Whitepaper FDM

API PHOTOSTABILITY TESTING: GMP STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

F.lli Della Marca S.r.l.
Viale Arcangelo Ghisleri, 40/42
00176 Rome - Italy

Contacts
(+39) 06 298042

Web
www.dellamarca.it

Executive Summary
Photostability testing ensures that Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) maintain efficacy and safety when exposed to light. Required by global regulatory agencies, these tests follow ICH Q1B guidelines and are essential for GMP compliance. This whitepaper outlines the principles, procedures, and best practices for robust and reproducible photostability testing.

Overview of API Photostability
Light exposure can lead to degradation, discoloration, or potency loss in pharmaceutical substances. According to ICH Q1B, photostability must be evaluated during product development to assess the impact of light on the active substance and final formulation.

ICH Q1B Testing Procedure
Photostability studies are conducted using light sources that simulate daylight conditions.

Core protocol includes:

- **Light exposure**: ≥1.2 million lux hours (visible) and ≥200 watt-hours/m^2 (UV)
- **Sample forms**: solid APIs, solutions, suspensions, and packaged products
- **Containers**: quartz or clear glass for light transmission
- **Controls**: protected samples to compare degradation levels
- **Conditions**: 25°C ±2°C; RH not critical but often kept at 60%

Samples must be evaluated via validated analytical methods (e.g., HPLC) to detect degradation products.

Checklist for Compliance and Accuracy

- ✅ Calibrated light source (meets ICH Q1B intensity requirements)
- ✅ Standardized sample preparation and placement
- ✅ Inclusion of protected controls
- ✅ Real-time monitoring of temperature and exposure
- ✅ Post-exposure analysis: potency, impurities, appearance

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

- **Uneven illumination**: use validated test chamber with uniform light distribution
- **Overheating**: monitor temperature continuously to avoid thermal degradation
- **Underexposure**: confirm total lux/h and UV dose with sensors and data logging

Case Study: API Photostability for Light-Sensitive Antibiotic
A pharmaceutical lab conducted ICH Q1B testing for a light-sensitive cephalosporin using an FDM chamber with calibrated UV-visible lighting. Initial samples showed 18% degradation after 1.4 million lux hours. Protective packaging was redesigned with amber glass, reducing degradation below 5%, allowing regulatory approval and stability data submission.

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Conclusion
Photostability testing is critical in API development and GMP compliance. FDM's photostability chambers provide precise, validated conditions that meet ICH Q1B guidelines, helping pharmaceutical labs streamline qualification and protect drug efficacy.

CONTACT US FOR EXPERT CONSULTATION

SEND EMAIL

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