
40 C.F.R. § 798.2450

Inhalation toxicity.

- (a) *Purpose.* In the assessment and evaluation of the toxic characteristics of a gas, volatile substance, or aerosol/particulate, determination of subchronic inhalation toxicity may be carried out after initial information on toxicity has been obtained by acute testing. The subchronic inhalation study has been designed to permit the determination of the no-observed-effect level and toxic effects associated with continuous or repeated exposure to a test substance for a period of 90 days. The test is not capable of determining those effects that have a long latency period for development (e.g., carcinogenicity and life shortening). It provides information on health hazards likely to arise from repeated exposures by the inhalation route over a limited period of time. It will provide information on target organs, the possibilities of accumulation, and can be of use in selecting dose levels for chronic studies and for establishing safety criteria for human exposure. Hazards of inhaled substances are influenced by the inherent toxicity and by physical factors such as volatility and particle size.
- (b) *Definitions.* (1) Subchronic inhalation toxicity is the adverse effects occurring as a result of the repeated daily exposure of experimental animals to a chemical by inhalation for part (approximately 10 percent) of a life span.
- (2) Aerodynamic diameter applies to the size of particles of aerosols. It is the diameter of a sphere of unit density which behaves aerodynamically as the particle of the test substance. It is used to compare particles of different size and densities and to predict where in the respiratory tract such particles may be deposited. This term is used in contrast to measured or geometric diameter which is representative of actual diameters which in themselves cannot be related to deposition within the respiratory tract.
- (3) The geometric mean diameter or the median diameter is the calculated aerodynamic diameter which divides the particles of an aerosol in half based on the weight of the particles. Fifty percent of the particles by weight will be larger than the median diameter and 50 percent of the particles will be smaller than the median diameter. The median diameter describes the particle size distribution of any aerosol based on the weight and size of the particles.
- (4) Inhalable diameter refers to that aerodynamic diameter of a particle which is considered to be inhalable for the organism. It is used to refer to particles which are capable of being inhaled and may be deposited anywhere within the respiratory tract from the trachea to the alveoli. For man, inhalable diameter is considered as 15 micrometers or less.
- (5) Dose refers to an exposure level. Exposure is expressed as weight or volume of test substance per volume of air (mg/l), or as parts per million (ppm).
- (6) No-effect level/No-toxic-effect level/No-adverse-effect level/No-observed-effect level is the maximum dose used in a test which produces no observed adverse effects. A no-observed-effect level is expressed in terms of weight or volume of test substance given daily per unit volume of air (mg/l or ppm).
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(7) Cumulative toxicity is the adverse effects of repeated doses occurring as a result of prolonged action on, or increased concentration of the administered test substance or its metabolites in susceptible tissues.

(c) *Principle of the test method.* Several groups of experimental animals are exposed daily for a defined period to the test substance in graduated concentrations, one concentration being used per group, for a period of 90 days. During the period of administration, the animals are observed daily to detect signs of toxicity. Animals which die during the test are necropsied and at the conclusion of the test, surviving animals are sacrificed and necropsied and appropriate histopathological examinations carried out.

(d) *Test procedures—(1) Animal selection—(i) Species and strain.* A mammalian species shall be used for testing. A variety of rodent species may be used, although the rat is the preferred species. Commonly used laboratory strains shall be employed. If another mammalian species is used, the tester shall provide justification/ reasoning for its selection.

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