

Review on Evalution and Formulation of Oral Thin Films of Fexofenadine

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Abstract— Thin films are being explored by the pharmaceutical sector as a potential new drug delivery method. It has been said that thin films offer an alternative to traditional dose forms. They offer quick, local, or systemic effects and are a very flexible platform. Furthermore, these systems are simple to use independently, particularly for patients with dysphagia, elderly, pediatric, or bedridden patients, as well as those who have trouble getting water. There are several methods to provide these drug delivery systems, including oral, buccal, sublingual, ophthalmic, and transdermal. This evaluation looks at oral thin films from all angles today and provides insight into the expanding global market share brought about by advancements in technology and research areas. The design of thin films, anatomical and physiological constraints, the choice of suitable manufacturing processes, characterization methods, and the physicochemical characteristics of polymers and medications are among the crucial formulation design parameters that are also discussed. It also offers information about the newest thin-film products that different pharmaceutical companies have produced.

Index Terms—*Oral Thin Film, Fexofenadine, Antihistaminic Drug, disintegration, solubility, HPMC E15 and Xanthan gum,*

I. INTRODUCTION

The gums, tongue, and base of the mouth all have mucosal thicknesses between 100 and 200 μm . While the polar nature of the intercellular space makes it easier for more hydrophilic molecules to penetrate, the lipophilic structure of cell membranes allows molecules with a high partition coefficient to go across the cells. The drug's absorption is determined by whether it is hydrophilic, hydrophobic, or amphiphilic. The innovative medication delivery

system It has been said that oral thin films offer an alternative to traditional dose forms. They offer quick, local, or systemic effects and are a very flexible platform. "These are drug delivery systems that they are rapidly releasing the drug by dissolving or adhering in the mucosa with saliva within a few seconds due to their containment of water-soluble polymers when placed in the mouth cavity or on the tongue," is how oral dissolving films or strips are described. Because of its thin membrane structure and high vascularization, the sublingual mucosa has a high membrane permeability. The way that OTFs distribute drugs through the buccal or sublingual mucosa has drawn a lot of interest lately. Combinations of polymers, the fundamental building blocks of thin films, in varying ratios can also be used to modify mechanical strength, associated characteristics, mucoadhesive qualities, and drug release rate. Because of the appealing qualities of OTFs, the pharmaceutical industry is creating thin-film technologies and is presently patenting these formulations. The European Medicines Agency states that an oro-dispers film is a thin layer that dissolves readily in the oral mucosa. Usually, the size of a postage stamp, rapidly dissolving oral films (OTFs) disintegrate or disperse in the oral cavity within one minute of coming into contact with saliva, allowing for rapid drug absorption and instant bioavailability.¹, 10 Unlike traditional medications, these novel dosage forms are taken orally and do not require water for consumption and absorption. OTFs should not be confused with buccal films, which are meant to remain on the cheek mucosa for a long time.

Compared to conventional solid dose forms, fast-dissolving oral films offer a number of benefits, including greater API efficacy and flexibility. Additionally, compared to ODTs, oral films dissolve and disintegrate in less than a minute with very little salivary fluid. The 40–50 cell layer known as mucus, which is composed of proteins and carbohydrates, is the oral mucosal epithelium. must improve patient compliance and the safety and effectiveness of the therapeutic molecule by creating an easy-to-administer dose form. Thin films have been recognised as a substitute for traditional dosage forms. The thin films are thought to be a flexible drug delivery platform since they are easy to swallow, self-administrable, and have a quick dissolving dose form. Through a variety of routes, including oral, buccal, sublingual, ocular, and transdermal, this delivery mechanism has been used for both systemic and local activity. The creation of mouth-dissolving films is the novel strategy. We will address the insufficient mechanical strength of mouth dissolving films, which is a major disadvantage. The primary goal of the current work is to create oral fast-dissolving films of fexofenadine in order to create a dosage form with a very rapid onset of action that can help manage severe allergy conditions, improve bioavailability, and be administered conveniently without the need for water or swallowing issue.

II. USE OF ORAL FILMS IN DRUG DELIVERY

A. Oral Uses

For treatments requiring quick absorption, such as those for pain, asthma, insomnia, and diseases of the central nervous system, oral mucosal distribution via buccal, sublingual, and mucosal routes using OTFs may end up being the recommended delivery strategy. Topical usage include the administration of active ingredients such as analgesics or antibacterial compounds for wound care and other applications using dissolvable films. Gastro-retentive dosing systems: Dissolvable films are being explored for dosage forms that include compounds of various molecular weights that are both poorly soluble and water soluble in a film format. The pH of the gastrointestinal system or the secretions of enzymes that may be employed to treat gastrointestinal diseases may be the cause of the films' breakdown.

B. Diagnostic Devices

: Dissolvable films can be used to provide separation barriers between many chemicals to permit a timed response within a diagnostic system, or they can be packed with sensitive reagents to enable controlled release when exposed to biological fluids [20]. In the late 1970s, fast-dissolving drug delivery systems were first offered as a substitute for conventional drug formulations. Fast dissolving products (OTFs) include oral thin films and oral disintegrating tablets (ODTs). 2010 saw the approval of Zuplenz (Ondansetron hydrochloride, 4 mg, 8 mg), the first opioid OTF. For the second time, suboxone (buprenorphine and naloxone) was approved right away. ODTs can be replaced with safer oral thin-film drug administration methods that dissolve readily. OTFs are instantly moistened by saliva when placed on the tongue's floor or tip. OTFs either dissolve to release medicine or rapidly hydrate before dissolving.

Oral medicine administration is the most popular method due to its ease of absorption, ability to prevent pain, and adaptability. Many elderly patients and children refuse to make solid preparations because they fear choking. One study found that 26% of 1576 individuals had trouble swallowing medications. Most people were worried with tablet size, then flavour and surface contour. Over the past 20 years, the need for more patient compliant dose forms has increased.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Analytical study: The drug's λ_{\max} will be ascertained using the UV spectrophotometric approach. For the quantitative measurement of the medication, a calibration curve was created using spectrophotometry based on UV absorption at λ_{\max} in PBS pH 6.8. For the quantitative measurement of the medication, a calibration curve was created using spectrophotometry based on UV absorption at λ_{\max} 224 nm in PBS pH 6.8.

Preformulating: Certain basic physical and chemical characteristics of the medication powder were identified. Preformulating is the term for this initial learning stage. The chemical and physical characteristics of pharmacological compounds should be determined before they are formulated into a dosage form. The initial stage in creating dosage forms for a pharmacological substance is preformulating testing. These studies might verify that the creation of dosage forms is not significantly hampered. Sanofi Pharma Pvt. Ltd. in Ankleshwar, India, provided a gift sample

of fexofenadine hydrochloride. A number of parameters were examined, including Shrivastava et al. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research | Vol. 11, Issue 7, 2022. | ISO 9001:2015 Certified Journal | 1203 solubility studies, partition coefficient, FTIR of the medication, physical appearance (colour, aroma, taste, and appearance), and melting point Rapid dissolving film formulation: The solvent casting technique will be used in this study to create rapid dissolving films of fexofenadine. The films will be cast using flat, square glass moulds coated with aluminium foil.

Casting solution preparation: Selected polymers were used to create the casting solutions. The necessary weighed amounts of xanthan gum (XG) and HPMC E15 polymers were each stored separately for swelling for the entire night in 5 millilitres of distilled water and dissolved. As indicated in Table 1, the medication and aspartame sweetener were added straight to the polymeric solution, along with glycerol as a plasticiser. The combination was then vigorously stirred on a magnetic stirrer to create a uniform mixture. Lastly, 10 millilitres of distilled water were added to the xanthan gum solution and the polymer solution. The sonication procedure was used to eliminate the trapped air bubbles. In order to prepare oral thin films, 10 millilitres of the casting solution were poured into glass Molds, which were then dried in a vacuum oven set at 40°C for 24 hours in order to evaporate the solvent.

The films were chopped into squares measuring 2.0 cm by 2.0 cm (4.0 cm²) after being peeled off. It was left to dry at room temperature for a full day. The transparent, bubble-free thin film was carefully taken out of the petri dish, which contained fast-dissolving films made with various polymers and ratios while keeping the plasticiser and sweetener concentrations constant (Karki S, 2016).

Table 1: Formulation casting solution of oral thin films.

F. Code	Otf1	Otf2	Otf3	Otf4	Otf5	Otf6	Otf7	Otf8	Otf9
Fexofenadine hcl (mg)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Hpmc e15 (mg)	50	100	150	-	-	-	25	50	75
Xanthan gum (mg)	-	-	-	50	100	150	25	50	75
Sodium starch glycolate (mg)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Citric acid (mg)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Aspartame (mg)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Glycerol (ml)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

IV. EVALUTION TESTS

Evaluation of oral thin films:

Weight variation: Using a digital balance, the average weight of the mouths' dissolving oral films will be calculated. It is preferable for films to weigh almost the same. Verifying that a film contains the necessary quantity of medication and excipients is helpful. Film thickness: Five completely separate locations were used to measure the film's thickness using a micrometre screw gauge, and an average of three values was computed. Film thickness: A micrometre screw gauge was used to measure the film's thickness at five totally different sites. Three average values were then calculated.

Uniformity of drug content:

40 millilitres of PBS pH 6.8 combination and 10 millilitres of methanol were used to dissolve the manufactured oral thin films. Whatman filter paper was used to filter the mixture. Following appropriate dilutions, the drug's concentration was measured using the UV technique at 224 nm.

Surface pH:

0.5 ml of distilled water was added to the film in a petri dish, and it was left for 30 seconds. By placing the pH meter's electrode on the formulation's surface and letting it equilibrate for a minute, the mixture's pH was determined.

Tensile strength:

The device, which has two clamps—the top one permanent and the lower one movable—determines the tensile strength. The two clamps are used to clamp the 0.5 x 3 cm film sample. It is established what the force is at tearing and elongation.

The following formula is used to determine the percent elongation (%E).

$(L_s - L_o) / L_o \times 100 = \% E$ where L_o is the initial length. L_s = The film's length following elongation

The formula $F/A = EM \{(L_s - L_o) / L_o\}$ was used to determine the modulus of elasticity of films. where A is the film's cross-sectional area and F is the breaking load (N).

Modulus of Elasticity (EM)

Water vapor transmission rate:

According to this study, transmission cells can be made out of vials of the same diameter.

After a thorough cleaning, the cells are dried in an oven.

The polymeric films (two cm² area) are adhered to the brim using an adhesive after one gram of calcium chloride is placed within the cell. The original weight of the cells is noted when they are precisely weighed. After that, the films are stored in a closed desiccator with an 80–90% relative humidity saturated potassium chloride solution. At 18, 36, 54, and 72 hours, the cells are removed and weighed.

The following formula can be used to determine the amount of water vapor communicated and the rate of transmission based on weight increases:

Transmission rate of water vapor = WL/S

Where, W = Water vapor transmitted in mg 0

L = Thickness of the film in mm S = Exposed surface area in cm²

In vitro disintegration time:

Visually measuring the in vitro disintegration time involves spinning a glass dish filled with 10 milliliters of distilled water every ten seconds. The moment the film begins to shatter or disintegrate is known as the disintegration time. In Invitro diffusion investigation: PBS pH 6.8 was used as the dissolving media in an in vitro diffusion study utilizing a Franz diffusion cell device. Fifty rotations per minute were used to keep the temperature at $37 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$. To maintain sink condition, 1 ml of aliquots was taken out at various intervals and the same volume of new dissolving medium was introduced. A UV spectrophotometer was used to measure the drug content of the aliquots at a wavelength of 224 nm, or λ_{max} . Drug release as a cumulative percentage was computed and reported.

Mechanical properties of the film:

Folding endurance:

Films (2 cm (L) x 2 cm (W)) chosen at random from each formulation were folded in the same spot until fractures were apparent. To find out how many times the films (F1–F6) could be folded without breaking or displaying obvious fissures, folding endurance was calculated for each film. Each experiment work carried out thrice. Statistical analysis: Graph pad prism software V5 was used to apply Dunnett's multiple comparison test to all six formulations,

taking into account the characteristics of disintegration time, earliest drug release, and film mechanical strength. An ANOVA analysis was conducted with a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$.

Stability testing: The top formulations (F4, F5, and F6) underwent stability testing. For 28 days, the films were kept in the aluminum container at $40 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ and $75 \pm 5\%$ relative humidity. At predetermined intervals, the films' mechanical and physicochemical characteristics were examined.

DRUG EXCIPIENT COMPATIBILITY STUDY:

Differential scanning calorimetric studies (DSC):

Using a DSC 200 F3 instrument, differential scanning calorimetry was used to determine the thermal characteristics of the formulation and the pure medication. The samples were put in regular aluminium pans and covered with a lid. They were heated by 10 k/min and purified with 6 ml/min of nitrogen at temperatures ranging from 0 to 450 OC. For the investigation, an aluminium pan of the same quality as two milligrams of pure medication was utilized as a comparison (Khadra I, 2019).

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM):

The surface morphology of the optimized formulations was investigated using scanning electron microscopy. The samples were double-sidedly affixed to the slab surface using your tips, and a scanning electron photomicrograph was captured at magnifications of 200

X, 500 X, and 1000 X.

Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR)

To verify interactions between the chosen drug and polymer, drug excipient interaction experiments were conducted using BRUKER FTIR. A spectrum scan was performed in the wavelength region of 400 and 4000 cm⁻¹ after the film was coarsely powdered with KBr to create the pellets under a hydraulic pressure of 600 psi.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to identification studies, pharmaceutical companies' drugs met the stated official standards. It was discovered that the maximal FEX absorption in PBS pH 6.8 was

224nm (Figure 1). It was discovered that the λ_{max} was extremely close to what reference books claimed. The equation of the straight line for the standard curve and correlation coefficients were found by linearly regressing the calibration curve data. A strong colinear connection between concentration (5–50 $\mu\text{g/ml}$) and absorbance was indicated by the correlation coefficient for standard curves, which was found to be extremely close to one (Figure 2). Therefore, medications in the 5–50 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ range are in accordance with the Beer–Lambert Law. The drug's melting point was discovered to be comparable to the published in the reference books. FEX's solubility profile demonstrated its hydrophobic character; it was freely soluble in methanol but insoluble in water and chloroform. Their solubility profile, which demonstrated the drug's hydrophobic nature, was used to determine the partition coefficient. The compatibility of FEX with excipients under various environmental circumstances was investigated. Throughout the storage period, no medication interactions were noticed, demonstrating their compatibility with every constituent (Figure 3–4). For a variety of patient populations, such as the elderly, children, and psychiatrics, as well as those who have swallowing difficulties, oral thin films are perfect. To offer the benefits of a mouth-dissolving drug delivery system, many medications can be made into fast-dissolving films. Fexofenadine HCl was employed as a model drug candidate in this investigation, and nine formulations of fast-dissolving films with varying polymer concentrations were made. Using HPMC E15 and xanthan gum, sodium starch glycolate as a disintegration agent, glycerin as a plasticizer, aspartame as a sweetener, and distilled water as solvent, fast-dissolving films of fexofenadine HCl were created using the solvent casting process on glass molds. Several formulations of oral dispersible films were prepared in order to study the impact of the polymer's nature. A number of criteria, including the films' thickness, drug content homogeneity, folding durability, disintegration time, in-vitro dissolution, and stability investigations, were characterized and assessed for the manufactured rapid dissolving films. Using several formulations (OTF1, OTF2, OTF3, OTF4, OTF5, OTF6, OTF7, OTF8, and OTF9) made with HPMC E15, Xanthan gum, and a mixture of HPMC E15 and Xanthan gum in varying percentages, the impact of polymer concentration was investigated.

It was discovered that all of the prepared batches had consistent weight variances in the films. . It was discovered that the film weight ranged between 35 and 40 mg, icing harmonious medicine distribution across all phrasings. OTF1 through OTF9 were set up to be between 98 and 110 μm thick. It's possible to draw the conclusion that thickness was attained during expression grounded on the findings attained for each expression. The quantum of folding abidance was determined by counting the number of times the set oral flicks could be folded in the same spot without breaking. Three readings' mean values were reckoned. It was discovered that OTF1 to OTF9 had folding abidance values between 48 and 110. Grounded on the results from the forenamed phrasings, every expression displays a folding abidance value that falls between 100 and 150, with the exception of OTF3, OTF5, OTF6, and OTF9, which do n't meet the limit according to the previous value. The results of calculating the chance of drug content in colorful phrasings are displayed in Table 6.6. With a 99.80 drug content chance, OTF7 was supposed the stylish expression when compared to the other phrasings. The medicine content probabilities for the phrasings ranged from 86.12 to 99.80. grounded on the issues of the forenamed formulas. After placing the pH cadence's electrode on the expression's face and letting it disequilibrate for a nanosecond, the pH of the oral film's face was measured. For every expression, the mean of three results was calculated. All the flicks' face pH values fell between 6- 7. Water vapor transfer of oral thin flicks was set up to be between and 29.2, and their tensile strength was between 1.04 and 4.29 Mpa). Using decomposition test outfit, the oral flicks were assessed using an in vitro decomposition time test for each generated expression. The decomposition time for OTF1 – OTF9 ranged from 8 to 26 seconds. According to the data, the decomposition time increased as the polymer attention increased. OTF7 was discovered to have a decomposition time of 8 seconds, which was briskly than all other phrasings (OTF1 – OTF9)(Siddiqui MDN, 2011).

The corruption time of all films, with the exception of OTF5, OTF6, and OTF9, was set up to be within the specified range of 5 to 30 seconds predicated on the results attained from the forenamed phrasings (USP 2007). OTF7 may develop as a fast- dissolving film predicated solely on the corruption time(Alam M,

2014). In vitro drug release measures revealed that phrasings with a single polymer had hastily drug release, whereas films made of HPMC E15 produced the fastest drug release. Likewise, it was discovered that the drug release reduced with adding polymer attention because it took longer for the drug molecules in the polymer matrix to wet down and dissolve. The order of the drug release was determined to be OTF1> OTF2> OTF4> OTF3> OTF5> OTF6. It was discovered that the drug release for the set of phrasings with a combination of polymers was OTF7> OTF8> OTF9. OTF7, OTF1, and OTF4 were determined to be the most effective phrasings in terms of drug release out of the nine phrasings (OTF1 to OTF9) that were created. The release kinetics study's findings demonstrated that every expression more nearly followed the first order drug release profile, meaning that the release rate was dependent on the drug's original attention. Thenon- fickian or super case II transport medium was shown by the pitch values of thermometer-Peppas plot(Sharma D).

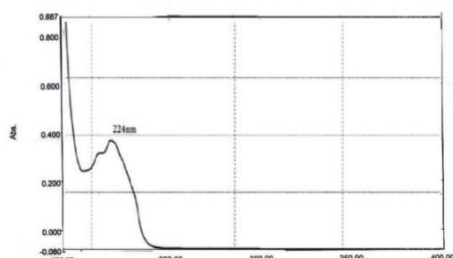


Figure 1: UV-Visible Scan of drug.

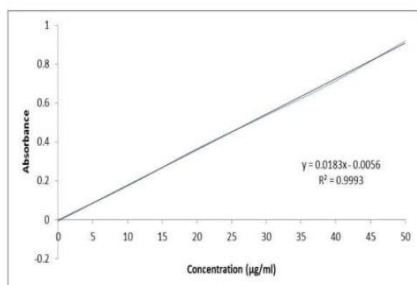


Figure 2: Calibration curve of drug in pH 6.8 phosphate buffer.

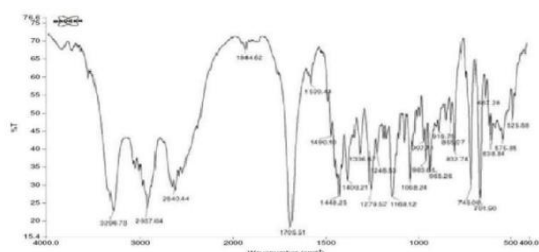


Figure 3: FTIR of drug.

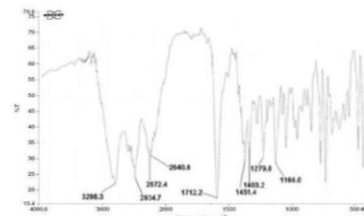


Figure 4: FTIR of Drug and Excipient.

Table 2: Weight variation of oral thin films.

Formulation Code	Weight of film (mg)	Thickness of film (µm)	Folding endurance	Drug content (%)	Surface pH	Tensile strength (Mpa)	Water vapor transmission rate
OTF1	37.24±1.1	98.1±1.1	98	86.11	6.28	1.04	8.8
OTF2	39.22±1.2	100.2±1.2	99	90.41	6.34	1.37	12.1
OTF3	40.8±2.1	102.1±1.6	93	93.12	6.25	1.12	22.2
OTF4	38.25±1.1	101.3±1.4	105	94.17	6.51	3.21	21.8
OTF5	38.90±1.2	105.2±1.2	92	91.17	6.44	1.03	28.4
OTF6	40.01±1.1	109.2±1.3	94	93.21	6.67	1.29	29.2
OTF7	37.16±1.7	99.3±1.2	112	99.19	6.71	4.29	11.2
OTF8	38.13±1.8	106.3±1.1	101	97.22	6.72	3.21	19.3
OTF9	41.15±1.2	110.2±1.1	98	99.51	6.81	4.19	23.1

Table 3: In-vitro drug release study of oral thin films (OTF1 – OTF9).

F. Code	Cumulative percent drug release								
Time (min)	OTF1	OTF2	OTF3	OTF4	OTF5	OTF6	OTF7	OTF8	OTF9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	42±1.1	36±0.9	32±0.8	33±1.0	31±1.2	30±1.2	49±0.8	41±1.3	38±1.2
4	69±1.7	66±2.5	62±1.6	65±1.3	58±1.6	55±2.5	71±2.5	69±2.1	67±2.2
6	81±1.8	78±2.9	76±2.1	77±1.8	76±2.2	75±3.1	88±3.7	82±3.1	78±3.4
8	94±2.2	91±3.1	90±2.8	92±2.7	89±2.9	89±3.4	99±2.8	99±3.4	98±3.7
10	98±3.4	98±3.5	97±3.6	98±2.6	97±3.1	96±2.8	99±3.1	98±2.8	98±3.5
12	99±3.7	98±2.6	97±2.5	98±3.5	97±3.2	96±3.0	99±3.4	98±3.2	98±2.8

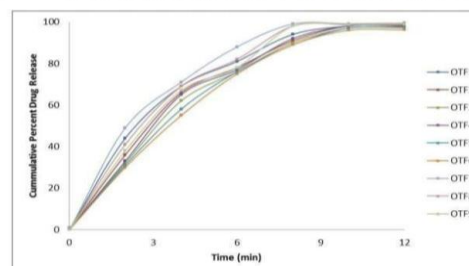


Figure 5: Zero-order plots of oral thin films (OTF1 – OTF9).

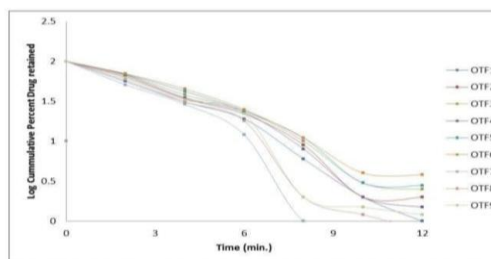


Figure 6: First-order plots of oral thin films (OTF1 – OTF9).

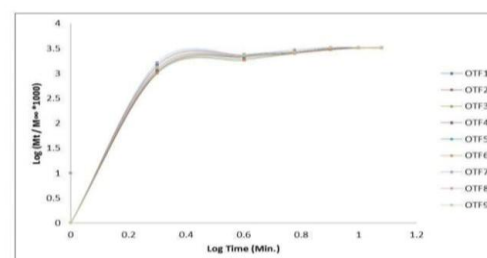


Figure 7: Korsmeyer's-Peppas plot of oral thin films (OTF1 – OTF9).

VI. CONCLUSION

According to identification studies, pharmaceutical companies' drugs met the stated official standards. It was discovered that the maximal FEX absorption in PBS pH 6.8 was 224 nm (Figure 1). It was discovered that the λ_{max} was extremely close to what reference books claimed. The equation of the straight line for the standard curve and correlation coefficients were found by linearly regressing the calibration curve data. A strong colinear connection between concentration (5–50 $\mu\text{g/ml}$) and absorbance was indicated by the correlation coefficient for standard curves, which was found to be extremely close to one (Figure 2). Therefore, medications in the 5–50 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ range are in accordance with the Beer–Lambert Law. The drug's melting point was discovered to be comparable to the published in the reference books. FEX's solubility profile demonstrated its hydrophobic character; it was freely soluble in methanol but insoluble in water and chloroform. Their solubility profile, which demonstrated the drug's hydrophobic nature, was used to determine the partition coefficient. The compatibility of FEX with excipients under various environmental circumstances was investigated. Throughout the storage period, no medication interactions were noticed, demonstrating their compatibility with every constituent (Figure 3–4). For a variety of patient populations, such as the elderly, children, and psychiatrics, as well as those who have swallowing difficulties, oral thin films are perfect. To offer the benefits of a mouth-dissolving drug delivery system, many medications can be made into fast-dissolving films. Fexofenadine HCl was employed as a model drug candidate in this investigation, and nine formulations of fast-dissolving films with varying polymer concentrations were made. Using HPMC E15 and xanthan gum, sodium starch glycolate as a disintegration agent, glycerine as a plasticizer, aspartame as a sweetener, and distilled water as solvent, fast-dissolving films of fexofenadine HCl were created using the solvent casting process on glass molds. Several formulations of oral dispersible films were prepared in order to study the impact of the polymer's nature. A number of criteria, including the films' thickness, drug content homogeneity, folding durability, disintegration time, in-vitro dissolution, and stability investigations, were characterized and assessed for the manufactured rapid dissolving films.

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