

## Simple Artificial OralCavity Model for *in vitro* Evaluation of Orally Disintegrating Tablets

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Conflict of interest: none declared

**Keywords:** artificial oral cavity, orodispersible dosage form, disintegration test, MG apparatus

(Reveived:May 2012 , Accepted :June 2012 )

### Abstract

Many patients who have problems in swallowing of solid dosage forms may benefit the Orodispersible tablets, where they rapidly disintegrate and dissolve in the oral cavity. Yet, there is no official and reproducible *in vitro* test that can predict the disintegration time. The present study was designed to evaluate a novel *in vitro* model for evaluation of disintegration time of the orodispersible tablets. A novel simple apparatus was prepared to simulate the oral cavity known as MG apparatus; it consists mainly of adult dental set with saliva input reservoir and digital monitoring. To validate the MG apparatus, nine blank orodispersible tablets were prepared using different concentrations of four superdisintegrants, in addition one of them prepared under different compression forces as well as subjected to stress storage condition (50°C/75%RH for 2weeks). Also, five commercial orodispersible tablets were used to compare between the saliva and buffer as disintegration media. Moreover, sixteen volunteers were participated in human sensory tests for disintegration. The results indicate that there is a very high correlation between the novel *in vitro* disintegration test using the new method (MG apparatus) and the *in vivo* disintegration using human sensory test; while poor correlation was reported with the conventional method. In conclusion, the novel MG method is simple and highly correlated with the *in vivo* method and might be of value to predict disintegration time for orodispersible solid dosage forms.

تطوير تجويف فموي صناعي يستخدم لتقييم الوقت اللازم لتفتت الحبوب التي تتفتت سريعاً في الفم مختبرياً

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**مفتاح البحث:** تجويف فموي صناعي، أشكال دوائية تتفتت في الفم، إختبار التفتت، جهاز MG

### الملخص

كثير من المرضى ومنهم كبار السن والأطفال لديهم صعوبة في بلع الأدوية وخاصة الصلبة منها، لذلك فإن المستحضر الذي يتفتت سريعاً في الفم هو حل لهذه المشكلة.

الحبوب التي تتفتت في الفم هي تقنية مطورة حديثاً وتعني أنها تتفتت أو تتحلل سريعاً خلال عدة ثواني عندما توضع فوق اللسان بدون الحاجة للماء.

بالرغم من أن وقت التفتت يعتبر معيار رئيسي لتقييم أداء الحبوب السريعة التفتت، لكن لحد الآن لا توجد طرق دستورية بسيطة ودقيقة في المختبر وذلك لأن حجم اللعاب قليل وكذلك سرعة تفتت الحبوب.

جهاز جديد وبسيط ركب بشكل يشبه التجويف الفموي وسمي جهاز (MG) يتكون بصورة رئيسية من موديل لفكي اسنان و خزان يغذي اللعاب ونظام تصوير فيديو.

لغرض تقييم الجهاز حضرت تسعة تركيبات لتكوين حبوب سريعة التفتت لا تحتوي على دواء باستخدام اربعة انواع من المفتتات المحسنة وبتراكيز مختلفة. اضافة الى تحضير واحدة من التركيبات باستخدام قيم مختلفة من قوة الضغط المسلط وكذلك تعرضها الى ظروف خزن مشددة (50 درجة مئوية و 75% رطوبة نسبية لمدة اسبوعين). كذلك استخدام خمسة انواع من الحبوب السريعة التفتت موجودة في الصيدليات لمقارنة تأثير استخدام المحلول المسيطر حامضيته بدل محلول اللعاب الصناعي. ستة عشر من المتطوعين شاركوا في تجربة الحبوب في افواههم.

أظهرت النتائج علاقة ربط عالية بين نتائج وقت التفتت باستخدام الجهاز الجديد ونتائج المتبرعين بينما لا توجد علاقة ربط مع النتائج باستخدام الطريق التقليدية حسب دستور الادوية البريطاني. من الممكن الاستنتاج من نتائج البحث ان الطريقة البسيطة المقترحة ذات علاقة الربط العالية هي موعودة ومفيدة لتقييم وقت التفتت للحبوب السريعة التفتت.

## Introduction

Recently, the oral disintegration tablets (ODT) are highly interested by pharmaceutical researchers because of their advantages over the conventional oral solid dosage forms like tablets, capsules, pills, granules, and powders regarding patient compliance, convenience, and performance which consequently produce efficient therapy [1-5]. The US Food and Drug Administration Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) defines an ODT as “a solid dosage form containing medicinal substances, which disintegrates rapidly, usually within a matter of seconds, when placed upon the tongue” [6]. Additionally, the European Pharmacopoeia describes orodispersible tablet as a tablet that can be placed in oral cavity where it disperses rapidly before swallowing [7]. The main critical property of ODTs is the disintegration time in the buccal cavity over the tongue; but there is no official test specific for ODTs reported until now. Although many trials to do the disintegration test have been published by many researchers including the use of CCD camera, Texture Analyzer, and modified dissolution apparatus [8-11], however, they are either complicated or not reproducible. Also in most of published articles the conventional disintegration tests for normal tablets described in the Pharmacopoeias are used for ODTs, but the results are widely variable due to the large test volume of disintegration medium used compared to normal saliva volume which is not more than few milliliters [12]. This may lead to alternative use of *in vivo* study that depends on human sensation which has many difficulties especially when the drug is pharmacologically potent. To overcome these problems, a novel simple apparatus that simulate the adult human oral cavity has been developed to provide the same saliva flow rate at 37°C with digital monitoring to a video that record the disintegration process. To evaluate the new apparatus (MG), nine formulas of blank ODTs were prepared with different types and concentrations of super-disintegrants by direct compression method.

Also the selected formula was prepared under three compression forces and subject to stress storage condition. As well as five commercial marketed tablets of different weights, sizes, and shapes were used in evaluation. The purpose of this study was to develop simple, applicable, and highly reproducible *in vitro* disintegration test for ODTs with *in vivo* results.

## Materials and Methods

### Materials

Cab-O-Sil and Mannitol were purchased from (Sigma-Aldrich, Germany). Talc, HCl, and Mg stearate were purchased from (BDH, England). Sodium starch glycolate (SSG), Cross-povidone (CP), and Cross-carmellose sodium were purchased from (Loba chemical, India). Calcium Chloride was purchased from (Gainland Chemical Company, U.K). Sodium Bicarbonate was purchased from (Teen Tech. Northants, U.K). Disodium hydrogen orthophosphate was purchased from (Sharlauchemie, EU). All other chemicals used in the study were of analytical grade. The commercial ODTs used in this study were purchased from the local market include Oronime® tablets, (TAD Pharma Italia S.r.l.); Olenaz Rapitab®, (Sun Pharmaceutical Ltd., India); Domstal-5 DT® tablets, (Torrent

Pharmaceuticals Ltd., India); Nimulide-MD® tablets, (Panacea Biotech Ltd., India); and Ketanov MD® tablets, (Ranbaxy-India).

#### **Preparation of blank ODTs**

The ODT formulations utilized in the present study (Table 1) were prepared using super-disintegrants (SSG, CCS, Crospovidone, and MCC), mannitol as a diluent, with cab-o-sil, talc, and magnesium stearate as a flow promoters. They were mixed together in geometrical order for 10 min, and passed through sieve no. 18. The powdered mixture was then blended for 2 min with cab-o-sil, talc, and magnesium stearate and then compressed directly into tablets using 8 mm single punch tablet machine (Manesty Type F, Liverpool, England).

#### **Evaluation of the prepared ODTs**

##### **Thickness.**

Ten tablets from each formula were selected randomly and their thickness was measured with a micrometer screw gauge [13].

##### **Hardness.**

The crushing strength of the tablets was measured using a Monsanto hardness tester and expressed as a force in kg/cm<sup>2</sup> required for crushing the tablet. Six tablets from each formula batch were tested randomly and the average reading  $\pm$  SD was recorded [14].

##### **Friability.**

Twenty tablets were weighed and placed in a Roche friabilator and the equipment was rotated at 25 rpm for 4 min. The tablets were taken out, dedusted and reweighed. The percentage friability of the tablets was calculated using the following equation [13].

$$\text{Friability \%} = \frac{\text{Initial weight} - \text{Final weight}}{\text{Initial weight}} \times 100$$

#### **Conventional in vitro Disintegration Test**

The *in vitro* disintegration tests were done for ODTs according to the British Pharmacopeia at 37 $\pm$ 0.5°C using artificial saliva as a disintegration medium. Disintegration apparatus with a basket rack assembly containing six open ended tubes and 10-mesh screen on the bottom was used. A tablet was placed in each tube of the basket and the time required for complete disintegration of the tablets, with no palpable mass remaining in the apparatus, was measured visually using a stopwatch, the mean of six readings were reported [15]. The artificial saliva solution was prepared according to the method proposed by Mariano *et al* (Table 2) [16].

#### **Measurement of disintegration time by human sensory test**

The disintegration time of ODTs was measured in sixteen healthy male volunteers (22–37 years old). The disintegration test in the oral cavity was assessed according to the method described by Ogata *et al* [17].

The volunteers were informed about the protocol and purpose of the study; all were asked to rinse their oral cavity with water prior to the test. Each volunteer was asked to place one tablet on the tongue and close the mouth; a stopwatch was started immediately. The end point of disintegration in the human sensory test was defined as the time when the tablet placed on the tongue had disintegrated without leaving any lumps. All the volunteers were instructed to rinse their mouth after completion of the test. This study was performed in accordance with the regulations of the Declaration of Helsinki about research in humans [18].

#### **The Novel disintegration method (The MG-Model)**

The MG apparatus consists mainly from 3 parts; the disintegration medium reservoir, the simulated oral cavity, and digital monitoring system as shown in figure (1). The reservoir contains heater with thermostat to control the temperature of disintegration medium; the liquid was transferred through a tube at controlled flow rate by valve to enter into the oral cavity around the tongue from multiple small

orifices in the tube. The simulated oral cavity, which is an adult dental set of lower and upper jaws, was connected by screw and instilled in a container with drainage tube to control the level of fluid in the cavity. The tongue was replaced by porous sponge filled the lower jaw around it. A tube with multiple orifices was supplied with fluid at controlled rate as shown in figure (2). The digital monitoring system consists of dental mini-camera (USB mini microscope A002 Adjustable auto-focus microscope; Shenzhen Kingsen Technology Co., Ltd. China) connected to a computer for recording the disintegration process as videoimages. In this MG-model (or the MG method), the temperature of disintegration medium in the reservoir was controlled at  $37 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$  and start to flow at 1.0ml/min for 10 min to ensure that the liquid reach the tongue; then the disintegration test can be initiated by putting the tablet over the tongue and close the upper jaw while the camera record the processes until the disintegration is complete.

#### ***Effect of concentration and type of superdisintegrant***

Nine blank formulas were prepared (F1-F9) using different concentrations (2.5, 5, and 10%) and types of superdisintegrants (CCS, SSG, CP, and MCC) to study their effect on hardness and disintegration time.

#### ***Effect of force of compression***

The selected formula was prepared under different compression forces (25, 30, and 35 KN) to study the effect of compression force on hardness and disintegration time.

#### ***Effect of stress storage condition***

Stability studies were carried out for the ODTs; the tablets were stored at  $50^\circ\text{C}/75 \pm 5\% \text{ RH}$  using saturated sodium chloride solution desiccator for two weeks. After storage, samples were withdrawn and tested for hardness and disintegration time. The disintegration times of stored samples were measured using the MG method and compared with those of the initial samples.

#### ***Effect of type of disintegration medium***

The five marketed commercial tablets were used in this study to compare the effect of using buffer instead of artificial saliva.

#### ***Statistical Analysis***

The results of the experiments are given as a mean  $\pm$  S.D and were analyzed utilizing Student's t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using Sigma Plot 11 software.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Physical Properties of ODTs***

Table 3 shows that the friability of all prepared ODTs is within the accepted percent (less than 1%). The hardness of the 9 formulas was kept around 3.7 which is suitable in order to present the effect of type and concentration of superdisintegrant.

### ***Comparison of the disintegration time using the conventional disintegration test and the in vivotest***

The results of disintegration time for the prepared ODTs are shown in table 3; they are widely variable with high deviation by using conventional disintegration test, also indicates that the shortest disintegration time is reported for formula that contains 5% SSG. Meanwhile, the results of *in vivo* human sensory tests are reproducible with low standard deviation, and indicates that the 5% CP shows the shortest disintegration time within the single super-disintegrant, and in case of using 2 super-disintegrants, the combination of 5% CP with 10% MCC demonstrates the shortest disintegration time; these results are in agreement with those reported by many researcher that work in the field of ODTs [19-21].

The results presented in figure 3 indicated that there was no correlation between the disintegration times determined by the conventional disintegration test and those of the human sensory test ( $R^2=0.492$ ), indicating that it was not accurate and reproducible to use the conventional disintegration test to determine the real oral disintegration time when the ODTs administered by patient. Increasing the compression force during preparation of tablets significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) prolong the

disintegration time according to conventional disintegration method, while lower change was observed in the disintegration time measured by human sensory test (Table 4) which reflect poor correlation ( $R^2=0.779$ ) (Figure 4) between the conventional disintegration test and those of the human sensory test. This effect may be attributed to the mechanical stress produced by the tongue in the mouth [22]. Similar observations were noticed in disintegration time for the formula subjected to stress storage conditions (Table 5 and Figure 4).

***Comparison of the disintegration time of the prepared ODTs using the new method (MG) and in vivo test***

The results of disintegration test of the prepared ODTs using the new method (MG) were reproducible and closer to the human sensory test than in the conventional disintegration test, revealed by the high correlation coefficient (Table 3 and Figure 5) between the new method (MG) and the human sensory test ( $R^2=0.994$ ). Also high correlation was observed for formulas prepared under high force of compression and stress storage condition (Figure 6).

***Disintegration time of commercial ODTs***

Five commercial ODTs of different weight, shape, and size were used for comparison between the three methods of disintegration to confirm the results obtained with the prepared ODTs. The results shown in table 6 and figure 7 indicated that there is no correlation between the disintegration time of the conventional disintegration test and those of the human sensory test ( $R^2=0.492$ ), while very high correlation ( $R^2=0.997$ ) was reported for the new method (MG) (Figure 8).

***Effect of disintegration medium on the disintegration time***

Saliva is very important in the ODTs, thus to investigate the significance of artificial saliva solution, the phosphate buffer (pH 6.8) was used as disintegration medium. Although the results shown in table 6 and figure 8 indicated no significant ( $p>0.05$ ) difference between artificial saliva solution and the phosphate buffer (pH 6.8), but still the use of artificial saliva solution in the new method of disintegration produce results with high correlation than when buffer is used. These results suggested that the MG method, using artificial saliva solution, can be used to determine the disintegration time and found comparable to the real disintegration in oral cavity. Although there are few trials performed to develop disintegration tests, they are complicated and require special instruments [23].

The novel method presented in this study is highly similar to the real conditions of the oral cavity, and take in consideration the two main factors that control the process of oral disintegration, the continuous secretion of very small volume of saliva (about 1ml/min) and removal from the mouth by swallowing; the second is the mild mechanical force produced by the tongue on the upper jaw, which is simulated in new method by the sponge of specific height that pushes the tablet up to the upper jaw. In conclusion, the designed novel apparatus for determination of DT for ODTs is simple and reproducible; it simulates the *in vivo* conditions to high degree with high correlation results compared with disintegration in the human mouth.

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Table 1. Formulation of blank orodispersible tablets

Composition (mg)	Formula No.								
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
CCS	5	10	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
SSG	-	-	-	10	20	-	-	-	-
CP	-	-	-	-	-	10	20	10	20
MCC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	20
Mg Stearate	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Talc	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Carb-O-Sil	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mannitol	189	184	174	184	174	184	174	164	154
Total weight	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200

Table 2: Composition of artificial saliva solution (ASS)

Ingredients	Quantity
Disodium hydrogen orthophosphate ( $\text{Na}_2\text{HPO}_4$ )	0.426 g
Sodium bicarbonate ( $\text{NaHCO}_3$ )	1.680 g
Calcium chloride ( $\text{CaCl}_2$ )	0.147 g
Hydrochloric acid (HCL) 1N	Q.S to adjust pH to 6.8
Water ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	Up to 1.0 L



Figure 1. New disintegration apparatus (MG apparatus) for ODTs



Figure 2. Artificial oral cavity part of MG apparatus

Table 3. Evaluation physical parameters of prepared ODTs

Formulas No.	Evaluated parameters					
	Thickness (mm)	Hardness kg/cm <sup>2</sup>	Friability %	Conventional <i>in vitro</i> disintegration time (sec)	Human sensory disintegration time (sec)	New method (MG) disintegration time (sec)
F1	3.45±0.02	3.76±0.14	0.57	42.2±10.6	92.1±0.3	90.3±0.71
F2	3.44±0.01	3.76±0.16	0.65	17.6±4.4	57.2±0.74	59.3±0.83
F3	3.52±0.02	3.66±0.18	0.54	16.1±5.7	64.2±0.36	63.3±0.22
F4	3.48±0.01	3.69±0.16	0.58	15.3±4.8	53.1±0.52	52.2±0.33
F5	3.40±0.02	3.73±0.15	0.62	19.6±5.6	58.1±0.4	59.2±0.27
F6	3.49±0.01	3.74±0.17	0.42	18.8±4.6	50.2±0.37	49.1±0.31
F7	3.55±0.01	3.69±0.19	0.53	16.3±3.7	55.1±0.41	54.5±0.29
F8	3.52±0.02	3.76±0.20	0.60	15.4±2.5	28.1±0.56	26.1±0.21
F9	3.47±0.01	3.72±0.19	0.45	23.6±4.8	37.2±0.26	35.2±0.16



Table 4. Effect of compression force on physical properties of prepared ODTs

Compression Force (KN)	Evaluated parameters			
	Hardness kg/cm <sup>2</sup>	Conventional <i>in vitro</i> disintegration time (sec)	Human sensory disintegration time (sec)	New method (MG) disintegration time (sec)
25	6.4±0.76	26.8±1.4	44.1± 0.75	45.3±0.91
30	8.3±1.1	28.7±1.3	51.4±1.33	50.6±1.6
35	11.1±1.76	80.4± 2.4	59.3±1.43	61.6±1.41

Table 5. Effect of stress storage condition on physical properties of prepared ODTs

Storage time (days)	Evaluation parameters			
	Hardness kg/cm <sup>2</sup>	Conventional <i>in vitro</i> disintegration time (sec)	Human sensory disintegration time (sec)	New method (MG) disintegration time (sec)
0	3.76±0.2	13.43±0.47	28.21±1.5	26.36±2.1
15	3.94±0.18	75.8±1.8	63.22±1.9	61.15±2.3

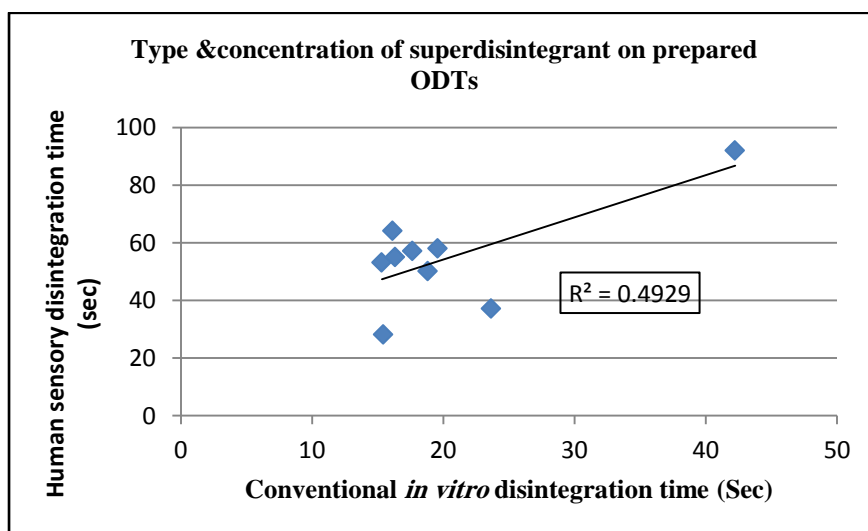


Figure 3. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and conventional *in vitro* DT of the prepared ODTs using different types and concentrations of super-disintegrants

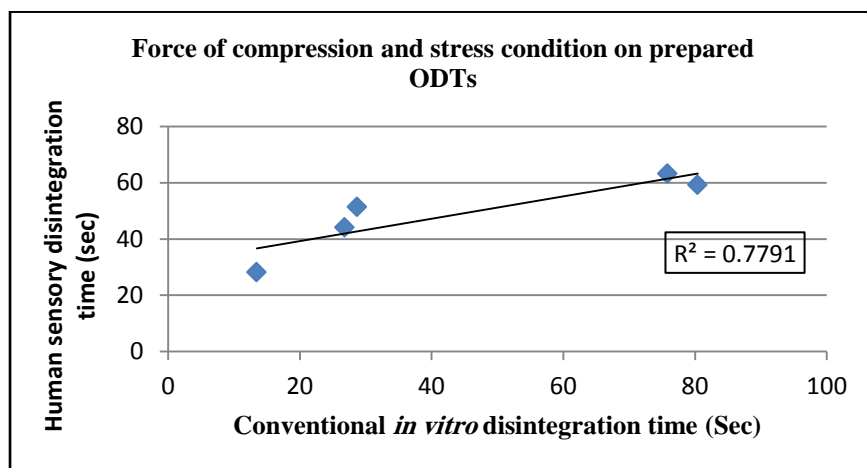


Figure 4. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and conventional *in vitro* DT of the prepared ODTs at different forces of compression and stress conditions

Table 6. Comparison of disintegration tests using commercial ODTs

Commercial ODTs	Evaluated parameters			
	Conventional <i>in vitro</i> disintegration time (sec)	Human sensory disintegration time (sec)	New method (MG) disintegration time (sec) Artificial saliva solution	New method (MG) disintegration time (sec) Phosphate buffer
Oronime(Nimesulide 100mg)	21.3±0.36	34.6±2.5	31.2±0.54	33.4±0.74
OlenazRapitab (Olanzapine 5mg)	25.4±0.87	42.7±0.97	40.4±0.94	44.7±0.77
Domstal -5 DT (Domperidone 5mg)	20.7±0.65	64.6±1.12	59.56±1.42	63.7±1.80
Nimulide-MD (Nimesulide 100mg)	30.9±0.53	84.6±3.4	79.5±1.60	82.2±1.20
Ketanov- MD (ketolac 10mg)	28.7±0.98	67.2±2.3	64.6±1.20	68.3±1.90

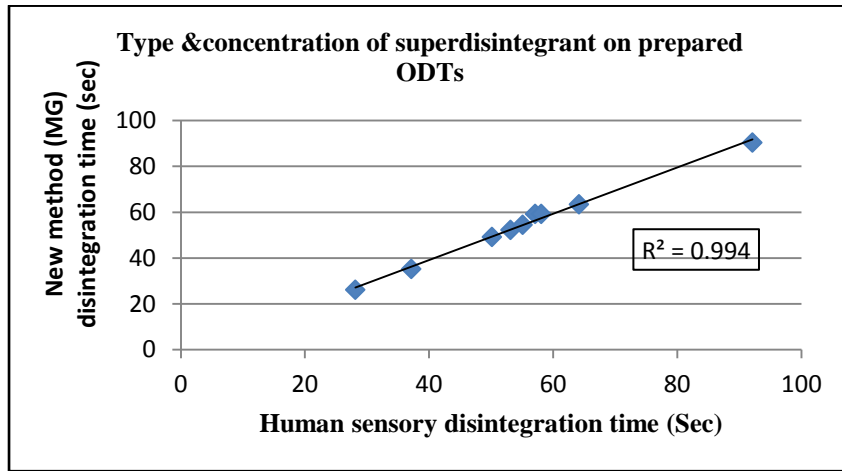


Figure 5. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and new method (MG) *in vitro* DT on the prepared ODTs using different types and concentrations of super-disintegrants

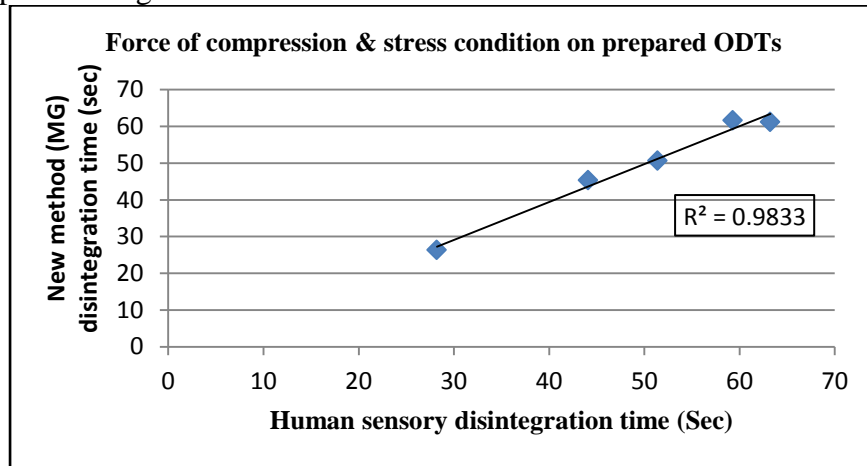


Figure 6. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and new method (MG) *in vitro* DT on the prepared ODTs at different forces of compression and stress conditions

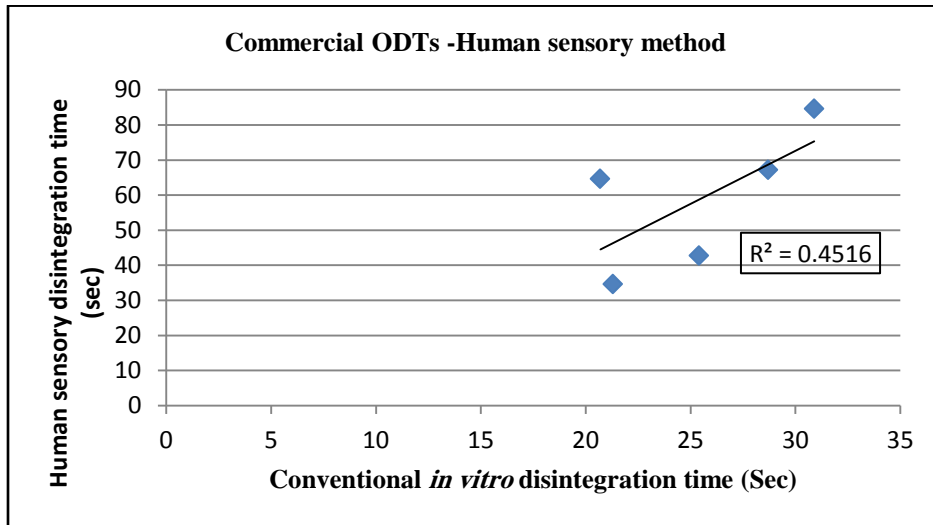


Figure 7. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and conventional *in vitro* DT on the commercially marketed ODTs

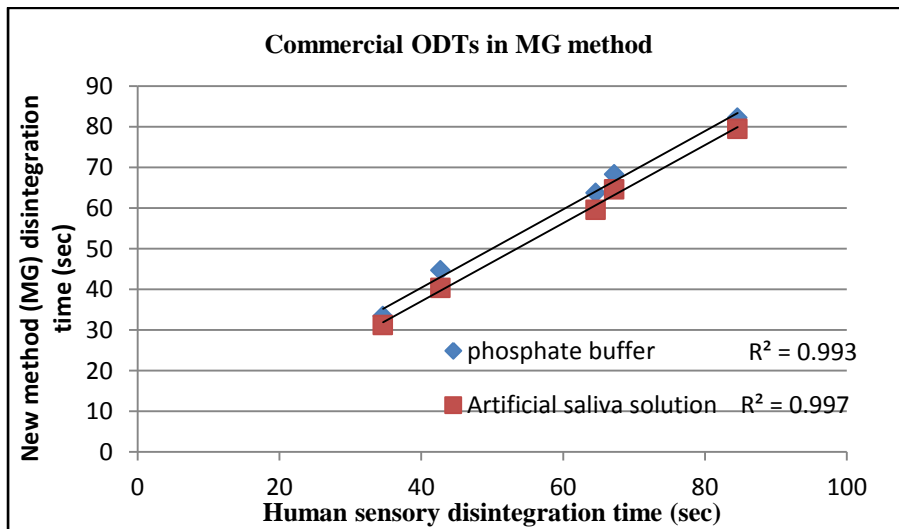


Figure 8. Relationship between DT *in vivo* and new method (MG) *in vitro* DT in commercially marketed ODTs using different disintegration media