

# In Vitro Skin Corrosion: Reconstructed Human Epidermis (RhE) Test Method

**Commonly used acronym:** RhE Corrosion Test Method, OECD TG 431 Created on: 23-02-2021 - Last modified on: 04-03-2021

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#### Organisation

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Department Health

**Country** Belgium

Geographical Area Flemish Region

#### SCOPE OF THE METHOD

The Method relates to	Human health
The Method is situated in	Regulatory use - Routine production
Type of method	In vitro - Ex vivo
Specify the type of cells/tissues/organs	Reconstructed human epidermis (RhE) obtained from human derived non-transformed epidermal keratinocytes

#### DESCRIPTION

#### Method keywords

Reconstructed human epidermis Three-dimensional human skin model cytotoxicity Cell viability MTT Skin corrosionReconstructed human epidermis Skin corrosion

#### Scientific area keywords

Hazard identification Corrosive chemical substances and mixtures Classification Labelling GHS in vitro toxicology

#### Method description

This method has been described in detail in OECD TG 431 and allows the identification of non-corrosive and corrosive substances and mixtures in accordance with the UN GHS. This method further supports the sub-categorisation of corrosive substances and mixtures into optional Subcategory 1A, in accordance with the UN GHS, as well as a combination of Subcategories 1B and 1C. A limitation of this method is that it does not allow discriminating between skin corrosive Sub-category 1B and Sub-category 1C in accordance with the UN GHS due to the limited set of wellknown *in vivo* corrosive Sub-category 1C chemicals. There are five validated test methods described under test guideline 431 which are able to discriminate subcategories 1A versus 1B-and-1C versus NC. The test chemical is applied topically to a three-dimensional RhE model, comprised of non-transformed, human-derived epidermal keratinocytes, which have been cultured to form a multi-layered, highly differentiated model of the human epidermis. It consists of organized basal, spinous and granular layers, and a multi-layered stratum corneum containing intercellular lamellar lipid layers representing main lipid classes analogous to those found *in vivo*. The RhE test method is based on the premise that corrosive chemicals are able to penetrate the stratum corneum by diffusion or erosion, and are cytotoxic to the cells in the underlying layers. Cell viability is measured by enzymatic conversion of the vital dye MTT, into a blue formazan salt that is quantitatively measured after extraction from tissues. Corrosive chemicals are identified by their ability to

decrease cell viability below defined threshold levels. The RhE-based skin corrosion test methods have shown to be predictive of *in vivo* skin corrosion effects assessed in rabbits according to the OECD guideline 404.

## Lab equipment

- Standard equipment for working with cell cultures,
- Microplate reader (OD) or HPLC/UPLC-spectrophotometer.

## Method status

Validated by an external party (e.g. OECD, EURL ECVAM,...)

# PROS, CONS & FUTURE POTENTIAL

## Advantages

- Commercially available test method.

- This method allows the identification of non-corrosive and corrosive substances and mixtures in accordance with the UN GHS. It supports the sub-categorisation of corrosive substances and mixtures into optional Subcategory 1A, in accordance with the UN GHS, as well as a combination of Subcategories 1B and 1C.

- This test can also be used for regulatory purposes for distinguishing corrosive from non-corrosive substances.

- This method is applicable to a wide range of chemical classes and physical states including liquids, semi-solids, solids and waxes. The liquids may be aqueous or nonaqueous; solids may be soluble or insoluble in water. Whenever possible, solids should be ground to a fine powder before application; no other prior treatment of the sample is required.

For more information: see OECD TG 431

# Challenges

- A limitation of this method is that it does not allow discriminating between skin corrosive Sub-category 1B and Sub-category 1C in accordance with the UN GHS due to the limited set of well-known in vivo corrosive Sub-category 1C chemicals.

- This method does not provide adequate information on skin irritation.

- This method is assumed to be applicable to mixtures as an extension of its applicability to substances. However, due to the fact that mixtures cover a wide spectrum of categories and composition, and that only limited information is currently available on the testing of mixtures, it might not be used for specific categories of mixtures.

- Test chemicals absorbing light in the same range as MTT formazan and test chemicals able to directly reduce the vital dye MTT (to MTT formazan) may interfere with the tissue viability measurements and need the use of adapted controls for corrections.

- Gases and aerosols cannot be tested with this method.

For more information: see OECD TG 431

# **REFERENCES, ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

# Associated documents

OECD TG 431.pdf

Links

Test Guideline No. 431 In Vitro Skin Corrosion: Reconstructed Human Epidermis (...

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