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Review Article

From H_2O to Healing: Insights into Water-Based Drug Delivery and Their Health Benefits

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the physicochemical properties of water, a crucial solvent in pharmacology, and its impact on drug solubility, stability, and bioavailability. Water's high polarity, hydrogen bonding, and high dielectric constant make it an ideal medium for dissolving various compounds. Its solubility is crucial for drug efficacy, while its stability is influenced by factors like pH, temperature, and impurities. The interaction between drugs and water molecules is also vital. Water quality, temperature, and pH also affect drug dissolution, affecting their pharmacokinetic profiles and therapeutic outcomes. Understanding these biochemical aspects is vital for developing efficient drug delivery systems and optimising pharmacological interventions. Thus, understanding water's physicochemical properties is vital for the development of effective drug delivery systems.

Keywords: Water, Solvent, Pharmacology, Drug Formulation, Drug Administration, Biochemical Considerations

Introduction

Water is a crucial component in medicine formulation and delivery due to its unique physicochemical properties.[1] Its strong polarity, hydrogen bonding, and dielectric constant make it a universal solvent, able to dissolve and solubilise pharmacologically active molecules.[2] Water is the primary solvent for oral solutions, suspensions, and injectables in pharmacology, and its bioavailability affects absorption after delivery.[3] Hydrophilic medicines are highly soluble in water due to hydrogen bonding and dipole-dipole interactions, while hydrophobic medications may require solubilisation aids or formulation methods. Water can also affect the stability of aqueous medication formulations through hydrolysis, oxidation, and other mechanisms.[4] Water contaminants can promote drug breakdown and reduce formulation stability.[5] Biochemical interactions between medications and water molecules affect solubility and dissolution.[6] Water molecules can form hydration shells, while hydrophobic medications can be complexed with surfactants to improve water solubility.[7] Understanding water's biochemical aspects is essential for optimising medication formulations, drug delivery methods, and pharmacology results.[8] This demonstrates that water is used in a variety of contemporary sectors outside of the pharmaceutical.[9–11] Additionally, advancements in artificial intelligence can facilitate the prediction of water-drug interactions, aiding in the development of more efficient drug delivery systems and optimising pharmacological interventions.[12]

Physicochemical Properties of Water

Water exhibits several remarkable physicochemical properties that make it an excellent solvent for pharmacological applications. These properties include high polarity, hydrogen bonding capability, and high dielectric constant. The polarity of water allows it to interact with a wide range of molecules, facilitating their dissolution.

Table 1.Water's Physicochemical Properties and Their Impact on Drug Solubility and Stability

Property	Description	Impact on Drug Solubility and Stability	Example
Polarity	The uneven distribution of electrons creates a partial positive charge on hydrogen atoms and a partial negative charge on the oxygen atom.	Water molecules are attracted to other polar or charged molecules. This allows water to solvate and dissolve hydrophilic drugs that have similar polarities.	Water readily dissolves salts (e.g., sodium chloride) and many injectable drugs due to their ionic or polar character.
Hydrogen bonding	Water molecules can form hydrogen bonds with each other (due to the electronegative oxygen) and with solutes containing hydrogen bond acceptors (like oxygen and nitrogen) or donors (like OH or NH_2 groups).	Hydrogen bonds between water and drug molecules stabilise the dissolved drug, preventing it from re-aggregating and improving solubility.	Hydrogen bonding between water and the hydroxyl group of paracetamol contributes to its good solubility.
High dielectric constant	Water can reduce the electrostatic forces between charged particles. A high dielectric constant indicates a strong ability to "shield" charged groups.	This property allows water to dissociate ionic drugs into individual ions, increasing their solubility and bioavailability.	Water effectively dissolves many orally administered drugs that are in salt form (e.g., aspirin, ibuprofen) by dissociating them.

Hydrogen bonding between water molecules and solutes enhances solubility by stabilising the dissolved species. Additionally, the high dielectric constant of water promotes the dissociation of ionic compounds, increasing their solubility in aqueous solutions.[13–15] Table 1 details the physicochemical properties of water and their influence on drug solubility and stability.

Water's Influence on Drugs: Solubility, Stability, and Interactions

Table 2.Role of Water in Formulations

Aspect	Description	Impact on Drugs
Drug solubility	- Water's polarity facilitates the dissolution of hydrophilic drugs. - Hydrophobic drugs may require formulation strategies for aqueous solubility.	- High solubility: Enhanced bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy. - Low solubility: Reduced bioavailability, potentially impacting effectiveness.
Biochemical interactions	- Hydration shells form through hydrogen bonding (hydrophilic drugs). - Micellisation or complexation with surfactants (hydrophobic drugs).	- Hydrophilic drugs: Dispersion in solution, efficient dissolution. - Hydrophobic drugs: Improved solubility for better absorption.
Water quality	- Impurities can interact with drugs, affecting stability or causing reactions.	- Poor quality of water: Formulation instability, potential adverse reactions. - High quality of water: Ensures formulation efficacy and safety.
Temperature & pH	- Temperature and pH can influence solubility and dissolution rates.	- Variations: Can impact pharmacokinetic profiles and therapeutic outcomes.

The impact of drugs on various aspects includes drug solubility, biochemical interactions, water quality, temperature, and pH. Hydrophilic drugs dissolve easily in water, while hydrophobic drugs require specific formulation strategies. High solubility enhances bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy, while low solubility reduces effectiveness. Hydration shells form through hydrogen bonding or complexation with surfactants, affecting drug dissolution efficiency. Water quality can affect stability and potential adverse reactions, while high quality ensures formulation efficacy and safety. Temperature and pH can also influence solubility and dissolution rates, impacting pharmacokinetic profiles and therapeutic outcomes.[16–20] Table 2 summarises the significant role of water in formulations.

Thus, water plays a crucial role in drug formulations, influencing solubility, stability, and interactions. Hydrophilic drugs dissolve easily in water, while hydrophobic drugs require specific formulation strategies. High solubility enhances bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy, while low solubility reduces effectiveness. Water quality affects stability and potential adverse reactions, while high quality ensures formulation efficacy and safety. Temperature and pH also influence solubility and dissolution rates, impacting pharmacokinetic profiles and therapeutic outcomes. Understanding these factors is essential for ensuring the efficacy and safety of pharmaceutical formulations.

- **Role of Water in Drug Solubility and Stability -** The solubility of a drug in water is a critical determinant of its bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy. Water plays a crucial role in enhancing the solubility of hydrophilic compounds through hydration and dissolution. However, hydrophobic drugs often require solubilisation aids or formulation strategies to improve their aqueous solubility. Furthermore, water influences the stability of drugs by affecting their chemical integrity and degradation kinetics. Factors such as pH, temperature, and the presence of impurities can impact the stability of drug formulations in aqueous solutions.
- **Biochemical Interactions between Drugs and Water Molecules -** The dissolution and solvation of drugs in water involve intricate biochemical interactions between drug molecules and water molecules. Hydrophilic drugs form hydration shells through hydrogen bonding with surrounding water molecules, leading to their dispersion in solution. In contrast, hydrophobic drugs may undergo micellisation or complexation with surfactants to enhance their solubility in water. The structure and conformation of drug molecules can also influence their interactions with water, affecting their solubility and dissolution kinetics.
- **Impact of Water Quality, Temperature, and pH on Drug Dissolution -** The quality of water used in drug formulation and administration can significantly impact the dissolution and bioavailability of drugs. Impurities such as ions, metals, and organic compounds present in water may interact with drugs, leading to formulation instability or adverse reactions. Moreover, variations in water temperature and pH can affect the solubility and dissolution rates of drugs, thereby influencing their pharmacokinetic profiles and therapeutic outcomes. Understanding the effects of water quality parameters on drug dissolution is essential for ensuring the efficacy and safety of pharmaceutical formulations.

Thus, water plays a crucial role in drug solubility and stability, influencing bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy. It enhances hydrophilic compounds' solubility, while hydrophobic drugs require solubilisation aids. Biochemical interactions between drugs and water molecules, as well as water quality, temperature, and pH, affect drug dissolution and pharmacokinetic profiles.[20–24]

Conclusion

Water is a crucial component in pharmacology, acting as a solvent with significant biochemical implications for drug formulation and administration. Its high polarity, hydrogen bonding capability, and high dielectric constant make it an ideal medium for dissolving various pharmacologically active compounds. The polarity of water allows it to interact with molecules, facilitating their dissolution by forming hydration shells and stabilising solutes through hydrogen bonding. Hydrophilic drugs dissolve readily in water, while hydrophobic drugs may require specific formulation strategies. The high dielectric constant promotes the dissociation of ionic compounds, increasing their solubility and bioavailability in aqueous solutions. The quality of water used in pharmaceutical formulations and drug administration is crucial for ensuring the stability and efficacy of drug products. Contaminants and variations in water temperature and pH can significantly impact drug dissolution rates, formulation stability, and pharmacokinetic profiles. Understanding the biochemical interactions between drugs and water molecules is essential for developing efficient drug delivery systems, optimising pharmacological interventions, and ensuring the efficacy and safety of pharmaceutical formulations.

Conflict of Interest: None

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