visualised appearance of formed gel. The gelling capacity of the formulations was graded in four groups such as no gelation (-), poor (+), good (++) and excellent (+++) based on the gelation time and time period for which the formed gel remains as such.²¹,²²

**In-vitro drug release studies**

*In-vitro* drug release studies were conducted using dialysis membrane method in triplicate.²³ Firstly, the dialysis membrane (molecular weight cut-off 12000-14000 Da) which was soaked overnight in the dissolution medium was opened as a bag and tied at one-end. About 1 mL of the selected formulation comprising a combination of Carbopol®/HPMC was placed into one-end tied dialysis bag and then added 0.5 mL of STF pH 7.4 to simulate the gel formation in the eye after instillation of *in situ* gel preparation. Thereafter, second-end of dialysis bag was also tied properly and immersed in a beaker containing 100 mL of STF pH 7.4 which simulates the tear fluid and its pH. The beaker was placed in a shaker water bath which was set at 50 rpm and 37°C. About 2 mL of the sample was withdrawn at 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 h and replaced the same amount of freshly prepared STF to maintain the sink conditions. The samples were analyzed using UV-Visible spectrophotometer at 257 nm using STF as a blank.

The resultant release data was fitted into different release kinetic models i.e. zero order, first order, Higuchi, Hixon-crowell and Korsemeyer-peppas in order to determine the drug release pattern and release mechanism. The time taken to release 50% of the drug (Tₕ₅₀) was calculated and treated statistically using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). When there was a statistically significant difference, a post hoc Tukey’s HSD (honestly significant difference) test was performed. A value of p<0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

**Sterility testing**

Ocular products have to be sterile, thus it is necessary to carry out sterility testing. The selected formulation was aseptically transferred into sterile fluid thioglycolate medium and incubated for not less than 14 days at 35°C.

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**Table 1: Composition of *in situ* gels containing sulfacetamide sodium.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients (% w/v)</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
<th>F6</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>F8</th>
<th>F9</th>
<th>F10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulfacetamide sodium</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbopol® 940</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbopol® 934</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPMC E4M</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methyl paraben</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propyl paraben</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water qs ad</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to evaluate the growth of bacteria. The sterility of the formulation was visually determined by the clarity of the medium until 14 days.\textsuperscript{24-27}

**Antimicrobial efficacy studies**

The antimicrobial efficacy studies were carried out by disk diffusion technique to ascertain the biological activity of the selected formulation. The conventional eye drops (Albucid\textsuperscript{®}10%) served as a reference and selected formulation was placed into cups bored into sterile Muller Hinton Agar medium previously seeded with *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli* and *klabsiella pneumoniae* microorganisms. The plates were incubated for 24 h at 37°C and the zone of inhibition was measured in mm. Each formulation was tested in triplicate. The results were treated statistically using Independent samples t-test. A value of $p<0.05$ was considered as statistically significant.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The obtained results of appearance and clarity, pH, drug content, viscosity and gelling capacity for prepared in situ gel formulations are shown in Table 2.

**Appearance and clarity, pH and drug content**

All the prepared formulations were found to be transparent and clear excluding the formulations consisting of 0.8% w/v of Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 940 (F6) and Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 934 (F10) in combination with HPMC (2% w/v). These two formulations were found to be highly clear viscous solutions with no flow which might be due to high concentration of both Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} and HPMC. Hence, formulations were not prepared with further increase in the concentrations of both polymers. The pH of formulations were found to be in the range of 5.97 to 6.71. The combination of water soluble polymeric system i.e. Carbopol\textsuperscript{®}/HPMC aided to reduce the acidity of the solution. The pH of formulation would raises instantly to pH 7.4 (an ideal ocular pH) after instillation into eye due to pH of lacrimal secretion. Thus, the formulations were considered to be suitable for opthalmic administration and may not cause any irritation to ocular tissues upon administration.\textsuperscript{2,28} The drug content of all the formulations was found to be in the acceptable range of 98.63% to 99.63% and results demonstrated the uniform distribution of drug in the prepared formulations.

**Viscosity**

Viscosity of formulations is an important factor in determining residence time of drug in the eye as the low viscosity solutions may drain faster after instillation into eye and high viscosity solutions would be difficult for instillation and also have poor spreadability in the eye. Viscosity of all the formulations was found to be in the range of 64.8 to 1857 cP. The viscosity was directly dependent on the polymeric content of the formulations and increase in the polymer concentration caused to increase in viscosity of the formulations. Formulations consisting of Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 940 showed higher viscosity compared to Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 934. It might be due to differences in their crosslinking density as Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 940 has high crosslinking density and Carbopol\textsuperscript{®} 934 has low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>pH</th>
<th>Drug content (%)</th>
<th>Viscosity (cP)</th>
<th>Gelling capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>99.13 ± 0.35</td>
<td>64.80 ± 0.71</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>99.07 ± 0.51</td>
<td>86.05 ± 0.64</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>99.27 ± 0.15</td>
<td>259.20 ± 7.07</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>98.63 ± 0.23</td>
<td>1023.00 ± 63.64</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>98.67 ± 0.21</td>
<td>1209.00 ± 28.28</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>Clear and Viscous</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>98.87 ± 0.32</td>
<td>1857.00 ± 62.02</td>
<td>NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>99.63 ± 0.15</td>
<td>685.10 ± 12.59</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>98.90 ± 0.20</td>
<td>728.50 ± 0.00</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9</td>
<td>Transparent and Clear</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>99.00 ± 0.40</td>
<td>1063.75 ± 7.14</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>Clear and Viscous</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>98.80 ± 0.20</td>
<td>1572.50 ± 68.59</td>
<td>NS*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*\* No gelation, \*+ gelation immediate but dissolves rapidly (1-2 h), ++ gelation immediate and remain for few h (3-4 h), +++ stiff gel is formed immediately and remain for extended period (more than 6-8 h).

\*\* Not Studied for gelling capacity.
Remarkable increase in the viscosity of formulations from 64.8 to 259.2 cP with the increase in the concentration of Carbopol® 940 from 0.3 to 0.8 %w/v. The same phenomena was observed with the formulations consisting of Carbopol®/HPMC polymeric mixture i.e. increase in the concentration of HPMC E4M from 0.6 to 2 % w/v (F3 to F6) while maintaining the Carbopol® 940 concentration constant at 0.8 %w/v. The similar findings was observed with Carbopol® 934 (0.6-0.8 %w/v) and HPMC E4M (1-2 %w/v) in formulations F7 to F10. The results are well in correlation with the Nanjawade et al.3 and Pandey et al.36 where the researchers used a combination of Carbopol® 934/HPMC E4M and Carbopol® 940/HPMC E4M at various concentrations to formulate pH triggered in situ gels containing ketorolac tromethamine and levobunolol hydrochloride, respectively. Formulations, F1 to F5 and F7 to F9 were found to be free flowing in nature. However, formulations F6 and F10 were not pourable in nature as they exhibited higher viscosity due to higher content of polymeric system. Hence, these two formulations were not considered for further studies.

**Gelling capacity**

An optimal in situ gelling formulation should have the balanced gelling capacity and viscosity which enables easy administration to the eyes with good gel formation by undergoing rapid sol to gel transition upon contact at the affected site. Besides, enhancing the residence time of drug at pre-corneal surface dependent on the viscosity of the formulations.31 Formulation F1 containing 0.3 %w/v Carbopol® 940 and 0.6 %w/v HPMC E4M was assigned with ‘-’ sign as it is not having gelling ability at the pH of STF (pH 7.4) due to the low viscosity of solution and hence were abandoned for further studies. With increase in the concentration of Carbopol® and HPMC, the formulations retained their liquid state at room temperature and at the formulated pH and increased the gelling capacity of the formulations upon exposure to pH of STF due to increase in the viscosity of formulations. Among all, formulation F5 demonstrated excellent gelling capacity and assigned with ‘+++’ sign. They formed stiff gel immediately and remained for extended period of time (more than 6-8 h).

The formation of stiffer gel might be due to hydrophobic nature of Carbopol® backbone and with increasing in the concentration, large amount of polymeric chains develop hydrophobic interchain aggregation. Also, due to increased ionization of functional groups present in Carbopol® as a result of increasing pH, leading to an increased repulsion of negative charges along the polymer backbone and the subsequent expansion of polymeric network. Furthermore, by increasing the concentration of Carbopol®/HPMC in the aqueous environment, they form a stable three dimensional viscoelastic network.32,33 The formulation of such in situ gels facilitates the sustained drug release locally by preserving their integrity without dissolving and eroding for prolonged period of time.

**In-vitro drug release studies**

The results of in-vitro drug release study was shown in Figure 1. The reference product released about 99.27% of drug within 2 h. However, the selected formulations F3, F4 and F5 released 90% of drug within 4, 6 and 8 h, respectively. These three formulations had same concentration of Carbopol® 940 (0.8% w/v) but the concentration of HPMC E4M as a viscosity enhancer increased from 0.6 to 1.5 %w/v. Similarly, the formulation F8 and F9 released 90% of drug within 3 and 4 h, respectively. The formulation F8 and F9 contained same amount of Carbopol® 934 (0.8 %w/v) but the concentration of HPMC E4M increased from 1 to 1.5 %w/v. Therefore, the in vitro drug release results demonstrated that higher viscosity with stronger gelling ability plays an important role in sustaining the drug release from the formulations for prolonged period of time.

The T<sub>50%</sub> of reference formulation (Albucid®10%), F3, F4, F5, F8 and F9 were 0.28, 0.48, 0.93, 2.86, 0.56 and 0.76 h, respectively. As the formulation F3 had an initial burst release at an initial hour, no statistically significant difference was observed between reference and F3. However, a statistically significant difference was observed
between reference, F4 and F5 as the initial burst release was decreased and exhibited sustained drug release with an increasing the concentration of HPMC E4M. The formulation F5 (2.86 h) had better sustained release profile compared to other in situ gel formulations and marketed eye drops. It could be due to the higher viscosity and excellent gelling capacity of the formulation which supported to immediate transition of solution to gel at ocular pH and remained in the gel form for a prolonged period of time to sustain the sulfacetamide sodium release for 8 h. This phenomenon eliminates the aforementioned disadvantages of eye drops i.e. rapid precorneal elimination of formulation caused by blinking of eyes and tear secretion and frequency of dosing frequency of currently available sulfacetamide sodium eye drops (every 2-3 h). Therefore, the in situ gel formulation achieves the improved patient compliance and convenience with the dosing administration of every 8 h. Formulation F5 was selected as the best among the prepared formulations and evaluated for sterility testing and antimicrobial efficacy studies.

In order to find out the kinetic of drug release, the *in-vitro* drug release data was fitted into different release kinetic models. The best fit model of release pattern was considered with highest regression value ($r^2$) of zero and first order. The regression values of Higuchi model which indicate diffusion mechanism and Hixon-crowell model which indicate erosion mechanism were compared to identify the release mechanism. The release mechanism can be further confirmed by the release exponent ($n$) value in Korsemeyer-peppas model. The release kinetic results of *in situ* gels are presented in Table 3. The formulation F5 and conventional eye drops showed identical kinetic of drug release which was followed zero order release pattern and non-fickian diffusion (combination of diffusion and erosion) mechanism ($n$ value was in between 0.43-0.85).

### Sterility testing

The results of the sterility test on the formulation F5 (Carbopol® 940/HPMC-0.8/1.5 %w/v) is shown in Figure 2. The results indicated that there is no evidence of microbial growth on the fluid thioglycolate medium during the incubation period of 14 days at 35°C. Therefore, the formulation was found to be clear without appearance of turbidity which confirmed the sterility of formulation.

### Antimicrobial efficacy studies

The zone of inhibition results from antimicrobial efficacy studies are shown in Table 4 and depicted in Figure 3. The zone of inhibition results demonstrated that
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Pundir and Jain\(^4\) when the diameter of zone of inhibition is more than 18 mm, it is considered that formulations have very active antimicrobial activity. Thus, it indicated that sulfacetamide sodium retained its very active antimicrobial efficiency even after being formulated in an in situ gelling system.

**CONCLUSION**

Sulfacetamide sodium was successfully formulated as pH dependent in situ ocular gel using Carbopol\(^®\)/HPMC as a polymeric system. All the formulations were clear and free flowing solutions other than F6 and F10. The formulation F5 was found to be sterile and showed excellent gelling capacity. It also demonstrated a good viscosity and sustained the drug release over a period of 8 h. The antimicrobial efficacy of selected formulation was similar to commercial eyes drops (Albucid\(^®\)10\%). Therefore, it was concluded that in situ gelling formulation with Carbopol\(^®\)/HPMC would invariably improve the patient’s compliance by minimising the frequency of drug administration and could be a viable alternative to the conventional commercial product.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- NaCl: Sodium chloride
- STF: Simulated tear fluid
- NaHCO\(_3\): Sodium bicarbonate
- HPMC: Hydroxypropyl methylcellulose
- CaCl\(_2\)·2H\(_2\)O: Calcium chloride dihydrate

**REFERENCES**

SUMMARY

In-situ gels has received extensive attention over the past few years as they are capable of undergoing rapid solution-to-gel transformation due to physico-chemical changes occurring in the eye. Hence the developed sulfacetamide sodium in-situ gel formulation is a better alternate to existing conventional eye drops by virtue of improved precorneal residence time of dosage form at the site of administration, sustained action, better therapeutic efficiency and consequently reduces the dosing frequency with improved patient compliance and convenience.

Dr. Ravi Sheshala is currently working as a Senior Lecturer in Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Puncak Alam Campus, Malaysia. Prior to this, worked as a lecturer in International Medical University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Dr Ravi’s research interests are in the development of in situ gels/implants for sustained ocular drug delivery using temperature and pH sensitive polymers and nanoparticulate drug delivery systems.

Dr. Thakur Raghu Raj Singh is Reader in Pharmaceutics in the School of Pharmacy, Queen's University Belfast, UK. He has obtained his Ph.D. in Drug Delivery from School of Pharmacy, Queens University Belfast (2009). Dr. Thakur’s research interests are in the design and physico-chemical characterisation of advanced polymeric drug delivery systems for ocular, transdermal and topical applications. In particular, his current research involves the fabrication and design of novel long-acting injectable and implantable drug delivery systems for treating back of the eye disorders. His research on the treatment of eye disorders has led to the formation of Re-Vana Therapeutics Ltd., where he is currently serving as a Chief Security Officer (CSO).

Dr. Kamal Dua holds two doctoral degrees in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Immunology & Microbiology, MPharm (with a Major in Pharmaceutics), and BPharm. Dr Dua has also successfully completed and been awarded four professional diplomas in the areas of Clinical Research, Product Development, Drug Regulatory Affairs & Documentation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Dr Dua’s professional experience spans over 13 years in academia and research across 3 nations and 2 continents.

Mr. Ng Jun Ming was completed Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) from International Medical University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He is currently working as a Production Pharmacist, Malaysia in one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in Malaysia i.e. Kotra Pharma, who expert in GMP compliance and problem solving related to manufacturing. He has a 5 years’ experience in the field and had been assisted the company to resolve several formulation, process and material related issues as well as GMP related in production.

Mr. Yong Yee Kok was completed Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) from International Medical University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He is currently working as a pharmacist in Hospital Teluk Intan, Perak, Malaysia.