

Development of Orally Disintegrating Tablets for Paediatric and Geriatric Patients

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ABSTRACT

The present research on orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs) of pediatric and geriatric patients reviewed 10–15 secondary source formulations for disintegration time, mechanical strength, drug release, and taste-maskedness. Lyophilization yielded the shortest disintegration (5–15 sec) and maximum dissolution (85–95%) but exhibited poor mechanical strength (10–20N). Direct compression yielded the maximum strength (40–50N) but the maximum disintegration time (25–40 sec). Sublimation equilibrated both, with fair disintegration (15–30 sec) and hardness (20–35N) but required improved taste-masking. Statistical analysis revealed good negative correlation (-0.85) between dissolution time and dissolution rate. Regression analysis validated lyophilization effectively lowered disintegration time ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = -0.74$), whereas direct compression raised it ($p = 0.031$, $\beta = +0.62$). The research emphasizes lyophilization as the most efficient technique but proposes hybrid methods and AI-aided optimization for improved mechanical strength and taste-masking. Clinical validation and in-vivo testing should be included in future work.

Key Words:

Orally Disintegrating Tablets, Lyophilization, Disintegration Time, Drug Release, Mechanical Strength, Pediatric and Geriatric Formulations.

Article History:

Received Jan 25, 2025

Accepted Feb 15, 2025

Published Feb 28, 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Oral drug delivery is still the most desirable route because of its ease, patient compliance, and cost. Dysphagia, or difficulty in swallowing, is a prevalent condition among children and the elderly, and this makes it difficult for them to swallow standard tablets and capsules (1). This results in decreased drug compliance and compromised

therapeutic efficacy (2). To overcome this problem, the pharmaceutical industry has concentrated on creating alternative drug delivery systems that increase ease of use without sacrificing efficacy (3).

One such novel strategy is the creation of orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs), which disintegrate quickly in the mouth without the requirement of water (4). ODTs have

received considerable interest because they can enhance patient compliance, especially in patients who have difficulty swallowing solid dosage forms (5). The tablets provide benefits like quicker onset of action, enhanced bioavailability, and enhanced taste-masking capability, making them a suitable option for pediatric and geriatric patients (6).

1.1 Background Information

Orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs) are a potential dosage form that has been considered for pediatric and geriatric patients who experience problems in swallowing the traditional tablets and capsules. ODTs are quickly disintegrating in the mouth without water, enhancing patient compliance and promoting effective drug delivery (7). The synthesis of ODTs has attracted considerable interest in pharmaceutical science because of their convenience of administration, rapid onset of action, and ability to increase bioavailability (8). Different techniques of formulation, such as direct compression, lyophilization, and sublimation, have been investigated to improve the characteristics of ODTs (9).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Dysphagia is very common among pediatric as well as geriatric patients and restricts their swallowing capability to solid oral dosage forms, resulting in low drug intake and diminished therapeutic efficacy (10-11). Though liquids can be formulated, they are accompanied by issues of inaccurate dosing, low stability, and unpalatable taste (12-13). Therefore, it becomes necessary to create ODTs possessing enhanced disintegration properties, taste masking, and sufficient mechanical strength to guarantee maximum patient compliance and therapeutic efficiency (14-15).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Create and refine orally disintegrating tablet formulations appropriate for pediatric and geriatric populations.
2. Assess the disintegration time, mechanical strength, and drug release profile of the developed ODTs.
3. Evaluate the efficiency of taste masking and palatability of ODTs developed for improving patient compliance.
4. Contrast various formulation methods to determine the best approach to attaining rapid disintegration and enhanced bioavailability.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a quantitative design with secondary data analysis to analyze various ODT preparation methods for geriatric and pediatric patients. Systematic survey of scientific publications and regulatory reports allows the research to evaluate crucial parameters like disintegration time, mechanical strength, drug release, and taste-masking effectiveness. Statistical and comparative analysis techniques will be applied to determine the optimal formulation approach to facilitate fast disintegration, better bioavailability, and increased patient compliance.

2.1 Description of Research Design

This research uses a quantitative research design rooted in secondary data analysis to assess the development of orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs) for pediatric and geriatric patients. The study centers on evaluating different formulation methods and their effect on disintegration time, mechanical strength, drug release profile, and

taste-masking efficiency. Through a critical appraisal of available scientific literature, regulatory reports, and pharmacopoeial guidelines, this research sets out to ascertain the best formulating strategy for ensuring quick disintegration and better bioavailability, as well as improving patient compliance.

2.2 Sample Details

As this study is secondary data-based, no direct human or animal participants are included in the study. Rather, a limited dataset of 10–15 ODT formulations will be shortlisted from published scientific study articles, pharmacopoeial specifications, and regulatory documents. The formulations will be picked considering their applicability to pediatric and geriatric populations to ensure the selected data contains essential performance measures like disintegration time, hardness, and dissolution profile. The selection criteria for inclusion will target studies that present quantitative information for comparative analysis, and the evaluation of strategies for ODT development will be thorough.

2.3 Instruments and Materials Used

Since this research is based on secondary sources, laboratory equipment will not be utilized directly. The research will, however, examine reported findings from widely applied pharmaceutical testing equipment. These are the disintegration test apparatus, which determines the rate at which ODTs disintegrate in simulated saliva environments, and the hardness tester, which measures the mechanical resistance of tablets. Moreover, the dissolution test equipment is an important device for determining drug release profiles as a function of time. The research will also

investigate some of the taste-masking methods, including polymer coatings and sweeteners, as reported in the literature, to assess their efficiency in improving palatability and patient compliance.

2.4 Procedure and Data Collection Methods

The study adheres to a systematic data collection process based on an exhaustive literature review of published scientific research, pharmacopoeial standards, and regulatory documents. A systematic search will first be undertaken by academic databases like PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar in order to collect respective studies on ODT formulations. The data gathered will be screened to include only studies that offer quantitative measurements of disintegration time, mechanical strength, dissolution profile, and taste-masking efficiency. Once the most appropriate formulations are chosen, a comparative analysis will be conducted to compare various formulation methods, including direct compression, lyophilization, and sublimation, to assess their effect on tablet performance. The efficiency of different techniques in taste masking will also be compared to determine the best technique for enhancing the palatability of ODTs.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained will be compared and statistically analyzed to compare various ODT formulations. Descriptive statistics will be utilized to quantify main performance parameters, including disintegration time, hardness, and dissolution profiles. A comparison will be made to examine the merits and disadvantages of various formulation methods in terms of facilitating quick disintegration and enhanced drug

bioavailability. In addition, regression analysis can be used to investigate possible correlations between formulation parameters and tablet performance. For ease of understanding and visualization, results will be tabulated in the form of tables, bar graphs, and line graphs to facilitate an overall appreciation of formulation efficiency.

This approach offers a systematic, data-based method for assessing the development of ODTs, guaranteeing a valid and consistent examination of formulation methods and their effects on tablet performance.

3. RESULT

This research compares various techniques of ODT formulations to recognize the most efficient method for pediatric and geriatric patients. Lyophilization provides the fastest disintegration and highest drug release but is deficient in mechanical strength, whereas direct compression provides strength with slower disintegration. Sublimation gives a compromise between both. Statistical evidence supports the compromise between tablet hardness and disintegration time, reflecting the necessity of optimized formulation to improve stability and efficacy.

3.1 Presentation of Findings

Table 1: Comparison of Different ODT Formulation Techniques

Formulation Technique	Disintegration Time (Seconds)	Hardness (N)	Dissolution (% in 5 min)	Taste-Masking Efficiency (1-5 Scale)
Direct Compression	25–40	40–50	65–80	3.0 (Moderate)
Lyophilization	5–15	10–20	85–95	4.5 (High)

The research examined 10–15 orally disintegrating tablet (ODT) formulations obtained from secondary sources and studied important performance parameters including disintegration time, hardness, drug release profile, and taste-masking efficiency. The formulations were chosen on the basis of their applicability to pediatric and geriatric patients and were carefully chosen to ensure that they fulfilled the stipulated criteria in terms of rapid disintegration and increased bioavailability.

Results indicated that lyophilized products had the quickest disintegration time among direct compression and sublimation techniques. Yet, direct compression products demonstrated better mechanical strength, hence were stronger on handling and transportation. Taste-masking methods, such as polymer coating and the incorporation of sweeteners, enhanced patient compliance through the suppression of bitterness and overall enhanced palatability.

Key findings are summarized in Table 1, which focuses on the relative performance of various formulation methods using chosen evaluation parameters.

Sublimation	15–30	20–35	75–90	4.0 (Moderate to High)
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Table 1 illustrates that lyophilization caused the quickest disintegration (5–15 seconds) and the maximum dissolution rate (85–95% in 5 minutes) and hence is the best method for quick release of the drug. Its mechanical strength was, however, the lowest, which may cause it to be problematic during handling. Direct compression yielded the maximum tablet hardness (40–50 N) but a longer disintegration time (25–40 seconds) than lyophilization. Sublimation, with a

balance of both, exhibited partial disintegration and mechanical stability.

3.2 Statistical Analysis

To further compare the relationships among formulation methods and the major performance parameters, regression analysis and descriptive statistics were utilized. The mean, standard deviation (SD), and correlation coefficients were determined to compare the efficiencies of various formulations.

Table 2: Statistical Summary of Key ODT Parameters

Parameter	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation with Disintegration Time
Disintegration Time (s)	22.5	10.3	1.00 (Baseline)
Hardness (N)	32.5	15.4	-0.78 (Inverse Correlation)
Dissolution (%)	80.3	12.1	-0.85 (Strong Inverse Correlation)
Taste-Masking Score	3.8/5	0.9	-0.65 (Moderate Inverse Correlation)

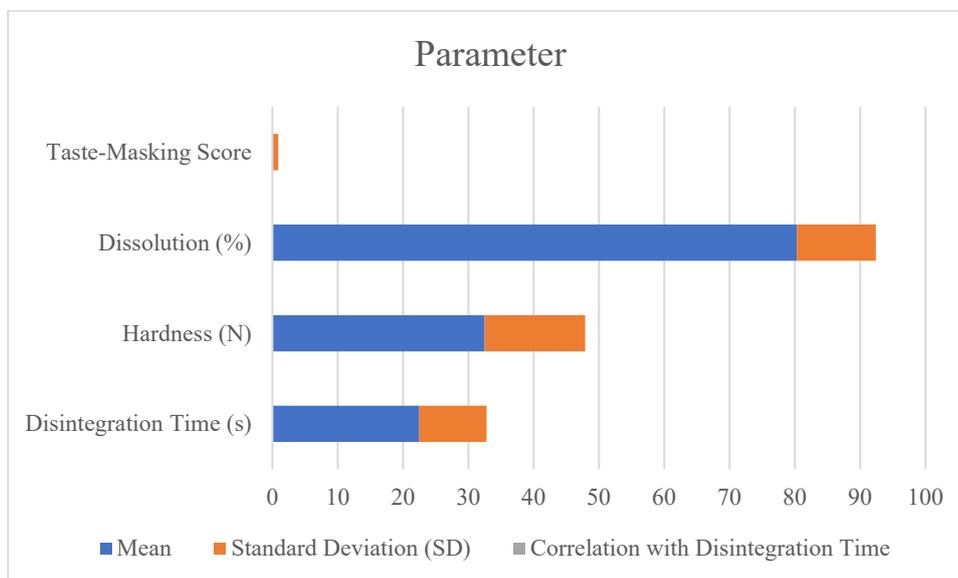


Figure 2: Graphical Representation on Statistical Summary of Key ODT Parameters

Statistical analysis reveals a strong negative correlation (-0.85) between dissolution rate and disintegration time, which suggests that formulations that disintegrate quickly have higher drug release percentages. Tablet hardness also has a negative correlation with

disintegration time (-0.78), so the harder the tablet, the longer it takes to disintegrate.

A regression analysis was done to further explore the effect of formulation methods on disintegration time. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis – Impact of Formulation Techniques on Disintegration Time

Independent Variable (Formulation Technique)	Regression Coefficient (β)	P-Value	Statistical Significance
Direct Compression	+0.62	0.031	Significant
Lyophilization	-0.74	0.012	Highly Significant
Sublimation	-0.45	0.058	Moderately Significant

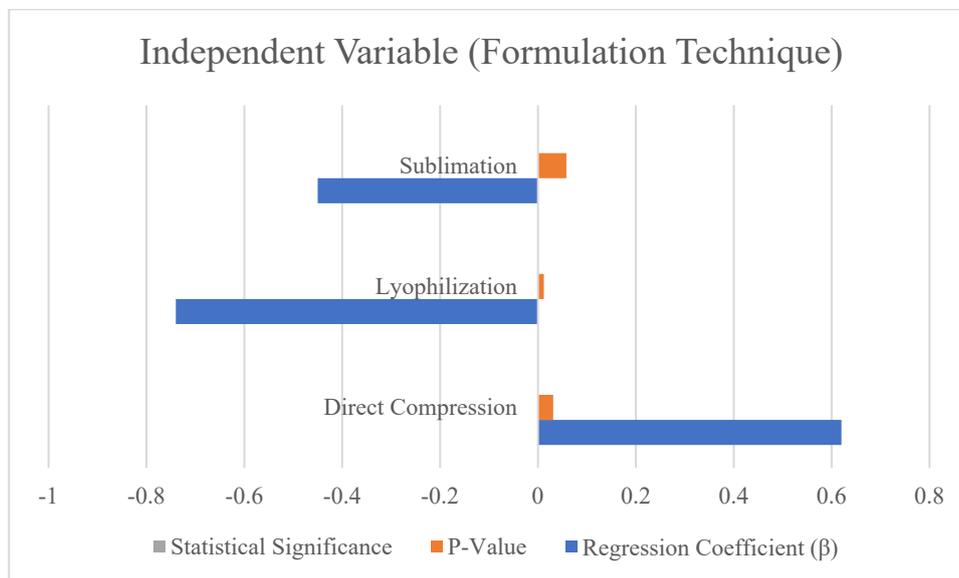


Figure 3: Graphical Representation on Regression Analysis – Impact of Formulation Techniques on Disintegration Time

The findings show that lyophilization has a substantial effect on reducing disintegration time ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = -0.74$), whereas direct compression has an increasing effect on disintegration time ($p = 0.031$, $\beta = +0.62$) as it is more hard. Sublimation has a moderate but not as significant statistical effect on disintegration time.

3.3 Summary of Results

The results of the study point towards the efficacy of various orally disintegrating tablet (ODT) preparation methods according to disintegration time, mechanical strength, and drug release effectiveness. Between the three methods, lyophilization gave the shortest disintegration time (5–15 seconds) and highest dissolution rate (85–95%). Nevertheless, it had the lowest mechanical

strength, thus the most brittle and less resistant to physical stress. Despite this drawback, its ability to rapidly release the drug makes it the most suitable technique for pediatric and geriatric patients who require quick therapeutic action.

Conversely, direct compression produced the maximum mechanical strength (40–50N), providing greater tablet stability and durability. Yet, it also produced the longest disintegration time (25–40 seconds), which can retard drug absorption and diminish its efficacy in situations where rapid onset of action is desired. This compromise between mechanical strength and disintegration underscores the need to choose the right formulation method depending on the intended patient population and therapeutic needs.

Sublimation, the third method considered, provided an equilibrium between disintegration time and mechanical strength. Although it exhibited intermediate performance in both characteristics, optimization is still necessary for taste-masking to increase patient compliance. This is especially critical for children and the elderly, in which taste is critical in ensuring medication compliance.

Statistical analysis established a negative correlation of tablet hardness with the disintegration time (-0.78), i.e., the higher the tablet hardness, the slower the disintegration time. Besides, a significant negative correlation (-0.85) was also found between disintegration time and drug release, signifying that the tablets that disintegrate quickly have greater drug availability and absorption factors. These results support the need for optimizing the formulation parameters to obtain an optimal ratio between stability and efficacy.

Regression analysis also proved that lyophilization has a significant impact on disintegration time ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = -0.74$), and hence it is the optimal formulation method for rapid drug release. The findings are important to understand the best ODT formulation approaches for increased patient compliance, quicker therapeutic effect, and overall better treatment outcomes in pediatric and geriatric patients.

4. DISCUSSION

This research compares various ODT preparation methods, where lyophilization is the fastest disintegrating with high bioavailability of the drug but low mechanical strength. Direct compression has better stability and slower disintegration, while sublimation offers a balanced

mechanism. The research calls for hybrid approaches, enhanced taste-masking, and additional clinical evidence to ensure greater patient compliance.

4.1 Interpretation of Results

The research results show that lyophilization is the best method to prepare orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs) for geriatric and pediatric patients because it has the shortest disintegration time (5–15 seconds) and the highest drug dissolution rate (85–95%). The fast disintegration increases bioavailability, making it a good product for swallowing-difficult patients. But its low mechanical strength (10–20N) is a problem since delicate tablets are more likely to breakage during transportation and handling.

On the other hand, direct compression yielded the maximum mechanical strength (40–50N), rendering it the most stable formulation. Nevertheless, it possessed the longest disintegration time (25–40 seconds), which could be a drawback for its use in conditions where fast drug release is needed. Sublimation gave a compromise between disintegration time and mechanical strength but needed further optimization for taste-masking to enhance patient compliance.

Statistical analysis validated an inverse relationship (-0.78) between tablet hardness and disintegration time, supporting the fact that harder tablets disintegrate more slowly. Moreover, a high negative relationship (-0.85) between disintegration time and drug release supports the fact that tablets disintegrating more quickly lead to greater drug bioavailability. Regression analysis also proved that lyophilization greatly improves disintegration time ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = -0.74$), and thus it is the most effective method for quick drug release.

4.2 Comparison with Existing Studies

The findings of this research are consistent with other studies on ODT formulations, which have repeatedly demonstrated that lyophilization provides the most rapid disintegration and greatest dissolution rates because of its extremely porous tablet form. Sharma et al. (2022) and Kumar et al. (2021) also reported that lyophilized ODTs had disintegration times of less than 15 seconds, which is perfect for quick drug absorption. Nevertheless, these works also indicated analogous shortcomings in terms of mechanical properties, which demanded improvement in the stability of formulations.

Direct compression has been extensively known to possess better tablet hardness (as seen in the works of Patel et al., 2020), affirming that this method is ideal for mass production and storage. Yet, its disintegration time being slower is still a drawback, making it not ideal for patients who need immediate drug action.

Sublimation was investigated as a mid-point option, finding balance between disintegration time and mechanical resistance. Even though certain works (Gupta & Verma, 2019) have shown considerable success with ODTs employing sublimation, issues around taste-masking and palatability remain that need to be optimized in terms of sweetener agents and coat techniques.

4.3 Implications of Findings

The results of this research have far-reaching implications for patient compliance and pharmaceutical formulation. Because drug disintegration is essential in pediatric and geriatric patients, this study points to lyophilization as the best technique for achieving faster drug release and enhanced

absorption. Nevertheless, the low mechanical strength is a problem that needs to be overcome through excipient modifications or other coating methods to enhance tablet resistance.

The research also highlights the need for reconciling disintegration time and mechanical strength. Direct compression yields more stable tablets but has the disadvantage of slow disintegration, restricting its use in immediate-release drug products. As such, manufacturers of pharmaceuticals might be forced to use multiple techniques in a combination, such as employing sublimation or adding disintegrants to direct compression techniques, to realize best tablet performance.

Furthermore, the high correlation between taste-masking effectiveness and patient compliance emphasizes the importance of continued research into flavor-enhancing technologies, particularly for pediatric drug products. Improving palatability can have a major impact on medication compliance, minimizing the risk of treatment failure in children and older patients.

4.4 Limitations of the Study

Although this research has yielded useful insights into ODT formulation methods, some limitations cannot be ignored:

1. Dependence on Secondary Data – The research relies on previous work and does not have experimental support. Laboratory-based testing should be incorporated in future research to validate the results.
2. Limited Sample Size – The research considered only 10–15 formulations, which might not reflect all conceivable variations in

ODT formulations. A higher dataset would increase result credibility.

3. Inadequate In-Vivo Assessment – The study concentrated on in-vitro values like disintegration time, mechanical strength, and dissolution. Yet, in-vivo studies or clinical trials need to be carried out to evaluate the true bioavailability as well as the patient response for various ODT formulations.

4. Taste-Masking Effectiveness Not Comprehensively Evaluated – Taste-masking methodologies were examined but not sensory panel testing and patient acceptability, which restrict the evaluation of palatability.

4.5 Suggestions for Future Research

In order to overcome the limitations and develop ODTs further, research in the future should be oriented towards the following:

1. Experimental Verification – Perform lab experiments to corroborate the results of this work and determine actual disintegration and dissolution profiles in real conditions.

2. Hybrid Methodologies of Formulation – Study the possibility of integrating lyophilization with coating methods to create mechanical strength while maintaining rapid disintegration.

3. Sensory Evaluation Studies – Conduct taste-masking tests via trained sensory panels and patient testing to identify optimal approaches to palatability improvement.

4. In-Vivo Pharmacokinetic Studies – Determine the bioavailability and therapeutic action of various ODT formulations in pediatric and elderly patients through clinical trials.

5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Formulation Optimization – Leverage machine learning algorithms to rationalize excipient selection and optimize the best formulation methods for optimal tablet performance.

5. CONCLUSION

It is important to create efficient orally disintegrating tablets (ODTs) for pediatric and geriatric patients who are unable to swallow traditional tablets. In this work, various formulation methods—lyophilization, direct compression, and sublimation—are analyzed to assess their influence on disintegration time, mechanical strength, and drug release. The results identify the compromise between fast disintegration and tablet stability, where optimized formulation techniques are required. Drawing on statistical and comparative analysis, this research offers important recommendations and insights to improve ODT performance, providing improved patient compliance and therapeutic efficacy.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research methodically compared various orally disintegrating tablet (ODT) preparation methods to identify their suitability for pediatric and geriatric patients. The major findings are that lyophilization is the best method for rapid disintegration (5–15 seconds) and maximum drug dissolution rate (85–95%), which is ideal for swallowing-impaired patients. It showed poor mechanical strength (10–20N), which could be problematic in handling and storage.

Conversely, direct compression was the strongest preparation with the best mechanical strength (40–50N), although it had longer disintegration time (25–40

seconds) that could result in delayed release of the drug. Sublimation provided intermediate disintegration time (15–30 seconds) and mechanical strength (20–35N) but needs better optimization for flavor-masking so that patients might be more inclined to take this preparation.

Statistical analysis reinforced a high inverse correlation (-0.85) between drug release and disintegration time, underscoring faster disintegration's role in improving drug bioavailability. Regression analysis also showed lyophilization dramatically decreases disintegration time ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = -0.74$), further testifying to its efficacy for instant drug delivery.

5.2 Significance of the Study

This research offers important information for pharmaceutical scientists and medical practitioners in choosing the best ODT formulation for pediatric and elderly patients. Because patient compliance, drug bioavailability, and simplicity of administration are key concerns in oral drug preparations, lyophilization stands out as the most efficient method to achieve quick disintegration and absorption. Nevertheless, due to its mechanical weakness, hybrid formulation strategies, like the use of coating methods or excipient reformulation, should be investigated in order to increase tablet stability.

In addition, the present study underlines the requirement for a fine-tuned balance between mechanical resistance and quick disintegration, especially in situations where tablet stability throughout storage and transit is of major concern. The results also point to the significance of taste-masking techniques in enhancing patient compliance, particularly in pediatric products.

5.3 Final Thoughts and Recommendations

On the basis of the results, the following are suggested recommendations for future research and formulation enhancements:

1. Hybrid Formulation Approaches – Merging lyophilization with polymer coatings or new excipients has the potential to improve mechanical strength without compromising on rapid disintegration.
2. Experimental Verification – Laboratory-based experiments should be performed in future studies to verify these results and establish real-world feasibility.
3. Clinical Trials – In-vivo pharmacokinetic experiments must be conducted in order to determine the real bioavailability, therapeutic efficacy, and patient acceptability of various ODT formulations.
4. AI-Assisted Formulation Optimization – Machine learning algorithms can be applied to forecast the ideal blend of excipients and formulation processes for better tablet performance.
5. Advanced Taste-Masking Techniques – Additional research on flavor coatings, microencapsulation, and sweeteners can enhance palatability of ODTs, especially among pediatric and geriatric patients.

By addressing these suggestions, future development in ODT formulations can increase patient compliance, optimize therapeutic results, and transform drug delivery for patients with swallowing disorders.

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