
40 C.F.R. § 798.2650

Oral toxicity.

- (a) *Purpose.* In the assessment and evaluation of the toxic characteristics of a chemical, the determination of subchronic oral toxicity may be carried out after initial information on toxicity has been obtained by acute testing. The subchronic oral 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 exposure by the oral 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.
- (b) *Definitions.* (1) Subchronic oral toxicity is the adverse effects occurring as a result of the repeated daily exposure of experimental animals to a chemical by the oral route for a part (approximately 10 percent) of a life span.
- (2) Dose is the amount of test substance administered. Dose is expressed as weight of test substance (g, mg) per unit weight of test animal (e.g., mg/kg), or as weight of test substance per unit weight of food or drinking water.
- (3) 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 the weight of a substance given daily per unit weight of test animal (mg/kg). When administered to animals in food or drinking water the no-observed-effect level is expressed as mg/kg of food or mg/ml of water.
- (4) 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 tissue.
- (c) *Principle of the test method.* The test substance is administered orally in graduated daily doses to several groups of experimental animals, one dose level 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 period of administration are necropsied. At the conclusion of the test all animals are necropsied and histopathological examinations carried out.
- (d) *Limit test.* If a test at one dose level of at least 1,000 mg/kg body weight (expected human exposure may indicate the need for a higher dose level), using the procedures described for this study, produces no observable toxic effects and if toxicity would not be expected based upon data of structurally related compounds, then a full study using three dose levels might not be necessary.
- (e) *Test procedures—(1) Animal selection—(i) Species and strain.* A mammalian species shall be used for testing.
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A variety of rodent species may be used, although the rat is the preferred species. Commonly used laboratory strains shall be employed. The commonly used nonrodent species is the dog, preferably of a defined breed; the beagle is frequently used. If other mammalian species are used, the tester shall provide justification/reasoning for his or her selection.

(ii) *Age*—(A) *General*. Young adult animals shall be employed. At the commencement of the study the weight variation of animals used shall not exceed ± 20 percent of the mean weight for each sex.

(B) *Rodents*. Dosing shall begin as soon as possible after weaning, ideally before the rats are 6, and in any case, not more than 8 weeks old.

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