

## New eco-friendly spectrofluorometric approaches for the analysis of three antiepileptic drugs based on quenching of Acriflavine and silver nanoparticles

Fawzia Ibrahim<sup>1</sup>, Rasha M. El-Sharawy<sup>2,\*</sup> and Sawsan Abd El-Razeq<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of analytical chemistry, Faculty of pharmacy, Mansoura University, Mansoura, Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Department of analytical chemistry, Faculty of pharmacy (Girls), Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

\* Correspondence: [rasha.elsharawy@yahoo.com](mailto:rasha.elsharawy@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract:** Two new spectrofluorometric methods have been developed for the quantitation of three antiepileptic drugs. The first method relied on monitoring the quenching effect of lamotrigine and carbamazepine on native fluorescence of acriflavine dye at 503nm ( $\lambda_{ex}260$  nm) in Britton Robinson buffer [pH 4]. The second one included the measuring of the quenching effect of carbamazepine and oxcarbazepine on the fluorescence intensity of silver nanoparticles at 531 nm ( $\lambda_{ex}265$  nm). Good linearity was obtained in method I over concentration range of 0.5 – 12  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  ( $r_2 = 0.9999$ ), with LOD of 0.16 and 0.157 and LOQ of 0.485 and 0.476 for lamotrigine and carbamazepine respectively. While in method II the linearity was in the range 1.0 -16  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  ( $r_2 = 0.9998$ ), with LOD of 0.167 and 0.259 and LOQ of 0.507 and 0.785 for carbamazepine and oxcarbazepine, respectively. The greenness of the methods was checked by three approaches; national environmental method index [NEMI], the analytical eco-scale and green analytical procedure index [GAPI].

**Keywords:** spectrofluorometry; quenching; lamotrigine; carbamazepine; oxcarbazepine; eco-friendly.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Lamotrigine (LMT) fig. 1(A) is a drug used to treat epilepsy, belongs to the class of phenyltriazine and it stabilizes the mood in bipolar disorder<sup>1</sup>. Lamotrigine was approved to use in USA in 1994 and it is considered the first-line treatment for primary seizures. Carbamazepine (CBZ) fig. 1 (B) is an anticonvulsant drug, described to cure bipolar disorder<sup>2</sup>; it works by reducing the electrical activity in the brain. Oxcarbazepine (OXC) fig. 1 (C) is a drug used in treating partial epilepsy as it is described for focal or generalized seizures<sup>3,4</sup> and it is a derivative of carbamazepine has been introduced to the market in 2000.

Different analytical techniques have been developed to determine the three cited drugs as spectrophotometry<sup>5-11</sup>, spectrofluorometry<sup>12-14</sup>,

chemiluminescence<sup>15</sup>, electrochemistry<sup>16-18</sup>, HPTLC<sup>19-21</sup>, HPLC<sup>22-26</sup>, and UPLC<sup>27-30</sup>.

In our survey in literature only two fluorometric methods have been reported for the determination of lamotrigine<sup>12, 13</sup> one through reaction with o-phthalaldehyde in the presence of 2-mercaptoethanol and the other by quenching the fluorescence of N-doped graphene quantum dots after its solid-phase extraction using magnetic graphene oxide and only one method has been reported for the determination of carbamazepine through reaction with NBD-Cl<sup>14</sup>.

The purpose of this work is to develop a sensitive, fast and simple fluorometric method for the quantitation of lamotrigine and carbamazepine in their tablet formulations through quenching of native fluorescence of acriflavine dye. Again carbamazepine and oxcarbazepine have been determined by

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quenching of the native fluorescence of silver nanoparticles because of their unique properties.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Instruments

- Pure samples of Lamotrigine (99%) as stated by the supplier were obtained from GlaxoSmithKline pharmaceutical, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt and checked by TLC<sup>(19)</sup>.
- Pure samples of Carbamazepine (99.7%) and Oxcarbazepine (99%) as stated by the supplier were obtained from Novartis Pharma, Zaytoun Al Qebleya, Cairo, Egypt and checked by TLC<sup>(20, 21)</sup>.
- Lamictal<sup>®</sup> 50 mg supplied by (GlaxoSmithKline pharmaceutical S.A., Poland), with batch no.≠ WL2Y.
- Lamictal<sup>®</sup> 100 mg supplied by (GlaxoSmithKline pharmaceutical S.A., Poland), with batch no.≠ W52D.
- Tegretol<sup>®</sup> 200 mg product of (Novartis Pharma), with batch no.≠ Y0632.
- Tegretol CR<sup>®</sup> 400 mg product of (Novartis Pharma), with batch no.≠ Y0382.
- Trileptal<sup>®</sup> 300 mg product of (Novartis Pharma), with batch no.≠ 112521A.
- Acriflavine aqueous solution (Sigma Aldrich, USA)  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  M was prepared in distilled water.
- Britton Robinson buffer solution was made by mixing up (0.04 M) acetic acid, (0.04 M) boric acid and (0.04 M) phosphoric acid<sup>34</sup>.
- Aqueous 0.2 M NaOH (Merck, Germany).
- Methanol [HPLC grade] was supplied by Sigma Aldrich, USA.
- Sodium borohydride (98%) were purchased from Fisher Chemical (UK) ;( $2 \times 10^{-3}$  M) freshly prepared in water by dissolving 0.0189g in 250 mL water.
- Silver nitrate (99.8%) was supplied by Sigma-Aldrich Co.; ( $1 \times 10^{-3}$  M) in water.
- Distilled water was used during this work.

### 2.2. Preparation of Ag nanoparticles

The Ag nanoparticles were synthesized following a previously described procedure<sup>(35)</sup>. 30 mL of freshly prepared aqueous NaBH<sub>4</sub> ( $2 \times 10^{-3}$  M) was transferred to 250 mL flask in ice bath on a magnetic stirrer. Add 10 mL of AgNO<sub>3</sub> solution ( $1 \times 10^{-3}$  M) to the stirred NaBH<sub>4</sub> solution approximately 1 drop per second to obtain a ( $2.7 \times 10^{-4}$  M) Ag nanoparticles. This solution was stable for one month<sup>(36)</sup>.

### 2.3. Stock drug solutions

Stock solutions of LMT, CBZ or OXC had been prepared as 0.1mg/mL in methanol separately.

### 2.4. General procedure

- **Method I** In two separate groups of 10 mL volumetric flasks 1.5 ml acriflavine solution ( $5 \times 10^{-6}$  M), 1.5 ml Britton–Robinson buffer [pH 4], and 0.05 – 1.2 mL standard solutions (0.1 mg/mL) of LMT or CBZ were transferred and mixed well. The mixtures were kept for 15min at ambient temperature, and then completed with water to the mark. The fluorescence intensity has been measured for a blank against each experiment at 503 nm ( $\lambda_{ex} = 260$  nm). The calibration curves were plotted by drawing  $\Delta F$  versus the concentration of the drug and regression analysis was performed.

- **Method II** In two separate groups of 10 mL volumetric flasks, aliquots (0.1-1.6 mL) of standard solution of CBZ or OXC and 0.4 mL of ( $2.7 \times 10^{-4}$  M) Ag nanoparticles solution were mixed well. Then diluted to 10 mL with distilled water and leave for 5 min then completed with water to volume.

The blank fluorescence intensity had been measured against each experiment at 531 nm ( $\lambda_{ex}$  265 nm).  $\Delta F$  was plotted at 531 nm against drug concentration in  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  to draw calibration curves and regression analysis was performed.

### 2.5. Application to pharmaceutical preparation

Ten tablets of each of Lamictal<sup>®</sup> or Tegretol<sup>®</sup> or Trileptal<sup>®</sup> were weighed precisely, finely ground, and mixed well.

A precisely weighed amount of each fine powder amounting to 10 mg of the drug was relocated into a small conical flask and extracted with  $3 \times 30$  mL of methanol. Then the extracts and washings were filtered into a 100 mL volumetric flask and completed to the mark with methanol to get a solution labeled to contain 0.1 mg/mL. The later solutions of each drug were analyzed by quenching spectrofluorometry as detailed under general procedure.

## 3. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Methods I and II

Acriflavine is a member of the acedine derivative and used as a reagent with high native fluorescence intensity at 503 nm ( $\lambda_{ex}$  260 nm). It was found to be quenched by adding many pharmaceutical compounds<sup>31-33</sup>. Thus, the

quenching effect of LMT or CBZ onto acriflavine solution was studied in method I; fig. 2 (A, B).

This quenching effect was attributed to formation of new fluorescent ion-associated complexes composed of acriflavine and each of the studied drugs. The different parameters which affect sensitivity of the proposed methods were studied.

In method II nanotechnology was used which is a new and remarkable field of recent research deals with design, synthesis and manipulation of particles structure which their size ranged from 1 to 100 nm. Recently, usage of metal nanoparticles in luminescence measurements enhances and increases their luminescence<sup>34-37</sup>.

Because of the unique properties of silver nanoparticles, they are in area of interest, so it used for determination of CBZ and OXC; Fig. 3(A,B). It noteworthy to mention that lamotrigine gave unreliable results with silver nanoparticles.

### 3.2. Optimization of experimental conditions

**Buffer medium**\_ Britton–Robinson buffer and Acetate buffer were tried as a medium for the reaction of each drug with acriflavine. Britton–Robinson buffer solution pH  $4 \pm 0.1$  gave better quenching of fluorescence intensity, so it was the buffer of choice; Fig. 4 A. Using different volumes of it (0.5- 2.5 mL) to the reaction mixture, illustrated an optimum volume of  $1.5 \pm 0.2$ ; Fig. 4 B.

**Concentration and volume of Acriflavine**\_ different concentrations of acriflavine reagent ( $0.4 - 2.0 \times 10^{-5}$  M) were studied on the quenched signal where maximum  $\Delta F$  was obtained with  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  M acriflavine; therefore this concentration was selected throughout the study. It also found that  $\Delta F$  increased by increasing volume of acriflavine, hence  $1.5 \pm 0.1$  mL of  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  M acriflavine solution was found to be optimum.

**Effect of the Silver Nanoparticles concentration** \_ The fluorescence intensity of silver NPs was increased and reached maximum value, when the nanoparticles' concentration ranged from  $2.0 \times 10^{-4}$  to  $3.0 \times 10^{-4}$  M. Further increase of concentration resulted in the decrease of the fluorescence intensity. Thus ( $2.7 \times 10^{-4}$  M) was considered optimum concentration of silver NPs.

**Reaction time**\_ it was observed that maximum quenching effect of each drug was obtained after  $15 \pm 2$  min of mixing with the reagent, after which  $\Delta F$  wasn't affected; therefore, reaction was allowed for this time. Fig. 5A

Again, it was observed that maximum quenching effect of carbamazepine or oxcarbazepine on silver

NPs was obtained after 5 min of mixing with the reagent, after which  $\Delta F$  wasn't affected till one hour; therefore, reaction was allowed to be measured after 5 min. Fig. 5B

**Effect of diluting solvent**\_ numerous diluents for the reaction mixture of the two methods were examined. Distilled water gave the greatest  $\Delta F$  for the studied drugs which adds to the benefits of the method.

### 3.3. Stoichiometry of the fluorometric reaction

Limiting logarithmic method has been used to determine the stoichiometric ratio of the fluorescence reaction between LMT or CBZ and acriflavine. Fig. 6 (A) displays plots of log concentration of [Lamotrigine] versus log  $\Delta F$  at a fixed concentration of acriflavine and log [acriflavine] versus log  $\Delta F$  at a fixed concentration of Lamotrigine. Also, Fig. 6 (B) displays plots of log concentration of [Carbamazepine] versus log  $\Delta F$  at a fixed concentration of acriflavine and log [acriflavine] versus log  $\Delta F$  at a fixed concentration of CBZ.

Both graphs gave straight lines with the slopes' values 1.43 and 1.4 for LMT and 0.972 and 0.958 for CBZ, respectively and from the slopes, the ratio of the reaction of the LMT or CBZ: complex of acriflavine can be considered as 1 : 1. The formation of an ion-associated complex was the proposed mechanism for the reaction quenching reaction<sup>(38)</sup>. (Scheme 1)

### 3.4. TEM images and characteristics of Silver nanoparticles UV spectrum

Transmission electron microscope (TEM) image Fig. 7 (A) showed the dark spherical shaped, mono-dispersed silver nanoparticles (Ag NPs) with size about 50 nm. Fig. 7 (B) showed the narrow absorption peak of Ag NPs near 400 nm which confirms the high level of dispersion of the Ag NPs.

### 3.5. The mechanism of fluorescence quenching in the proposed methods

The fluorescence quenching takes place through various mechanisms, such as inner filter effect [IFE], dynamic quenching or static quenching.

It was found that the spectra of excitation of acriflavine or Ag NPs and UV absorbance of three drugs showed some overlap, suggesting that the quenching might be related to IFE. So IFE could be evaluated for the three drugs by the following equation<sup>39</sup> :

$$F_{\text{(corrected)}} = F_{\text{(observed)}} \times \text{antilog} \{ (A_{\text{ex}} - A_{\text{em}}) / 2 \}$$

In which  $F_{\text{(corrected)}}$  is the fluorescence intensity

after subtracting IFE,  $F_{(observed)}$  was the measured fluorescence,  $A_{ex}$  and  $A_{em}$  were the absorbance of the three drugs at the excitation and emission wavelengths of fluorophore. Then (%E) the suppressed efficiency was obtained for the observed and corrected fluorescence from this equation:

$$\% E = \left[ 1 - \frac{F}{F^0} \right] \times 100$$

From drawing % E of both  $F_{(corrected)}$  and  $F_{(observed)}$  of the three drugs versus their concentrations (Fig. 8), It was found that %E decreased. This decrease indicate that IFE of the three drugs was the main cause of quenching by about 31% and 23% for LAM and CBZ respectively in method I and by 21% and 13% for CBZ and OXC respectively in method II.

Stern–Volmer equation was also applied<sup>(40)</sup>. In static quenching, the quencher substance complexes with the fluorescent material (in ground state). However, in dynamic quenching the quencher substances collide with the fluorescent materials (in their excited state). Stern–Volmer equation was:

$$F^0/F = 1 + D_{SV} C_{que}$$

In which  $F$  and  $F^0$  are the fluorescence intensities of fluorophore (Acridine or Silver NPs) with or without the quencher;  $C_{que}$  is the quencher's concentration and  $D_{SV}$  is the Stern–Volmer quenching constant.

Stern–Volmer constant was calculated at different temperatures. When there is an inverse relationship between Stern–Volmer quenching constant  $D_{SV}$  and temperature, the mechanism of quenching is static quenching. However positive relationship between Stern–Volmer quenching constant  $D_{SV}$  and temperature indicated dynamic quenching.

The three temperatures (293<sup>0</sup>F, 303<sup>0</sup>F and 313<sup>0</sup>F) were examined and Stern–Volmer graphs of  $F^0/F$  vs.  $C_{que}$  are presented in Fig. 9 (A-D).  $F^0/F$  and  $C_{que}$  had a linear relationship at the three temperatures where with increased temperature  $D_{SV}$  value decreased, so the mechanism of quenching was static quenching.

### 3.6. Method validation

The methods were validated relied on ICH Q2R1 guidelines<sup>41</sup>

#### Linearity and range

A good linear regression was obtained by drawing the  $\Delta F$  between blank and experiment versus the final drug concentration ranged between

0.5– 12  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  for LMT and CBZ in method I and 1.0– 16  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  for CBZ and OXC in method II under the optimum experimental conditions. These equations were obtained from data analysis of the linear relationship:

- method I

$$\Delta F = 7.593 C + 30.55 \quad C \quad (r^2 = 0.9999) \text{ for LMT}$$

$$\Delta F = 65.214 C + 36.912 \quad C \quad (r^2 = 0.9999) \text{ for CBZ}$$

- method II

$$\Delta F = 76.514 C + 47.29 \quad C \quad (r^2 = 0.9998) \text{ for CBZ}$$

$$\Delta F = 37.99 C + 51.65 \quad C \quad (r^2 = 0.9998) \text{ for OXC}$$

Where:  $\Delta F$  is the difference in fluorescence intensity between blank and experiment;  $r^2$  is the correlation coefficient and  $C$  is the drug concentration in  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ .

The data was analysed statistically<sup>42</sup> showed small values of SD of residuals ( $S_{y/x}$ ); 1.86 for LMT and 2.2 for CBZ in method I and are 3.01 for CBZ and 5.744 for OXC in method II with a good value for the correlation coefficient ( $r^2$ ) of the regression equations, which indicate small scattering of the points around the calibration plots. LOQ and LOD were calculated according to ICH Q2R1 recommendation<sup>41</sup>:

$$\text{LOQ} = 10 S_a/b$$

$$\text{LOD} = 3.3 S_a/b$$

LOQ was between 0.476 and 0.785  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  while LOD ranged between 0.157 and 0.256  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ , Table 1.

#### Accuracy and Precision

Pure samples of LMT, CBZ and OXC over the working concentration range were examined by the developed methods. The obtained results were in a good agreement with the results of comparison methods with concentration range 0.5 - 12  $\mu\text{g}$  for LMT or CBZ and 1.0 – 16  $\mu\text{g}$  for CBZ or OXC.

The intraday and interday precisions were assayed by analyzing three concentrations of each LMT, CBZ and OXC in the pure form three sequential times in a day and on three sequential days, where intraday %RSD had range between 0.14 and 1.63 and interday% RSD were between 0.31 and 1.87. Table 2.

**Table 1.** Analytical performance data for the developed florescence quenching methods.

Parameters	Lamotrigine	Carbamazepine		Oxcarbazepine
	(method I)	method I	method II	(method II)
Linearity range ( $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ )	0.5 – 12	0.5 – 12	1-16	1-16
Intercept (a) $\pm$ SD	7.593 $\pm$ 1.4	65.214 $\pm$ 1.7	76.514 $\pm$ 2.39	37.99 $\pm$ 4.05
Slope (b) $\pm$ SD	30.55 $\pm$ 0.19	36.912 $\pm$ 0.22	47.29 $\pm$ 0.25	51.65 $\pm$ 0.44
SD of residual	1.864	2.2096	3.01	5.744
Correlation coefficient	0.9999	0.9999	0.9998	0.9998
LOD ( $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ )	0.16	0.157	0.167	0.259
LOQ ( $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ )	0.485	0.476	0.507	0.785
Accuracy	99.87 $\pm$ 0.78	99.98 $\pm$ 0.62	99.91 $\pm$ 0.67	100.22 $\pm$ 1.15
% Error	0.296	0.234	0.253	0.434

### Robustness

It was determined by estimating the impact of small variation of experimental variables:

- In Method I: Volume of Britton Robinson buffer (1.5 mL  $\pm$  0.2) and its pH (4  $\pm$  0.2), acriflavine (1.5 mL  $\pm$  0.2).
- In Method II: Volume of Ag NPs was found to be (0.4 mL  $\pm$  0.05).

The results had not been affected significantly by little changes in the variables; so, the developed quenching fluorimetric methods were found to be robust; Table 3.

### Application to the analysis of pharmaceutical preparation

Both developed and reported methods were used to determine LMT, CBZ and OXC in Lamictal<sup>®</sup>, Tegretol<sup>®</sup> and Trileptal<sup>®</sup> and then the results of the developed methods were statistically compared with those of the reported methods<sup>6,9,14</sup>.

Tables 4, 5 showed values of Student t- test and variance F ratio and revealed that there was no considerable difference between reported and developed methods regarding accuracy and precision. However, the developed quenching fluorometric methods were much more selective for determination of the three cited drugs regarding the usage of two wavelengths ( $\lambda_{\text{ex}}$  and  $\lambda_{\text{em}}$ ).

### Selectivity

The methods' selectivity had been checked by monitoring any confusion from the widespread tablet additives like starch, talc and lactose which did not have any effect on the results of the developed fluorometric method.

### 3.7. Estimation of the developed methods Greenness

Nowadays it is very significant to estimate any analytical method greenness, so three approaches were used to evaluate greenness of the developed fluorometric methods. The first one is [NEMI] the national environmental method index<sup>43</sup>; Fig. 10 (A), the developed methods meet the standards of the NEMI approach.

The second one is the analytical eco-scale<sup>42</sup>, which relies on counting the penalty point; Table 6 summarized the obtained PPs for the proposed methods which are a score of 83 for method I and 77 for method II. Although the reported methods were found to be green according to eco-scale<sup>44</sup> table 6, the proposed methods were much more selective and sensitive than the reported methods.

The score obtained approved that the developed methods are acceptable and excellent green ones. The third approach is [GAPI] the green analytical procedure index<sup>45</sup> which is one of the new tools to estimate the greenness of the methods and gathers the both advantages of eco-scale and NEMI tools as

it estimate the greenness starting from the sample collection to the final determination. Fig. 11 and

table 7 clarify the GAPI assessment of the proposed methods.

**Table 2.** Precision data for the developed fluorometric methods for the analysis of pure lamotrigine, carbamazepine and oxcarbazepine

Drug			Taken Concentration (µg/mL)	Found Concentration* (µg/mL)	% RSD	% Error
Lamotrigine	Method I	Intraday	1	1.001	1.11	0.64
			8	7.856	0.14	0.08
			10	10.102	0.31	0.18
		Interday	1	0.989	1.07	0.62
			8	8.005	0.31	0.18
			10	9.986	0.73	0.42
Carbamazepine	Method I	Intraday	1	1.012	0.68	0.39
			5	4.92	0.35	0.20
			10	10.04	1.44	0.83
		Interday	1	0.989	1.50	0.87
			5	4.96	0.92	0.53
			10	10.13	0.44	0.26
	Method II	Intraday	1	1.008	0.67	0.39
			8	7.902	0.25	0.15
			14	13.9	1.33	0.77
		Interday	1	0.980	1.54	0.89
			8	7.934	0.64	0.37
			14	14.26	1.73	1.00
Oxcarbazepine	Method II	Intraday	1	1.018	0.92	0.71
			7	6.919	1.08	0.63
			15	15.150	1.63	0.94
		Interday	1	1.010	1.87	1.03
			7	6.867	1.68	0.97
			15	15.168	0.65	0.37

\* Average of three determinations

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Accurate and green spectrofluorometric methods through quenching of acriflavine dye or silver nanoparticles were used for the quantitation of Lamotrigine, Carbamazepine and Oxcarbazepine in pure forms and in their pharmaceutical preparations.

LOD and LOQ of the developed methods were 0.16 and 0.485 µg/mL for Lamotrigine, 0.157 and 0.476 µg/mL for Carbamazepine in method I, 0.167

and 0.507 µg/mL for Carbamazepine in method II and 0.259, 0.785 µg/mL for Oxcarbazepine in method II respectively. The two methods proved to be robust and successfully applied to the pharmaceutical preparations of the cited drugs with high sensitivity. Hence, they can be used in quality control laboratories and can be used for application in biological fluids.

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