English

LIMULUS AMEBOCYTE LYSATE

PYROCHROME®

for the Detection and Quantification of Gram Negative Bacteria Endotoxins (Lipopolysaccharides)

The *Limulus* amebocyte lysate (LAL) test, when used according to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines (1), may be substituted for the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) Pyrogen Test (rabbit fever test) for the end-product testing of "human injectable drugs (including biological products), animal injectable drugs, and medical devices." The LAL test is recommended for the quantification of endotoxin in raw materials used in production, including water, and for in-process monitoring of endotoxin levels. The USP Bacterial Endotoxins Test (2) is the official LAL test referenced in specific USP monographs.

Summary of Test

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Summary of Test

Limulus amebocyte lysate is an aqueous extract of blood cells (amebocytes) from the horseshoe crab *Limulus polyphemus*. In the presence of endotoxin, factors in LAL are activated in a proteolytic cascade that results in the cleavage of a synthetic peptide-chromogen substrate present in Pyrochrome LAL. Proteolytic cleavage of the substrate liberates p-nitroaniline (pNA), which is yellow and absorbs at 405 nm. The test is performed by adding a volume of Pyrochrome to a volume of specimen and incubating the reaction mixture at 37°C. The greater the endotoxin concentration in the specimen, the faster pNA will be produced. Pyrochrome can be used to quantify endotoxin concentrations in two ways (3).

In the kinetic method, the time taken to reach a particular absorbance at 405 nm (the onset time) is determined. Higher endotoxin concentrations give shorter onset times. The assay requires specialized instrumentation to incubate multiple samples at a controlled temperature (usually 37°C) and to take optical density readings at regular intervals. Standard curves may be constructed by plotting the logarithm of the onset times against the logarithm of standard endotoxin and are used to calculate endotoxin concentrations in specimens.

Alternatively, in the endpoint chromogenic method, the amount of pNA released can be measured following a fixed incubation period. A standard curve relating endotoxin to measured optical density plotted against known standard endotoxin concentration, is used to determine concentrations in specimens. For samples that absorb at 405-410 nm, a diazo-coupling modification may be used. In this method, a diazo dye is formed by adding sulfanilamide (reagent 0) and hydrochloric acid, which is yellow and absorbs light at 405 nm. In this chromogenic adaptation of the LAL assay, coagulogen concentration is reduced by dilution to minimize interference when chromogenic substrate is added to the LAL. Thus, when endotoxin is added to Pyrochrome LAL, a clot will not form or be formed in preference to turbidity or a gel-clot. In all versions of the LAL assay (gel-clot, turbidimetric, and chromogenic), the greater the amount of endotoxin present, the faster the reaction (shorter gel-clot, turbidity, or color) develops. More information about the LAL assay types, reaction, and applications is available in the literature (10, 11, 12).

Reagent

Pyrochrome is packaged in lyophilized form in a 12 ml vial fill size. It contains an aqueous extract of amebocytes of *Limulus polyphemus*, dextran (stabilizer), EDTA, $CaCl_2$, $MgCl_2$, buffer and chromogenic substrate (Boc-Leu-Gly-Arg-p-nitroanilide).

Pyrochrome is not labeled with a specific sensitivity. Sensitivity in a given test (designated λ) is the lowest endotoxin concentration used to construct the standard curve. The greatest sensitivity, λ, of Pyrochrome is 0.005 EU/mL.

Pyrochrome is for *in-vitro* diagnostic purposes only. It is not intended for the diagnosis of endotoxemia in humans. The toxicity of Pyrochrome has not been determined. However, prolonged or repeated contact of LAL with the skin should be avoided as a Type I allergic reaction is some individuals (13). Thus, caution should be exercised when handling Pyrochrome.

Reconstitution Procedure:

1. Gently tap the vial of Pyrochrome to cause loose LAL to fall to the bottom. Break the vacuum by lifting the grey stopper. Do not continue reconstitution if the vacuum is not broken and discard the stopper; do not inject through or reuse the stopper. A small amount of LAL on the stopper will not affect the test.
2. Reconstitute Pyrochrome with 5.2 mL Pyrochrome Buffer or a compatible buffer available from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc. The pellet will take a few minutes to go into solution. Remove the stopper at least 5 minutes prior to use to allow any aerosols to settle. Avoid vigorous mixing that may cause excessive foaming and a loss of sensitivity. Cover the vial with Parafilm M® and store cold (2-8°C or on ice) when not in use. Pyrochrome must be used within 8 hours of reconstitution.

Storage Conditions

Lyophilized Pyrochrome is relatively stable and, if stored properly, will retain full activity through the expiration date on the label. Store the product at 2-8°C. Temperatures in excess of 37°C can cause rapid deterioration of lyophilized Pyrochrome as evidenced by the loss of sensitivity and a distinct yellowing of the product. Pyrochrome is shipped in insulated containers to protect against high temperatures. Pyrochrome, prior to reconstitution, is light sensitive and should be stored in the dark.

Reconstituted Pyrochrome is usually clear and slightly opalescent. An occasional lot will exhibit a slight, uniform turbidity. This opalescence will not affect the assay results (nor will endotoxin contamination not affect activity; however, flocculent precipitation or a distinct yellow color does indicate deterioration.

Reconstituted Pyrochrome is less stable than the lyophilized product; vials may be held for up to 8 hours at 2-8°C (or on ice). Reconstituted Pyrochrome cannot be frozen.

Specimen Collection and Preparation

Specimens should be collected aseptically in containers that are free of detectable endotoxin. Reused, depyrogenated glassware or sterile, disposable, polystyrene or polythylene terephthalate (PET) plastics are recommended to minimize adsorption of endotoxin to container surfaces. Not all plastic containers are free of detectable endotoxin. In addition, extractable substances from some plastics may interfere with the LAL test. Labware should be tested for acceptability by randomly selecting containers from a batch, rinsing them with a small volume of LAL Reagent Water (LRW) at room temperature for one hour, and testing the rinse as a specimen. The rinse should contain significantly less endotoxin than the lowest standard concentration to be used. Glass or other containers that inhibit non-enhance the test as determined by recovery of a known amount of added endotoxin.

The pH of the reaction mixture is volume of specimen or specimen dilution mixed with an equal volume of Pyrochrome should be 6.0 - 8.0. Adjust the pH of specimens to LRW, Tris-HCl, or buffer (free of detectable endotoxin). Dilute concentrated HCl or NaOH with LRW and use in normalizes that will not lead to significant diluition of the test specimen. If a precipitate forms in the sample upon pH adjustment, dilute the sample prior to centrifuging. See also "Limitations of Procedure") before adjusting the pH. Do not adjust the pH of unbuffered saline or water. Note that dilution alone may change the pH of specimens.

Substances that denature proteins, chelate ions, bind endotoxin or alter endotoxin's hydrophobic state may interfere with the test. Interference may be detected as recovery of significantly more or less endotoxin than expected when a known amount of endotoxin is added to the specimen (see "Limitations of Procedure"). In most cases, dilution of the specimen will reduce the concentration and activity of interfering substances and still yield valid test results. Appropriate controls and dilutions must be determined for each specimen.

Specimens should be tested as soon as possible after collection. It may be advisable to freeze non-sterile specimens that will be stored or shipped before testing. Specimens expected to contain low concentrations of endotoxin should be tested for loss of endotoxin during storage.

Test Procedure

Test Reagents Supplied with Pyrochrome

1. *Pyrochrome* (see descriptions under Reagent and Reconstitution Procedure above).
2. *Pyrochrome Reconstitution Buffer*. Use the buffer to reconstitute Pyrochrome as described above.
3. *Control Standard Endotoxin* (CSE) – Diazo kit (CD060) only: Each vial of CSE contains 10 mg. Reconstituate CSE with the volume specified on the Certificate of Analysis (C of A), which gives the potency of the CSE. CSE has been specially formulated to give a pink solution rapidly. After adding LRW, vortex the vial for 30-60 seconds. CSE is then ready for use. If not used immediately, vortex the vial for 30 seconds prior to use. Then make appropriate dilutions to achieve the desired endotoxin concentrations in reagent grade water. Reconstituted CSE is stable for seven days when stored between 2 and 8°C. Do not freeze reconstituted CSE.

Each vial of CSE contains endotoxin whose activity has been determined with respect to the U.S. Reference Standard Endotoxin (RSE) and is stated on the C of A. The U.S. Reference Standard Endotoxin (designated is RSE) may be obtained from the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc.

Note: The C of A and the potency stated on it are specific to a combination of Pyrochrome and CSE lot. A given lot of CSE may show different potencies (EU/ng) when tested with different lots of Pyrochrome. Conversely, a given lot of Pyrochrome may show different potencies when tested with the same lot of Pyrochrome.

Be sure to use the correct C of A and potency.

Use CSE for preparation of standard endotoxin concentrations from which to construct standard curves, for positive controls and for positive product (interference) controls. Do not use this CSE as a depyrogenation control.

4. *Diazo reagents* – Diazo kit (CD060) only: Vial 1a, HCl; Vial 1, Sodium Nitrite; Vial 2, Ammonium sulfamate; Vial 3, NEDA. Reconstitute Vial 1 with entire contents of Vial 1a; reconstitute Vial 2 with 4 mL of water; and reconstitute Vial 3 with 4 mL of water. See item 5 below for grade of water required.

Test Reagents Not Supplied with Pyrochrome

1. *Control Standard Endotoxin* (CSE). (Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., catalog number EC010). Reconstituate CSE with the volume specified on the Certificate of Analysis (C of A), which gives the potency of the CSE and as directed in the package insert. Follow the directions in the insert for use and storage of standard endotoxin.
2. The potency of the CSE has been determined with respect to the U.S. Reference Standard Endotoxin (RSE) and is stated on the C of A. USP Endotoxin Reference Standard (designated is RSE) may be obtained from the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. Use the C of A and the potency stated on it are specific to a combination of Pyrochrome and CSE lot. A given lot of CSE may show different potencies (EU/ng) when tested with different lots of Pyrochrome. Pyrochrome, or other brands of LAL (1). Similarly, different lots of CSE will likely have different potencies when tested with the same lot of Pyrochrome. **Be sure to use the correct C of A and potency.**
3. *LAL Reagent Water* (LRW). Recommended sources include Associates of Cape Cod, Inc. (various sizes and packaging configurations available). Commercially available USP Sterile Water for Injection (sterile WFI) without bacteriostat or USP Water for Irrigation may be used provided that they have been shown to be acceptable for use as an LRW. The endotoxin limit for USP sterile WFI is only 0.25 EU/mL; therefore, sterile WFI may contain detectable endotoxin and be unsuitable for use.
5. Test tubes (10 x 75 mm) suitable as an LRW, test it as a specimen with a positive product control (see item 1.c. in the section on "Controls"). Use certified LRW to make dilutions of standards, and to prepare positive controls (see items 1.a. and 1.b. under "Controls"). Construct a standard curve from the onset times or endpoint assays for the standards. The standard curve should be at least (500 absolute value). The endotoxin concentration of the water being tested can be estimated by extrapolation of the standard curve below the lowest endotoxin concentration and should be significantly less than that of the lowest standard. In addition, the endotoxin concentration of the positive product control should be within ± 25% of that of a positive control.
3. *Glucanolin® Buffer* Available from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc. (catalog number GB051) can be used in place of Pyrochrome Reconstitution Buffer to overcome interference from (1,3)-Beta-D-glucans.
4. *50% acetic acid* (for endpoint method). Prepare by adding a volume of glacial acetic acid to an equal volume of distilled or reverse osmosis (RO) water (LRW, see 2. above, may be used but is not required).
5. *Water* (for reconstitution of diazo-coupling reagents only). Any laboratory source of distilled (including LRW), deionized, or reverse osmosis water is acceptable. This water does not need to be endotoxin-free as it is used solely for diazo-coupling chemistry.

Materials and Equipment

1. *Microplates.* 96-well, covered microplates (available from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., catalog number CA961). Plates should be certified or tested for endotoxin and/or glucan contamination or activity if these are a potential source of interference.
2. *Reaction tubes.* The end-point assays can also be run in 10 x 75 mm, depyrogenated, borosilicate glass culture tubes (available from Associates of Cape Cod, Inc. catalog number TB050).
3. *Optical reader*:capable of reading at 405 nm, or at 540-550 nm for the diazo method. For the kinetic method, the instrument must incubate the samples.

   For the endpoint method, use a plate reader to read microplates or, if running the test in tubes, a spectrophotometer with appropriate cuvettes.
4. *Incubator-*capable of maintaining 37°C for the kinetic (or endpoint methods only). A dry block incubator for microplates (or tubes, as appropriate) is recommended. (A water bath can be used for the endpoint test tube method.) Incubators should be shown to have a variance of ± 0.5°C or better.
5. *Test tube racks* to hold and/or incubate dilution and reaction tubes.
6. *Pipets*, micropipettors, and tips. Use pyrogen-free, preferably disposable, plastic syringe barrels. Disposable pipets and tips free of interfering endotoxins and glucans are recommended. Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., offers the Pyrocleaner® line of product, which are certified to be free of interfering endotoxin and glucan.
7. *Vortex-type mixer.*
8. *Parafilm M®* (American National Can™). The side in contact with the paper backing is hydrophobic and detectable endotoxin.
9. *Test tubes* that are free of interfering endotoxin with adequate capacity for making dilutions of endotoxin standards and for holding specimens. See "Specimen Collection and Preparation" for containers suitable for dilutions.
10. *Hot-air oven* with capacity to heat to at least 250°C for depyrogenation of glassware. Commonly used depyrogenation time and temperature are 30 minutes at 250°C. Use the oven as exposed to minimum time and temperature of 30 minutes and 250°C (2, 14, 15).

Controls

Controls are necessary to insure a valid test. Recommended procedures are detailed by the FDA (1) and USP (2).

1. **Endotoxin controls.**
   1. **Endotoxin standard series**. Prepare a fresh set of dilutions from the stock endotoxin solution for each test. Do not use previously prepared and stored dilutions unless you have demonstrated the stability of that range of concentrations. Make dilutions in a geometric series. Use at least two (preferably three) endotoxin concentrations. Duplicate dilutions are recommended for endpoint methods; greater dilutions can be used for the kinetic method. The lowest endotoxin concentration in any standard series is the detection limit of that particular test and is designated λ (**Note:** a detection limit of 0.005 EU/mL is possible with Pyrochrome). To get to the range of standards required, use as few dilutions as possible with appropriate pipet sizes to minimize inaccuracy. Dilutions can be made in glass or suitable plastic test tubes or directly in a microplate. Maximum concentrations detected with Pyrochrome are method dependent. See the recommended dilution schemes provided with Pyrochrome reagents.
   2. **Positive control** (a single standard endotoxin concentration) should be included if the standard series (see a. above) is not prepared in the same way as the positive product controls (see c. below). The concentration of endotoxin in the positive control should equal that of a standard from the middle of the standard curve. A 4x concentration is generally convenient for a concentration of standard 3, 5 or 6 serial dilution of standard endotoxin. A value of 0.5 EU/mL would be appropriate for positive controls included with a standard series that is comprised of 0.005, 0.05, 0.5, 5 and 50 EU/mL concentrations. Endotoxin-free water is not blank for this test, a positive control must be included to verify that it is appropriate to use the parameters of a previous (archived) standard curve to calculate endotoxin concentrations. Refer to the FDA guideline (1), under Standard Curve, and USP (2) for the LAL Test.
   3. Positive product controls are inhibition/enhancement controls and consist of the specimen or diluted specimen to which sufficient endotoxin standard is added. The concentration of added endotoxin in the test specimen should be the same as that of the positive control. See section b. above for selection of the appropriate endotoxin concentration for the positive product control. The added endotoxin is frequently referred to as a "spike".
2. **Negative controls.**
   1. Endotoxin-free controls should be included with each test.

Specimen Preparation – Determination of Test Dilution

If a test protocol has been developed previously for the type of specimen under test, make the required dilution for the assay and proceed as described in the appropriate "Assay Section." If a protocol has not been developed for the specimen type, make a series of tenfold dilutions of the specimen. Do not exceed the Maximum Valid Dilution of the product by more than a factor of 16. (Note: Use a maximum dilution factor of 16 or less if the product is listed below or in the literature.) See the Dilution Recommendation and Calculation of Maximum Valid Dilution (MVD) and Minimum Valid Concentration (MVC). Prepare appropriate dilutions of all specimens with a positive product control for each one.

Performing the Test

Consistent technique is necessary to obtain satisfactory results. All controls and specimens should be tested in (at least) duplicate. A common problem with microplate incubators is uneven temperature distribution. Place the microplate in the incubator well in advance of use to allow wells, thus avoiding the heat problem and/or potential contamination through handling the plate.

1. Prepare test instrumentation as necessary. In an automated system this usually involves entering sample descriptors, setting test parameters, and turning on the incubator set at 37°C.
2. Add to the reaction vessel the appropriate volume of sample (negative control, endotoxin standard, specimen or specimen dilution, positive control). If a diluent is used, Pyrochrome is added (see 3. below). Use 0.05 mL for any method (kinetic, endpoint or diazo-coupling). Alternatively, use 0.1 mL for the kinetic and endpoint methods.
3. Add Pyrochrome as appropriate for the method:
   a. For a microplate, add Pyrochrome as rapidly as possible to all samples and mix from 5 to 30 seconds. Mixing time is dependent on the number of samples tested or you can an incubating plate reader (for a kinetic test). The volume of Pyrochrome added is equal to the sample volume (see 2. above; generally 0.05 mL, however, 0.1 mL can be used in the kinetic and endpoint methods). Pipet Pyrochrome into the reaction mixture as timers are determined for volumes of 0.05 mL.

   Failure to mix properly is a common cause of unsatisfactory tests. Pyrochrome may be added most conveniently using a repeating pipettor. Take care to avoid contaminating the vial of Pyrochrome when removing reagent.

   b. For methods using individual tubes or cuvettes, add 0.05 mL (or other volume) of Pyrochrome to each reaction vessel in turn, add Pyrochrome, mix for approximately 2 seconds and place the vessel into the incubating device.
4. Read the test.
   a. For the kinetic method, allow the test to run until all samples have incubated for significantly longer than the time required for the highest standard endotoxin concentration to reach the onset ODsw. Automated test systems will usually terminate the test after a preset period. See the recommended incubation times for guidance.
   b. For the endpoint method, read the incubated microplate or tubes in a plate or reaction tubes from the incubator, stop with 50% acetic acid (volume sufficient to give a final concentration 10% acetic acid: use 0.025 mL for sample/Pyrochrome volumes of 0.05 mL) and read the optical density (OD) in a spectrophotometer (or plate reader (as appropriate) at 405 nm. The test should be set up and read so that the incubation time for each sample is the same. Take care to avoid disturbing the reaction mixture. Depends on the endotoxin concentration range desired and is likely to vary with different lots of Pyrochrome. Preliminary tests may be necessary to determine the correct incubation period. See the recommended incubation times for guidance.
   c. For the endpoint method with diazo-coupling, remove the reaction tubes or plate from the incubator, stop with 0.05 mL of the HCl reconstituted sodium nitrite (solution 1). Add 0.05 mL of ammonium sulfamate (solution 2) after 1.1 minutes. Add 0.05 mL of NEDA (solution 3) to each. Full color (magenta) should develop immediately. Read the test at 540-550 nm. The test should be set up and read so that the incubation time for each sample is the same (within ±30 seconds). The incubation period depends on the endotoxin concentration range desired and is likely to vary with different lots of Pyrochrome. Preliminary tests may be necessary to determine the correct incubation period.

Results

1. Preliminary calculations.

a. For the kinetic method, determine the time taken for specimens to reach a particular optical density (onset time) and the endotoxin concentration (λ) of each standard. Curves may be made. Optical density readings must be relative to an initial reading taken to be zero OD units. Many plate readers have software suggesting that perform these calculations. The time taken to reach the OD value is called the onset time.

2. Construct a standard curve.

a. For the kinetic method, construct a standard curve by regression of the log onset time on the log endotoxin concentration for the standards. The equation for the regression line describes the standard curve.

b. For the endpoint method, construct a standard curve by plotting optical density readings against standard endotoxin concentrations.

3. Calculate the endotoxin concentrations.

Calculate endotoxin concentrations of all specimens (including standards and controls) using the equation for a straight line:

$$Y = aX + b \quad \text{(1)}$$

where:

Y = log onset time (kinetic method), or optical density (endpoint method)

X = log endotoxin concentration (kinetic method), or endotoxin concentration (end point method)

a = slope of the line

b = the Y intercept

Interpretation

1. In order for a test to be valid, the endotoxin concentration of negative controls (estimated by interpolation of the standard curve) should be significantly less than that of the lowest standard concentration.
2. The correlation coefficient for the standard curve included with the test should have an absolute value greater than 0.980.
3. The mean measured endotoxin concentration of positive controls (for verification of an unbiased recovery) should be within 25% of the nominal concentration. Thus, if the positive control is 0.125 EU/mL, the measured concentration must be between 0.09375 and 0.15625 EU/mL.
4. Endotoxin concentrations can only be reported for the range from the lowest to the highest standard endotoxin concentration. Results for specimens that lie outside of this range should be reported as either less than the lowest standard concentration (not detectable) or greater than the highest standard concentration.

   For the endpoint method, valid endotoxin concentrations can only be calculated from OD values that lie on the linear portion of the standard curve.
5. In order to demonstrate that the specimen does not significantly interfere with the LAL/endotoxin reaction, the measured endotoxin concentration of the positive product control must be within 50 to 200% of the nominal concentration added to the product (a "spike." Before determining whether the spike is recovered within these limits, subtract the endotoxin concentration measured in the (unspiked) specimen. The measured endotoxin concentration in a 0.125 EU/mL positive product control (after subtraction of any endotoxin in the unspiked specimen) must be between 0.0625-0.25 EU/mL. If the unspiked specimen is 0.025 EU/mL, the endotoxin concentration of the specimen under test is 0.028 EU/mL and that in the positive product control is 0.103 EU/mL, the endotoxin attributable to the spike is 0.103 – 0.028 = 0.075 EU/mL. This is within the range and subject to other requirements being met; the test of the sample is valid.

Limitations of Procedure

The procedure is limited by the extent of the inhibition or enhancement capacity of the specimen under test. If the procedure cannot be validated (1, 2) at a specimen concentration that is greater than the minimum valid concentration (MVC), then the LAL test cannot be substituted for the USP Pyrogen Test. The MVC is calculated as follows:

$$MVC = \frac{(L)\ (\text{specimen dose})}{(\text{endotoxin tolerance limit})}$$

where L is in EU/mL, specimen dose is in units per kg body weight, and the endotoxin tolerance limit is in EU/kg.

The maximum valid dilution (MVD) is the specimen dilution containing the MVC (1). It is calculated by dividing the initial specimen concentration by the MVC.

The endotoxin tolerance limit for 18 EU/kg for a bolus with an intrathecal route of administration and 5 EU/kg for all other parenterals. The limit for medical devices is expressed per mL of an extraction or rinse volume (see the guidance described in the USP (10) based on the limits for devices. For devices that do not contact cerebrospinal fluid, the limit is 20 EU/device; for those that do, it is 2.15 EU/device. The limit for liquid devices is the same as that for drugs per the FDA guidelines (1, 2).

Some serine proteases (e.g. trypsin, activated blood factors) will cause a false positive result unless denatured by heat treatment before testing. Yellow-colored materials such as animal serum, albumin, and plasma may interfere with the chromogenic LAL assay. Some of these products, use the diazo-coupling assay (ACC catalog no. CD060). Excess turbidity in a sample may also interfere with the test unless the endotoxin is separated from the negative control (blank) or the sample treated in such a way as to remove the turbidity.

Expected Values

Endotoxin in specimens can be quantified between the range of standard endotoxin concentrations used to construct the standard curve. If the endotoxin in the specimen can be overcome any inhibition or enhancement, the least amount of endotoxin that can be detected will be increased accordingly. Materials derived from biological sources, even after biochemical purification, may contain endotoxin. Endotoxin may be released into blood by fractionation, reverse osmosis, or ultrafiltration may contain less endotoxin than detectable as long as the purification process is operating correctly and the water is not contaminated after purification.

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Français

LYSAT DE *LIMULUS*, AMÉBOCYTES

PYROCHROME®

pour la détection et la quantification des endotoxines des bactéries gram-négatives (lipopolysaccharides)

Le test du lysat d'amebocytes de limule (LAL), utilisé conformément aux recommandations de la Food and Drug Administration (FDA) des É-U (1), peut remplacer le test d'apyrogénicité sur lapin de l'US Pharmacopeia (USP) (test de la fièvre du lapin) pour les produits injectables "chez l'usage humain (y compris les produits biologiques), de médicaments injectables à usage vétérinaire et de dispositifs médicaux ». Le test LAL est recommandé pour la quantification des endotoxines dans les produits bruts utilisés dans la production, notamment l'eau, et pour la surveillance des taux d'endotoxines dans la fabrication. Le Bacterial Endotoxins Test (2) est le test LAL officiel référence dans des monographies spécifiques de l'USP.

Résumé du test

Le lysat d'amebocytes de limule est un extrait aqueux de cellules sanguines (amebocytes) du crabe des Moluques *Limulus polyphemus*. En présence d'endotoxines, des facteurs du LAL sont activés en une cascade protéolytique qui libère un peptide-chromogène synthétique (aussi appelé substrat chromogène) présent dans le Pyrochrome LAL. Le clivage protéolytique du substrat libère de la p-nitroaniline (pNA), une substance jaune qui absorbe à 405 nm. Pour réaliser le test, ajouter un volume de Pyrochrome à un volume de spécimen et incuber le mélange réactif à une réaction à 37 °C. La vitesse de la production de pNA augmente avec la concentration d'endotoxines dans l'échantillon. Le test Pyrochrome peut être utilisé de deux manières pour quantifier la concentration d'endotoxines (3).

Avec la méthode cinétique, on détermine le temps nécessaire pour atteindre une certaine absorbance à 405 nm (temps de réaction). Plus la concentration d'endotoxines est élevée, plus le temps de réaction est court. Le test requiert une instrumentation spécialisée pour incuber plusieurs échantillons à une température contrôlée (généralement 37 °C) et pour mesurer la densité optique à intervalles réguliers. On peut tracer une courbe étalonnage en traçant le logarithme du temps de réaction en fonction du logarithme de la concentration d'une endotoxine étalon, et utiliser ces courbes pour calculer la concentration en endotoxines d'échantillons.

Autre méthode est la méthode chromogène en point final, dans laquelle on mesure la quantité de pNA libérée à une température donnée. Cette méthode, elle, établit une courbe d'étalonnage de la densité optique mesurée en fonction de concentrations connues d'endotoxine étalon, et on utilise cette courbe pour déterminer la concentration dans des échantillons. Les échantillons absorbant à 405-410 nm, on peut utiliser une modification par diazotation. Dans cette méthode, le pNA (formé avec la méthode chromogène) est transformé en une teinture rouge-violet par ajout de nitrite de sodium (réactif 1) et de chromogène), le point final (gel-caillot, turbidité ou couleur) apparaît d'autant plus vite que la concentration en endotoxines est élevée. Des informations complémentaires sur les types de test LAL, la réaction et les applications sont disponibles dans la littérature (10, 11, 12).

Réactif

Le Pyrochrome est conditionné sous forme lyophilisée dans un flacon de 3,2 mL. Il contient un extrait aqueux d'amebocytes de *Limulus polyphemus*, du dextrane (stabilisateur), de l'EDTA, du $CaCl_2$, du $MgCl_2$, un tampon et un substrat chromogène (Boc-Leu-Gly-Arg-p-nitroanilide).

Le Pyrochrome n'est pas étiqueté avec une sensibilité spécifique. La sensibilité d'un test donné (désignée λ) est la plus faible concentration d'endotoxines utilisée pour établir la courbe d'étalonnage. La sensibilité la plus grande λ du Pyrochrome est de 0,005 UE/mL.

Le Pyrochrome est exclusivement destiné à des fins diagnostiques *in vitro*. Il n'est pas destiné au diagnostic de l'endotoxémie chez l'homme. Le Pyrochrome n'a pas fait l'objet d'une étude de toxicité. Cependant, le contact prolongé ou répété du LAL avec la peau a annoncé des réactions allergiques de type 1 chez certaines personnes (13). Il faut donc prendre des précautions lors de la manipulation du Pyrochrome.

Procédure de reconstitution :

1. Tapoter délicatement le flacon de Pyrochrome pour détacher le LAL qui tombe au fond du flacon. Rompre le vide en soulevant le bouchon gris. Ne pas contaminer l'orifice du flacon. Retirer le bouchon et l'éliminer ; ne pas injecter ni travers du bouchon et ne pas le réutiliser. La présence d'une petite quantité de LAL sur le bouchon n'affecte pas le test.
2. Reconstituer le Pyrochrome avec 5,2 mL de Pyrochrome Tampon ou un tampon compatible disponible auprès d'Associates of Cape Cod, Inc. La solubilisation du lyophilisé prend quelques minutes ; il faut donc le réhydrater au moins 5 minutes avant l'utilisation. Tourner le flacon pour homogénéiser la solution ; ne pas agiter vigoureusement afin d'éviter la formation excessive de mousse et une perte de sensibilité. En dehors des périodes d'utilisation, couvrir le flacon de Parafilm M® et le conserver au froid (2-8°C). Ne pas placer. Le Pyrochrome doit être utilisé dans les 8 heures qui suivent la reconstitution.

Conditions de stockage

Le Pyrochrome lyophilisé est relativement stable ; stocké correctement, il conserve toute son activité jusqu'à la date de péremption indiquée. Conserver le produit entre 2 et 8 °C. Une température supérieure à 37 °C entraîne une détérioration rapide du Pyrochrome lyophilisé avec une diminution de la sensibilité et un net jaunissement du produit. Le Pyrochrome est livré dans des conteneurs isothermes pour le protéger des températures élevées. Avant la reconstitution, le Pyrochrome est sensible à la lumière et doit être conservé à l'obscurité.

Le Pyrochrome reconstitué est généralement transparent et légèrement opalescent. Certains lots peuvent parfois montrer une légère turbidité homogène. La présence de petites fibres ou de floculats indique que le Pyrochrome s'est détérioré. Le produit ne prend pas une floculation ou une nette coloration jaune indique cependant une détérioration.

Le Pyrochrome reconstitué est moins stable que le produit lyophilisé ; on peut le conserver pendant 8 heures entre 2 et 8 °C (ou sur glace). Ne pas congeler le Pyrochrome reconstitué.

Prélèvement et préparation des échantillons

Les échantillons doivent être prélevés aseptiquement dans des récipients exempts d'endotoxines détectables. Pour minimiser l'adsorption d'endotoxines sur les surfaces du contenant, il est recommandé d'utiliser des flacons en verre réutilisables dépyrogénés ou des plastiques jetables en polystyrène ou polyéthylène téréphtalate (PET). Tous les contenants en plastique ne sont pas exempts d'endotoxines détectables. De plus, des substances extractibles issues de certains plastiques peuvent interférer avec le test LAL ; l'adéquation du matériel de laboratoire doit être testée en sélectionnant de manière aléatoire des flacons d'un lot. Rincer ces flacons avec un petit volume d'eau pour réactif LAL (ERL) à température ambiante pendant une heure, et tester l'eau de rinçage comme un échantillon. Lorsque le rinçage doit contenir significativement moins d'endotoxines que la plus faible concentration d'étalon à utiliser. En outre, l'eau de rinçage ne doit pas inhiber ni augmenter le test, ce qui se vérifie en ajoutant la quantité d'endotoxine étalon mesurée précédemment.

Le pH du mélange réactionnel (un volume d'échantillon ou d'échantillon dilué, mélangé à un volume de Pyrochrome) doit être compris entre 6,0 et 8,0. Ajuster le pH des échantillons avec du HCl, du NaOH ou un tampon (exempt d'endotoxines détectables). Diluer le HCl ou le NaOH concentré avec de l'ERL et utiliser des normalités qui n'entraînent pas de dilution importante du spécimen testé. Si un précipité se forme dans l'échantillon lors de l'ajustement du pH, diluer l'échantillon avant d'ajuster le pH (après avoir lu DMV – voir la section « Limites de la procédure »). Ne pas ajuster le pH d'eau ou de sérum physiologique non tamponnés. Notons que la dilution seule peut modifier le pH des échantillons.

Les substances qui dénaturent les protéines, chélatent des ions, se lient aux endotoxines ou altèrent l'état hydrophobe des endotoxines peuvent interférer avec le test. Une interférence peut être détectée par une augmentation ou une diminution significative de la récupération d'endotoxines après l'ajout d'une quantité connue d'endotoxine étalon à l'échantillon (voir la section « Limites de la procédure »). Dans la plupart des cas, la dilution de l'échantillon réduit la concentration et l'activité des substances interférentes et génère des résultats de test valides. Les contrôles appropriés et les schémas de dilution sont présentés dans la section « Procédure de test ».

Les échantillons doivent être testés le plus rapidement possible après le prélèvement. Il est conseillé de congeler les échantillons stériles qui doivent être stockés ou expédiés avant le test. Les échantillons censés contenir de faibles concentrations d'endotoxines doivent être testés pour une perte d'endotoxines pendant la conservation.

Procédure de test

Réactifs de test fournis avec le Pyrochrome

1. *Pyrochrome* (voir la description plus haut dans les sections « Réactif » et « Procédure de reconstitution »).
2. *Tampon de reconstitution Pyrochrome*. Utiliser le tampon pour reconstituer le Pyrochrome comme décrit plus haut.
3. *Endotoxine étalon de contrôle* (EEC) – Kit de diazotation (CD060) uniquement : Chaque flacon d'EEC contient 10 mg. Reconstituer l'EEC avec le volume spécifié sur le certificat d'analyse (CA) indiquant la puissance de l'EEC. L'EEC est spécialement formulée pour une dissolution rapide. Après ajout de l'ERL, mélanger le flacon avec un agitateur vortex pendant 30-60 secondes. L'EEC est alors prête à l'utilisation. Si l'utilisation n'est pas immédiate, mélanger le flacon avec un agitateur vortex pendant 30 secondes avant l'utilisation. Préparer des dilutions appropriées dans de l'eau réactif de qualité supérieure désirées d'endotoxines. Mélanger à l'agitateur vortex entre les dilutions. Conservé entre 2 et 8 °C, l'EEC reconstituée reste stable pendant sept jours. Ne pas congeler l'EEC reconstituée.

   Chaque flacon d'EEC cont

Probenvorbereitung – Bestimmung der Testverdünnung

Wenn benötigt ein Testprotokoll für den zu testenden Probentyp entwickelt wurde, die für den Test notwendige Verdünnung herstellen und wie unter „Erläuterungen zur Verfahrensvorbereitung" beschrieben fortfahren. Wenn für den Probentyp noch kein Protokoll entwickelt wurde, mit Verdünnungsreihen aus zehnfachen Verdünnungen der Probe herstellen. Die maximal zulässige Verdünnung des Produktes bzhzuen um den Faktor 10 überschreiten. (Erläuterungen und Rechenbeispiele zur maximal zulässigen Verdünnung (MZV) bzw. der minimal zulässigen Ausgangsmenge (MZM) sind im Abschnitt „Grenzen des Verfahrens" unten oder in der FDA-Richtlinie [1] zu finden. Zweckdienliche Verdünnungen und Probenmengen müssen jedoch vor einer Positivkontrolle.

Testdurchführung

Zum Erreichen zufriedenstellender Ergebnisse ist eine gleichbleibende Technik notwendig. Alle Kontrollen und Proben müssen mindestens in Doppelbestimmung getestet werden. Bei Mikroinjektionen laboratorien teston häufig Probleme mit Kontaminationen und Ausleeranud auf. Eventuell kann es notwendig sein, die am Rand liegenden Kavitäten leer zu lassen, wodurch das Temperaturprofile und auch potenzielle Kontaminationen durch das Hantieren mit der Platte vermieden werden.

1. Die Testinstrumente nach Bedarf vorbereiten. Bei einem automatischen System bedeutet dies in der Regel das Einpipettieren der Probenverdünnungen, das Einsetzen der Testparameter und das Einschalten des auf 37 °C eingestellten Inkubators.
2. Das entsprechende Probenvolumen (Negativkontrolle, Verdünnts-Standard, Probe oder Produkt-Positivkontrolle) in das Reaktionsgefäß geben, so dass beim Zusatz von Pyrochrome ein Verhältnis von 1:1 zustande kommt (siehe 3. unten). 0,05 ml. für alle Methoden (kinetisch, Endpunkt oder Analyzing). Endpunkt oder Analyzing. Als Alternative kann für die kinetische und die Endpunktmethode auch 0,1 ml. verwendet werden.
3. Entsprechend der Methode Pyrochrome zusetzen:
   a. Bei einer Mikrotiterplatte das Pyrochrome so rasch wie möglich allen Proben zusetzen und 5 bis 30 Sekunden lang mischen. Die Platte entweder auf einen Inkubatorblock (bei einem Endpunktest) oder in ein Plattenphotometer mit Inkubator (bei einem kinetischen Test) stellen. Das zugesetzte Pyrochrome Endotoxin reagiert mit den Probenvolumen (siehe oben unter 2.; gemeint 0,05 ml., jedoch kann für die kinetische und die Endpunktmethode auch 0,1 ml. verwendet werden). Die Testinstrumente, ausgenommen, dass die empfohlenen Inkubationszeiten sich auf ein Volumen von 0,05 ml. beziehen.

   Unbedingtdiegte Testergebnisse sind oft auf unzureichendes Mischen zurückzuführen. Der Zusatz von Pyrochrome geschieht am besten mit einer Mehrkanalpipette. Bei der Reagenzenmahme ist besonders darauf zu achten, dass eine Kontamination des Pyrochrome-Flaschchens vermieden wird.
4. Bei Methoden mit einzelnen Reaktionsröhrchen kann es notwendig sein die Einhaltung gleicher Zeiten für alle Röhrchen von ensteckiender Bedeutung, jedem Reaktionsgefäß der Reihe nach Pyrochrome zusetzen, etwa 2 Sekunden lang mischen und das Röhrchen dann in den Inkubator stellen.
4. Das Testergebnis ablesen.
   a. Bei der kinetischen Methode den Test so lange laufen lassen, bis alle Proben deutlich länger inkubiert wurden, als es dauert, bis die niedrigste Endotoxinstandard Konzentration den „Onset"-ODzu-Wert erreicht hat. Automatische Testsysteme berechnen üblicherweise den Test nach einer zuvor eingegebenen Zeit. Es sollte empfohlenen Inkubationszeiten bisten Röhrchen.
   b. Bei der Endpunktmethode die Inkubationszeit genau messen, die Platte bzw. die Reaktionsröhrchen aus dem Inkubator nehmen, mit 50%iger Essigsäure stoppen (das Volumen muss eine Endkonzentration von 10% Essigsäure ergeben; für Proben- und Pyrochrome-Volumen von 0,05 ml. sind 0,025 ml. zu verwenden) und die optische Dichte (OD) bei 405 nm in einem Spektrophotometer bzw. Plattenphotometer ablesen. Der Test sollte so gestaltet und ausgewertet werden, dass die Inkubationszeit für alle Proben gleich ist (innerhalb von ±30 Sekunden). Die Inkubationszeiten müssen hängt von gewünschten Bereich der Endotoxinkonzentrationen ab und ist wahrscheinlich von einer Pyrochrome-Charge zur anderen unterschiedlich. Eventuell sind zur Bestimmung der richtigen Inkubationsdauer Vortests erforderlich. Die empfohlenen Inkubationszeiten bieten Richtwerte.
   c. Bei der Endpunktmethode mit Ansäuerung die Reaktionsröhrchen bzw. die Platte aus dem Inkubator nehmen und die Reaktion mit 0,05 ml. Lösung 1 (mit HCl nikonstituiertes Natriumnitrit) stoppen. In jede Reaktionsgefäß 0,05 ml. Lösung 2 (Ammoniumsulfamat) geben. In jede Kavität der Platte 0,05 ml. (NEDA) gibt eine Farbumschlag nach Magenta sollte sofort und vollständig erfolgen. Den Test bei 540 nm bis 550 nm ablesen. Den Test sollte so gestaltet und ausgewertet werden, dass die Inkubationszeit für alle Proben gleich ist (innerhalb von ±30 Sekunden). Die Inkubationsdauer hängt vom gewünschten Bereich der Endotoxinkonzentrationen ab und ist wahrscheinlich von einer Pyrochrome-Charge zur anderen unterschiedlich. Eventuell sind zur Bestimmung der richtigen Inkubationsdauer Vortests erforderlich. Die empfohlenen Inkubationszeiten bieten Richtwerte.

Ergebnisse

1. **Vorläufige Berechnungen.**
   a. Bei der kinetischen Methode die Zeit bestimmen, die die Proben bis zum Erreichen einer bestimmten Schwellen-OD (normalerweise 0,03 OD-Einheiten) benötigen, unter Berücksichtigung aller etwaigen Inkubationszeiten. Die Standardkurve wird dann aus einen als null OD-Einheiten definierten Ausgangswert beziehen. Pathetmometer verfügen oft über Software, die diese Berechnungen vornimmt. Die Zeit bis zum Erreichen des OD-Wertes heißt „onset time".
2. **Eine Standardkurve erstellen.**
   a. Bei der kinetischen Methode wird eine Standardkurve erstellt durch Regression der logarithmischen „onset time" über der logarithmischen Endotoxinkonzentration der Standards. Die Gleichung für die Regressionslinie beschreibt die Standardkurve.
   b. Bei der Endpunktmethode wird eine Standardkurve erstellt durch Auftragen der OD-Werte über den Endotoxinkonzentrationen der Standards.
3. **Die Endotoxinkonzentrationen berechnen.**
   Die Endotoxinkonzentrationen für alle Proben (einschließlich Standards und Kontrollen) anhand der Gleichung für eine Gerade berechnen:

$$Y = aX + b$$

wobei:

Y = logarithmische „onset time" (Methode kinetisch) oder optische Dichte (Endpunktmethode)

X = logarithmische Endotoxinkonzentration (kinetische Methode) oder Endotoxinkonzentration (Endpunktmethode)

a = Steigung der Geraden

b = Y-Achsenabschnitt

Interpretation

1. Damit ein Test gültig ist, muss die durch Extrapolation der Standardkurve geschätzten Endotoxinkonzentration der Negativkontrolle kleiner sein als der niedrigste Endotoxin-Standards liegen.
2. Der Korrelationskoeffizient für die im Test enthaltene Standardkurve sollte einer Absolutwert von über 0,980 haben.
3. Der Durchschnitt der gemessenen Endotoxinkonzentrationen der Positivkontrollen (bei Verdünnung einer Activkurve) darf nicht mehr als 25% OD Werte abweichen. Die OD Werte müssen innerhalb der Gültigkeitsbereichs von 0,125 EU/ml. muss der Messwert also zwischen 0,09575 EU/ml. und 0,15625 EU/ml. liegen.
4. Endotoxinkonzentrationen kann man zur Konzentrationsbereich von niedrigsten bis nun höchsten Endotoxinstandard angegeben werden. Ergebnisse für Proben, die außerhalb dieses Bereiches liegen, sollten als unbestimmt (mehr als Endotoxinkonzentration niedrig nachweisbar) bzw. oberhalb der höchsten Standardkonzentration angegeben werden.

   Bei der Endpunktmethode können gültige Endotoxinkonzentrationen nur aus OD-Werten berechnet werden, die im linearen Teil der Standardkurve liegen.
5. Zur Bestätigung, dass die Probe LAL/Endotoxinenaktion nicht wesentlich stört, muss die gemessene Endotoxinkonzentration der Produkt-Positivkontrolle innerhalb von 50% bis 200% der Nennkonzentration liegen („Spike"). Ergebnisse für Proben, die Pyro Bestimmung, ob der „Spike" innerhalb dieser Grenzwerte wiedergefunden werden, die bei (unspezifiziert) Probe gemessenen Endotoxinkonzentration mindestens 50% beträgt. Es muss die gemessene Endotoxinkonzentration einer Produkt-Positivkontrolle von 50% bis 200% der Nennkonzentration (Spike) ergeben. Ergebnisse für Proben, die Pyro Bestimmung, ob der „Spike" innerhalb dieser Grenzwerte wiedergefunden werden, die bei (unspezifiziert) Probe gemessenen Endotoxinkonzentration mindestens 50% beträgt. Es muss die gemessene Endotoxinkonzentration einer Produkt-Positivkontrolle von 0,125 EU/ml. (nach der Subtraktion etwaiger Endotoxine in der ungespikten Probe) im Bereich von 0,0625 EU/ml bis 0,25 EU/ml. (50% bis 200% von 0,125 EU/ml.) liegen. Jedoch diese als frei von wesentlicher Interferenz angesehen werden kann. Beträgt die gemessene Endotoxinkonzentration in der ungespikten Probe 0,028 EU/ml. und die in der Produkt-Positivkontrolle 0,163 EU/ml. dann ergibt sich 0,163 EU/ml. – 0,028 EU/ml. = 0,135 EU/ml. Endotoxine auf den „Spike" zurückzuführen. Dieser Wert liegt im zulässigen Bereich und der Test der Probe ist gültig, vorausgesetzt, die anderen Kriterien erfüllen.

Grenzen des Verfahrens

Das Verfahren wird durch das Ausmaß der Hemm- bzw. Verstärkungsfähigkeit der getesteten Probe begrenzt. Falls das Verfahren nicht bei einer Probenkonzentration oberhalb der minimal zulässigen Konzentration (MZK) stattfinden kann, muss das Produkt bis zum MZK verdünnt werden. Das Testet nicht anstelle des Pyrogentests nach USP verwendet werden. Die MZK berechnet sich wie folgt:

$$MZK = \frac{(A) \text{ (Probendosis)}}{\text{(Endotoxin-Toleranzgrenzwert)}}$$

wobei 2, in EU/ml., die Probendosis in Einheiten pro kg Körpergewicht und der Endotoxin-Toleranzgrenzwert in EU/kg angegeben wird.

Der maximal zulässige Verdünnungs (MZV) ist die Probenverdünnung, die die MZK erhält (1). Sie wird berechnet, indem man das Ausgangs-Probenkonzentration durch die MZK dividiert.

Der Endotoxin-Toleranzgrenzwert beträgt 0,2 EU/kg bei Arzneimitteln zur intrathekalen Verabreichung und 5 EU/kg für alle anderen parenteralen Arzneimittel. Für Medizinprodukte wird der Grenzwert pro ml. eines Extrakt- bzw. Spülvolumens angegeben, das wie in der FDP (16) beschrieben gewonnen wurde, auf Grundlage der Grenzwerte für Medizinprodukte. Bei Medizinprodukten, die nicht mit dem Liquor cerebrospinalis in Kontakt kommen, beträgt der Grenzwert 20 EU pro Produkt, andernfalls 2,15 EU pro Produkt. Bei Medizinprodukten (1) ist der Grenzwert für Blutkreise Medizinprodukte der gleiche wie für Arzneimittel.

Manche Substrgemmen (z.B. Trypsin, aktivierte Blutfaktoren) verursachen falsch positive Ergebnisse, wenn sie nicht vor dem Test durch Hitzebehandlung inaktiviert werden. Gelbliche Materialien wie z.B. Tierserum, Albumin und Plasma können den chromogenen Test auf pNA-Basis stören. Für diese Stoffe ist der Test mit Ausnahme der Endpunktmethode (MVD = 1, siehe Kapitel „CD060). Übermäßige Trübung einer Probe kann gleichfalls den Test stören, es sei denn, die Trübung lässt sich von der Negativkontrolle (der Leerwertprobe) subtrahieren oder die Probe kann derart behandelt werden, dass die Trübung verschwindet.

Erwartungswerte

Die Endotoxine in den Proben lassen sich im Bereich der Konzentrationen der Endotoxinstandards, mit denen die Standardkurve erstellt wurde, quantifizieren. Um Fehler zur Beheben von Störfaktoren eine Verdünnung der Probe notwendig ist, erhält sich die kleinste nachweisbare Endotoxinmenge entsprechend. Materialien biologischer Herkunft können selbst nach einer biochemischen Reinigung noch mehrere Endotoxine enthalten und auftreten. Wasser, das durch Destillation, Umkehrosmose oder Ultrafiltration gewonnen wurde, kann einen Endotoxingehalt unterhalb der Nachweisgrenze aufweisen, vorausgesetzt, der Reinigungsprozess arbeitet ordnungsgemäß und das Wasser wird nach der Produktion nicht kontaminiert.

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Unser erfahrenes Personal bespricht den LAL-Test im praktischer und theoretischer Hinsicht gerne mit ihnen. Rufen Sie bei Fragen zum Umgang mit Pyrochrome bitte an. Wir erstellen gerne Ihnen ein LDP (Protocol) zu Ihrer Probe, um die optimalen Bedingungen für Ihre Prüfung zu ermitteln. Setzen Sie sich vor einer Rücksendung bitte mit dem Kundendienst in Verbindung.

Italiano

LISATO DEGLI AMEBOCITI DEL *LIMULUS*

PYROCHROME®

per il rilevamento e la determinazione quantitativa delle endotossine batteriche Gram-negative (lipopolisaccaridi)

Se impiegato attenendosi alle linee guida della Food and Drug Administration (FDA) statunitense (1), il test del lisato degli amebociti del *Limulus* (LAL), può sostituire il test dei pirogeni (test della febbre del coniglio) della U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) per testare a prodotti finiti / farmaci iniettabili per uso umano (inclusi prodotti biologici). Farmaci iniettabili per uso veterinario e i dispositivi medici.[1] Il test LAL è indicato per la determinazione quantitativa di endotossina in materie prime (acqua inclusa) impiegate nella produzione e per il monitoraggio di processo dei livelli di endotossina. Il Bacterial Endotoxins Test (2) della USP è i test LAL affiliate a cui si fa riferimento in specifiche monografie USP.

Breve descrizione del test

Il lisato degli amebociti del *Limulus* è un estratto acquoso di cellule ematiche (amebociti) del granchio a ferro di cavallo, *Il Limulus polyphemus*. In presenza di endotossina, i fattori del LAL sono attivati in una cascata proteolitica che determina la scissione di un substrato peptidico incolore. Il rilascio del prodotto di scissione, una proteina coagulante, produce un colore giallo-pallido p-nitroanilina (pNA), di colore giallo, che assorbe la luce a 405 nm. Il test viene eseguito aggiungendo un volume di Pyrochrome a un volume di campione e incubando la miscela di reazione a 37 °C. Quanto maggiore è la concentrazione di endotossina, quanto più rapida sarà la produzione di pNA. Ai fini della determinazione quantitativa della concentrazione di endotossina, la reazione può essere misurata in due modi:

Nel metodo cinetico, viene determinato il tempo necessario per ottenere una particolare assorbanza a 405 nm (il tempo di inizio). Concentrazioni più elevate di endotossina determinano tempi di inizio più rapidi. Il dosaggio richiede una standardizzazione specifica per l'incubazione di più campioni a una temperatura controllata (di solito 37 °C) e per l'esecuzione a intervalli regolari delle letture di densità ottica. Le curve standard, costruite a partire dal logaritmo del tempo di inizio in funzione del logaritmo della concentrazione standard, vengono usate per calcolare le concentrazioni di endotossine nei campioni.

In alternativa, nel metodo endpoint, la reazione enzimatica è fermata dopo un tempo misurata al termine di un periodo di incubazione predeterminato. Per determinare le concentrazioni nei campioni viene usata una curva standard, costituita dalla densità ottica di laboratorio in funzione della concentrazione di endotossina standard. Il prodotto (i campioni che assorbono la luce a 405-410 nm, più esere usato un dosaggio di tipo diazico. In questo metodo, la pNA (formatasi durante il metodo endpoint cromogenico) viene fatta reagire con nitrito in HCl e poi con N-(-1-Naftil) etilenediammina (NEDA) per formare un composto diazoico della fucsina che assorbe la luce in un range compreso tra 540 e 550 nm.

Il metodo endpoint è generalmente più sensibile, specifico e preciso e alternate semplici. Il limite di rilevamento dipende dal metodo e dalla strumentazione usati e può giungere a rilevare la presenza di 0,005 unità endotossiniche (EU) per ml..

Storia e principio biologico

Howell descrisse la coagulazione del lisato del *Limulus* nel 1885 (4). Negli anni'50, presso il Marine Biological Laboratory di Woods Hole, nel Massachusetts, USA, Bang scoprì che i batteri Gram-negativi provocavano la coagulazione del sangue del *Limulus* (5). Levin e Bang successivamente dimostrarono che la reazione era attivata da una frazione di cellule ematiche intervenuti grandi degli amebociti (6, 7). Essi dimostrarono che la coagulazione viene avviata da una particolarissima cascata enzimatica della parete cellulare dei batteri Gram-negativi chiamata endotossina o lipopolisaccaride (8). In base alle conoscenze attuali si ritiene che la reazione consista in una cascata di passaggi di attivazione enzimatica che termina con la scissione del peptide. Il coagulante è formato da due subunità della scissione: una subunità coagulante (a aggrega mediante interazione laterale. Se si forma una quantità sufficiente di coagulina, il prodotto diventa dapprima torbido, quindi gellifica con formazione di coagulo. Questa interazione è irreversibile. Il lisato del dosaggio per endotossine contiene una frazione lisato degli amebociti del *Limulus* (LAL). Nel 1977, ricercatori giapponesi scoprirono che il LAL attivato da endotossina può anche reagire con un secondo substrato proteico presente nel coagulo, provocando una sito di scissione degli aminoacidi simile al coagulogeno e al cromoforo, il p-nitroanilide (9). La scissione comporta la liberazione di pNA, di colore giallo, che assorbe la luce a 405 nm. In questo adattamento cromogenico del dosaggio LAL, la reazione enzimatica è quindi misurata nei granuli