BIOPHARMACEUTICS: AN INTRODUCTION

Authors

Sakshi Garg
Bharat Institute of Pharmacy
Sonipat, Haryana

Priyanka Sharma
Bharat Institute of Pharmacy
Sonipat, Haryana

Arun Mittal
Amity University
Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana

Parveen Kumar Goyal
Department of Pharmacy
Panipat Institute of Engineering and
Technology (PIET)
Samalkha, Panipat, Haryana

Mona Piplani
Maharaja Agrasen University
Baddi, Himachal Pradesh

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to introduce biopharmaceutics and to define some key terms used within biopharmaceutics and introduces its involvement in the drug development process. Drugs are chemical substances, used as a medication which induces change(s) in an organism's physiology and psychology*(Wichrowski et al,2020)*. However, the changes induced may either be therapeutic or toxic effect(s). The origin of drug is versatile such as plants, animals, minerals, microorganisms, chemical synthesis, biotechnological, genetical, computer-aided, etc.*(Susa et al,2023)*.

Drugs are the substances that are intended to diagnose, prevent or treat a disease. Drugs in the form of different dosage forms i.e, solids, semisolids, liquids (monophasic and biphasic), etc. are administered to provide systemic or local therapeutic response. These dosage forms releases and delivers the API to the site of action to induce the desired therapeutic potential and intended to meet the patient's acceptability, convenience, palatability and safety.

Pharmaceutics is the branch of science that focuses on the design and development of pharmaceutical dosage forms that helps in treatment, prevention and diagnosis of a particular disease. It is concerned with novel drug product measures. It deals with the fabrication of a drug product.Drug products that contain same therapeutic agent uses different inactive ingredients. The selection of inactive ingredients is based on the physicochemical properties of the drug, the type of formulation and the route from where it gets administered. The usage of drugs serves several stable, fruitful and preventive purposes*(Marino et al,2023)*.

The treatment of disease using drugs is a multifaceted process that involves:

- A pharmacologically active compound either synthesized, isolated or extracted and being rationalized for toxicity and potential key features by clinical and preclinical studies. *(Rasul,2018)*.
- Formulation of a dosage form that delivers a dose through appropriate route to the site of action or target tissue.

- Physiological, pathological and clinical response is produced(*Chu,2023*).

Even though differences in therapeutic efficacy is also detected if the same API is administered in the form of different dosage forms or similar dosage forms formulated by variant manufacturers. So, in this regard, a novel and distinct discipline known as biopharmaceutics is developed to consider factors that decide the therapeutic efficacy of a drug*(Selker et al,2018).*

Biopharmaceutics is the study of basic and applied research that focuses on the interactions between drugs and their physicochemical properties and dosage form, as well as their pharmacokinetics and clinical responses in response to its administration*(Shargel et al,2012).*The term "**Biopharmaceutics**" was coined by Dr. Gerhard Levy in 1960. It is the major branch of pharmaceutical sciences. Biopharmaceutical drugs have transformed the medical care of a broad spectrum of ailments and are being used more frequently in almost all areas of medicine.

Biopharmaceutics influenced by circumstances which contributes towards:
- the drug dissolutionrate at absorption site (*in vivo*)
- the drug release from the dosage form
- the systemic drug absorption

To administer drugs optimally, knowledge is needed not only on the ADME mechanisms but also on the rate at which they occur i.e., pharmacokinetics*(Aiache,2005).* The mechanism of movement of drug from the site of administration to the systemic circulation is known as **absorption**. The drug concentration in blood and its onset and duration of action depends upon the bioavailability of drug from its specific dosage form. Some mechanisms that play a key role in inducing the therapeutic response of a drug are distribution and elimination i.e., drug disposition. The drug movement from the blood to the extra vascular tissues (usually between one compartment and other) is termed as **drug distribution**. The efficacy and the time duration of drug response depends upon the effective concentration of a drug for a particular period of time at the site of action which largely depends upon elimination process. It occurs by two mechanisms- metabolism (transformation of drug from one form to another) and excretion (mechanism of exit of drug/ metabolites from the body) (*Price & Patel, 2023*).

The goal of biopharmaceutical studies is to formulate a dosage form that provides a consistent bioavailability to the systemic circulation, in case the drug has a narrow therapeutic index. The study of various factors associated with biopharmaceutics allows to design the drug product in a rationale manner so as to deliver the drug to optimize therapeutic potential and to reduce the adverse effects.

Apart from biopharmaceutics, "**Pharmacokinetics"** of drug determines the onset, duration, and potency of a drug's impact. The Greek words pharmakon (drug) and kinesis (motion or rate of change) are the origin of the word "pharmacokinetics"*(Rimmington).*Pharmacokinetics of a drug is divided into different steps i.e., digestion, delivery to a target site, and elimination via biotransformation of drug and its excretion. The method of drug administration and how the organs work have a remarkable impression on each of these processes. Various pharmacokinetic parametersare clearance

(CL), volume of distribution (V_d), half-life ($t_{1/2}$), bioavailability, protein binding*(Adepu & Ramakrishna,2021).*

"**Pharmacodynamics**" is defined as the relation between drug concentration at the site of action and the influence it shows, including the onset and efficacy of both therapeutic and negative effects. A relationship of a drug with a receptor at the site of action affects the therapeutic potential of drug*(Wankhade et al.,2022).*

II. KEY TERMS

1. **Biopharmaceutics:** It is the branch that study the factors affecting the dose and extent of drug (API) that provides systemic or local therapeutic potential after reaching systemic circulation to measure the therapeutic response of drug.

2. **Pharmacokinetics:** It is a branch of biopharmaceutics that deals with the study of body's effect on the drug i.e., the drug ADME properties with its therapeutic and toxic effects. There are several applications of these pharmacokinetic studies such as:
   - Measurement of bioavailability
   - Clinical pharmacokinetics
   - Predict the designing of optimal dosage regimen
   - Design and development of sophisticated pharmacokinetic models
   - Analytical techniques (HPLC, GC, mass spectrometry) for the assay of drugs and its metabolites.(*Jambhekar and Breen, 2013*)

Pharmacokinetics
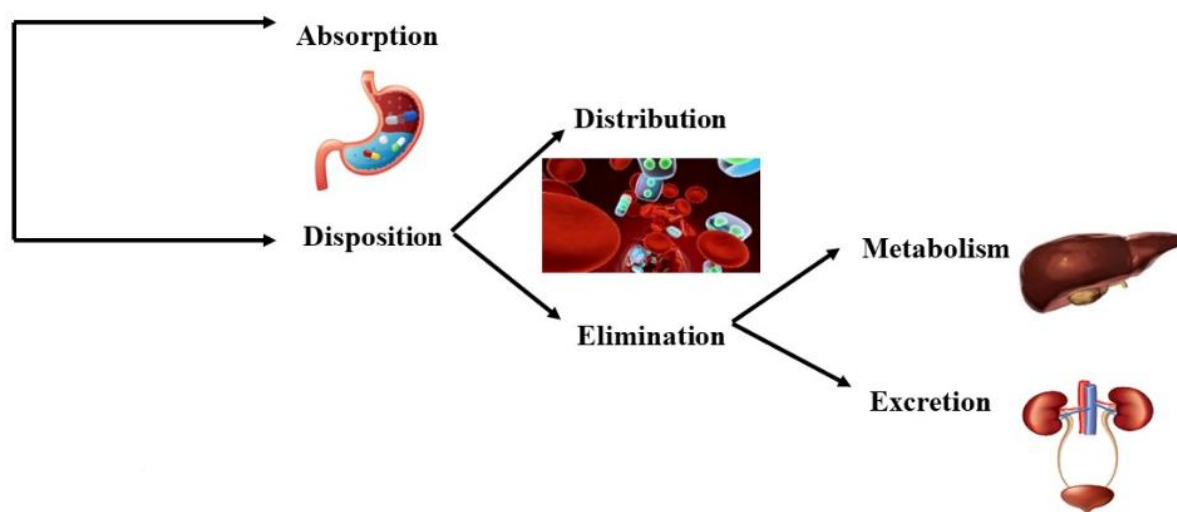
Figure 1: Schematic Illustration of Pharmacokinetic Processes

3. **Pharmacodynamics:** It deals with the study of drug's effect on the body i.e., the mechanism of action of drug that is related with the response of drug concentration in the body. It is defined as the coordination of the drug concentration at the receptor site and its

corresponding pharmacological response i.e., the various biochemical and physiological effects that influences the interaction of a drug molecule with the receptor. This interaction either respond a pharmacological response or a toxic response.

It involves the study of:
- Mechanism of Action
- Biochemical Reaction
- Physiological Effect

4. **Absorption:** Absorption of a drug is a process in which the drug from the dosage form reaches the site of action from the site of administration. There are various mechanisms of drug absorption such as transcellular/ intracellular transport (Passive transport, active transport, facilitated diffusion), paracellular/ intercellular transport and vesicular transport (pinocytosis and phagocytosis).

5. **Distribution:** Once drug molecules enter the systemic circulation, these molecules mix with the body fluids and reaches the site of action. Drug distribution refers to the transfer of drug from one compartment to other i.e., from blood to extra vascular tissues through passive diffusion. Drug distribution can occur through blood and other fluids, cells, central nervous system and placenta.

6. **Metabolism:** It is defined as the conversion of drug from one form to another form by enzymatic action. The term metabolism is used synonymously with biotransformation. The drug can be metabolized either by phase I (oxidation, reduction and hydrolysis) or phase II (conjugation) reactions.

7. **Excretion:** It is a process in which drugs or their metabolites are flushed out from the body irreversibly either through kidney (renal excretion) or by other organ (non-renal excretion).

8. **Bioavailability:** It is defined as the rate and extent to which drug gets absorbed from site of administration to the site of action after reaching systemic circulation.The drug concentration in blood and its onset of action, the intensity and duration of drug response depends on drug bioavailability from a dosage form.

9. **Clinical Pharmacokinetics:** It is defined as a multidisciplinary approach in which the dose of a drug is optimised for a particular patient depending on its disease conditions, age and gender using various pharmacokinetic principles to achieve maximum therapeutic potential. It basically involves the designing of dosage regimen by determination of drug interactions and medication errors, if any. The main objectives of clinical pharmacokinetics are to improve a patient's pharmacological therapeutic efficacy and reduction in its toxicity.

10. **Toxicology:** It deals with the study of harmful poisons (either natural or man-made) and its related adverse effects in the human body*(Jambhekar & Breen,2013)*.

11. **Therapeutic Drug Monitoring:** Therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) refers to a processin which a detailed monitoring is carried out to find the therapeutic potential of given medicaments to a particular patient in a disease*(Zhao & Jacqz-Aigrain,2011)*.

12. **Pharmacokinetic Models:** These are the mathematical models used to predict the drug absorption, distribution, metabolism and excretion of drugs in human and animals. It includes compartment models and non-compartment models.

Since, the study of drugs handling by a human body is a complicated process due to the complexity of human anatomy and physiology. So, in this situation, the pharmacokinetic models serve as a useful source of information. It is assumed that the body is composed of a number of compartments and these compartments are imaginary or virtual. They help to predict the drug concentration in body fluids and calculates dosage regimens*(Daryaee & Tonge,2018)*.
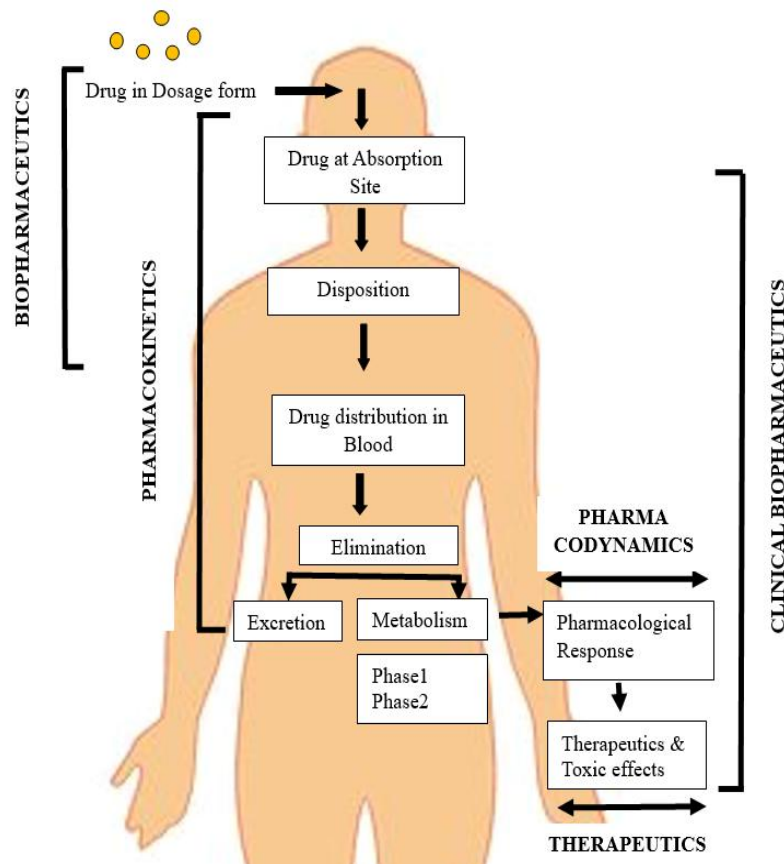
Figure 2: Diagrammatic Representation of the Dynamic Relationship Between Drug, Dosage Form, Pharmacological and Pharmacokinetic Response

The data on biopharmaceutics and pharmacokinetics plays an integral role for the design and development of novel drugs and improvement of therapeutic potential/efficacy of existing drugs. Drug administration and therapy is conveniently divided into four phases.

- **The Pharmaceutical Phase**: It involves physico-chemical properties of drug by which design and manufacturing of suitable dosage form occurs.
- **The Pharmacokinetic Phase**: It involves the mechanisms of ADME i.e., the drug kinetics, influenced by plasma drug concentration-time profile and its relationship

with the dose, dosage form, dosing frequency and route of administration. It is the sum of all the processes imposed by the body on the drug.

- **The Pharmacodynamic Phase**: It is related with the drug's mechanism with its biochemical and physiological effects and is characterized by drug concentration at site of action.

13. **The Therapeutic Phase**: This phase is related to the pharmacological effect of drug in relation with its clinical benefit.*(Kang & Lee,2009)*

       Monitoring of drug therapy in individual patient requires regular assessment of response of the patient to the recommended dose of drug. It is much important to ensure that the therapeutic objective from the dose of a drug is being attained and if failure occurs, then it requires readjustment of dosage regimen. Depending upon the dosage regimen and the type of disease to be treated, management and monitoring of drug therapy is divided into:

- **Therapeutic Monitoring**: to monitor therapeutic effects i.e., the occurence and intensity of desired therapeutic potential and undesired side effects
- **Pharmacodynamic Monitoring**: to monitor pharmacological actions that can be used as a guide for therapeutic process
- **Pharmacokinetic Monitoring**: to monitordrug plasma concentration so that unbound drug at site of action must be in equilibrium in plasma*(Reichel & Lienau,2016)*.

       The most important stage in case of drug discovery and development is to evaluate pharmacokinetic and physicochemical properties of the drugs. The main parameters that regulates the rate and extent of oral drug absorption are the drug solubility and gastrointestinal permeability and their importance has been emphasized in the BCS that categorizes drug into four categories based on their solubility and permeability*(Benet,2013)*.

14. **BCS Classification:** BCS stands for Biopharmaceutics Classification System. It was developed by Amidon and his colleagues in 1995 as "a scientific approach for selecting the drug molecule" in order to establish the correlation between *in vitro* drug dissolution studies and *in vivo* bioavailability studies.*(Varma et al,2004)*.

       The two parameters of biopharmaceutics namely solubility and permeability plays a vital role in new drug development and lead optimization because of its dependence on drug absorption and pharmacokinetics.
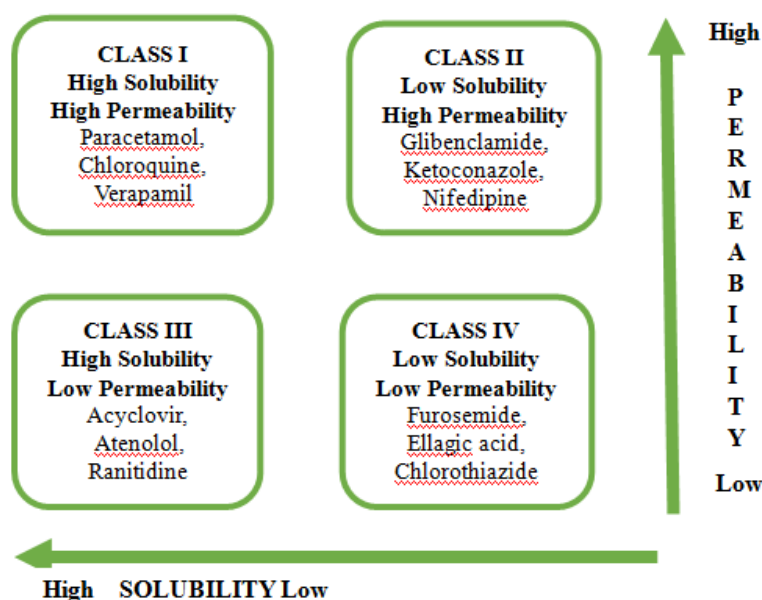
Figure 3: Biopharmaceutics Classification System (BCS)

- **Class 1: High Solubility and High Permeability**: Drug is rapidly absorbed and dissolved but dissolution is slowest step, if dissolution becomes rapid, then gastric emptying rate becomes slowest step*(Dutta et al,2021).* Rate of Absorption>Rate of Excretion
- **Class 2: Low Solubility and High Permeability**: Drug is rapidly absorbed due to its high permeability across membranes but dissolves slowly. Since, absorption is slower than BCS class I drugs so, it occurs over a long period of time.
- **Class 3: High Solubility and Low Permeability**: Permeability is rate limiting step for absorption of drug*(Shekhawat &Pokharkar, 2017).*
- **Class 4: Low Solubility and Low Permeability**: Drugs have low dissolution rate and produces low therapeutic effect. These drugs exhibit issues for oral administration due to its limited absorption and permeability*(Dev,2018).*

15. **Biopharmaceutics Drug Disposition Classification System (BDDCS):** The BCS was developed to predict the *in vivo* pharmacokinetics (ADME) of drug product using solubility and permeability measurements. A modification in such a classification system known as Biopharmaceutics Drug Disposition Classification System (BDDCS) has been developed that predicts the overall drug disposition such as elimination route of drugs, drug interactions in the intestine and liver*(Manzari et al,2021).*
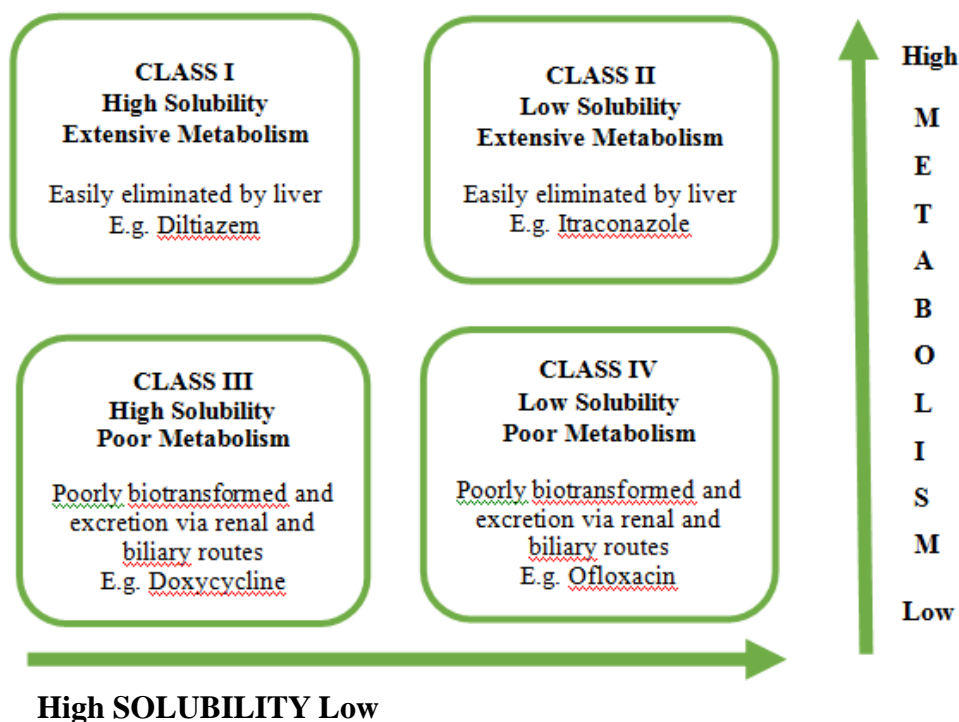
Figure 4: Biopharmaceutics Drug Disposition Classification System (BDDCS)

III. APPLICATIONS OF BIOPHARMACEUTICS

To achieve optimal drug therapy, the drug is designed in such a way so that it may deliver an ideal rate and amount of drug. Rational use of drug can only be attained by the determination of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics parametersof drug that helps in designing a proper dosage regimen*(Gupta et al,2013)*.

The goal of biopharmaceutical studies is to formulate a dosage form that provides consistent bioavailability after reaching systemic circulation, providing maximum therapeutic potential with minimal side effects*(Zane et al,2019)*.

- Biopharmaceutics deals with the study of *in-vivo* (estimation of systemic drug availability after administering a drug) and *in-vitro* (estimation of drug availability using laboratory animals or human volunteers, e.g., Disintegration tests, Dissolution tests) methods.
- It deals with the visualization of*in vivo* drug performance from *in vitro*permeability and solubility of drug.
- It helps in improvement of the drug safety and its efficacy.
- It is used to formulate a dosage form by changing its formulation factors so as to provide optimum onset of action.
- These studies evaluate the performance of API i.e., its pure form or salt form.
- These studies help in predicting the bioavailability of new dosage forms in comparison with existing dosage forms to determine whether they are equivalent or not.

- Biopharmaceutics focuses on the consistency, robustness and predictability of the formulation*(Chow,2014)*.

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