

Solid Dispersions: A Review

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Abstract

Solid dispersions have attracted considerable interest as an efficient means of improving the dissolution rate and hence the bioavailability of a range of hydrophobic drugs. This article reviews the various preparation techniques for solid dispersion and compiles some of the recent technology transfers. The different types of solid dispersions based on the molecular arrangement have been highlighted. Some of the practical aspects to be considered for the preparation of solid dispersions, such as selection of carrier and methods of physicochemical characterization, along with an insight into the molecular arrangement of drugs in solid dispersions are also discussed. The Experience with solid dispersions over the last 20-30 years indicates that this is a very fruitful approach to improving the release rate and oral bioavailability of poorly water soluble drugs and the availability of a wide variety of polymers that are themselves poorly soluble or which swell under aqueous conditions suggests that solid dispersions have tremendous potential in the area of controlled release dosage forms.

Keywords

Solid dispersion, Selection of carrier, *In-vitro* dissolution.

Introduction¹⁻⁵

The oral route of drug administration is the most common and preferred method of delivery due to convenience and ease of ingestion. From a patient's perspective, swallowing a dosage form is a comfortable and a familiar means of taking medication. As a result, patient compliance and hence drug treatment is typically more effective with orally administered medications as compared with other routes of administration, for example, parenteral. Although the oral route of administration is preferred, for many drugs it can be a problematic and inefficient mode of delivery for a number of reasons. Limited drug absorption resulting in poor bioavailability is paramount amongst the potential problems that can be encountered when delivering an active agent via the oral route. Drug absorption from the gastrointestinal (GI) tract can be limited by

a variety of factors with the most significant contributors being poor aqueous solubility and/or poor membrane permeability of the drug molecule. When delivering an active agent orally, it must first dissolve in gastric and/or intestinal fluids before it can then permeate the membranes of the GI tract to reach systemic circulation. Therefore, a drug with poor aqueous solubility will typically exhibit dissolution rate limited absorption, and a drug with poor membrane permeability will typically exhibit permeation rate limited absorption. Hence, two areas of pharmaceutical research that focus on improving the oral bioavailability of active agents include enhancing solubility and dissolution rate of poorly water-soluble drugs and enhancing permeability of poorly permeable drugs. This article focuses on the former, in particular, the use of solid dispersion technologies to improve the dissolution characteristics of poorly water-soluble drugs and in turn their oral bioavailability. Numerous solid dispersion systems have been demonstrated in the pharmaceutical literature to improve the dissolution

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properties of poorly water-soluble drugs. Other methods, such as salt formation, complexation with cyclodextrins, solubilization of drugs in solvent(s), and particle size reduction have also been utilized to improve the dissolution properties of poorly water-soluble drugs; however, there are substantial limitations with each of these techniques. On the other hand, formulation of drugs as solid dispersions offers a variety of processing and excipient options that allow for flexibility when formulating oral delivery systems for poorly watersoluble drugs. Much of the research that has been reported on solid dispersion technologies involves drugs that are poorly water-soluble and highly permeable to biological membranes as with these drugs dissolution is the rate limiting step to absorption. Hence, the hypothesis has been that the rate of absorption *in vivo* will be concurrently accelerated with an increase in the rate of drug dissolution. In the Biopharmaceutical Classification System (BCS) drugs with low aqueous solubility and high membrane permeability are categorized as Class II drugs. Therefore, solid dispersion technologies are particularly promising for improving the oral absorption and bioavailability of BCS Class II drugs. With recent advances in molecular screening methods for identifying potential drug candidates, an increasing number of poorly water-soluble drugs are being identified as potential therapeutic agents. In fact, it has been estimated that 40% of new chemical entities currently being discovered are poorly water-soluble drugs. Unfortunately, many of these potential drugs are abandoned in the early stages of development due to solubility concerns. It is therefore becoming increasingly more important that methods for overcoming solubility limitations be identified and applied commercially such that the potential therapeutic benefits of these active molecules can be realized.

Definition of Solid Dispersions⁶

The term solid dispersion refers to a group of solid products consisting of at least two different components, generally a hydrophilic matrix and a hydrophobic drug. The matrix can be either crystalline or amorphous. The drug can be dispersed molecularly, in amorphous particles (clusters) or in crystalline particles.

Advantages of Solid Dispersion⁶⁻⁸

Particles with reduced particle size

Molecular dispersions, as solid dispersions, represent the last state on particle size reduction, and after carrier dissolution the drug is molecularly dispersed in the dissolution medium. Solid dispersions apply this principle to drug release by creating a mixture of a poorly water soluble drug and highly soluble carriers.

Particles with improved wettability

A strong contribution to the enhancement of drug solubility is related to the drug wettability improvement verified in solid dispersions. It was observed that even carriers without any surface activity, such as urea improved drug wettability. Carriers with surface activity, such as cholic acid and bile salts. When used, can significantly increase the wettability property of drug. Moreover, carriers can influence the drug dissolution profile by direct dissolution or co-solvent effects.

Particles with higher porosity

Particles in solid dispersions have been found to have a higher degree of porosity. The increase in porosity also depends on the carrier properties; for instance, solid dispersions containing linear polymers produce larger and more porous particles than those containing reticular polymers and, therefore, result in a higher dissolution rate. The increased porosity of solid dispersion particles also hastens the drug release profile.

Drugs in amorphous state

Poorly water soluble crystalline drugs, when in the amorphous state tend to have higher solubility. The enhancement of drug release can usually be achieved using the drug in its amorphous state, because no energy is required to break up the crystal lattice during the dissolution process. In solid dispersions, drugs are presented as supersaturated solutions after system dissolution, and it is speculated that, if drugs precipitate, it is as a metastable polymorphic form with higher solubility than the most stable crystal form. For drugs with low crystal energy (low melting temperature or heat of fusion), the amorphous composition is primarily dictated by the difference in melting temperature between drug and carrier. For drugs with high crystal energy, higher amorphous compositions can be obtained by choosing carriers, which exhibit specific interactions with them.

Types of Solid Dispersions^{3,6}

It is appropriate to classify various systems of solid dispersion on the basis of their major fast release

mechanisms. Chiou and Riegelman classified solid dispersions into the following six representative types: Simple eutectic mixtures, solid solutions, glass solutions and glass suspensions, amorphous precipitations in a crystalline carrier, compound or complex formation, and combinations of the previous five types.

Selection of the Carrier^{3,7,9}

The selection of the carrier has the influence on the dissolution characteristics of the dispersed drug, since the dissolution rate of one component from the surface is affected by the other component in a multiple component mixture. Therefore, a water-soluble carrier results in a faster release of the drug from the matrix. A poorly soluble or insoluble carrier leads to slower release of a drug from the matrix. If the active drug present is a minor component in the dispersion, faster release of a drug can be achieved from matrix.

Preparation of Solid Dispersions¹⁰⁻¹⁵

Various preparation methods for solid dispersions have been reported in literature. These methods deal with the challenge of mixing a matrix and a drug, preferably on a molecular level, while matrix and drug are generally poorly miscible. During many of the preparation techniques, de-mixing (partially or complete), and formation of different phases is observed. Phase separations like crystallization or formation of amorphous drug clusters are difficult to control and therefore unwanted. It was already recognized in one of the first studies on solid dispersions that the extent of phase separation can be minimized by a rapid cooling procedure. Generally, phase separation can be prevented by maintaining a low molecular mobility of matrix and drug during preparation. On the other hand, phase separation is prevented by maintaining the driving force for phase separation low for example by keeping the mixture at an elevated temperature thereby maintaining sufficient miscibility for as long as possible.

Fusion method

The fusion method is sometimes referred to as the melt method, which is correct only when the starting materials are crystalline. Therefore, the more general term fusion method is preferred. The first solid dispersions created for pharmaceutical applications were prepared by the fusion method. The dispersion consisted of sulfathiazole and urea as a matrix, which was melted using a physical mixture at the eutectic composition, followed by a cooling step.

The eutectic composition was chosen to obtain simultaneous crystallization of drug and matrix during cooling. This procedure resulted in solid dispersions of type I. Poly (ethylene glycol) (PEG) is a hydrophilic polymer often used to prepare solid dispersions with the fusion method. This often results in solid dispersions of type III since many drugs are incorporated as separate molecules in the helical structure present in a crystalline PEG. The helices are aligned in orderly fashion, illustrating that PEG easily crystallizes. Another polymer frequently applied as a matrix in the fusion method is poly (vinyl pyrrolidone) PVP. PVP, supplied in the amorphous state, is heated to above its T_g (glass transition temperature). The drug has to fuse with or dissolve in the rubbery matrix, which is subsequently cooled to vitrify the solid dispersion. When PVP is used as matrix, solid dispersions of type V or VI are obtained. The mode of incorporation of the drug depends on the PVP-drug miscibility and the preparation procedure. Grinding is required to obtain the solid dispersion as powder that is easy to handle. Although frequently applied, the fusion method has serious limitations. Firstly, a major disadvantage is that the method can only be applied when drug and matrix are compatible and when they mix well at the heating temperature. When drug and matrix are incompatible two liquid phases or a suspension can be observed in the heated mixture, which results in an inhomogeneous solid dispersion. This can be prevented by using surfactants. Secondly, a problem can arise during cooling when the drug-matrix miscibility changes. In this case phase separation can occur. Indeed, it was observed that when the mixture was slowly cooled, crystalline drug occurred, whereas fast cooling yielded amorphous solid dispersions. Thirdly, degradation of the drug and or matrix can occur during heating to temperatures necessary to fuse matrix and drug. For example, to melt a sugar matrix of galactose a temperature of 169°C was required and in order to get the glassy PVP in the rubbery state a temperature of about 170°C is required. Poly ethylene glycols melt at around 70°C and are therefore often used for the preparation of solid dispersions with the fusion method.

Hot melt extrusion

Melt extrusion is essentially the same as the fusion method except that intense mixing of the components is induced by the extruder. When

compared to melting in a vessel, the product stability and dissolution are similar, but melt extrusion offers the potential to shape the heated drug-matrix mixture into implants, ophthalmic inserts, or oral dosage forms. Just like in the traditional fusion process, miscibility of drug and matrix can be a problem. Solubility parameters are investigated to predict the solid state miscibility and to select matrices suitable for melt extrusion. High shear forces resulting in high local temperatures in the extruder are a problem for heat sensitive materials. However, compared to the traditional fusion method, this technique offers the possibility of continuous production, which makes it suitable for large-scale production. Furthermore, the product is easier to handle because at the outlet of the extruder the shape can be adapted to the next processing step without grinding.

Solvent method

The first step in the solvent method is the preparation of a solution containing both matrix material and drug. The second step involves the removal of solvent(s) resulting in formation of a solid dispersion. Mixing at the molecular level is preferred, because this leads to optimal dissolution properties. Using the solvent method, the pharmaceutical engineer faces two challenges. The first challenge is to mix both drug and matrix in one solution, which is difficult when they differ significantly in polarity. To minimize the drug particle size in the solid dispersion, the drug and matrix have to be dispersed in the solvent as fine as possible, preferably drug and matrix material are in the dissolved state in one solution. Various strategies have been applied to dissolve the lipophilic drug and hydrophilic matrix material together in one solution. Low drug concentrations are used to dissolve both drug and matrix material in water, but this requires evaporation of tremendous amounts of solvent, making the process expensive and impractical. Solubilisers like cyclodextrins or surfactants like Tween80® increase the aqueous solubility of the drug substantially. However, the amounts of solubilisers or surfactants in the final product are often eminent. This results in solid dispersions that, to a significant extent, consist of solubilisers or surfactants, materials that significantly change the physical properties of the matrix (e.g., decrease of T_g). Moreover, only dosage forms with low drug loads are possible. In addition, they are not always tolerated well in the body or may even be toxic.

Chloroform or dichloromethane have been used to dissolve both drug and PVP as matrix simultaneously. These solvents are used also in other preparation methods. However, according to the ICH-Guidelines, these solvents belong to Class I, comprising the most toxic solvents. Therefore, the use of these solvents is unacceptable and impractical because the amount of residual solvent present in the solid dispersion after drying has to be below the detection limits. The last strategy for the dissolution of both drug and matrix is the use of solvent mixtures. Water and ethanol or dichloromethane and ethanol have been used for this purpose. However, dissolution of drug and matrix in these mixtures is not always possible in the required concentration or ratio. The second challenge in the solvent method is to prevent phase separation, e.g. crystallization of either drug or matrix, during removal of the solvent(s). Drying at high temperatures speeds up the process and reduces the time available for phase separation. On the other hand, at high temperatures the molecular mobility of drug and matrix remains high, favoring phase separation (e.g., crystallization). To dry the solutions, vacuum drying is often used. The solution is dried by the application of vacuum and moderate heating. Sometimes, the solvent evaporation is accelerated by using a rotary evaporator. Afterwards the formed solid dispersion is often stored in vacuum desiccators to remove the residual solvent. Vacuum drying at elevated temperature bears the risk of phase separation because the mobility of drug and matrix decreases slowly. Another drying technique is spray drying. The solution is dispersed as fine particles in hot air. Due to the large specific surface area offered by the droplets, the solvent rapidly evaporates and the solid dispersion is formed within seconds, which may be fast enough to prevent phase separation. Moreover, the solid dispersions prepared by spray drying consist of particles of which the size may be customized by changing the droplet size to meet the requirements for further processing or application (e.g., free flowing particles or particles for inhalation). Spray drying usually yields drug in the amorphous state, however sometimes the drug may have (partially) crystallized during processing. An alternative to these drying techniques is freeze drying. Although it is concluded in literature that this is a promising and suitable technique to incorporate drug substances in stabilizing matrices, the technique

is poorly exploited for the preparation of solid dispersions. One of the reasons might be the low freezing temperature of most organic solvents (table 2). Obviously, sublimation during freeze drying is only possible when the solvent stays frozen. In addition when the formation of a glass is envisaged, the sample temperature should be kept below the T_g of the maximally freeze concentrated fraction. Therefore, low sample temperatures are required which slows down the process. Betageri and Makarla, 1995 used a condenser temperature of -75°C , to dry a solution with cyclohexanol as the solvent. In table 2 an overview is presented of several organic solvents. To obtain a lyophilization process of acceptable duration, the solvent should have a sufficiently high vapour pressure. As can be seen in table 2, dimethylsulphoxide (DMSO) has a high melting temperature but it has a very low vapour pressure. Therefore, DMSO is not suitable as a solvent for freeze drying. A suitable solvent that meets both requirements is 2- methyl-2-propanol or tertiary butanol (TBA), because it has a high melting temperature as well as a high vapour pressure. The application of TBA in lyophilization is discussed by Teagarden. Also mixtures of solvents can be considered. For example, while water and DMSO have melting points of 0°C and 19°C , the mixture has eutectic points below -60°C . The sample temperature of such a mixture should be kept below this value, which causes a slow sublimation. An important advantage of freeze drying is that the drug is subjected to minimal thermal stress during the formation of the solid dispersion. However, the most important advantage of freeze drying is that the risk of phase separation is minimized as soon as the solution is vitrified. An even more promising drying technique is spray-freeze drying. The solvent is sprayed into liquid nitrogen or cold dry air and the frozen droplets are subsequently lyophilized. The large surface area and direct contact with the cooling agent result in even faster vitrification, thereby decreasing the risk for phase separation to a minimum. Moreover, spray freeze drying offers the potential to customize the size of the particle to make them suitable for further processing or applications like pulmonary or nasal administration. In an electrostatic spinning process a drug-matrix solution is pumped through an orifice and then subjected to an electrical field to form fibres with a diameter of micro- or nano-scale. This process is

restricted to a limited amount of matrices, because only a few high molecular weight materials are fibre forming materials. Evaporative precipitation into aqueous solutions (EPAS) was used to coat a colloidal suspension of carbamazepine with block-copolymers as stabilizing surfactants. A solution of drug in dichloromethane was sprayed in an aqueous solution containing polymeric surfactants as stabilizers. The obtained colloidal suspension was spray dried, freeze dried or spray freeze dried, resulting in solid dispersions of type IV/V. It was concluded that the amorphous state of the drug was best preserved with the spray freeze drying process.

Supercritical fluid methods

Supercritical fluid methods are mostly applied with carbon dioxide (CO_2), which is used as either a solvent for drug and matrix or as an anti-solvent. When supercritical CO_2 is used as solvent, matrix and drug are dissolved and sprayed through a nozzle, into an expansion vessel with lower pressure and particles are immediately formed. The adiabatic expansion of the mixture results in rapid cooling. This technique does not require the use of organic solvents and since CO_2 is considered environmentally friendly, this technique is referred to as 'solvent free'. The technique is known as Rapid Expansion of Supercritical Solution (RESS). However, the application of this technique is very limited, because the solubility in CO_2 of most pharmaceutical compounds is very low ($<0.01\text{wt}\%$) and decreases with increasing polarity. Therefore, scaling up this process to kilogram-scale will be impractical. All other supercritical techniques are precipitation methods. Although generally labelled as solvent-free, all these supercritical fluid methods use organic solvents to dissolve drug and matrix and exploit the low solubility of pharmaceutical compounds in CO_2 . In fact, these techniques represent alternative methods to remove solvents from a solution containing typically a drug and a polymer. Moneghini and co-workers (2001) reported their method as solvent-free, but they dissolved PEG and carbamazepine in acetone. They used a technique that is called the Gas-Anti-Solvent technique (GAS) or Precipitation from Gas Saturated Solutions (PGSS). The solution is brought into contact with compressed CO_2 . The conditions are chosen so that CO_2 is completely miscible with the solution under supercritical conditions, whereas drug and matrix will precipitate upon expansion of the

solution. When the volume of the solution expands the solvent strength (i.e. the ability to dissolve the drug) decreases. This results in precipitation of matrix and drug. Since this technique is often applied with PEG as matrix, this technique results in formation of a solid dispersion with a crystalline matrix (Sethia and Squillante, 2002). The second type of precipitation technique involves the spraying of a solution containing drug and matrix through a nozzle into a vessel that contains a liquid or supercritical anti-solvent. The supercritical anti-solvent rapidly penetrates into the droplets, in which drug and matrix become supersaturated, crystallize and form particles. The general term for this process is Precipitation with Compressed Anti-Solvent (PCA). More specific examples of PCA are Supercritical Antisolvent (SAS) when supercritical CO₂ is used, or Aerosol Solvent Extraction System (ASES), and Solution Enhanced Dispersion by Supercritical fluids (SEDS). However, as with the other solvent techniques described in the previous section, the critical step in these precipitation techniques might be the dissolution of drug and matrix in one solution. The use of water is limited, because the water solubility in compressed CO₂ is limited. Usually organic solvents like dichloromethane or methanol have to be applied to dissolve both drug and matrix.

Characterization of Solid Dispersion¹⁶⁻²⁵

Detection of crystallinity in solid dispersions

Several different molecular structures of the drug in the matrix can be encountered in solid dispersions. Many attempts have been made to investigate the molecular arrangement in solid dispersions. However, most effort has been put into differentiate between amorphous and crystalline material. For that purpose many techniques are available which detect the amount of crystalline material in the dispersion. The amount of amorphous material is never measured directly but is mostly derived from the amount of crystalline material in the sample. It should be noted that through the assessment of crystallinity as method to determine the amount of amorphous drug it will not be revealed whether the drug is present as amorphous drug particles or as molecularly dispersed molecules.

Currently, the following techniques are available to detect (the degree of) crystallinity

Powder X-ray diffraction can be used to qualitatively detect material with long range order. Sharper

diffraction peaks indicate more crystalline material. Recently developed X-ray equipment is semi quantitative. Infrared spectroscopy (IR) can be used to detect the variation in the energy distribution of interactions between drug and matrix. Sharp vibrational bands indicate crystallinity. Fourier Transformed Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) was used to accurately detect crystallinities ranging from 1 to 99% in pure material. However in solid dispersions only qualitative detection was possible. Water vapor sorption can be used to discriminate between amorphous and crystalline material when the hygroscopicity is different, this method requires accurate data on the hygroscopicity of both completely crystalline and completely amorphous samples. Isothermal Microcalorimetry measures the crystallization energy of amorphous material that is heated above its glass transition temperature (T_g). However, this technique has some limitations. Firstly, this technique can only be applied if the physical stability is such that only during the measurement crystallization takes place. Secondly, it has to be assumed that all amorphous material crystallizes. Thirdly, in a binary mixture of two amorphous compounds a distinction between crystallization energies of drug and matrix is difficult. Dissolution Calorimetry measures the energy of dissolution, which is dependent on the crystallinity of the sample. Usually, dissolution of crystalline material is endothermic, whereas dissolution of amorphous material is exothermic. Macroscopic techniques that measure mechanical properties that are different for amorphous and crystalline material can be indicative for the degree of crystallinity. Density measurements and Dynamic Mechanical Analysis (DMA) determine the modulus of elasticity and viscosity and thus affected by the degree of crystallinity. However, also these techniques require knowledge about the additivity of these properties in intimately mixed binary solids. A frequently used technique to detect the amount of crystalline material is Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC). In DSC, samples are heated with a constant heating rate and the amount of energy necessary for that is detected. With DSC the temperatures at which thermal events occur can be detected. Thermal events can be a glass to rubber transition, (re)crystallization, melting or degradation. Furthermore, the melting- and (re)crystallization energy can be quantified. The melting energy can be

used to detect the amount of crystalline material. Possibly, the recrystallization energy can be used to calculate the amount of amorphous material provided, that all amorphous material is transformed to the crystalline state. If during DSC-measurements, amorphous material crystallizes, information is obtained on the crystallization kinetics and on the physical stability of the amorphous sample. To quantify the amount of crystalline material, measurements should be completed before crystallization of amorphous material has started. In some cases, this can be established applying high scanning rates.

Detection of molecular structure in amorphous Solid dispersions

The properties of a solid dispersion are highly affected by the uniformity of the distribution of the drug in the matrix. The stability and dissolution behaviour could be different for solid dispersions that do not contain any crystalline drug particles, i.e. solid dispersions of type V and VI or for type II and III. However, not only the Knowledge on the physical state (crystalline or amorphous) is important; the distribution of the drug as amorphous or crystalline particles or as separate drug molecules is relevant to the properties of the solid dispersion too. Nevertheless, only very few studies focus on the discrimination between amorphous incorporated particles versus molecular distribution or homogeneous mixtures.

1. Confocal Raman Spectroscopy was used to measure the homogeneity of the solid mixture of ibuprofen in PVP. It was described that a standard deviation in drug content smaller than 10% was indicative of homogeneous distribution. Because of the pixel size of 2 μm^3 , uncertainty remains about the presence of nano-sized amorphous drug particles.
2. Using IR or FTIR, the extent of interactions between drug and matrix can be measured. The interactions are indicative for the mode of incorporation of the drug, because separately dispersed drug molecules will have more drug-matrix interactions than when the drug is present in amorphous clusters or other multi-molecule arrangements.
3. Temperature Modulated Differential Scanning Calorimetry (TMDSC) can be used to assess the degree of mixing of an incorporated drug. Due to the modulation, reversible and irreversible events can be separated. For example, glass transitions (reversible)

are separated from crystallization or relaxation (irreversible) in amorphous materials. Furthermore, the value of the Tg is a function of the composition of the homogeneously mixed solid dispersion. It has been shown that the sensitivity of TMDSC is higher than conventional DSC. Therefore this technique can be used to assess the amount of molecularly dispersed drug, and from that the fraction of drug that is dispersed as separate molecules is calculated.

Applications of Solid Dispersions³⁻⁹

1. To increase the solubility of poorly soluble drugs thereby increase the dissolution rate, absorption and bioavailability.
2. To stabilize unstable drugs against hydrolysis, oxidation, recombination, isomerisation, photo oxidation and other decomposition procedures.
3. To reduce side effect of certain drugs.
4. Masking of unpleasant taste and smell of drugs.
5. Improvement of drug release from ointment, creams and gels.
6. To avoid undesirable incompatibilities.
7. To obtain a homogeneous distribution of a small amount of drug in solid state.
8. To dispense liquid (up to 10%) or gaseous compounds in a solid dosage.
9. To formulate a fast release primary dose in a sustained released dosage form.
10. To formulate sustained release regimen of soluble drugs by using poorly soluble or insoluble carriers.
11. To reduce pre systemic inactivation of drugs like morphine and progesterone.

Conclusion

Solubility is a most important parameter for the oral bio availability of poorly soluble drugs. Dissolution of drug is the rate determining step for oral absorption of the poorly water soluble drugs, which can subsequently affect the *in vivo* absorption of drug. Currently only 8% of new drug candidates have both high solubility and permeability. Because of solubility problem of many drugs the bio availability of them gets affected and hence solubility enhancement becomes necessary. Solid dispersion technology is one of the possible modes that increase the solubility of poorly soluble drugs.

Table 1: Types of solid dispersion

S.No	Solid dispersion type	Matrix *	Drug **	Remarks No.	Phases	Ref. to lit.
1	Eutectics	C	C	The first type of solid dispersion prepared	2	(Chiou and Riegelman, 1971)
2	Amorphous precipitations in crystalline matrix	C	A	Rarely encountered	2	(Breitenbach AH, 2002); (Mullins and Macek, 1960)
3	Solid solutions	-	-	-	-	-
i.	Continuous solid solutions	C	M	Miscible at all composition, never prepared	1	(Goldberg <i>et al.</i> , 1965]
ii.	Discontinuous solid solutions	C	M	Partially miscible, 2 phases even though drug is molecularly dispersed.	2	Sekiguchi K and Obi N (1961)
iii.	Substitutional solid solutions	C	M	Molecular diameter of drug (solute) differs less than 15% from the matrix (Solvent) diameter. In that case the drug and matrix are substitutional. Can be continuous or discontinuous. When discontinuous: 2 phases even though drug is molecularly dispersed.	1 or 2	(Rastogi and Verma, 1956); (Wilcox <i>et al.</i> , 1964)
iv.	Interstitial solid solutions	C	M	Drug (solute) molecular diameter less than 59% of matrix (solvent) diameter. Usually limited miscibility, discontinuous. Example: Drug in helical interstitial spaces of PEG.	2	(Chiou and Riegelman, 1971); (Chiou and Riegelman, 1969)
4	Glass suspension	A	C	Particle size of dispersed phase dependent on cooling/evaporation rate. Obtained after crystallization of drug in amorphous matrix	2	(Chiou and Riegelman, 1971); (Sarkari M <i>et al.</i> , 2002)
5	Glass suspension	A	A	Particle size of dispersed phase dependent on cooling/evaporation rate many solid dispersions are of this type	2	(Chiou and Riegelman, 1971); (Sarkari M <i>et al.</i> , 2002)
6	Glass solution	A	M	Requires miscibility OR solid solubility, complex formation or upon fast cooling OR evaporation during preparation, many (recent) examples especially with PVP	1	Simonelli AP <i>et al.</i> , 1969

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