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### HPLC Isocratic Elution Method for Quantification of Tenofovir Disoproxil and Emtricitabine Simultaneously In Bulk and Tablet Formulation

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#### ABSTRACT

An HPLC method has been developed for simultaneous estimation of tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine in bulk and in their tablet dosage form. Separation and analysis of both drugs was achieved on Supelco C18 (250 x 4.6 mm; 5 µm particle size) analytical column with temperature set at 25°C. The best chromatographic condition was found as an isocratic mobile phase consisting of 0.2 M ammonium acetate (pH 4.5) and methanol in a ratio of 65: 35 (% v/v) at a flow rate of 1.2 ml/min for 6 minutes. The retention of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil was found to be 3.020 min and 4.264 min, respectively. The method was validated according to the International Conference on Harmonization guidelines and various validation parameters (system suitability, selectivity, linearity, precision, accuracy, limit of detection, limit of quantification and robustness) were determined. The results of validation parameters are satisfactory. Applicability of the developed and validated HPLC method was checked in tablet dosage form.

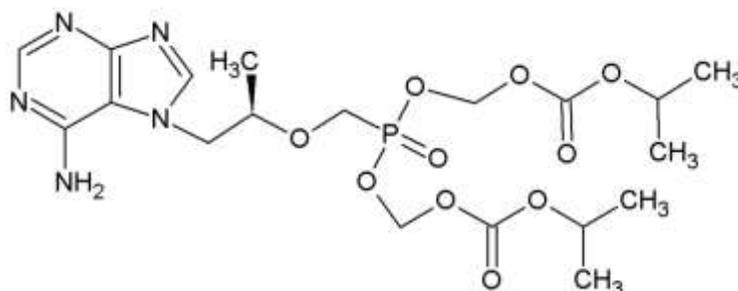
**Keywords:** Tenofovir disoproxil, Emtricitabine, HPLC method, Validation, Estimation.

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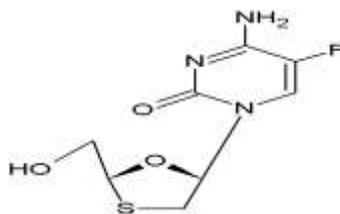
## INTRODUCTION

Tenofovir disoproxil is an antiretroviral drug belonging to the drug class known as nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors<sup>1,2</sup>. Chemically, it is described as [[(2R)-1-(6-aminopurin-9-yl)propan-2-yl]oxymethyl-(propan-2-yloxycarbonyloxymethoxy)phosphoryl] oxy methyl propan-2-yl carbonate;(E)-but-2-enedioic acid (Figure 1). Tenofovir disoproxil acts by blocking a crucial enzyme, reverse transcriptase, which is responsible for the viral multiplication in human immunodeficiency virus infected people. Tenofovir disoproxil is prescribed for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis B virus infections in combination with additional antiretroviral agents<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 1: Structure of tenofovir disoproxil**

Emtricitabine is a synthetic nucleoside analog of cytidine with activity against human immunodeficiency virus type 1 reverse transcriptase<sup>4</sup>. Chemically, emtricitabine is describes as 4-amino-5-fluoro-1-[(2R,5S)-2-(hydroxymethyl)-1,3-oxathiolan-5-yl]pyrimidin-2-one (Figure 2). Emtricitabine was approved for use in combination with other antiretroviral agents in adults with human immunodeficiency virus infection<sup>5</sup>. Emtricitabine inhibits viral replication by inhibiting the activity of human immunodeficiency virus type 1 reverse transcriptase reverse transcriptase<sup>6</sup>.



**Figure 2: Structure of emtricitabine**

Tenofovir disoproxil is formulated in binary mixture with emtricitabine to prevent human immunodeficiency virus from altering the genetic material of healthy T cells<sup>7,8</sup>. Combining the two antiviral drugs, tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine, in one tablet also helps in lessening of the pill burden and increases the compliance with antiretroviral therapy.

Several analytical methods have been reported for simultaneous estimation of tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine including first derivative spectrophotometry<sup>9</sup>, first derivative of ratio spectra

spectrophotometry<sup>9</sup>, simultaneous equation spectrophotometry<sup>10</sup>, absorbance ratio spectrophotometry<sup>10</sup>, area under curve spectrophotometry<sup>11</sup>, dual wavelength spectrophotometry<sup>11</sup>, ratio derivative spectrophotometry<sup>12</sup>, absorbance corrected spectrophotometry<sup>12</sup>, HPLC<sup>13-19</sup>, HPTLC<sup>20,21</sup> and LC-MS<sup>22-24</sup>. In the present study an attempt was made to develop an HPLC method for the assay of tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine, simultaneously, in bulk and combined tablet dosage. The developed method was validated as per guidelines given by International Conference on Harmonization<sup>25</sup>.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

### **Mobile phase:**

The solvents and chemicals used in the preparation of mobile phase were of HPLC grade and analytical grade, respectively. The mobile phase used was 0.2M ammonium acetate (Sd. Fine Chemicals Ltd., Mumbai) and methanol (Merck India Ltd., Mumbai) in the ratio of 65:35 v/v. The pH was adjusted to 4.5 with dilute orthophosphoric acid (Sd. Fine Chemicals Ltd., Mumbai). Before use, the mobile phase was filtered through millipore membrane filter and degassed for 15 min by sonication.

### **Instrumentation and chromatographic conditions:**

In the present study Waters 2695 alliance with binary HPLC pump equipped with Waters 2998 PDA detector and Waters Empower2 software was used. Supelco C18 (250 x 4.6 mm; 5 µm particle size) analytical column was used for separation and simultaneous quantification of tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine. The column temperature was maintained at 25±1 °C. The separation was carried out under isocratic elution. The flow rate was maintained as 1.2 ml/min. The injection volume was 10 µL. The eluents were detected at 260 nm.

### **Standard solutions:**

Tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine bulk samples were obtained from Lara drugs pvt Ltd., Hyderabad. The standard stock solution was prepared by dissolving 200 mg of emtricitabine and 300 mg of tenofovir disoproxil in 100 ml mobile phase. Working standard solutions equivalent to 100, 150, 200, 250 & 300 µg/ml emtricitabine and 150, 225, 300, 375 & 450 µg/ml tenofovir disoproxil was prepared from stock solution by appropriately diluting the stock standard solution with the mobile phase.

### **Sample Solution:**

The tablet dosage form, Tavin-EM, manufactured by Hetero Drugs Limited, Hyderabad, India (Label claim: emtricitabine 200 mg and tenofovir disoproxil 300 mg), were purchased and used in

the present study. Ten tablets were weighed, average weight was determined and finely powdered to obtain a homogenous mixture. The powder equivalent to 200 mg of emtricitabine and 300 mg of tenofovir disoproxil was transferred to a 100 ml volumetric flask containing 30 ml of mobile phase, sonicated for 20 min and made up to mark with the mobile phase. The resultant mixture was filtered through 0.45  $\mu\text{m}$  filter. The filtrate was diluted appropriately with the mobile phase to get a final concentration 200  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 300  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil, respectively.

#### **Assay of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil in bulk:**

The working standard solutions, in the concentration of 100, 150, 200, 250 & 300  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  emtricitabine and 150, 225, 300, 375 & 450  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  tenofovir disoproxil, prepared from stock solution were injected into the column (10  $\mu\text{l}$ ) and chromatographed under optimized chromatographic conditions. Peak areas were recorded for each concentration of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil. The calibration curve was plotted as concentration *vs* peak area. The regression equation was derived. The concentration of unknown was determined either from the calibration curve or regression equation derived.

#### **Assay of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil in combined tablet dosage forms:**

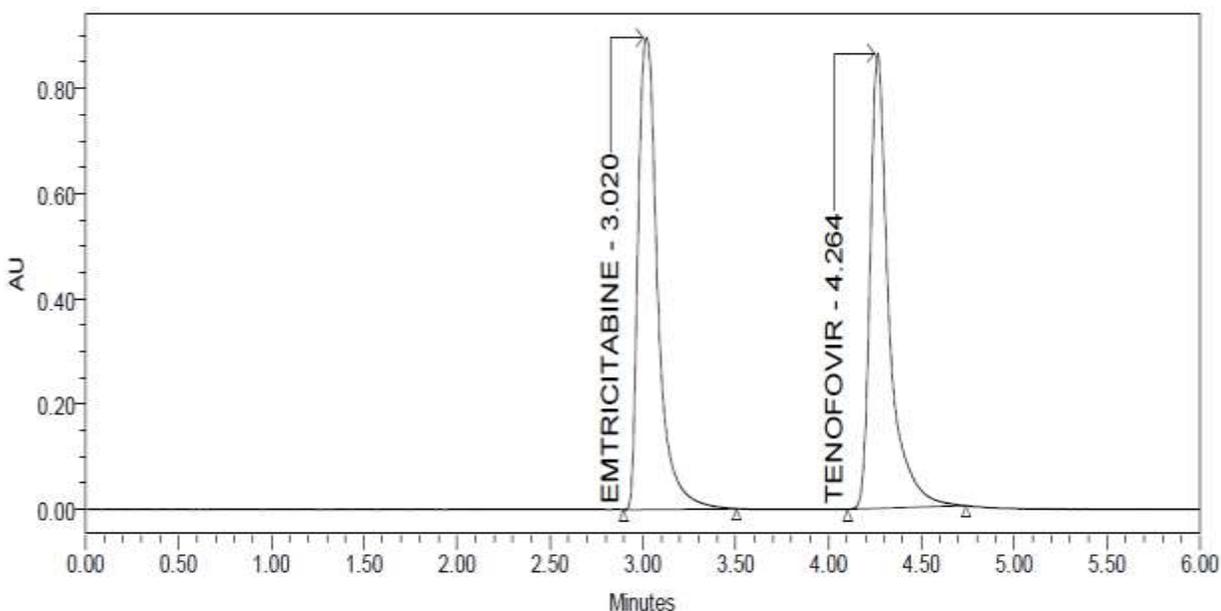
10  $\mu\text{L}$  of the sample solution prepared in the section “sample solution” was injected into the HPLC system three times. The peak areas were recorded and the content of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil in combined tablet dosage form was determined from the calibration curve or from the regression equation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Method development:**

The main objective of the present study was to develop a HPLC method for the estimation of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil simultaneously in bulk and tablet dosage form and to obtain well resolved peaks of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil. During method development, chromatographic parameters such as mobile phase composition, flow rate of mobile phase, detection wavelength, analytical column and column temperature were optimized to get improved efficiency of the chromatographic system. Two HPLC analytical columns, Phenomenex C18 (150 mm x 4.6 mm; 5  $\mu\text{m}$  particle size) and Supelco C18 (250 mm x 4.6 mm; 5  $\mu\text{m}$  particle size) were tested during method development. The system suitability parameters like tailing factor, resolution, and plate count were considered. Based on the above said parameters Supelco C18 column (250 mm x 4.6 mm; 5  $\mu\text{m}$  particle size) was finalized. Mobile phase containing a mixture (*v/v*) of 0.2 M

ammonium acetate and methanol in different ratios were evaluated so as to obtain appropriate composition of mobile phase. Finally the mixture of 0.2 M ammonium acetate and methanol in the ratio of 65:35 (v/v) was selected as optimal. At a flow rate of 1.2 ml/min and with column temperature of  $25\pm 1$  °C well defined and well resolved peaks of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil are obtained. At the wavelength 260 nm, best detector response for emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil was obtained. Therefore, 272 nm was selected as the analytical wavelength for the detection and simultaneous estimation of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil. Under the optimized chromatographic conditions, the retention time for emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil was found to be 3.020 min and 4.264 min, respectively.



**Figure 3: Chromatogram of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil under optimized conditions**

#### **Method validation:**

The developed method was validated for system suitability, selectivity, linearity, precision, accuracy, limit of detection (LOD), limit of quantification (LOQ) and robustness as per International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) guidelines<sup>25</sup>.

#### **System suitability studies:**

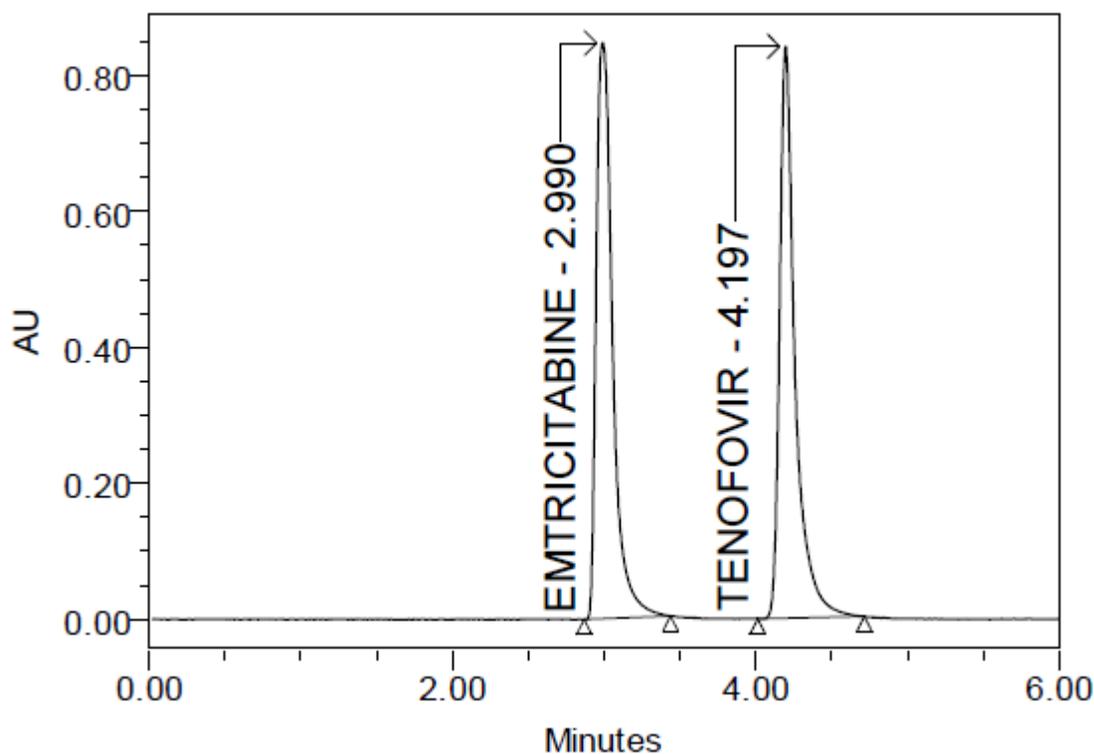
Mixed standard solution of emtricitabine (200 µg/ml) and tenofovir disoproxil (300 µg/ml) solution was injected in five replicates in the HPLC system to determine system suitability. System suitability parameters established for the developed method include number of relative standard deviation of peak area, theoretical plates, resolution and tailing factor. The values obtained (Table 1) demonstrated the suitability of the system for the analysis of this drug combination.

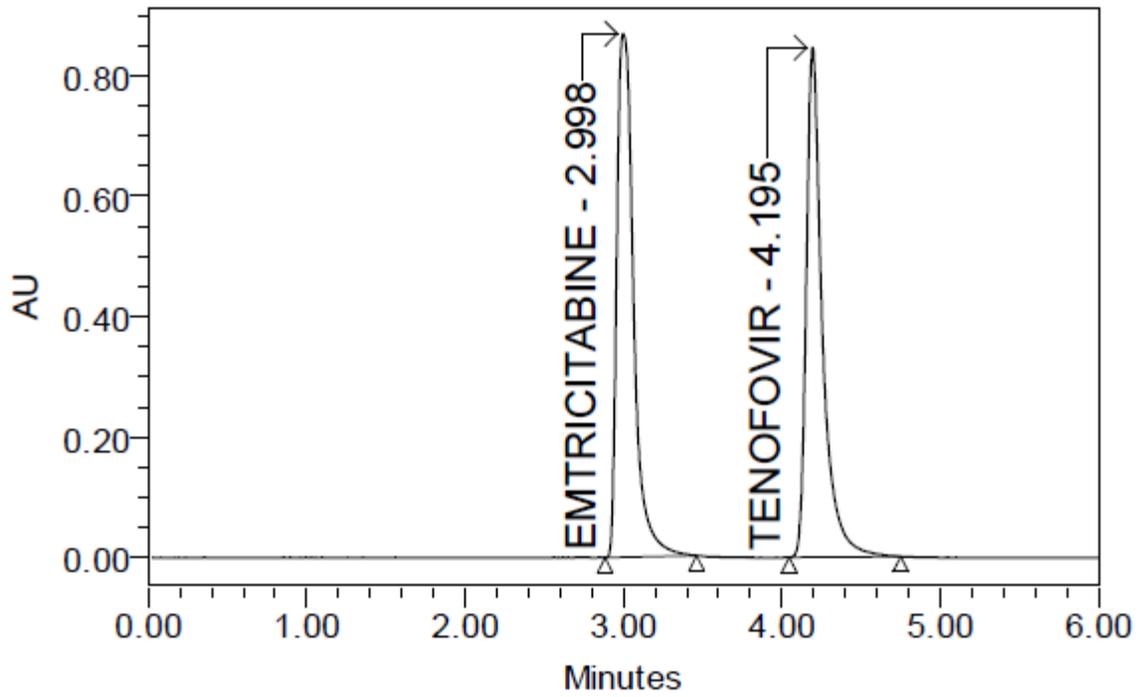
**Table 1: System suitability parameters**

Parameters	Emtricitabine	Tenofovir disoproxil	Recommended limits
Retention time	2.999	4.205	-
Peak area	6462861 (%RSD – 1.044)	6050896 (%RSD - 0.150)	RSD ≤1
USP resolution	-	6.826	> 1.5
USP plate count	4548	10096	> 2000
USP tailing factor	1.77	1.73	≤ 2

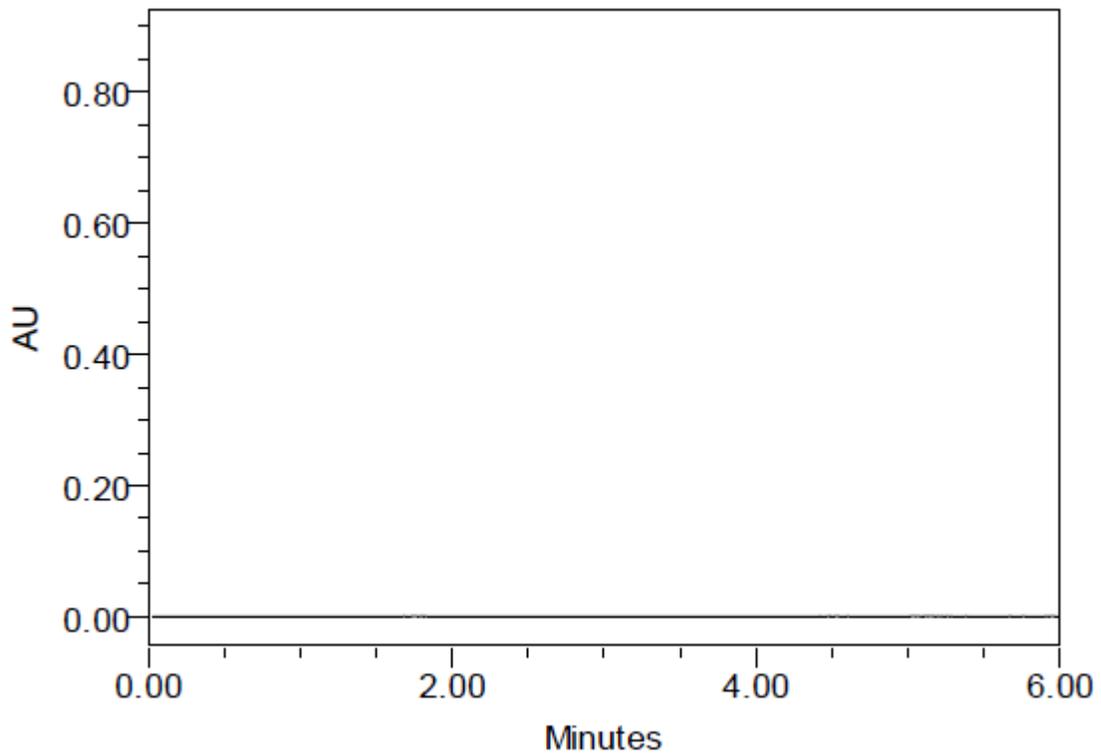
**Selectivity:**

The selectivity of the developed HPLC method was investigated by non-interference of excipients in tablet dosage form and components of mobile phase. Selectivity of the present method was demonstrated by comparing the chromatograms of standard solution of emtricitabine (200 µg/ml) and tenofovir disoproxil (300 µg/ml) with the chromatogram of sample solution (containing emtricitabine 200 µg/ml and tenofovir disoproxil 300 µg/ml), blank mobile phase and placebo blank. The chromatograms are shown in Figures 4-7. There were no difference in the chromatograms of standard solution and sample solution (Figures 4 & 5). There are no peaks in the chromatogram of blank mobile phase and placebo blank (Figures 6 & 7). The results indicated the selectivity of the present method.

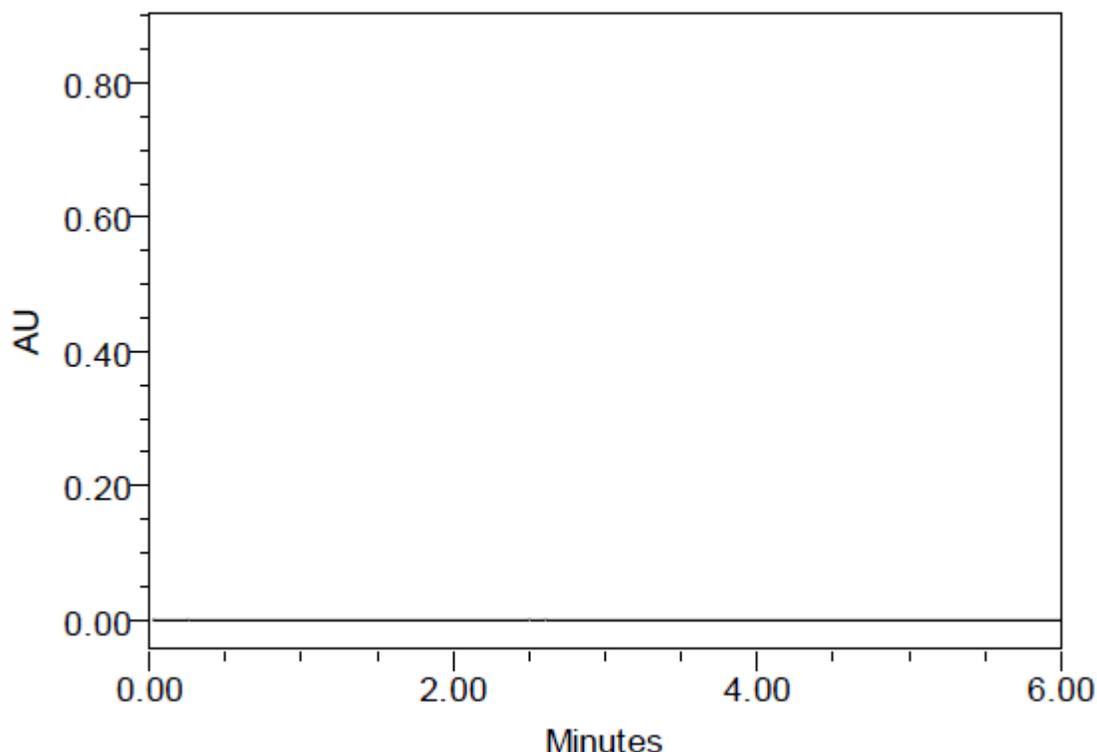
**Figure 4: Chromatogram of standard drug solution**



**Figure 5: Chromatogram of tablet sample solution**



**Figure 6: Chromatogram of mobile phase blank solution**



**Figure 7: Chromatogram of placebo blank solution**

**Linearity and range:**

The linearity for the present method was established by least squares regression analysis of the calibration curve. Calibration curves were linear over the concentration range of 100-300  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  for emtricitabine and 150-450  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  for tenofovir disoproxil with a regression coefficient ( $R^2$ ) of 0.9999 for both the drugs. The results shows a good correlation exists between peak area and concentration of drugs within concentration range indicated above. The results for calibration data are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Linearity for emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil by present method**

<b>Emtricitabine</b>		<b>Tenofovir disoproxil</b>	
<b>Concentration (<math>\mu\text{g/ml}</math>)</b>	<b>Peak area</b>	<b>Concentration (<math>\mu\text{g/ml}</math>)</b>	<b>Peak area</b>
100	3239167	150	3020788
150	4848789	225	4536348
200	6463443	300	6052003
250	8075765	375	7564988
300	9693348	450	9079296
<b>Regression equation:</b>		<b>Regression equation:</b>	
$y = 32271 x + 9967$		$y = 20180 x - 2706$	
$R^2 = 0.9999$		$R^2 = 0.9999$	

y = peak area, x = concentration of drug in  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ ,  $R^2$  = Regression coefficient

**Limit of detection (LOD), limit of quantification (LOQ):**

The Limit of quantification and detection determines the sensitivity of the method. The LOD and LOQ were calculated using the following formulas (a) and (b).

$$(a) \text{ LOQ} = 10 \text{ sd} / S$$

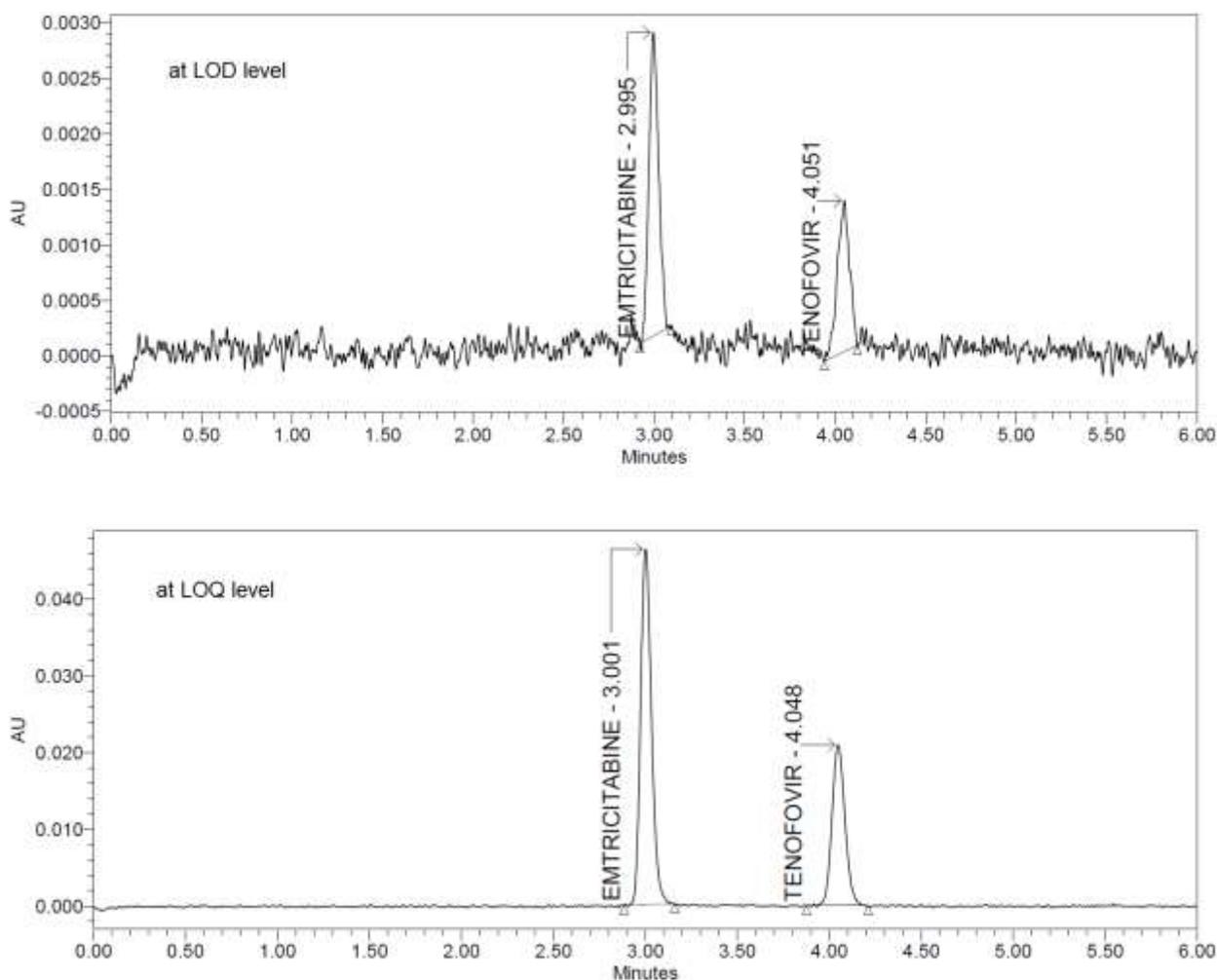
$$(b) \text{ LOD} = 3.3 \text{ sd} / S$$

Where

sd = standard deviation of response

S = slope of the calibration curve.

The LOD of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil was found to be 0.566  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 0.879  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and the LOQ of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil was 1.885  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 2.932  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively. The chromatograms of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil at LOD and LOQ levels are shown in Figure 8. The results indicate that the developed method possess adequate sensitivity for the simultaneous determination of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil.



**Figure 8: Chromatograms of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil at LOD and LOQ levels**

**Precision:**

The precision of the proposed method was established by analyzing five standard solutions (emtricitabine-200 µg/ml; tenofovir disoproxil-300 µg/ml). The peak area of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil and their percentage relative standard deviation were calculated. The results of are presented in Table 3. The results were within the acceptable limit and indicated that the method is precise.

**Table 3: Precision of the method**

S.No	Emtricitabine			Tenofovir disoproxil		
	Concentration (µg/ml)	Peak Area	%RSD	Concentration (µg/ml)	Peak Area	%RSD
1	200	6464178	0.175	300	6056286	0.043
2	200	6460798		300	6050608	
3	200	6460733		300	6055169	
4	200	6435886		300	6057505	
5	200	6462315		300	6056448	
	200	6460808		300	6055628	

**Accuracy:**

Recovery experiments were performed to determine the accuracy of the method. The accuracy of the proposed method was established by preparing samples spiked with 50%, 100%, and 150% of the test concentration of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil. Each concentration level was analyzed thrice. Mean percent recovery was calculated for each concentration.

**Table 4: Accuracy of the method**

Accuracy level	(µg/ml) added	(µg/ml) found	% Recovery	% Mean
<b>Emtricitabine</b>				
50%	99.000	99.60	100.61	100.63
	99.000	99.57	100.57	
	99.000	99.70	100.71	
100%	198.000	199.06	100.54	100.52
	198.000	198.96	100.49	
	198.000	199.03	100.52	
150%	297.000	298.63	100.55	100.54
	297.000	298.53	100.52	
	297.000	298.66	100.56	
<b>Tenofovir disoproxil</b>				
50%	148.500	148.84	100.23	100.34
	148.500	149.01	100.34	
	148.500	149.16	100.44	
100%	297.000	297.89	100.30	100.34
	297.000	298.23	100.41	

	297.000	297.96	100.32	
150%	445.500	446.79	100.29	
	445.500	446.89	100.31	100.29
	445.500	446.67	100.26	

Percent recovery was well within the acceptable limit. Results are presented in Table 4. From the data, added recoveries of standard drugs were found to be accurate.

### Robustness:

The robustness test was carried out by making deliberate changes in optimized chromatographic conditions. Retention time, tailing factor, resolution and plate count were measured to demonstrate the robustness of the method. The results are shown in Table 5. In all the deliberate varied chromatographic conditions, the parameters like tailing factor, peak area and theoretical plates were within the acceptance limits, which show that the method is robust.

**Table 5: Robustness of the method**

Parameter varied	Retention time	Peak area	USP plate count	USP Tailing	USP resolution
<b>Emtricitabine</b>					
Flow rate – 1.1 ml/min	3.747	8439799	4323	1.84	-
Flow rate – 1.3 ml/min	2.463	5839251	3692	1.22	-
Column temperature - 24 °C	3.687	8829885	3633	1.36	-
Column temperature - 26 °C	2.457	5922671	4606	1.70	-
<b>Tenofovir disoproxil</b>					
Flow rate – 1.1 ml/min	4.921	10357991	14138	1.80	5.86
Flow rate – 1.3 ml/min	3.042	6397673	6990	1.25	3.50
Column temperature - 24 °C	4.531	9862925	7782	1.43	3.55
Column temperature - 26 °C	3.026	6486799	8658	1.77	4.00

### Comparison with the reported methods:

Simultaneous determination of tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine by spectrophotometry<sup>9-12</sup>, HPLC<sup>13-19</sup>, HPTLC<sup>20,21</sup> and LC-MS<sup>22-24</sup> are found in the literature. The spectrophotometric methods<sup>9-12</sup>, are less selective as it involves measurement in UV region where most of the tablet excipients shows absorbance. The reported HPTLC<sup>20, 21</sup> and LC-MS<sup>22-24</sup> methods are often time consuming, require expensive/sophisticated instrumentation, cumbersome procedure and required expertise operational personnel. The LC-MS<sup>22-24</sup> methods are not applied to combined tablet dosage forms. HPLC, because of its simplicity, sensitivity, selectivity, fair accuracy, precision and easy access in most quality control laboratories, is widely used for the analysis of therapeutic compounds used as medications. The details of reported and proposed HPLC methods are summarized in Table 6.

The decreased total run time (6 min) makes the proposed method more rapid than the reported HPLC methods<sup>14,15,17-19</sup>. The decreased runtime also decreases the utilization of solvents and increases the throughput of the proposed method. The proposed method has wide range of linearity than the methods of Sharma & Gupta<sup>13</sup>, Lavanya *et al.*<sup>15</sup>, Viswanath *et al.*<sup>16</sup> and Karunakaran *et al.*<sup>18</sup>. From the values of LOD and LOQ, it was observed that the proposed method is sensitive than the methods reported by Reddy *et al.*<sup>14</sup> Viswanath *et al.*<sup>16</sup>, Gandhi *et al.*<sup>17</sup> and Karunakaran *et al.*<sup>18</sup>. The percent relative standard deviation and percent recovery values indicated the good precision and accuracy of the proposed method, respectively over all the reported HPLC methods<sup>13-19</sup>. The volume of sample (10 µl) used in the proposed method for single analysis is less than all the reported HPLC methods<sup>13-19</sup>. Unlike the methods of Sharma & Gupta<sup>13</sup> and Karunakaran *et al.*<sup>18</sup>, the proposed method does not utilize triple solvent system as mobile phase. The use of triple solvent system as mobile phase increases the utilization of solvents and cost of single analysis. Most of the reported HPLC methods are not fully validated. The system suitability<sup>14,15</sup> and robustness<sup>14,15,16,18</sup> tests are not reported in some of the reported methods. Though the HPLC method reported by Rezk *et al.*<sup>19</sup> is sensitive with broad range of linearity, it suffers from drawbacks like long run time (18 min) and gradient mode of elution. These two factors increase the solvent utilization, time of analysis and cost per single analysis. Furthermore Rezk *et al.*<sup>19</sup> method is applied only to human plasma samples.

**Table 6: Performance of the proposed and reported HPLC methods for the simultaneous estimation of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil**

Drug	Run Time (min)	Detection wavelength (nm)	Flow rate (ml/min)	Linearity ( $\mu\text{g/ml}$ )	LOD ( $\mu\text{g/ml}$ )	LOQ ( $\mu\text{g/ml}$ )	RSD (%)	Recovery (%)	Reference
TDF	4	260	1.5	5-50	0.039	0.117	0.124-0.216	100.02-100.08	Sharma & Gupta [13]
EMT				5-50	0.015	0.045	0.116-0.451	100.06-100.11	
TDF	10	260	1	60-360	4.6	13.65	0.226-0.374	99.54-100.43	Reddy et al., [14]
EMT				40-240	1.54	4.54	0.226-0.375	99.12-100.33	
TDF	8	NR	1	8-50	0.00851	0.0315	0.1	99.00-99.83	Lavanya et al., [15]
EMT				8-50	0.00752	0.00218	0.26	99.50-100.83	
TDF	6	270	1	3-15	0.191	0.581	0.59	99.60-100.40	Viswanath et al., [16]
EMT				2-10	0.639	1.907	0.96	99.40-101.7	
TDF	8	260	1	60-360	4.5924	13.931	0.374-0.377	99.73-99.81	Gandhi et al., [17]
EMT				40-240	1.5456	4.6839	0.227-0.251	99.74-99.84	
TDF	8	258	0.6	1-6	1.427	4.3243	0.288-0.629	100.77-101.59	Karunakaran et al., [18]
EMT				2-12	0.03003	0.091015	0.675-0.977	100.51-100.82	
TDF	18	259	NA	10- 10000*	NA	NA	3.7 to 5.2	97-103	Rezk et al.,[19]
EMT		280		10- 10000*	NA	NA	1.7 to 3.7%	98-105	
TDF	6	260	1.2	150-450	0.879	2.932	0.043	100.29-100.34	Proposed method
EMT				100-300	0.566	1.885	0.175	100.52-100.63	

EMT-emtricitabine; TDF-tenofovir disoproxil; NA-not available; NR-not reported; \*- ng/ml

## CONCLUSION

The present HPLC method was developed and validated for the simultaneous quantification of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil in bulk and tablet dosage form. The proposed HPLC method is rapid<sup>14,15,17-19</sup>, sensitive<sup>14,16-18</sup>, precise<sup>13-19</sup> and accurate<sup>13-19</sup> with broad range of linearity<sup>13,15,16,18</sup> than the reported HPLC methods (Table 6). The proposed HPLC method was validated as stated by the guidelines of International Conference on Harmonization. The results of the validation tests were found to be satisfactory. Hence, the proposed HPLC method can be applied successfully for routine quality control analysis of emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil simultaneously in bulk and pharmaceutical formulation (tablet dosage form).

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