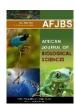
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## **African Journal of Biological**

### **Sciences**



#### A Review on Co-crystal methodology for formulation and development

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#### Abstract

This review aims to provide an extensive overview of the methodologies employed in the formulation and development of cocrystals. Cocrystals, crystalline materials consisting of two or more distinct molecular entities held together by non-covalent bonds, have garnered significant attention in the pharmaceutical and materials science sectors due to their potential to enhance the physicochemical properties of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). Pharmaceutical cocrystals are multicomponent systems in which at least one component is an active pharmaceutical ingredient and the others are pharmaceutically acceptable ingredients. A novel and promising method of enhancing the solubility, stability, pharmacokinetics, and dissolving profile of pharmaceuticals is co crystallization of the medicinal ingredient with a coformer.

**Keywords:** Cocrystallisation, Hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, Powder X -ray diffraction, Stoichiometry, Coformer, Dynamic Light Scattering

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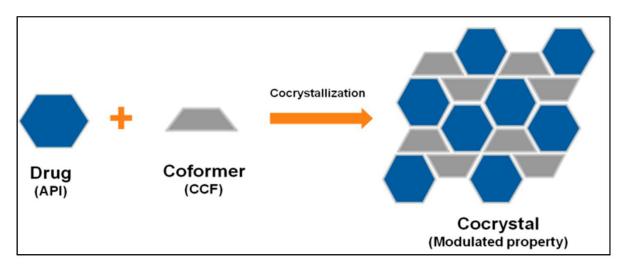


Figure-1: A novel and promising method approach of pharmaceutical cocrystals

#### Introduction

**Co**-crystals are crystalline materials that consist of two or more different molecular units, usually the drug and coformer are combined in a specific stoichiometric ratio non-covalent interactions. These interactions may include hydrogen bonds, ionic interactions, van der Waals forces and  $\pi$ - $\pi$  stacking. The resulting Co-crystals structure is different from individual components and has unique properties.<sup>01</sup>

Pharmaceutical Co-crystals techniques include preparation and characterization of Cocrystalss, which are crystalline structures formed by combining two or more different molecules components through noncovalent interactions. The goal is often to improve a solubility, stability and bioavailability.<sup>02</sup>





The main purpose of crystallization in the pharmaceutical industry is to increase potency properties of medicinal molecules. This includes improving solubility, stability, bioavailability, and sometimes changing the physical form of the medicine. <sup>03</sup>

**1. Improve Solution:** Co-crystals are often used to solve the challenge of a bad drug solubility, which can limit drug absorption and therapeutic efficacy. Forming in the case of Co-crystals, drug solubility may increase, leading to better bioavailability.<sup>04</sup>

**2. Stability improvement:** Co-crystals can improve the chemical and physical stability of the drug compounds. This is important when developing longer dosage forms shelf life and better performance under different storage conditions. <sup>05</sup>

**3. Taste masking:** Co-crystals can be used to mask the unpleasant taste of some drugs they taste good in children or elderly patients. <sup>05</sup>

**4. Tailored Properties**: Using cocktail glasses, researchers can tailor the properties of the drug to suit them specific requirements that allow control of the drug and the behaviour of the organism.<sup>06</sup>

Several advantages of Co-crystals in formulation development and design. Some of the main advantages are:

**Improvement of solubility:** Co-crystals can significantly improve the solubility of poorly soluble drugs. This is crucial improves drug bioavailability, as higher solubility often leads to better absorption in the digestive tract. <sup>04</sup>

**Improve stability:** Co-crystals can improve the stability of drug molecules. They can protect medicines degradation, including problems with light, heat and humidity, resulting in a longer shelf life and improves product stability.<sup>05</sup>

**Improve bioavailability:** In solving solubility and stability problems, cocrystals can contribute to the improvement bioavailability, ensuring that most of the administered drug reaches its target in the body, which leads to better treatment results.<sup>07</sup>

**Taste masking:** Co-crystals can be used to mask the unpleasant taste of certain drugs, making them stronger especially delicious for patient groups such as children or people in difficulties oral medication intake.<sup>08</sup>

Adjustment of physico-chemical properties: Co-crystals offer the possibility to adapt the physicochemical properties of drugs, such as melting point, hardness and crystallinity. This adjustment makes it possible to optimize medicines dosage forms according to special requirements.<sup>09</sup>

**Design flexibility:** Cocrystals offer flexibility in formulation design. Researchers can select co-formers and optimize conditions to achieve the desired properties of Co-crystals, allowing tailored and more efficient drug development process. <sup>10</sup>

**Protection of intellectual property rights:** The creation of stones can provide opportunities for the protection of intellectual property rights. a novel co-crystal preparations can be patented, giving the drugs a competitive advantage companies in the market. <sup>11</sup>

**Regulatory compliance:** Alternative formulations can be developed from Cocrystals that meet legislative requirements existing drugs, which gives an opportunity to extend and facilitate the life cycle of the drug compliance with regulations.<sup>12</sup>

**Compatibility with existing processes:** Crystal formation techniques can often be integrated into existing drugs production process. This compatibility makes it more viable for pharmaceutical products companies adopt co-crystal technology.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Disadvantages of formulation of Co-crystals**

**Complexity of design and optimization:** Designing and optimizing Co-crystals can be a complex process that requires a deep understanding interaction between drug

and co-former. Identification of suitable co-formers and determining the optimal stoichiometric ratio can be time consuming.<sup>14</sup>

**Extended Challenges:** Converting laboratory mixed-crystal synthesis to large-scale production can be difficult. Problems related to reproducibility, scalability and process robustness may arise during scale-up. Limited Coformer Options: The availability of coformers suitable for the formation of Co-crystals can be limited, e.g certain drug molecules. This limitation may limit the use of Co-crystals with certain crystals medicines<sup>15</sup>

**Analytical challenges:** Characterization of Co-crystals requires advanced analytical methods such as X-ray diffraction, solid state NMR and infrared spectroscopy. These techniques may not be routine or simple available in all laboratories.<sup>16</sup>

**Stability of the preparation:** Although Co-crystals can improve drug stability, there is a risk that the crystals themselves can undergo phase changes or degrade over time, affecting ultimate stability design.<sup>17</sup>

**Cost estimates:** The development of combined preparations may result in additional costs for research, development and analytical characterization. Cost-effectiveness of the co-crystal approach must be carefully evaluated.<sup>18</sup>

**Limited clinical experience:** Crystal mixtures may have a limited clinical history compared to the conventional drug dosage forms.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Challenges to formulating Co-crystals:**

The composition of composite crystals presents several challenges, and meeting these challenges is critical to the successful development and commercialization of Co-crystals-based formulations. Some of the main challenges include:

**1. Choice of coformer:** Suitable coformer can be identified that form stable cocrystals with the drug of interest challenging The choice of coformer is influenced by factors such as molecular recognition, compatibility and the ability to form strong and specific interactions.<sup>21</sup>

**2. Stoichiometry and composition:** It is important to determine the optimal stoichiometric ratio of drug to excipient successful formation of Co-crystals. Achieving

the right composition can be difficult and deviations can lead to the formation of unwanted phases.<sup>22</sup>

**3. Synthetic Reproducibility**: Achieving reproducibility in the synthesis of Cocrystals is crucial for scale-up and production. The formation of different crystals can cause uneven product quality, which affects formula reliability.<sup>23</sup>

**4. Extension problems:** Converting the synthesis of Co-crystals from the laboratory to large-scale production presents challenges. Factors such as mixing efficiency, temperature control and mass transfer become critical higher weights.<sup>24</sup>

**5. Analytical techniques:** Characterization of Co-crystals requires advanced analytical techniques such as X-ray diffraction, solid state NMR and infrared spectroscopy. The use and knowledge of these techniques can be especially for smaller R&D groups.<sup>25</sup>

**6. Biopharmaceutical considerations:** Understand the effect of Cocrystal formation on the drug and its biopharmaceutical properties, including solubility, dissolution rate, and permeability are critical. Unpredictable changes in them properties can affect the course and therapeutic effectiveness of the drug. <sup>26</sup>

**7. Compatibility of drug and excipient:** Interactions between Co-crystals and excipients in the formulation must be carefully evaluated ensure compatibility and stability. There may be compatibility issues that affect the whole thing design.<sup>27</sup>

**8. Clinical experience and approval:** Limited clinical experience with Cocrystals preparations may present problems in acquisition reception of health professionals and patients. Enhancement of security and efficiency profile in clinical trials is important.<sup>28</sup>

## Several techniques are used to make Co-crystals, each of which has its own advantages and restrictions

The choice of a specific technique depends on its physical-chemical characteristics drug and coformer and the desired properties of the Co-crystals. Here are a few Co-crystal manufacturing techniques:

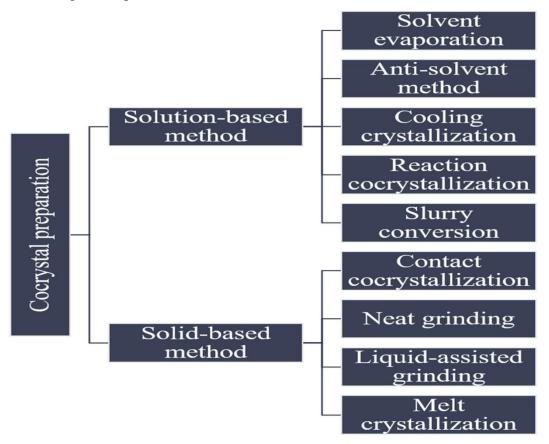


Figure-3: Co-crystal manufacturing techniques

**1. Solvent evaporation/crystallization:** This method involves dissolving the drug and coformer in a common solvent, followed by dissolution evaporation of the solvent to induce crystallization. Slow evaporation allows components interact and form Co-crystals.<sup>29</sup>

**2. Liquid Assisted Grinding (LAG):** In LAG, the drug and excipient are ground together in the presence of a small amount of liquid. The milling process facilitates the formation of coke crystals by breaking the crystal lattice and promoting molecular interactions.<sup>30</sup>

**3. Anti-solvent crystallization:** Here the drug and coformer are dissolved in a solvent and then a non-solvent (anti-solvent) is added to produce a precipitate. Crystals form when the solution concentration is reduced by the addition of a non-solvent.<sup>31</sup>

**4. Co-crystallization in solution:** Co-crystals can be formed by dissolving the drug and coformer in a common solvent and allowing them to crystallize together. The choices of solvent and crystallization conditions are crucial for successful Co-crystals formation. <sup>32</sup>

**5. Slurry conversion**: This method involves preparing a suspension by mixing the drug and coformer in a suitable solvent. The suspension is then subjected to conditions promoting crystallization, such as cooling or evaporation.<sup>33</sup>

**6. Hot melt extrusion (HME):** HME involves the use of heat and mechanical force to melt and mix the drug and coformer components. The mixture is then cooled to induce the formation of Co-crystals.<sup>34</sup>

**7. Spray drying:** In a spray, the drug and co-form solution or suspension is sprayed into fine droplets. The solvent evaporates, resulting in the formation of co-crystals in the dried powder. <sup>35</sup>

**8. Hydrothermal/solvothermal methods**: Co-crystals can be synthesized under high pressure and high temperature conditions using a hydrothermal method or solvothermal techniques. These methods can lead to the formation of well-defined Co-crystals. <sup>36</sup>

**9. Grinding without solvent (Neat grinding):** Pure milling involves milling the drug and coformer without solvents. The mechanical force used in grinding promotes the interaction of molecules and Co-crystals formation.<sup>37</sup>

**10. Melt Congealing:** In this technique, the drug and coformer are melted together and then the melt is cooled causes the formation of Co-crystals. This approach is suitable for components with low melting points.<sup>38</sup>

#### **11. Sonocrystallization:**

Ultrasonic irradiation is applied to promote cocrystal formation. The acoustic cavitation generated during sonication can enhance mixing and promote nucleation.<sup>39</sup>

#### **12. Vapour Diffusion:**

This method involves exposing a solution containing the drug and coformer to vapors of a nonsolvent, leading to supersaturation and cocrystal formation.<sup>40</sup>

The selection of the appropriate technique depends on factors such as the physicochemical properties of the components, the desired cocrystal characteristics, and the scalability of the process for manufacturing.

# A Co-crystals preparation is often used address issues such as poor solubility, stability or bioavailability. <sup>41-42</sup>

**1. Carbamazepine**: Carbamazepine is an anticonvulsant that has been studied in Cocrystals formulations. Various coformers such as saccharin and nicotinamide have been used to improve its solubility and dissolution rate.

**2. Ibuprofen**: Ibuprofen is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) commonly used to treat pain and inflammation. Ibuprofen crystals are mixed with coformers such as caffeine and theophylline was investigated for better solubility.

**3. Theophylline**: Theophylline, a bronchodilator, has been studied in crystalline mixtures with coformers such as oxalic acid improves solubility and stability. Caffeine: Caffeine, a central nervous system stimulant, has been studied in Co-crystals preparations with coformers such as citric acid to improve solubility and bioavailability.

**4. Carvedilol**: Carvedilol, a beta blocker used to treat heart failure and hypertension investigated in Co-crystals formulations to improve its solubility and dissolution properties.

**5. Fluconazole**: Fluconazole, an antifungal drug, has been studied in the form of crystalline mixtures coformers such as saccharin to overcome solubility problems.

**6. Aspirin:** Aspirin, a widely used pain and anti-inflammatory drug, has been studied in co-crystals formulations to improve solubility, such as nicotinamide.

**7. Paracetamol (acetaminophen)**: Paracetamol, a common pain reliever and antipyretic, has been studied in Co-crystals preparations containing to improve solubility, such as caffeine.

#### **Excipients and Polymer used to formulate Co-crystals**

As for excipients, the choice depends on the specific goals of the formulation. Excipients may be selected to enhance stability, modify release characteristics, improve taste, or aid

in the manufacturing process. Common excipients used in pharmaceutical formulations include: <sup>43-44</sup>

#### **Polymeric Excipients:**

Excipients like hydroxypropyl cellulose (HPC), hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC), and polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP) are commonly used to modify drug release and improve stability.

#### Surfactants:

Surfactants such as polysorbate 80 or sodium lauryl sulfate may be used to enhance the solubility and dissolution of poorly soluble drugs.

#### **Binders:**

Binders such as microcrystalline cellulose (MCC) and lactose are used to improve binding tablet compositions.

**Disintegrants:** Excipients such as crosspovidone or crosscarmellose sodium are used for relief disintegration of tablets in the gastrointestinal tract.

**Sweeteners and Flavourings:** Excipients such as sucrose or mannitol can be used to improve the taste of the preparation.

**3.** Antioxidants and stabilizers: Excipients such as ascorbic acid or tocopherol can be added to increase the stability of the drug in the formulation.

It's important to note that the choice of drugs and excipients in cocrystal formulations is highly case-specific, and each drug-coformer system requires careful consideration based on the physicochemical properties and desired outcomes.

#### **Characterization of Formulation of Cocrystals**

The evaluation of pharmaceutical cocrystals involves a comprehensive analysis of their physicochemical, structural, and performance characteristics <sup>(45-49)</sup>

**1. Structural Characterization:** The structural characteristics done by the X-ray diffraction (XRD), single-crystal X-ray crystallography, solid-state NMR.

**2. Thermal analysis:** Thermal analysis of formulation characterised by Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC), thermogravimetric analysis (TGA).

**3. Spectroscopic techniques:** Spectroscopic analyses perform by the Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), Raman spectroscopy, UV-Vis spectroscopy.

**4. Powder X-ray Diffraction (PXRD):** Structure of the compound by powder X-ray diffraction to investigate the crystal structure of co-crystals. Polymorphic Screening & Choice.

**5. Solubility studies:** Equilibrium solubilities in various solvents.

**6. Morphology and particle size analysis:** Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS).

**7. Mechanical Properties**: Evaluation of mechanical properties using techniques such as nanoindentation.

Applications of cocrystal composition Combined formulation has many applications, especially in pharmaceuticals and materials in the fields of science. Here are some notable applications: <sup>(50-51)</sup>

#### **Pharmaceuticals:**

**1. Improve drug solubility:** Co-crystals can be used to improve poor solubility soluble drugs. This can improve the bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy of the drug.

**2. Improve stability:** Co-crystals can improve the stability of drugs and make them even better against degradation, which is crucial in formulation development.

**3. Taste Masking:** Cocrystals can be employed to mask the unpleasant taste of certain drugs, making them more palatable for patients, especially in the case of pediatric or geriatric populations.

#### Materials Science:

**1. Optical and Electronic Properties:** Cocrystals can exhibit unique optical and electronic properties that differ from the individual components. This makes them useful in the development of materials for electronic devices, sensors, and optoelectronic applications.

**2. Semiconductors:** Cocrystals may be designed to function as semiconductors, which is valuable for applications in electronics and photonics.

**3. Magnetic Properties:** Cocrystals can be engineered to have specific magnetic properties, making them useful in the development of magnetic materials.

#### **Food industry:**

**1. Enhancement of Taste and Aroma:** Co-crystal ideas can be used to enhance taste and aroma certain foods. This is especially important in the food industry for new and advanced food compositions.

#### **Environmental Applications:**

**1. Sorption and Separation:** Co-crystals can be designed to absorb and sequester with some selectivity gases or pollutants, making them useful in environmental remediation and cleaning processes.

**2. Agricultural Chemicals:** Pesticide Formula: Co-crystals can be used for agricultural chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides to improve their stability, solubility and overall effectiveness.

#### **003: FUTURE SCOPE**

Co-crystals can play an important role in drug development by addressing challenges such as poor solubility, stability and bioavailability. Possibility to adapt the properties of medicines in cooperation crystal technology can contribute to the development of personalized medicine.

**1. Combination Therapy:** Co-crystals offer opportunities to combine multiple active ingredients (API) into a single crystal structure. This may facilitate the formulation of combination therapy, which allows for better efficiency and patient compliance.

**2.** Advanced drug delivery systems: Co-crystals can be integrated into new drug delivery systems such as nanoparticles, liposomes, or micelles. These systems can improve targeted drug delivery, sustained release and controlled release profiles.

**3. Pediatric Formulations:** Co-crystals can be used to improve the taste and flavour of medicines, making them more suitable for pediatric formulations. This is especially important to ensure medication adherence children.

**4. Green chemistry and sustainable production:** The principles of green chemistry can be applied to the preparation of co-crystals by promotion ecological and

sustainable production practices. Green synthesis methods and the use of environmentally friendly solvents can help reduce environmental impact.

**5. Materials Science and Technology:** In addition to pharmaceuticals, co-crystals have applications in materials science design materials with special properties. This includes development materials for sensors, optoelectronics and catalysis.

**6. Nanotechnology Crystal Technology:** Co-crystals can be studied in nanotechnology applications, which promote design and production of nanomaterials with tailored properties for various applications.

**7. Inclusion of Co-crystals in Regulatory Guidelines:** As the design of cocrystals evolves, regulatory agencies may develop guidelines. In particular, the evaluation, approval and registration of co-crystalline compounds.

**8. Computer aided design and forecasting:** The use of computational methods to predict and design parallel crystals is an area of active research. Advanced computer techniques can help quickly screen and select potential parallel products, which accelerates the drug development process.

**9. Hybrid materials and multifunctional systems:** Co-crystals can be part of hybrid materials and multifunctional systems with a combination of properties such as mechanical strength, conductivity and catalytic activity.

**10.Continuous production:** The advantages of continuous co-crystal production processes can be explored efficiency, consistency and less waste compared to traditional batch processes.

**11. Biomedical and theranostic applications:** Co-crystals can find applications in therapeutic and diagnostic treatment functions are combined into one system for individual medicine and diseases monitoring.

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