

*Contains Nonbinding Recommendations*  
*Draft – Not for Implementation*  
**Draft Guidance on Fluticasone Propionate**  
**February 2024**

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In general, FDA's guidance documents do not establish legally enforceable responsibilities. Instead, guidances describe the Agency's current thinking on a topic and should be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are cited. The use of the word *should* in Agency guidances means that something is suggested or recommended, but not required.

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<b>Active Ingredient:</b>	Fluticasone propionate
<b>Dosage Form:</b>	Powder
<b>Route:</b>	Inhalation
<b>Strengths:</b>	0.05 mg/inh, 0.1 mg/inh, 0.25 mg/inh
<b>Recommended Studies:</b>	Two in vitro bioequivalence studies, one in vivo bioequivalence study with pharmacokinetic endpoints, and one comparative clinical endpoint bioequivalence study

**Two in vitro bioequivalence studies:**

FDA recommends that prospective applicants conduct the following in vitro bioequivalence studies for all strengths of the test (T) and reference standard (RS) products. For each strength, use at least three batches each of the T and RS products, with no fewer than 10 units from each batch. FDA recommends that three primary stability batches be also used to demonstrate in vitro bioequivalence. The three batches of T product should be manufactured from, at minimum, three different batches of drug substance(s), excipient(s), and device components. The T product should consist of the final device constituent part and final drug constituent formulation intended to be marketed.

1. Type of study: Single actuation content (SAC)  
Design: The SAC test should be performed at the beginning (B), middle (M), and end (E) lifestages<sup>1</sup> of the product using flow rates of 30 L/min, 60 L/min and 90 L/min. The U.S. Pharmacopoeia (USP) <601> Apparatus B or another appropriate apparatus may be used to determine the SAC using a validated assay. The number of actuations per determination should be one. The volume of air drawn through the delivery system should be 2 L.

**Bioequivalence based on:** Population bioequivalence (PBE) analysis of SAC. Refer to the most recent version of the FDA product-specific guidance on *Budesonide Inhalation Suspension* (NDA 020929)<sup>a</sup> for additional information regarding PBE analysis procedures.

2. Type of study: Aerodynamic particle size distribution (APSD)  
Design: The APSD test should be performed at the B and E lifestages of the product using flow rates of 28.3 L/min or 30 L/min, 60 L/min and 90 L/min. Cascade impaction devices for inhalation powders as per USP <601> Table 2 or another appropriate method may be used to determine APSD using a validated assay. The APSD determination of each unit should be performed with a minimum number of inhalations justified by the sensitivity of the validated assay. The volume of air drawn through the delivery system should be 4 L.

Additional comments: Drug deposition on individual sites, including the mouthpiece adapter, the induction port, the pre-separator, and each stage of the cascade impactor (CI) and the filter, is requested. Mass balance accountability should be reported based on the sum of all deposition sites. For electronic submission of the individual CI data for the T and RS products, provide a table using the format in the appendix, and send them as part of the abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) submission.

**Bioequivalence based on:** PBE analysis of impactor-sized mass (ISM).<sup>2</sup> The CI profiles representing drug deposition on the individual stages of the CI along with the mass median aerodynamic diameter (MMAD), geometric standard deviation (GSD) and fine particle mass (FPM) should be submitted as supportive evidence for equivalent APSD.

### One in vivo bioequivalence study with pharmacokinetic endpoints:

1. Type of study: Fasting  
Design: Single-dose, two-way crossover  
Dose: Minimum number of inhalations that is sufficient to characterize a pharmacokinetic profile by using a sensitive analytical method.  
Subjects: Normal healthy adult males and non-pregnant females, general population.  
Additional comments: (1) Subjects enrolled for in vivo studies should be trained in the

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the labeled number of actuations, the terms, B lifestage, M lifestage, and E lifestage represent the first actuation(s), the actuation(s) corresponding to 50 percent of the labeled number of actuations, and the actuation(s) corresponding to the labeled number of actuations, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> ISM is defined as a sum of the drug mass on all stages of the CI plus the terminal filter, but excluding the top CI stage because of its lack of a specified upper cutoff size limit.

use of the inhalation powder in a standard fashion, prior to each treatment session, to assure a relatively consistent inspiratory flow rate and inspiratory duration. (2) The subjects should adhere to labeling as follows: “Rinse your mouth with water after breathing in the medicine. Spit out the water. Do not swallow it.” (3) A Bio-IND is required prior to conduct of the pharmacokinetic study if the dose exceeds the maximum labeled single dose.

**Analyte to measure:** Fluticasone propionate in plasma.

**Bioequivalence based on:** AUC and  $C_{\max}$  for fluticasone propionate. The 90% confidence intervals for the geometric mean T/R ratios of AUC and  $C_{\max}$  should fall within the limits of 80.00% - 125.00%.

### **One comparative clinical endpoint bioequivalence study:**

1. Type of study: Comparative clinical endpoint bioequivalence study  
Design: A randomized, multiple-dose, placebo-controlled, parallel group design, at minimum consisting of a 2-week run-in period followed by a 4-week treatment period of the placebo, T, or RS product  
Strength: 0.05 mg/inh  
Dose: 0.05 mg/inh, two inhalations twice daily

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria should, at minimum, include:

- a. Adult male or female subjects of non-child bearing potential or of child bearing potential committing to consistent and correct use of an acceptable method of birth control
- b. Diagnosis of asthma, as defined by the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP)<sup>3</sup>, at least 12 months prior to screening
- c. Pre-bronchodilator FEV1 of  $\geq 45\%$  and  $\leq 85\%$  of the predicted normal value during the screening visit and on the first day of treatment
- d. Patients should be stable on their chronic asthma treatment regimen for at least 4 weeks prior to screening
- e. Currently non-smoking; had not used tobacco products (i.e., cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco) within the past year, and had  $\leq 10$  pack years of historical use
- f.  $\geq 15\%$  reversibility of FEV1 within 30 minutes following 360 mcg of albuterol inhalation (pMDI)
- g. Ability to discontinue their asthma medication (inhaled corticosteroids and long-acting  $\beta$  agonist) during the run-in period and for remainder of the study
- h. Ability to replace current short-acting  $\beta$ -agonists (SABAs) with salbutamol/albuterol inhaler for use as needed for the duration of the study; subjects should be able to withhold all inhaled SABAs for at least 6 hours prior to lung function assessments on the study visit

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma: Expert Panel Report 3. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program; National Institute of Health; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. 2007, Publication No. 07-4051.

- i. Willingness to give their written informed consent to participate in the study

Exclusion criteria should, at minimum, include:

- a. Life-threatening asthma, defined as a history of asthma episode(s) requiring intubation, and/or was associated with hypercapnia, respiratory arrest or hypoxic seizures, asthma related syncopal episode(s), or hospitalizations within the past year prior to the screening or during the run-in period.
- b. Significant respiratory disease other than asthma (COPD, interstitial lung disease, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, etc.)
- c. Evidence or history of clinically significant disease or abnormality including congestive heart failure, uncontrolled hypertension, uncontrolled coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction, or cardiac dysrhythmia. In addition, historical or current evidence of significant hematologic, hepatic neurologic, psychiatric, renal, cardiovascular, endocrine, or other diseases that, in the opinion of the investigator, would put the patient at risk through study participation, or would affect the study analyses if the disease exacerbates during the study
- d. Hypersensitivity to any sympathomimetic drug (e.g., albuterol) or to any inhaled, intranasal, or systemic corticosteroid therapy, or to excipients in the dry powder inhaler (DPI)
- e. Patients receiving  $\beta$ 2-blockers, anti-arrhythmics, anti-depressants, and/or monoamine oxidase inhibitors within 4 weeks prior to the screening.
- f. Viral or bacterial, upper or lower respiratory tract infection, or sinus, or middle ear infection within 4 weeks prior to the screening visit, during the run-in period, or on the day of treatment
- g. Patients who required systemic or oral corticosteroids (for any reason) within the past 6 months prior to screening
- h. Evidence or history of oral candidiasis, tuberculosis, hypercorticism, adrenal suppression, or eye problems (e.g., increased intraocular pressure, glaucoma, or cataracts)

Additional comments:

- a. The study may enroll all asthma patients who meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria, or may be enriched by using a subpopulation of patients predicted to respond well to the study treatment (appropriate justification should be included for the population chosen for study).
- b. Subjects who discontinued from the study early should be identified, and the protocol should clearly, prospectively state how missing data will be handled in the statistical analyses and provide appropriate justification for the method chosen. The protocol should also include subject retention strategies and other plans to minimize missing data. If there are missing data, adequate justification should be provided that the missing data do not lead to biased equivalence determination. Detailed information for all subjects who are discontinued from the study should be provided.
- c. All spirometry should be conducted in accordance with American Thoracic Society Standards.

- d. The study should begin with a placebo run-in period at least two weeks in duration, to wash out any pre-study corticosteroids/long-acting bronchodilators and to establish FEV1 baseline values.
- e. The study protocol should include pre-specified definitions of asthma exacerbation, as well as pre-specified and appropriate escape criteria with consideration to patient safety.
- f. The study protocol should provide a definition of compliant subjects (e.g., used at least 75% and no more than 125% of study drug doses) and specify how compliance will be verified (e.g., by the use of subject diaries).
- g. To ensure study sensitivity, the T and RS products should both be statistically superior to placebo ( $p < 0.05$ ) with regard to the bioequivalence study primary endpoint.
- h. It is the prospective applicant's responsibility to enroll a sufficient number of subjects for the study to demonstrate bioequivalence of the T to the RS product.
- i. A clear list of permitted and restricted medications should be provided, including justification for use (or restriction) of certain classes of respiratory therapies, that considers the current standard of care for asthma.
- j. The start and stop date of concomitant medication use during the study should be provided in the data set in addition to the reason for the medication use. The prospective applicant should clearly explain whether the medication was used prior to baseline visit, during the study, or both.
- k. All adverse events (AEs) should be reported, whether or not they are considered to be related to the treatment. The report of each AE should include the date of onset, description of AE, severity, relation to study medication, action taken, outcome, and date of resolution. The information will assist FDA in determining whether the incidence and severity of adverse reactions is different between the T and reference listed drug (RLD) products.

**Bioequivalence study endpoint:** FEV1 measured in the morning prior to the dosing of inhaled medications on the last day of the 4-week treatment.

The above primary endpoint should be baseline adjusted (change from baseline). An FEV1 baseline is defined as the average of pre- dose FEV1 values of at least two time points measured in the morning of the first day of a 4-week treatment period. Sampling is recommended to correspond to the same time of day as used on the last day of a 4-week treatment.

**Bioequivalence based on:** T/R ratio for the primary endpoint. The 90% confidence intervals for the T/R ratios for the bioequivalence study endpoint should fall within the limits of 80.00% - 125.00%.

#### **Additional information:**

Formulation:

To demonstrate bioequivalence, the T product should contain no difference in inactive ingredients or in other aspects of the formulation relative to the RS product that may significantly affect the local or systemic availability of the active ingredient. For example, the T

product can be qualitatively (Q1)<sup>4</sup> and quantitatively (Q2)<sup>5</sup> the same as the RS product to satisfy no difference in inactive ingredients.

Device:

The RLD is presented as a blister-based DPI. The DPI is the device constituent part.

FDA recommends that prospective applicants examine the size and shape, the external critical design attributes, and the external operating principles of the RLD device when designing the T devices. In addition, T device design should take into consideration the following characteristics of the RLD:

- Passive (breath-actuated), pre-metered, multi-dose format
- Number of doses
- Device airflow resistance
- Dose indicator/counter

User interface assessment:

An ANDA for this product should include complete comparative analyses so FDA can determine whether any differences in design for the user interface of the proposed generic product, as compared to the RLD, are acceptable and whether the product can be expected to have the same clinical effect and safety profile as the RLD when administered to patients under the conditions specified in the labeling. For additional information, refer to the most recent version of the FDA guidance for industry on *Comparative Analyses and Related Comparative Use Human Factors Studies for a Drug-Device Combination Product Submitted in an ANDA*.<sup>b</sup>

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**Document History:** Recommended October 2017; Revised February 2024

**Unique Agency Identifier:** PSG\_020833

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<sup>a</sup> For the most recent version of a product-specific guidance, check the FDA product-specific guidance website at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/psg/index.cfm>.

<sup>b</sup> For the most recent version of a guidance, check the FDA guidance website at <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents>.

<sup>4</sup> Q1 (qualitative sameness) means that the T formulation uses the same inactive ingredient(s) as the RS formulation.

<sup>5</sup> Q2 (quantitative sameness) means that concentrations of the inactive ingredient(s) used in the T formulation are within  $\pm 5\%$  of those used in the RS formulation.

## APPENDIX

Variable Name	Variable Name	Variable Name	Variable Name
Product Name	Character	TEST or REF	Identifier for product
LOT Number	Alphanumeric/Numeric	Alphanumeric/Numeric	Identifier for product lot
UNIT Number	Numeric	Numeric values	Identifier for unit must be unique for each product (e.g., #1-30 for test and #31-60 for ref).
Stage 1	Numeric	Numeric Values	S1
Stage 2	Numeric	Numeric Values	S2
Stage 3	Numeric	Numeric Values	S3
Stage 4	Numeric	Numeric Values	S4
Stage 5	Numeric	Numeric Values	S5
Stage 6	Numeric	Numeric Values	S6
Stage 7	Numeric	Numeric Values	S7
Stage 8 or Filter	Numeric	Numeric Values	S8
ISM	Numeric	Numeric Values	ISM
MMAD	Numeric	Numeric Values	MMAD
GSD	Numeric	Numeric Values	GSD
FPM	Numeric	Numeric Values	FPM

Example:

PRODUCT	LOT	Unit	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8 or Filter	ISM	MMAD	GSD	FPM
TEST	1234	1												
		2												
		3												
		4												
		5												
		6												
		7												
		8												
		9												
		10												