
**Cardiovascular biological evaluation
of medical devices — Guidance for
absorbable implants**

*Évaluation biologique cardiovasculaire des dispositifs médicaux —
Directives pour les implants absorbables*

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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
1 Scope	1
2 Terms and definitions	1
3 General considerations	1
4 Sterilization considerations	2
5 Drug-device combination product considerations	3
6 Part listing and description of absorbable related issues in addition to the relevant parts of ISO 10993 series “Biological evaluation of medical devices”	4
6.1 ISO 10993-1:2009, Evaluation and testing within a risk management process	4
6.2 ISO 10993-2:2006, Animal welfare requirements	4
6.3 ISO 10993-3:2003, Tests for genotoxicity, carcinogenicity and reproductive toxicity	4
6.4 ISO 10993-4:2002, Selection of tests for interactions with blood	4
6.5 ISO 10993-5:2009, Tests for <i>in vitro</i> cytotoxicity	5
6.6 ISO 10993-6:2007, Tests for local effects after implantation	6
6.7 ISO 10993-7:2008, Ethylene oxide sterilization residuals	8
6.8 ISO 10993-9:2009, Framework for identification and quantification of potential degradation products	8
6.9 ISO 10993-10:2010, Tests for irritation and delayed-type hypersensitivity	8
6.10 ISO 10993-11:2006, Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 11: Tests for systemic toxicity	9
6.11 ISO 10993-12:2012, Sample preparation and reference materials	9
6.12 ISO 10993-13:2010, Identification and quantification of degradation products from polymeric medical devices	13
6.13 ISO 10993-14:2001, Identification and quantification of degradation products from ceramics	13
6.14 ISO 10993-15:2000, Identification and quantification of degradation products from metals and alloys	13
6.15 ISO 10993-16:2010, Toxicokinetic study design for degradation products and leachables	13
6.16 ISO 10993-17:2002, Establishment of allowable limits for leachable substances	13
6.17 ISO 10993-18:2005, Chemical characterization of materials	13
6.18 ISO/TS 10993-19:2006, Physico-chemical, morphological and topographical characterization of materials	14
6.19 ISO/TS 10993-20:2006, Principles and methods for immunotoxicology testing of medical devices	14
Annex A (informative) Nomenclature of absorb, degrade and related terms	15
Bibliography	16

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2. www.iso.org/directives

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The committees responsible for this document are ISO/TC 194, *Biological evaluation of medical devices* and ISO/TC 150/SC 2, *Cardiovascular implants and extracorporeal systems*.

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Cardiovascular biological evaluation of medical devices — Guidance for absorbable implants

1 Scope

The objective of this Technical Report is to provide interim Part-by-Part guidance on potential adjustments to various test methods within the 10993 series to account for the intentional release of soluble components or degradation products from absorbable medical devices. The content is intended to add clarity and present potentially acceptable approaches for reducing the possibility of erroneous or misleading results due to the nature of the absorbable material. All suggestions should be considered as preliminary and subject to change, with final dispositions implemented through direct modification to the respective parts of ISO 10993. Thus, interim adoption of any of the described adjustments requires an accompanying written justification.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1

absorb

<biomaterials> action of a non-endogenous (foreign) material or substance passing through or being assimilated by cells and/or tissue over time

2.2

degradation product

<byproduct> any intermediate or final result from the physical, metabolic, and/or chemical decomposition of a material or substance

2.3

degrade

to physically, metabolically, and/or chemically decompose a material or substance

2.4

leachable

substances that can be released from a medical device or material during clinical use

Note 1 to entry: In absorbable devices, leachables can be substances released from the as-manufactured product or substances generated and released as a consequence of its degradation (i.e degradation products).

[SOURCE: ISO 10993-12:2012, 3.10 modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3 General considerations

Biological evaluation is the assessment of the ability of a device, device component, or a material to be present in the body without creating an adverse systemic impact and/or local effect on the surrounding cells and/or tissue. Biological evaluation of an absorbable material should be conducted in accordance with ISO 10993-1:2009 and other relevant parts (see ISO 10993-1:2009, Table A.1).

NOTE 1 General guidance regarding evaluation of devices in accordance with ISO 10993 series can be found in ISO/TR 15499.

By design, polymeric, ceramic, or metallic absorbable materials inherently produce relatively low molar mass degradation products when *in vivo*. The relatively elevated presence of these same products within the culture media can potentially impact the results of some biocompatibility tests. For example, in rare

cases if the degradation rate of an absorbable material is sufficiently rapid, elevated concentrations of one or more of the intended products could alter the pH and/or osmolality of an *in vitro* test system. Since the *in vivo* condition provides the combined presence of perfusion and carbonate equilibria, when evaluating intentionally degradable (i.e. absorbable) materials it can be considered acceptable, if necessary, to adjust the *in vitro* test solution pH and/or osmolality to bring the cell culture into a physiologic range – provided there is documented evidence this(these) factor(s) is(are) the potential source of an adverse result and post-adjustment testing within a physiologic range produces a successful result. Such adjustment of pH (using a buffer-appropriate acid or base) and/or osmolality (via dilution) to better approximate the *in vivo* environment helps to mitigate the presence of expected degradation products, functionally allowing the test solution to be evaluated for other causation.

Any pH or osmolality adjustment shall be justified. If under standard test conditions an adverse result is obtained, one should consider the cell type, cell media, culture conditions, and degradation products when determining the amount of osmolality adjustment to be used, if any. For example, with magnesium alloys evaluated with an human osteoblast cell type, it may not be appropriate to dilute the culture medium to less than 105 % of normal osmolality.

NOTE 2 Minimum value of 105 % derived from review of experimental results obtained from 10993 to 12 extraction of magnesium and magnesium alloy samples see Reference.^[23]

To directly address these and other absorbable-specific method concerns, a list of relevant testing precautions for each relevant part of ISO 10993 has been compiled and is presented in [Clause 6](#). All suggestions should be considered as preliminary and subject to change, with final dispositions implemented through direct modification to the respective parts of ISO 10993. Thus, interim adoption of any of the described adjustments requires an accompanying written justification. As a part of any justification, both local and systemic effects should be considered, as local pH and osmolality changes could result in toxicities that are clinically relevant.

Degradation products may be released into the media/tissue or reside in the degrading implant. Released degradation products that are generated either prior to product use (i.e. during processing or shelf-life) or during degradation should be characterized (e.g. chemical identity, quantity, and toxicity). Identification of the degradation products may be derived from chemical analyses of the implant or through a theoretical analysis. Literature data for implants manufactured from absorbable materials with an established history of safe clinical use (e.g. PGA) at the intended location may be helpful in identifying expected degradation products and potential toxicities - if one can demonstrate that equivalent manufacturing processes were used. A toxicological risk assessment using information from chemical analyses of degradation products over time, in conjunction with toxicity data from the literature may be sufficient to support an omission of biocompatibility testing from various stages of material degradation (either during device storage or in clinical use).

NOTE 3 Guidance regarding the identification and assessment of chemical degradation products and leachables can be found in ISO 10993-9 and ISO 10993-17.

Since absorbable materials are intended to degrade, potential exists for generation of transient particulate matter as the device breaks down. While an understanding of the potential clinical impact of such degradation is needed, a separate biocompatibility assessment of the absorbable particulates alone may not be necessary if the particles are both produced and absorbed at a rate that is similar to other materials of the same chemistry with a history of safe use in the intended clinical application. However, formulation chemistry as well as particle size could affect biological responses, so additional information and/or testing may be necessary to establish sufficient equivalency to support omission of full biocompatibility testing. Guidance regarding the determination of whether identification and/or quantification of particulates are needed can be found in ISO 10993-9:2009, Annex A.

4 Sterilization considerations

While biological evaluation can be conducted on any component at any stage in the manufacturing process, finished product evaluation needs to be conducted on sterilized finished devices or test samples that are representative of the final device. Evaluations should be conducted following terminal sterilization at a level that meets or exceeds anticipated commercial exposure. While higher sterilization

durations and intensities are generally considered as providing a more stringent evaluation, caution should be undertaken when sterilizing under harsher conditions (i.e. higher radiation dose) as more and different chemical by-products may be produced. If the final sterilized device is not used for testing, a rationale shall be provided that includes:

- a) a description of all manufacturing differences between the test article and the final, sterilized device;
- b) data that demonstrates that all differences between the test article and the final device do not impact their chemistry or degradation kinetics.

NOTE If potentially significant differences exist between the test article and final device (e.g. surface properties or device geometry when hemocompatibility testing), some test end points can be affected. In such situations, use of a test article cannot be representative of a final device.

5 Drug-device combination product considerations

For devices that include an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), the presence of a pharmaceutical can affect the biological response. As such, separate testing of both the finished device including the API and devices constructed excluding any drug component should be considered. In addition, any potential for interaction between the pharmaceutical ingredient(s) and the as-manufactured or degrading absorbable component(s) should be both understood and assessed for its impact on device biocompatibility and the drug component itself.

Any pH or osmolality adjustment shall be justified. If under standard test conditions an adverse result is obtained, one should consider the cell type, cell media, culture conditions, and degradation products when determining the amount of osmolality adjustment to be used, if any. For example, with magnesium alloys evaluated with a human osteoblast cell type, it may not be appropriate to dilute the culture medium to less than 105 % of normal osmolality.

NOTE 1 Minimum value of 105 % derived from review of experimental results obtained from 10993 to 12 extraction of magnesium and magnesium alloy samples see Reference.[23]

NOTE 2 Additional guidance regarding evaluation of drug-device combination products can be obtained in ISO/TS 12417, which was developed for vascular medical devices.

Biological evaluation of identifiable and already previously well characterized chemical components, such as degradation products from some intentionally absorbable materials or APIs in drug-device combination products, may be optionally substituted with an appropriate toxicological evaluation. Such a justification might be generated through a chemical characterization of device extracts in conjunction with a biological risk assessment for the specifically identified chemicals, if the risk assessment considers:

- a) How *in vitro* chemical extraction studies reasonably characterize the degradation and accumulation of chemicals *in vivo*;
- b) Whether toxicity data are available from the literature to explore the biological response to multiple chemicals present from the same device;
- c) Results from a subset of final product testing where surface properties and geometry may impact the toxicological profile of an absorbable device. For example, hemocompatibility testing might be needed if the surface properties and/or device geometry could impact the test results.

Devices that include API's can potentially impact the results with misleading positives when extracted at the recommended extraction ratio detailed in ISO 10993-12. Use of a direct dilution of the sample or a partition of the overall device evaluation may be considered.