

RSC Advances



This is an *Accepted Manuscript*, which has been through the Royal Society of Chemistry peer review process and has been accepted for publication.

Accepted Manuscripts are published online shortly after acceptance, before technical editing, formatting and proof reading. Using this free service, authors can make their results available to the community, in citable form, before we publish the edited article. This *Accepted Manuscript* will be replaced by the edited, formatted and paginated article as soon as this is available.

You can find more information about *Accepted Manuscripts* in the [Information for Authors](#).

Please note that technical editing may introduce minor changes to the text and/or graphics, which may alter content. The journal's standard [Terms & Conditions](#) and the [Ethical guidelines](#) still apply. In no event shall the Royal Society of Chemistry be held responsible for any errors or omissions in this *Accepted Manuscript* or any consequences arising from the use of any information it contains.

1 Real-Time Release Monitoring for Water Content and Mean Particle Size of Granules in

2 Lab-Sized Fluid-Bed Granulator by Near-Infrared Spectroscopy

3

4 Makoto Otsuka, Akira Koyama, and Yusuke Hattori

5

6 *Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, Musashino*

7 *University, 1-1-20 Shinmachi, Nishi-Tokyo, Tokyo 202-8585, Japan.*

8 *E-mail: motsuka@musashino-u.ac.jp*

9

10

Address correspondence to:

Makoto Otsuka, Ph.D.,

Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences,

Faculty of Pharmacy, Musashino University,

Shinmachi 1-1-20, Nishi-Tokyo 202-8585, Japan

Phone & Fax: 81-424-68-8658

11

12

13 Abstract

14 Simultaneous real-time monitoring of water content and mean particle size in
15 the powder bed of a fluidized-bed granulator was performed by near-infrared (NIR)
16 spectroscopy through a window, and the findings were used to evaluate the granular
17 properties. A powder mixture containing acetaminophen bulk and additive powders was
18 granulated by spraying with 10, 8.5 and 7.5% binder solutions in a lab-size fluid-bed
19 granulator. Change of water content and mean particle size of the granules during
20 fluid-bed granulation were evaluated by weight loss and sieving of the removed granule
21 samples, respectively. The NIR spectra were recorded during the granulation processes,
22 and calibration models to evaluate water content and mean particle size of the granules
23 were developed based on NIR spectra using the partial least squares regression method.
24 The best calibration models to predict water content and mean particle size were
25 obtained by multiplicative scatter correction treatment. The validation results based on
26 external validation NIR spectra also had sufficiently linear relationships. In the
27 predicted water content-time profiles during the granulation processes, the water content
28 increased in the granulation process, and it decreased in the drying process; the
29 predicted values fitted very well to the actual values in all processes. The maximum
30 water content in the processes using 8.5 and 7.5% binder solutions was around 6-7%,

31 but that using 10% binder solution was around 3%. In terms of the predicted mean
32 particle size-time profiles, they increased during the granulation process, remained
33 constant during the drying process; the predicted profile fitted very well to the actual
34 values in all processes.

35

36 Keywords: Real-time monitoring; process analytical technology; water content; mean
37 particle size; reflectance near-infrared spectroscopy; fluidized-bed granulator;
38 chemometrics

39

40

41

42

43

44

45 Introduction

46 Since controlling of wetting and drying of pharmaceutical powder solids is
47 conventional and frequent operation in the practical manufacturing processes,
48 solid-water interaction is one of the fundamental issues in pharmaceutical technology.¹
49 The state of water in solid dosage forms may be characterized using X-ray diffraction,
50 microscopic methods, thermal analysis, vibrational spectroscopy and nuclear magnetic
51 resonance spectroscopy.² In the pharmaceutical industry, wet granulation is generally
52 carried out with water to improve the physical properties of raw powdered materials,
53 such as the powder flow, compression properties, increasing the density, ensuring
54 mixture uniformity and reducing the dust.³ Additionally, the water content during
55 granulation processes affects the pharmaceutical properties of final products, such as
56 polymorphic crystalline stability, drug degradation rate and drug release rate.

57 Fluid-bed granulation is a popular wet granulation technique for producing granules
58 in the pharmaceutical industry by spraying a binder solution onto a fluidized powder.
59 The control of fluidized-bed granulation has been carried out by on indirect
60 measurements of the amount of air, moisture content, amount of powder solids, their
61 temperature and their mass-balance calculation.⁴⁻⁶

62 On the other hand, regulatory authorities such as the US Food and Drug
63 Administration and the International Conference on Harmonization have promoted and
64 requested real-time control of drug product quality and the application of
65 quality-by-design principles using in-line analytical tools, as process analytical
66 technology (PAT).⁷⁻⁸ Since the introduction of FDA guidelines for PAT, in-line
67 real-time analysis as a tool to monitor and control manufacturing processes has become
68 increasingly accepted in the pharmaceutical industry.⁹⁻¹⁰

69 The nondestructive character of vibrational spectroscopy techniques, such as
70 near-infrared spectroscopy (NIR), makes them a novel tool for in-line quality assurance
71 as PAT,¹¹⁻¹³ since the development of PAT will provide an in-line window on the
72 physicochemical phenomena occurring during pharmaceutical manufacture. NIR can
73 be applied for both quantitative analysis of water¹⁴⁻¹⁵ and determining the state of water
74 in solid materials¹⁶⁻¹⁷ during granulation. This enables us to understand the molecular
75 level phenomena during manufacture of pharmaceuticals. Further more, NIR has been
76 applied to study the nature of water-solid interactions within various materials.¹⁸
77 Several authors have reported the monitoring of moisture levels using NIR in a fluid
78 bed.¹⁹ Rantanen et al. described²⁰⁻²¹ the real-time monitoring of moisture using of
79 NIR for process monitoring and control during fluid-bed granulation and drying.

80 Peinado et al.²¹ developed a calibration model to predict water content, and validated
81 and transferred an NIR model to determine the end-point for commercial production
82 batches of an FDA-approved solid oral product. Rantanen et al.²³⁻²⁴ have
83 demonstrated the use of multivariate NIR chemometric models coupled with
84 temperature and humidity data recorded by the data loggers to develop models for better
85 understanding of the fluid-bed granulation process. However, there is no report on a
86 simultaneous real-time release monitoring pharmaceutical properties, such as water
87 content and mean particle size, of granules during fluidized bed granulator by using
88 NIR.

89 This is the first study of simultaneous prediction of the water content and the
90 mean particle size of conventional granules in a lab-sized fluid-bed granulator by in-line
91 NIR monitoring. Pharmaceutical properties of the granules depended on the binder
92 solution concentration and changes of water content and mean particle size of the
93 granules obtained using different binder solutions were evaluated using a chemometric
94 method.

95

96 Materials and Methods

97 Materials

98 Bulk powder of acetaminophen (Lot No. 90197) was obtained from Iwaki Pharm. Co.
99 Ltd. Diluents, α -lactose monohydrate (Pharmatose 200M, Lot 30330-2175), was
100 obtained from DFE Pharm (Amsterdam, Holland). A binder, hydroxyl-propyl-cellulose
101 (Nisso HPC-L, Lot No. NHB-4811), was obtained from Nippon Soda Co. Ltd. (Tokyo,
102 Japan). A lubricant, magnesium stearate (Lot No. SDF1110, derived from a natural
103 plant), was obtained from Wako Chemical Co. Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan).

104 Preparation of granules

105 The powder mixture consisted of bulk powders of acetaminophen (30.8 g), crystalline
106 α -lactose monohydrate (188.4 g), and microcrystalline cellulose (80.8 g), as shown in
107 Table 1. Figure 1 shows the lab-sized fluid-bed granulator (Okada Seiko, Ltd., Tokyo,
108 Japan) with a chamber (160 mm in diameter and 6.0 L in volume) made of glass used to
109 prepare granules. A sampling port was equipped at 3-cm from the bottom of a
110 chamber of the granulator, and granular samples was withdrawn by a plastic sampling
111 bar in diameter 15 mm. The granulator was loaded with a reflectance NIR
112 spectrometer, and NIR light focused on at 3 cm from the bottom and center of the
113 chamber to measure granular properties during granulation. The binder solutions (10,
114 8.5 and 7.5%) of hydroxypropyl cellulose (7.9 g) were prepared to be dissolved in
115 different amounts of water (71.1 g, 85.1 g and 97.1 g). Fluid-bed operation conditions

116 were fixed during all processes as follows: warming up time was 20 min at 35°C, rotor
117 speed was 360 rpm and spray down occurred at 200 mm height from the bottom mesh
118 screen with an air spray presser, at 0.1 MPa. The spray speeds for 10, 8.5 and 7.5%
119 binder solutions were at 3.95, 4.64 and 5.26 g/min, respectively, as shown in Table 2.
120 The powder mixture (307.9 g) containing the bulk and additives powders was agitated
121 and mixed at 35±2°C in the chamber for 5 min, and then the binder solutions were
122 sprayed into the powder mixture at 35±2°C for 20 min, which was then dried at 60±2°C
123 for 10 min. The wet-granular powder samples (1.0 g) were withdrawn from the
124 chamber at predetermined intervals (every 3 minutes), with 12 granular samples
125 obtained in each experiment (the binder solutions, 10, 8.5 and 7.5%), and the total was
126 36 samples.

127 Granular properties of the samples

128 The sample granules in glass containers were dried in a hot air oven at 70±2°C for 24
129 hours, and then, the loss due to drying was measured using their weight. The dried
130 granular samples were passed through six kinds of mesh sieve screen (75, 106, 150, 355,
131 500 and 850 μ m), and the weights of sieved granular sample fractions were measured
132 to evaluate mean particle sizes. The mean particle size (D50) was evaluated as median
133 particle size by 50% cumulative weight of the sieved fractions.

134 Microscopic observation of the granules:

135 Microscopic observation of the granular samples was performed by digital microscopy
136 (Type VHX-100, Keyence Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) and scanning electron microscopy
137 (SEM) (JSM-6510LV, Jeol Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan), respectively.

138 NIR spectroscopic measurements

139 The NIR reflectance spectra for raw powder materials were recorded over the range of
140 12000-4000 cm^{-1} (32 scans with 8 cm^{-1} resolution) using an NIR spectrometer (MPA,
141 Bruker Optics, Ettlingen, Germany). Another NIR spectrometer (MATRIX-F, Bruker
142 Optics, Ettlingen, Germany) was set in front of the fluid bed with a focal length of 250
143 mm. NIR reflectance spectra were measured through a glass wall, and recorded 10 times
144 every minute with scan time, 10 scans/spectrum; resolution, 64 cm^{-1} and wavelength
145 range, 12000-4000 cm^{-1} during all granulation processes. In order to measure accurate
146 spectra during granulation, the wall of the fluid-bed granulator was periodically
147 percussed using a rubber spatula for keeping clean glass wall.

148 Partial Least Squares (PLS) Model: The water content and D50 of the standard
149 granule samples for calibration models were estimated with a PLS model. The
150 granulation experiments were performed with three kinds of binder solution (10, 8.5 and
151 7.5% HPC) for 35 minutes, the NIR spectra were measured six times at every sample

152 collect on time (12 samples x 3 kinds of the solution), and a total of 216 spectra were
153 measured. Then, 108 NIR spectra were randomly selected to prepare the calibration
154 models to predict water content and D50. The other 108 spectra were used as an
155 external validation data set for validation testing. The best calibration model was
156 determined to minimize the standard error of cross-validation (SEV) by the
157 leave-one-out method in PLS regression software, after the spectral data were
158 transformed by various functions, such as non-treatment (NON), area normalized
159 (NOR), second derivative (2nd), standard normal variate (SNV) and multiplicative
160 scatter correction (MSC). Cumulative percent variance (CV), Prediction Residual Error
161 Sum of Squares (PRESS) and the r-values for calibration and validation (r-Cal and r-Val)
162 were evaluated as shown below, and the calculated chemometric parameters are
163 summarized in Table 3.

164 When cross-validation was applied during PLS, a regression model for a
165 validation sample x_v was evaluated based on k factor regression vector β_k .²⁵

$$166 \quad \hat{y}_v = x_v \beta_v \quad (1)$$

167 Then, the prediction residual can be generated

$$168 \quad \hat{f} = y_v - \hat{y}_v, \quad (2)$$

169 where y_v is the “true” value for the dependent variable of the validation sample.

170 To keep the notation simple, hatted symbols indicate a k factor estimate of a quantity.

171 For a set of n_v validation samples, a Prediction Residual Error Sum of Squares

172 (PRESS) can be calculated for the y block:

$$173 \quad \text{PRESS} = \hat{f}^T \hat{f} \quad (3)$$

174 Related to the PRESS is the Standard Error of Prediction (SEP), which takes

175 into account the number of samples and has the same units as the y variable.²⁵

176

$$177 \quad \text{SEP} = \sqrt{\frac{\text{PRESS}}{n_v}} \quad (4)$$

178 The most naive version of validation predicts on the basis of training set samples. This

179 type of SEP is termed a Standard Error of Calibration (SEC). The SEC must be

180 corrected for the number of factors k in the model:

$$181 \quad \text{SEC} = \sqrt{\frac{\text{PRESS}}{n_v - k}} \quad (5)$$

182 On the other hand, the other 108 spectra of the external validation data set were

183 used to validate the best fitted calibration models for water content and D50. The

184 validated chemometric parameters of the best calibration models are summarized in

185 Table 4. The analysis was performed using the chemometric software Pirouette

186 version 3.11 (InfoMetrix, Inc., Bothel, WA, USA).

187 All granulation processes in a fluid-bed granulator were monitored for 35 min by
188 reflectance NIR spectroscopy and 245 NIR spectra were obtained. The granular
189 samples were obtained with three kinds of binder concentration solution, and the water
190 content and D50 of the granules were predicted based on 735 spectra by the best
191 calibration models.

192

193 Results and Discussion

194 Change of NIR spectra of acetaminophen granular formulation during fluid-bed
195 granulation process

196 Figure 2 shows NIR spectra for raw powder materials. The NIR spectral
197 peaks of the raw materials were identified based on a reported database²⁶ as follows:
198 The NIR spectrum of acetaminophen bulk powder had specific peaks at 4069 cm^{-1} due
199 to CH stretching (st) and CC st, 4335 cm^{-1} due to NH st and C=O st in a CONH group,
200 at 4667 cm^{-1} due to CH st and deformation (DF) in a CH_2 subscript group, at 4944 cm^{-1}
201 due to C=O st 2nd overtone (OT) in a CONH group, at 6013 cm^{-1} due to CH st 1st OT in
202 an aromatic ring and 8836 cm^{-1} due to CH st 2nd OT in an aromatic ring. The spectrum
203 of MCC had specific peaks at 4775 cm^{-1} due to 2nd OT and DF of CH st in a CH_2 group,
204 5218 cm^{-1} due to 1st OT of OH st and 6700-6800 cm^{-1} due to 1st OT of OH st. The

205 spectrum of α -lactose monohydrate had specific peaks at 4775 cm^{-1} due to 2nd OT and
206 DF of CH st in a CH_2 group, 5218 cm^{-1} due to 1st OT of OH st and $6300\text{-}6700\text{ cm}^{-1}$ due
207 to 1st OT of OH st. The spectrum of HPC had specific peaks at 4775 cm^{-1} due to 2nd
208 OT and DF of CH st in a CH_2 group, 5218 cm^{-1} due to 1st OT of OH st, 5843 cm^{-1} due to
209 1st OT of CH st of CH_3 in a propyl group, $6700\text{-}7000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ due to 1st OT of OH st and at
210 $8500\text{-}8600\text{ cm}^{-1}$ due to 2nd OT CH st of CH_3 in a propyl group.

211 Figure 3 shows the change of MSC-corrected NIR spectra of the powder sample with
212 10% HPC binder solution during the fluid-bed granulation process. In the mixing
213 process for 5 min, NIR spectra were not significantly changed as determined by visual
214 observation. In the granulation process for 5-25 min, the whole NIR spectral intensity
215 increased with an increase of the sprayed binder solution amount, meaning that the
216 granular size increased with an increase of the binder solution amount. In the final
217 drying process for 25-35 min, the absorption peak at around 5200 cm^{-1} due to free water
218 decreased over time due to drying of water in the granules.

219

220 Development of calibration models to predict water content and D50 of the granules

221 Pharmaceutical properties of fluid-bed granules, such as mean particle size, particle
222 size distribution, porosity and granular strength, might differ among batches based on

223 granulation conditions, such as binder solution conditions, agitation rate, temperature
224 and amount of air. The calibration models to evaluate water content and D50 of the
225 granules during the granulation process were, therefore, developed based on 108 NIR
226 spectra by using the PLS method involving various pre-treatment functions.

227 Table 3 shows the effect of pre-treatments on chemometric parameters to predict
228 water content and D50 of the granules obtained by fluid-bed granulation with various
229 binder concentration solutions. The result indicated that the minimum SEV value by
230 the leave-one-out method could thus be realized by using the best calibration model for
231 the analysis of NIR spectra after suitable pre-treatment. The orders of SEV for
232 calibration models to predict water content and D50 were MSC<SNV<2nd<NOR<NON
233 and MSC<NOR<2nd<SNV<NON, respectively. The best calibration models to predict
234 water content and D50 were by MSC treatment, and consisted of 5 and 8 principal
235 components involving 98 and 99% cumulative variance, respectively. Additionally,
236 the results of r-Val and PRESS-Val evaluated by the leave-one-out method also
237 supported the assertion that the best calibration models were by MSC.

238 Finally, the orders of SEC for the calibration models to predict water content
239 and D50 were MSC<SNV<2nd<NOR<NON and MSC<NOR<2nd<SNV<NON, and the
240 PRESS-Cal had almost the same tendency. The r-Cal of the models to predict water

241 content and D50 were 0.9903 and 0.9613, respectively, indicating that the best
242 calibration models for water content and D50 were by MSC.

243

244 Validation of the best fitted calibration models

245 To validate the created PLS calibration models to predict water content and
246 D50 of the granules, the other 108 NIR spectra as an external validation set were
247 applied to each calibration model. The PRESS and SEP of the calibration models were
248 calculated based on the external validation data sets and are summarized in Table 4.

249 The SEP values for water content and D50 of the granules obtained by MSC
250 pretreatments were sufficiently small.

251 Figure 4 shows the relationships between predicted and actual water content
252 and D50 of the granules based on validation NIR spectral data sets by the best
253 calibration model. The plots for water content and D50 gave a straight line (r -Val were
254 0.9903 and 0.9613) with slopes of 0.9807 and 0.9241 and Y -intercepts of 0.046% and
255 13.61 μm , indicating that the best calibration models by MSC had a significantly linear
256 relationship with high repeatability.

257

258 Science background of PLS calibration models to predict pharmaceutical properties of

259 the granules

260 PLS regression is effective in extraction of feature and regularity, and modeling of
261 the large numerical data. However, the disadvantages of PLS regression are the
262 difficulty of interpretation of the factors, and that it is necessary to determine the
263 number of factors to be used. Therefore, in order to prove the validity of the PLS
264 models to predict the water content and D50, were examined for evidence of the
265 regression vectors, respectively.

266 Figure 5-(a) shows that the regression vector for water content had positive peaks at
267 4998 cm^{-1} due to OH st bonded, at 5276 cm^{-1} due to OH st free water, at 7004 cm^{-1} due
268 to OH st 1st OT, and at $11,500\text{ cm}^{-1}$ due to CH st 3rd OT. In contrast, the negative peaks
269 were at 4289 cm^{-1} due to CH st and CH df and at 4690 cm^{-1} due to NH st 2nd OT. All
270 positive peaks were related to hydrophilic groups such as OH group or free water, since
271 the water interacted with hydrophilic functional groups, so it seemed that the peak
272 intensity of hydrophobic groups was comparatively decreased.

273 On the other hand, Figure 5-(b) shows that the regression vector for D50 had positive
274 peaks at 4350 cm^{-1} due to NH st, at 6788 cm^{-1} due to NH st 1st OT and at 8824 cm^{-1} due
275 to CH st 2nd OT. The negative peaks were at 4227 cm^{-1} due to CH df 2nd OT, at 4998

276 cm^{-1} due to OH st bonded, at 6109 cm^{-1} due to CH st 1^{st} OT, at 7775 cm^{-1} due to CH st
277 2^{nd} OT and at 9534 cm^{-1} due to CHdf 2^{nd} OT.

278 The vector for D50 indicated that both positive and negative peaks were not
279 significantly related to the peaks due to an OH group. The peaks in the vector did not
280 match the peaks in the actual NIR profiles, meaning that the peaks in the vector were
281 related to the baseline shifting. It is well known that physical information of particle
282 size reflects the NIR baseline, and there is a linear relationship between height of the
283 baseline and particle size.²⁷

284 Figure 6 shows the loading vectors of calibration models for water content and D50
285 of the granules. In the loadings for water content (Figure 6-a), the PC1 had a positive
286 peak at 5214 cm^{-1} due to OH st and free water, and at 7096 cm^{-1} due to OH st 1^{st} OT,
287 but the PC2 had positive peaks at 6017 cm^{-1} due to CH st of 1^{st} OT and at 8810 cm^{-1} due
288 to CH st of 2^{nd} OT, meaning that the PC1 loading was due to free water and the PC2
289 was similar to acetaminophen. Since the percent variances for PC1 and PC2 were 76.3
290 and 9.42%, respectively, PC1 due to additive water was a major component. In
291 contrast, PC2 was due to the other functional chemical groups of acetaminophen, which
292 were a minor component.

293 In the loadings for the D50 (Figure 6-b), the PC1 also had positive peaks at 5245
294 cm^{-1} due to OH st, and free water, and at 7066 cm^{-1} due to OH st 1st OT, but the PC2
295 had positive peaks at 5986 cm^{-1} due to CH st of 1st OT and at 8810 cm^{-1} due to CH st of
296 2nd OT, and a negative peak at 5183 cm^{-1} due to OH st bonded. Since the percent
297 variances for PC1 and PC2 were 62.2 and 21.8%, respectively, the PC1 and PC2
298 loading might be due to free water and interaction peaks with the other functional
299 chemical groups of acetaminophen, respectively. The particle size of the granules
300 increased in proportion to the additive water amount, but their contribution in the
301 loading vector for the calibration model was not so great, as shown by the percent
302 variance of PC1 and PC2.

303 Figure 7 shows the relationships between PC1 and PC2 for water content and D50 of
304 the granules. In the score plot profiles to predict the water content and D50, PC1 and
305 PC2 indicated the amount of free water and the other chemical functional groups of API,
306 as shown in the result of loading vectors in Figure 6. The profiles for D50
307 significantly depended on the amount of water in binder solutions.

308

309 Prediction of water content and D50 of the granules during fluid-bed granulation
310 process

311 Figure 8-a shows the predicted water content-time profiles during all fluid-bed
312 granulation processes; the water content increased during the granulation process and it
313 decreased during the drying process. The predicted water contents fitted very well to
314 actual values of sampling granules in all processes. The maximum water content in
315 the processes using 8.5 and 7.5% binder solutions was around 6-7%, but that using 10%
316 binder solution was around 3%. Total amount of water added for the 7.5%, 8.5% and
317 10% of binder solutions was approximately 24%, 22% and 19% of the total weight
318 respectively and differ only slightly. However, the water content for 10% of binder
319 solution was almost half and significantly small compared to the other solutions.
320 Drying rate of binder solution was inverse proportion with their concentration, since
321 viscosity of polymer solution was proportional with their concentrations; therefore,
322 drying rate for 10% HPC granulation is slower than the others. This result indicated
323 that the maximum water contents depended on a balance of spraying and drying rates of
324 water in the fluid-bed chamber, and affected the viscosity of the binder solution.

325 Figure 8-b shows the predicted D50-time profiles; the D50 increased during the
326 granulation process and then remained constant during the drying process. The
327 predicted D50 profile fitted very well to the actual values of sampling granules in all
328 processes. The result indicated that the final D50 of granules increased with

329 decreasing binder concentration and/or increasing of spray speed. Total amount of
330 water added for the 7.5%, 8.5% and 10% is approximately 24%, 22% and 19% of the
331 total weight respectively and differ only slightly. However, the water content for 10%
332 binder concentration is significantly small (almost half) compared to the other
333 concentrations. Can the authors elaborate on the possible reason/explanation for this
334 finding.

335 Figure 9 shows visual observation of the powder samples during granulation using
336 10% HPC solution. In the sample for 5 min, powder particles of less than 20 μm in
337 diameter were observed, and the powder was aggregated and formed wet-granules of
338 50-200 μm in diameter for 16 min, and then the samples for 35 min were granules of
339 100-250 μm in diameter.

340 Figure 10 shows the SEM observations of the granules obtained with 7.5, 8.5 and
341 10% HPC solutions. The granules obtained using 10% HPC solution had more
342 irregular surfaces and particle shapes with a wide particle size distribution, while
343 those using 7.5 and 8.5% HPC solutions (water- rich solutions) had smooth surfaces
344 and a narrow particle size distribution.

345

346 Conclusion

347 The present study demonstrated the possibility of using NIR spectroscopy to
348 predict the water content and D50 of acetaminophen formulation granules during
349 mixing, granulation and drying processes in a laboratory-sized fluid-bed granulator.
350 Binder solution concentration might be used to control the size of the granules.
351 Accurate calibration models to predict water content and D50 were established, and
352 their chemometric parameters exhibited chemical interaction between additive water
353 and powder solids. Since this technique provides better understanding and monitoring
354 of fluid-bed granulation, real-time release monitoring of fluid-bed granulation by NIR
355 very important for product quality.

356

357 Acknowledgement

358 The authors wish to thank Mr. Takashi Sato, *CAMO Software Japan Co. Ltd.* for
359 technical advice on the chemometrics.

360

361 Declaration of interest: Supported by Grants from Musashino Joshi-Gakuin.

362

363

364 References

- 365 1. G. Zografi States of water associated with solids. *Drug Dev Ind Pharm.* 1988, 14,
366 1905-1926.
- 367 2. H. Brittain, Methods for the characterization of polymorphs and solvates. In: H.
368 Brittain, ed. *Polymorphism in pharmaceutical solids*. 1st ed. New York: Marcel Dekker
369 Inc, 1999, 227-278.
- 370 3. S.L. Cantor, L.L. Augsburger, S.W. Hoag, A.H. Gerhardt, Wet Granulation. In: Hoag,
371 S.W., Augsburger, L.L. (Eds.), *Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms: Tablets Volume I*, Third
372 Edn., 2008, Informa Healthcare, New York.
- 373 4. T. Schaefer, O. Wört, Control of fluidized bed granulation III. Effect of inlet air
374 temperature and liquid flow rate on granule size and size distribution, Control of
375 moisture content of granules in the drying phase. *Arch Pharm Chem Sci.* 1978, 6, 1-13.
- 376 5. T. Abberger, J. Raneburger, H. Egermann, Instrumentation of laboratory-scale
377 fluid-bed granulator for critical moisture content and of free moisture. *Sci Pharm.* 1996,
378 64, 255-262.
- 379 6. K. Wöstheinrich, P. Schmidt, Evaluation and validation of a fully instrumented
380 Hüttlin HKC 05-TJ laboratory-scale fluidized bed granulator, *Drug Dev Ind Pharm.*
381 2000, 26, 621-633.

- 382 7. “Process Analytical Technology (PAT) Initiative”, U.S. Food and Drug
383 Administration Center for Drug Evaluation and Research Home Page
384 ([http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/OfficeofMedicalProducts
andTobacco/CDER/ucm088828.htm](http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/OfficeofMedicalProducts
385 andTobacco/CDER/ucm088828.htm)).
- 386 8. “International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for
387 Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use. Pharmaceutical Development Q8
388 (R2)”. Accessed August 2009, at: [http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/
GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryinformation/Guidances/ucm073507.pdf](http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/
389 GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryinformation/Guidances/ucm073507.pdf).
- 390 9. L.X. Yu, Pharmaceutical quality by design product and process development,
391 understanding and control, *Pharm. Res.* 25 (10), 781–791 (2008).
- 392 10. T. De Beer, A. Burggraeve, M. Fonteyne, L. Saerens, J.P. Remon and C. Vervaet,
393 Near infrared and Raman spectroscopy for the in-process monitoring of pharmaceutical
394 production processes, *Int. J. Pharm.*, 2011, 417(1-2), 32–47.
- 395 11. K. R. Beebe , W. W. Blaser, R. A. Bredeweg, J. Paul Chauvel Jr., R. S. Harner, M.
396 LaPack , A. Leugers , D. P. Martin, L. G. Wright, E. Deniz Yalvac, Process analytical
397 chemistry. *Anal Chem.* 1993, 65, 199R-216R.
- 398 12. J. Workman, A review of process near infrared spectroscopy: 1980-1994. *J Near*
399 *Infrared Spectrosc.* 1993, 1, 221-245.

- 400 13. T. Axon, R. Brown, S. Hammond, S. Maris, F. Ting, Focusing near infrared
401 spectroscopy on the business objectives of modern pharmaceutical production. *J Near*
402 *Infrared Spectrosc.* 1998, 6, A13-A19.
- 403 14. P. Frake, D. Greenhalgh, S. Grierson, J. Hempenstall, D. Rudd, Process control and
404 end-point determination of a fluid bed granulation by application of near infra-red
405 spectroscopy. *Int J Pharm.* 1997, 151, 75-80.
- 406 15. J. Rantanen, S. Lehtola, P. Rämetsä, J.P. Mannermaa, J. Yliruusi, On-line monitoring
407 of moisture content in an instrumented fluidized bed granulator with a multichannel
408 NIR moisture sensor. *Powder Technol.* 1998, 99, 163-170.
- 409 16. P. Luukkainen, J. Rantanen, K. Mäkelä, E. Räsänen, J. Tenhunen, J. Yliruusi,
410 Characterization of silicified microcrystalline cellulose and α -lactose monohydrate wet
411 masses using near infrared spectroscopy. *Pharm Dev Technol.* 2001, 6, 1-9.
- 412 17. E. Räsänen, J. Rantanen, A. Jørgensen, M. Karjalainen, T. Paakkari, J. Yliruusi,
413 Novel identification of pseudopolymorphic changes of theophylline during wet
414 granulation using near infrared spectroscopy. *J Pharm Sci.* 2001, 90, 389-396.
- 415 18. S. Delwiche, R. Pitt, K. Norris, Examination of starch-water and cellulose-water
416 interactions with near infrared (NIR) diffuse reflectance spectroscopy. *Starch/Stärke.*
417 1991, 43, 415-422.

- 418 19. N. Heigla, D. M. Kollera, B. J. Glasserb, F. J. Muzziob, J. G. Khinasta, Quantitative
419 on-line vs. off-line NIR analysis of fluidized bed drying with consideration of the
420 spectral background, *European Journal of Pharmaceutics and Biopharmaceutics*, 2013,
421 85(3), Part B, 1064–1074.
- 422 20. J. Rantanen, O. Antikainen, J.P. Mannermaa, J. Yliruusi, Use of the near-infrared
423 reflectance method for measurement of moisture content during granulation. *Pharm.*
424 *Dev. Technol.* 2000a, 5, 209–217, [http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1081/PDT-100100536](http://dx.doi.org/10.1081/PDT-100100536).
- 425 21. J. Rantanen, A. Jørgensen, E. Räsänen, P. Luukkonen, S. Airaksinen, J. Raiman, K.
426 Hänninen, O. Antikainen, J. Yliruusi, Process analysis of fluidized bed granulation.
427 *AAPS PharmSciTech* 2001, 2, 21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1208/pt020421>.
- 428 22. A. Peinado, J. Hammond, A. Scott, Development, validation and transfer of a near
429 infrared method to determine in-line the end point of a fluidised drying process for
430 commercial production batches of an approved oral solid dose pharmaceutical product.
431 *J. Pharm. Biomed. Anal.* 2011, 54, 13–20, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpba.2010.07.036>.
- 432 23. J. Rantanen, M. Knskoski, J. Suhonen, J. Tenhunen, S. Lehtonen, T. Rajalahti, J.P.
433 Mannermaa, J. Yliruusi, Next generation fluidized bed granulator automation. *AAPS*
434 *PharmSciTech*, 2000b, 1, E10, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1208/pt010210>.
- 435 24. Rantanen, J., Jørgensen, A., Räsänen, E., Luukkonen, P., Airaksinen, S., Raiman, J.,

- 436 Hänninen, K., Antikainen, O., Yliruusi, J., 2001. Process analysis of fluidized bed
437 granulation. *AAPS PharmSciTech* 2, 21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1208/pt020421>.
- 438 25. Software manual for Pirouette Ver. 3.11 (Infometrix Co., Woodenville WA).
- 439 26. M. Iwamoto, S. Kawano, J. Uozumi, Introduction of Near Infrared Spectroscopy,
440 Sachi Syobou Co., 1994.
- 441 27. M. Otsuka, Comparative Particle Size Determination of Phenacetin Bulk Powder by
442 Using Kubelka-Munk Theory and Principle Component Regression Analysis Based on
443 Near-Infrared Spectroscopy, *Powder Tech.*, 2004, 141, 244-250.
- 444

445 Figure captions.

446 Figure 1. Lab-sized fluid-bed granulator equipped with reflectance NIR spectroscopy.

447

448 Figure 2. NIR spectra of raw powder materials.

449

450 Figure 3. Change of NIR spectra during granulation processes in fluid-bed granulator.

451

452 Figure 4. Development of calibration model to predict water content and D50 by PLS.

453

454 Figure 5. Change of NIR spectra and RV during granulation process.

455

456 Figure 6. Loadings of PC1 and PC2 of granulation process.

457

458 Figure 7. Change of PC1 and PC2 scores during granulation.

459

460 Figure 8. Predicted water content and D50 during granulation processes.

461

462 Figure 9. Visible observation of fluid-bed granulation process with 10% HPC solution.

463

464 Figure 10. SEM observation of fluid-bed granules obtained using 7.5, 8.5 and 10% HPC
465 solutions.

466

467

468 Table 1. Granular formulation for fluid-bed granulation.

469

470 Table 2. Spray conditions for fluid-bed granulation.

471

472 Table 3. Chemometric parameters to predict water content and D50 by PLS in fluid-bed
473 granulation process.

474

475 Table 4. Validation result for the best calibration models to predict water content and
476 D50 by PLS in fluid-bed granulation process.

477

478

479

480

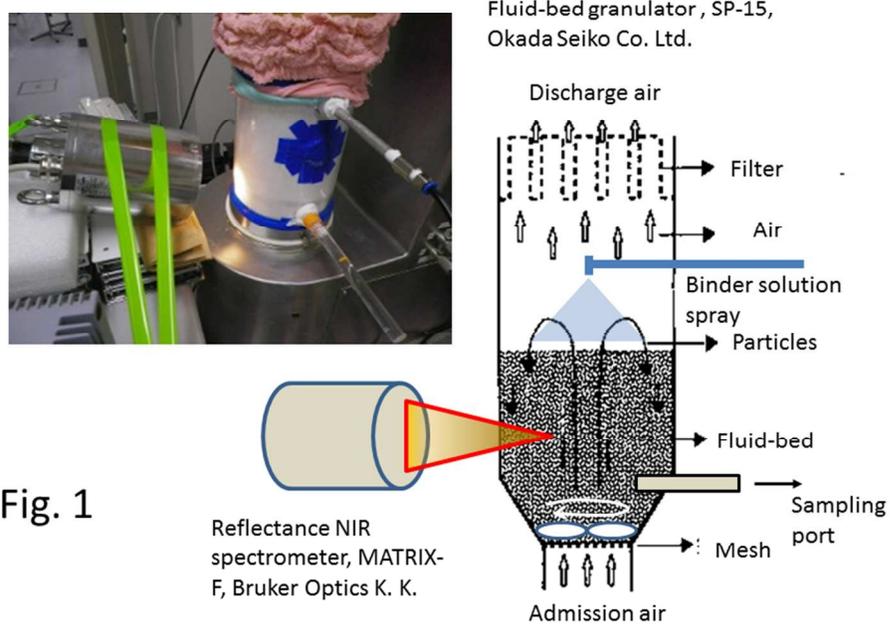


Fig. 1

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

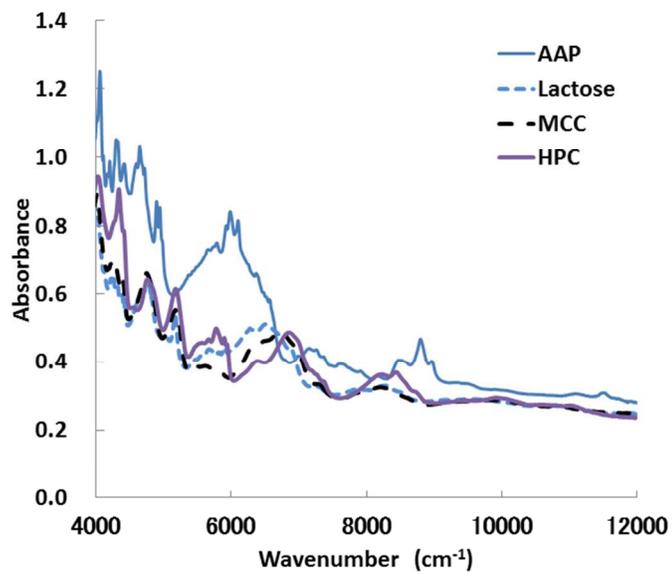


Fig. 2.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

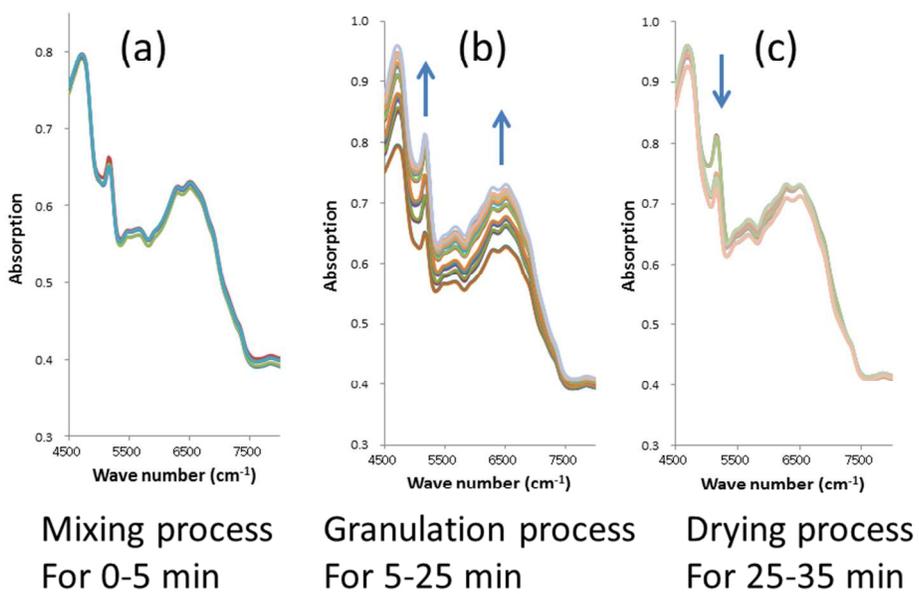


Fig. 3

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

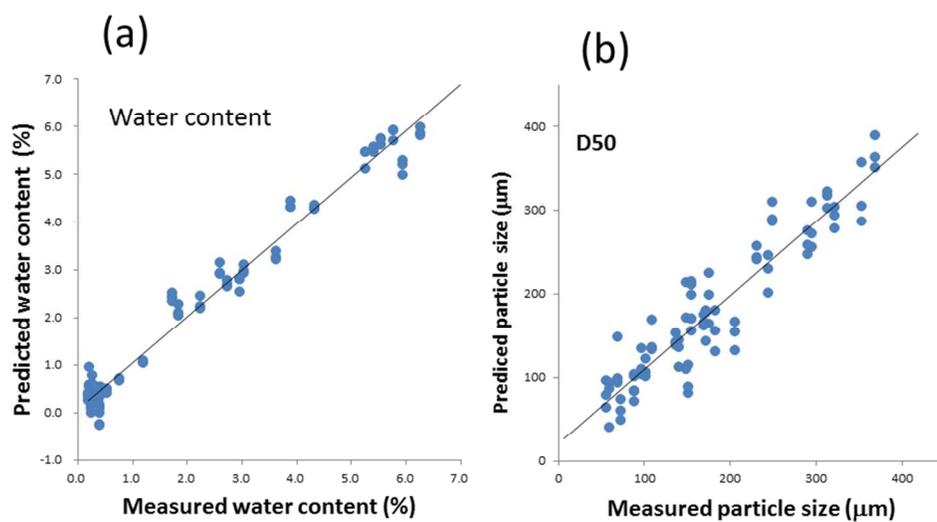


Fig. 4.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

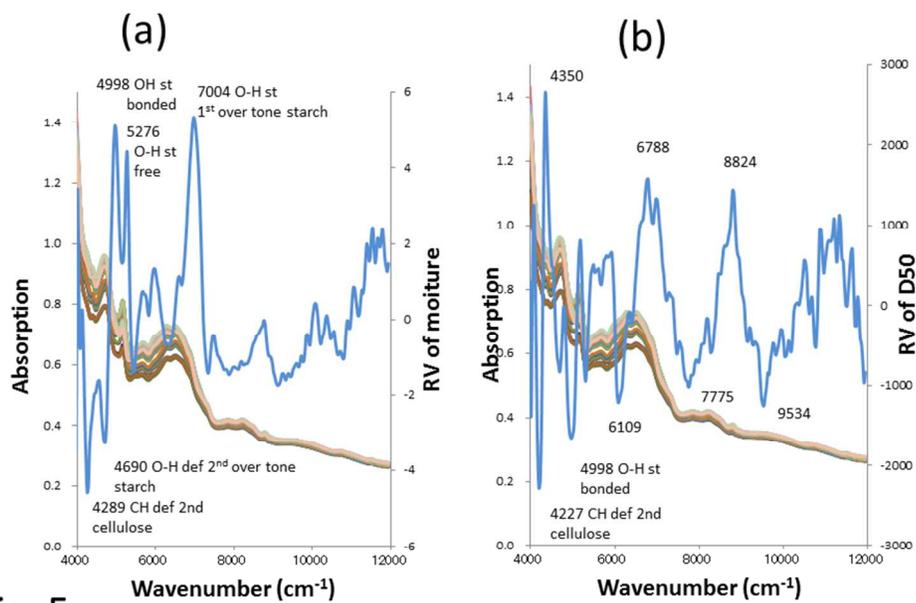


Fig. 5.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

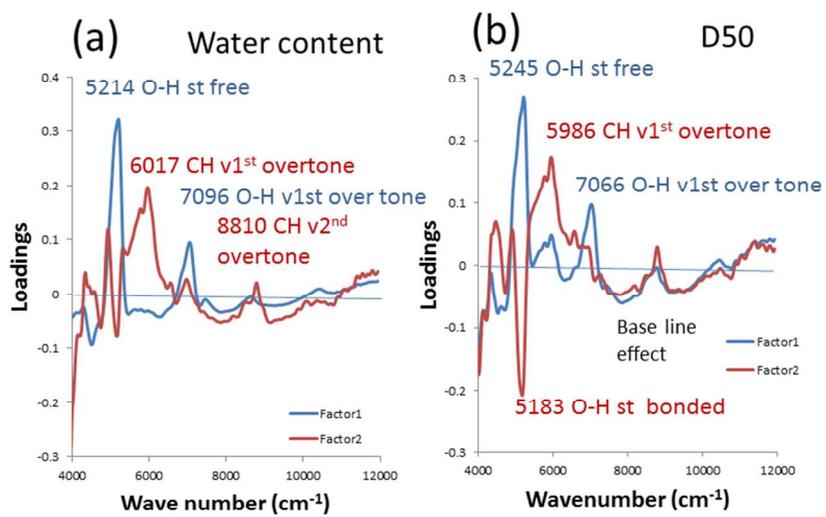


Fig. 6.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

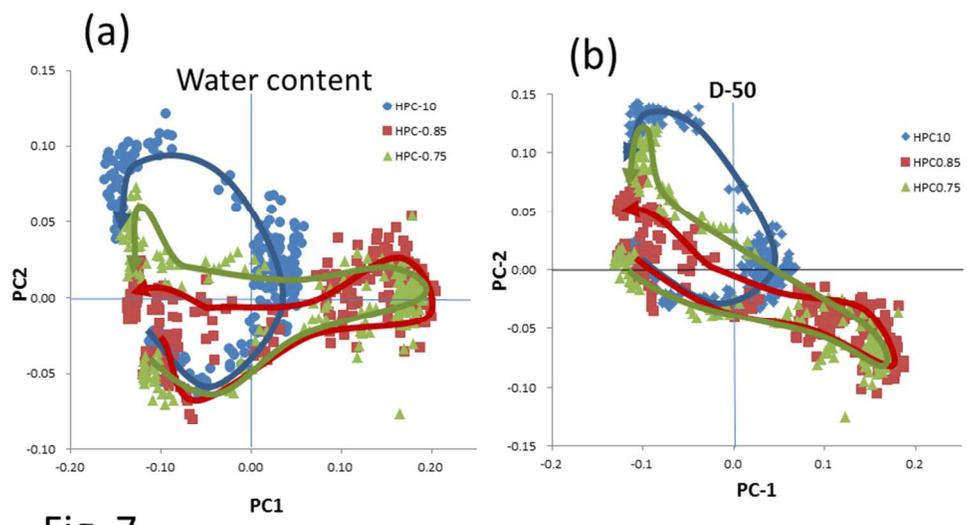


Fig. 7.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

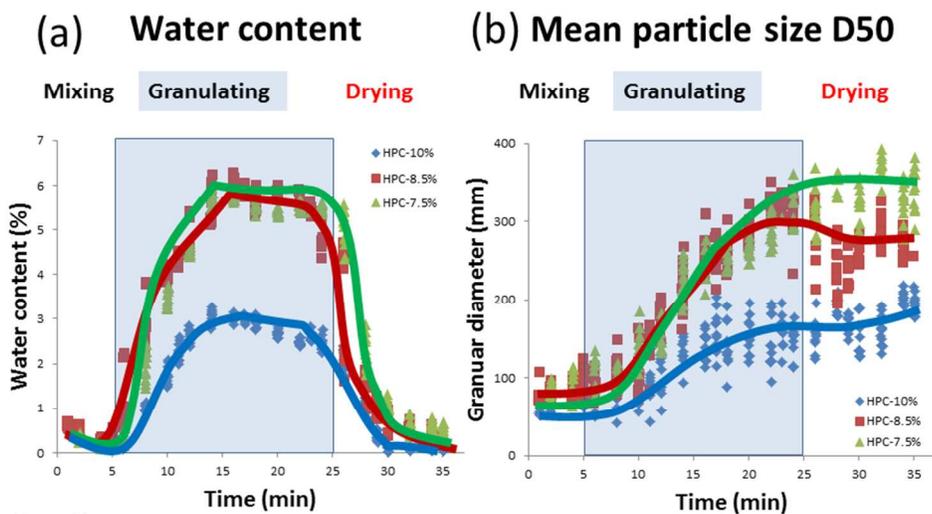
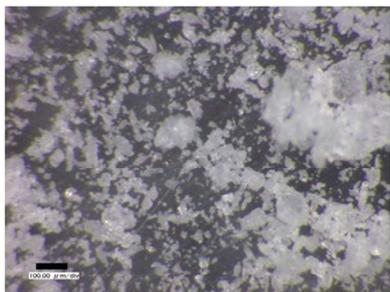


Fig. 8.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)



After granulation for 1 min (mixing process).



After for 16 min (granulation process).



After for 35 min (drying process).

Fig. 9.(HPC 10%)

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

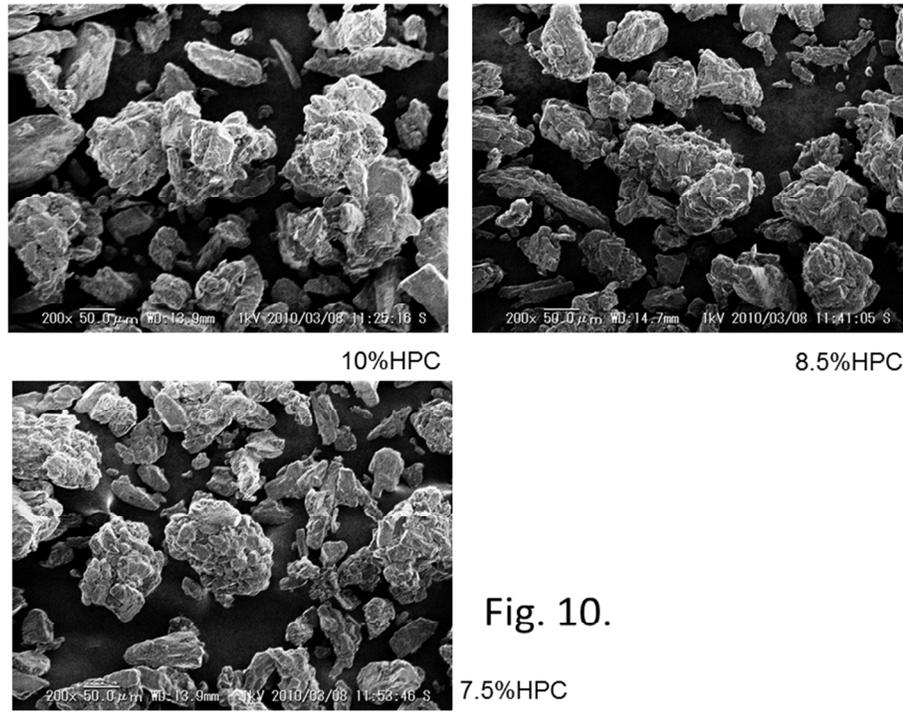


Fig. 10.

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

Table 1. Lab-sized formulation.

	Composition amount (g)	Composition rate (%)
Acetaminophen (AAP)	30.8	10
Crystalline α -lactose monohydrate (Lactose)	188.4	61
Microcrystalline cellulose (MCC)	80.8	26
Hydroxypropyl cellulose (HPC)	7.9	3
Total	307.9	100

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

Table 2. Spray conditions of granulation.

	10 %HPC	8.5 %HPC	7.5 %HPC
Binder solution additives(g)	79	93	105
HPC additives(g)	7.9	7.9	7.9
Water additives(g)	71.1	85.1	97.1
Spray speed(g/min)	3.95	4.64	5.26
Spray time(min)	20	20	20

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

Table 3.

Moist content								
Function	Factors	CV	SEV	Press Val	r Val	SEC	Press Cal	r Cal
Non	3	99.70	0.4412	1.694E+01	0.9774	0.4218	1.476E+01	0.9803
MSC	5	97.92	0.3259	9.242E+00	0.9877	0.2996	7.272E+00	0.9903
2nd	4	99.33	0.4034	1.416E+01	0.9811	0.3756	1.157E+01	0.9846
Nbr	3	98.81	0.4260	1.579E+01	0.9789	0.3955	1.298E+01	0.9827
SNV	4	96.32	0.3388	9.987E+00	0.9867	0.3167	8.224E+00	0.9891
D50								
Function	Factors	CV	SEV	Press Val	r Val	SEC	Press Cal	r Cal
Non	1	76.30	72.35	4.554E+05	0.6185	66.71	3.782E+05	0.6820
MSC	8	98.99	32.19	9.016E+04	0.9341	26.22	5.362E+04	0.9613
2nd	7	99.74	34.20	1.018E+05	0.9253	27.66	6.045E+04	0.9563
Nbr	8	99.84	37.57	1.228E+05	0.9114	27.64	5.958E+04	0.9569
SNV	7	99.74	34.20	1.018E+05	0.9253	27.66	6.045E+04	0.9563

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

Table 4.

	Water content	D50
SEP	2.891E-01	2.483E+01
PRESS	7.272E+00	5.362E+04
r	0.9903	0.9613
Factors	5	8
Slope	0.9808	0.9242
Intercept	4.569E-02	1.361E+01
ModelESS	3.750E-02	1.986E-02

254x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)