

1 **Effects of medicines used to treat gastrointestinal diseases on the pharmacokinetics of co-**
2 **administered drugs: A PEARRL Review**

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20 **ABSTRACT**

21 *Background*

22 Drugs used to treat gastrointestinal diseases (GI drugs) are widely used either as prescription or over-
23 the-counter (OTC) medications and belong to both the ten most prescribed and ten most sold OTC
24 medications worldwide. Current clinical practice shows that in many cases, these drugs are administered
25 concomitantly with other drug products. Due to their metabolic properties and mechanisms of action,
26 the drugs used to treat gastrointestinal diseases can change the pharmacokinetics of some co-
27 administered drugs. In certain cases, these interactions can lead to failure of treatment or to the
28 occurrence of serious adverse events. The mechanism of interaction depends highly on drug properties
29 and differs among therapeutic categories. Understanding these interactions is essential to providing
30 recommendations for optimal drug therapy.

31

32 *Objective*

33 To discuss the most frequent interactions between GI and other drugs, including identification of the
34 mechanisms behind these interactions, where possible.

35

36 *Conclusion*

37 Interactions with GI drugs are numerous and can be highly significant clinically. Whilst alterations in
38 bioavailability due to changes in solubility, dissolution rate and metabolic interactions can be (for the
39 most part) easily identified, interactions that are mediated through other mechanisms, such as
40 permeability or microbiota, are less well understood. Future work should focus on characterizing these
41 aspects.

42

43 **KEYWORDS**

44 Drug-Drug Interactions, gastrointestinal drugs, Pharmacokinetic Interactions, GI pH, GI solubility,
45 permeability, dissolution rate, motility, microbiota

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72 **1. Introduction**

73 It is estimated that 60-70 million US-Americans suffer annually from various types of gastrointestinal (GI)
74 diseases, with GI diseases being the underlying cause of approximately 10% of all deaths in the U.S.^[1,2] In
75 fact, statistical data on global sales of prescription medication from 2014 indicate that sales of drug
76 products for the treatment of GI diseases rank 12th with regard to sales of prescription medication
77 worldwide.^[3]

78 The term gastrointestinal diseases covers a wide range of disorders, which can be either acute or
79 chronic. Non ulcer or functional dyspepsia, for example, is usually an acute condition that affects the
80 upper GI tract and is expressed by symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, heartburn, bloating and stomach
81 discomfort. The treatment of functional dyspepsia can involve various drug classes depending on the
82 symptoms as well as the possible causative factors.^[4-6] Crohn's disease, by contrast, is a chronic
83 inflammatory disorder that can affect any part of the GI tract from the mouth to the anus. Although as of
84 yet there is no cure for Crohn's disease, there are several treatment options which can relieve the
85 symptoms and prevent relapse.^[7] As illustrated by these two examples, it is evident that a diversity of
86 drugs with different mechanisms of action are required to address the various targets across the
87 spectrum of GI diseases.

88 Frequently, patients are prescribed several drugs concomitantly. Drug-Drug Interactions (DDIs) are a
89 common problem during drug treatment and can sometimes lead to failure of treatment, or can cause
90 serious or even fatal adverse events.^[8]

91 Medications used for the treatment of GI diseases can alter the GI physiology and thus interact with the
92 absorption of concomitant medications, but they can also alter the metabolism and/or elimination of co-
93 administered drugs, potentially resulting, on the one hand, in a lack of efficacy of the co-administered
94 drug or, on the other hand, in adverse drug reactions. From a regulatory perspective, studies of potential
95 drug-drug interactions which lead to changes in absorption are required for the marketing authorization

96 of medicinal products in the European Union and United States.^[8,9] In particular, these studies are
97 designed to evaluate the effect of increased GI pH, the possibility of complexation and alterations in GI
98 transit time.^[8] Understanding the effect of GI drugs on the physiology of the GI tract and achieving a
99 mechanistic understanding of the interaction(s) involved are key to successfully managing concomitant
100 drug therapy.

101 In clinical trials drug performance is determined under controlled conditions (e.g. with strict
102 inclusion/exclusion criteria, under absence of, or controlled co-medication and with monitoring of
103 compliance). But, in clinical practice, where a much wider variety of patient characteristics, disease
104 states and multimorbidity is usual, the potential for DDIs is much greater. In fact, statistics show that one
105 in a hundred hospital admissions occurs as a result of a drug-drug interaction.^[10] The number of
106 unreported/ less severe interactions is probably far greater.

107 In addition to potential interactions with prescription drugs, one must also consider the possibility of
108 interactions with over-the-counter medication (OTC). FDA publishes information leaflets for consumers
109 about the most typical drug interactions that occur with specific OTC medications. It is interesting to
110 note that four out of the twelve drugs discussed by FDA in these leaflets involve drugs used to treat
111 gastrointestinal diseases.^[11] European statistics indicate that there may be similar issues with
112 concomitant use of OTC medication in the European Union, since 20-70% of those surveyed reported
113 using OTC medicines.^[12]

114 Keeping in mind these statistics, as well as the fact that medications used to treat GI diseases count
115 among the 10 most prescribed medicines - and also fall within the top 10 in terms of sales of OTC
116 medications - worldwide,^[3,13] it is evident that there is a high potential for DDIs with these medications.

117 The objective of this review is first, to present and discuss the effects of drugs used to treat GI diseases,
118 both prescription and OTC, on the pharmacokinetics and bioavailability of co-administered drugs and
119 second, to identify the mechanisms behind these interactions insofar as possible. The review is organized
120 according to the therapeutic indication of the drug (see Figure 1 for an overview) and covers drugs used

121 to prevent/treat all major GI diseases. Although several reviews concerning DDIs of specific GI drug
122 classes, e.g. PPIs, are available in the literature, to the best of these authors' knowledge this is the first to
123 provide an overview of interactions that are likely to occur across the range of drugs used to treat GI
124 diseases.

125 **2. Medicines used to treat gastrointestinal diseases and their effect on co-administered drugs**

126 **2.1 Agents affecting gastrointestinal motility**

127 Various neurotransmitters have an effect on GI motility and its coordination. Dopamine, for example, is
128 present in significant amounts in the GI wall and has an inhibitory effect on motility.^[14,15] Dopamine
129 receptor antagonists are currently being used for motor disorders of the upper GI tract,
130 gastroesophageal reflux disease, chronic dyspepsia and gastroparesis and have also been investigated
131 for therapy of motility disorders of the lower GI tract.^[16,17] Acetylcholine, by contrast, stimulates GI
132 motility through increased contractile activity by the smooth muscle.^[18,19] Serotonin, which is mainly
133 present in the enterochromaffin cells in the enteric epithelium and colon, has a wide range of effects on
134 the GI tract. The diversity of effects can be explained by the presence of multiple subtypes of 5-HT
135 receptors, located on different types of cells. Both agonists and antagonists of 5-HT receptors are used
136 for the treatment of GI diseases.^[20,21]

137 **2.1.1 Prokinetic agents**

138 Prokinetic agents promote gut wall contractions and increase their coordination, thus enhancing GI
139 motility. However, they do not disrupt the normal physiological pattern of motility.^[16,17]

140 **2.1.1.1 Metoclopramide**

141 Metoclopramide is a first generation prokinetic agent with antidopaminergic properties (D1 and D2
142 receptor antagonist). In addition, metoclopramide is a 5-HT₃ receptor antagonist and a 5-HT₄ receptor
143 agonist. Metoclopramide promotes the response to acetylcholine in the upper GI tract and therefore
144 accelerates gastric emptying and increases the tone of the lower esophageal sphincter.^[22] The effect is
145 observed in both healthy volunteers and those with GI diseases.^[23–25] For example, Fink et al.
146 demonstrated that metoclopramide accelerates gastric emptying in patients with gastroesophageal
147 reflux disease independent of their gastric emptying status (Figures 2a and 2b).^[25] Metoclopramide is
148 used for the symptomatic treatment of postoperative or chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting,

149 gastro-esophageal reflux disease and gastroparesis.^[23] A summary of the effects of concomitant use of
150 metoclopramide on the absorption of several APIs is presented in Table 1 and mechanistic explanations
151 for the observed effects are presented in the following text.

152 It is known that migraine attacks are often accompanied by delayed gastric emptying.^[26] Tokola et al.,
153 1984, investigated the effect of metoclopramide on the absorption of tolfenamic acid in patients
154 diagnosed with migraine. According to the protocol, the volunteers took part in the absorption studies
155 twice in the absence of migraine and twice as soon as possible after the beginning of a migraine attack.
156 After rectal administration of metoclopramide, the absorption of the tolfenamic acid was accelerated
157 compared to control (rectal administration of placebo) in all subjects. However, the total bioavailability
158 of tolfenamic acid did not change significantly.^[27] A similar study had been conducted in 1975 by Volans,
159 in which the effect of metoclopramide on the absorption of aspirin during migraine attacks was
160 investigated.^[28] In that study, the delayed gastric emptying during a migraine attack was confirmed. In
161 addition, it was shown that the plasma levels of salicylate achieved during a migraine attack, after
162 intramuscular administration of metoclopramide, were higher in comparison to those achieved without
163 metoclopramide pre-treatment.

164 Gothoni et al., 1972, reported an earlier time to achieve maximum plasma concentration (t_{max}) and
165 elevated serum tetracycline concentrations in six healthy volunteers after co-administration of
166 tetracycline with intramuscular metoclopramide. Nonetheless, the total area under the curve (AUC)
167 remained unaltered. In the same study, an increase in the rate of absorption of oral pivampicillin was
168 reported when administered along with metoclopramide.^[29]

169 Concomitant administration of metoclopramide has also been shown to increase the absorption rate of
170 acetaminophen, mexiletine, lithium, droxicam and morphine. Nimmo et al., 1973, studied the absorption
171 of acetaminophen with and without co-administration of metoclopramide in five healthy volunteers. The
172 mean t_{max} was reduced from 120 min to 48 min while the mean maximum plasma concentration
173 (C_{max}) increased from 125 µg/mL to 205 µg/mL. The urinary excretion of acetaminophen was not

174 influenced. Given the fact that t_{max} is a function of both absorption and elimination rates, the shortened
175 t_{max} after pre-treatment with metoclopramide indicates an enhanced absorption rate.^[30] Similar results
176 were obtained in the study of Wing et al., 1980, in which the authors demonstrated an increased
177 absorption rate of mexiletine after co-administration of metoclopramide. Here too, it was observed that
178 the bioavailability of mexiletine was unaltered, indicating that during chronic dosing of mexiletine, the
179 antiarrhythmic effect is unlikely to change after concomitant use of metoclopramide.^[31] In a further
180 study by Crammer et al., 1974, it was shown that metoclopramide reduced the t_{max} of co-administered
181 lithium by two hours.^[32] Sánchez et al., 1989, investigated the effect of intravenous metoclopramide on
182 the absorption of droxicam (a piroxicam prodrug) and Manana et al., 1988, investigated the effect of oral
183 metoclopramide after concomitant administration of an oral controlled release formulation of morphine.
184 In both cases, a significant reduction of t_{max} was observed, but other pharmacokinetic parameters were
185 not significantly different.^[33,34] Thus, in most studies it has been demonstrated that although
186 concomitant administration of metoclopramide increases absorption rate, there is little or no effect on
187 AUC, or clinical efficacy.

188 In a study by Morris et al., 1976, it was likewise observed that the co-administration of metoclopramide
189 resulted in an increased rate of absorption of levodopa and higher peak plasma concentrations,
190 consistent with the earlier t_{max} .^[35] In this case, though, the authors emphasized the fact that higher
191 peak concentrations of levodopa may result in dyskinesic movements and therefore, this should be taken
192 into consideration when metoclopramide is co-administered with levodopa.

193 Considering the properties of metoclopramide and the fact that besides promoting gastric emptying, it
194 also increases the upper small intestinal motility, administration of metoclopramide could also decrease
195 the time available for absorption in the small intestine and thus lead to a reduction of total
196 bioavailability. Gugler et al., 1981, explored this hypothesis by studying the absorption of cimetidine
197 when given concomitantly with antacids or metoclopramide. The study was conducted in eight healthy
198 volunteers and showed that there was a tendency to a shorter time to reach maximum plasma

199 concentrations when metoclopramide was co-administered. Additionally, a decrease in AUC of
200 approximately 22% was observed, although in neither case did the difference reach statistical
201 significance.^[36] On the other hand, Mahony et al., 1984, conducted a clinical study with children with
202 leukemia and reported that concomitant administration of methotrexate tablets with oral
203 metoclopramide led to significantly lower AUC. Consistent with these findings, Pearson et al., 1985,
204 demonstrated that a very fast or slow small intestinal transit in children with leukemia reduces the C_{max}
205 of methotrexate.^[37,38]

206 In the studies conducted by Manninen et al., co-administration of metoclopramide with digoxin in eight
207 healthy adults or in eleven patients on digoxin therapy resulted in reduced serum digoxin
208 concentrations.^[39,40] The lower bioavailability of digoxin was attributed to its dissolution rate-limited
209 absorption, since the changes were only observed when digoxin was given as a tablet and not when it
210 was given as a solution. For this reason, authors suggested that fast dissolving tablets of digoxin would
211 be less affected by co-administration of drugs which alter the GI motility. Supporting this hypothesis,
212 Johnson et al., 1984, demonstrated that digoxin was absorbed completely and more quickly when it was
213 given as soft-gelatin capsules rather as a tablet. Oral metoclopramide reduced the t_{max} for both
214 formulations, but only reduced the AUC of the tablet formulation.^[41] From these two studies it is
215 apparent that co-administration of metoclopramide may result in impaired drug absorption and
216 decreased bioavailability in cases when a poorly soluble API exhibits dissolution-rate limited absorption.

217 In contrast to the results discussed above, Wadhwa et al., 1986, conducted a clinical study in fourteen
218 kidney transplant patients with the aim of increasing the bioavailability of cyclosporine. Cyclosporine is
219 incompletely absorbed in the small intestine with a dose-dependent rate and extent of absorption. The
220 authors reasoned the concomitant administration of cyclosporine with metoclopramide would increase
221 the absorption rate and possibly the bioavailability of this immunosuppressive. Due to accelerated
222 gastric emptying, there was a very significant increase in the C_{max} of cyclosporine, as well as a decrease
223 in t_{max}. Furthermore, an average increase of 29% in the AUC was observed (p=0.003). However, the

224 authors concluded that further studies would be required to determine whether metoclopramide can
225 reproducibly increase the absorption of cyclosporine on a long term basis.^[42]
226 Overall, it appears that co-administration of metoclopramide, leads to a decreased t_{max} of the co-
227 administered drugs, indicating a faster rate of absorption. However, the effect of concomitant use of
228 metoclopramide on the AUC of the co-administered drug is variable. Although the reported examples are
229 limited, it appears that after co-administration of metoclopramide small intestinal transit may be too fast
230 for poorly permeable (e.g. cimetidine) or poorly dissolving (e.g. digoxin) drugs to be adequately
231 absorbed. Thus, in this case, BCS classification may be helpful in identifying potential problems in
232 bioavailability when metoclopramide is co-administered.

233 *2.1.2 Anticholinergic agents*

234 Propantheline is an anticholinergic agent which reduces gastrointestinal motility and prolongs gastric
235 emptying rate. It is usually used in combination with other medicines to treat stomach ulcers. As for
236 metoclopramide, propantheline has been investigated with respect to its potential effect on the
237 absorption of concomitant medications. As one would anticipate, propantheline decreased the
238 absorption rate of acetaminophen and lithium when given concurrently.^[30,32] Co-administration of
239 propantheline with a rapidly and a slowly dissolving tablet of digoxin resulted in increased serum digoxin
240 concentrations only for the slowly dissolving formulation.^[39,40]

241 *2.1.3 Laxatives*

242 Laxatives promote defecation and are often used OTC for the treatment of constipation. They can be
243 grouped in osmotic, stimulant and bulk laxatives (Table 2).^[43] An overview of the effects of laxatives and
244 antidiarrheal agents on gastrointestinal physiology is given in Table 3. Osmotic laxatives (indigestible
245 disaccharides, sugar alcohols, synthetic macromolecules, saline laxatives) attract and retain water in the
246 intestinal lumen by increasing the luminal osmotic pressure. Stimulant laxatives (such as bisacodyl, senna
247 and sodium picosulfate) act locally by increasing colonic motility and decreasing water absorption in the

248 large intestine.^[44] Bulk laxatives such as bran, isphagula and sterculia adsorb and retain luminal fluids
249 and increase the fecal mass. For constipation linked with specific diseases additional treatment options
250 are available: Linaclotide, an agonist of guanylate cyclase-C, stimulates fluid secretion, accelerates
251 intestinal transit and is used for constipation-predominant irritable bowel syndrome.^[45]

252 In general, laxatives shorten GI transit time, but depending on the type of laxative, the extent of the
253 effect on transit time through specific GI compartments may vary (Figure 3). Studies have been
254 conducted with a variety of methods including radiopaque markers method,^[46–48] following transit of a
255 single metal sphere (diameter 6 m, density 1.4 g/ml) using a metal detector^[49], [¹³C]-octanoate and
256 lactose-^{[13}C] ureide breath tests^[50] and scintigraphy.^[45,51–54]

257 For healthy subjects the following observations have been reported: The total GI transit time was
258 reduced in thirteen subjects after treatment for nine days with either the bulk laxative wheat bran (39.0
259 h vs. 69.0 h) or the stimulant laxative senna (41.0 h vs. 69.0 h) compared to the baseline value.^[46] Small
260 intestinal transit time was reduced by bisacodyl (dose 10 mg) from approximately 2.5 h to 1.5 h in ten
261 subjects,^[49] while the osmotic laxatives polyethylene glycol and lactulose, had a minimum effect (if any)
262 on the small intestinal transit time after being administered at a dose of 10 g twice daily for five days.^[51]

263 Administration of an isosmotic solution containing 40 g polyethylene glycol 3350 resulted in a significant
264 decrease in oro-caecal transit time from 423.8±28.1 min to 313.8±17.2 min in twelve subjects.^[50] In
265 another study, administration of 5 mg bisacodyl in twenty-five subjects significantly accelerated the
266 transit through the ascending colon (median 6.5 h vs. 11.0 h).^[54] Similarly, 10-20 mL of lactulose
267 (Duphalac; Duphar Laboratories Ltd., England) three times daily for five days resulted in a significant
268 decrease of the mean proximal colon transit time from 12.9±3.7 h to 7.0±2.5 h in eleven subjects.^[53] The
269 total colonic transit time was reduced to a greater extent after administration of 10 mg bisacodyl (from
270 31±14 h to 7±8 h) than by treatment with 30 g lactulose (from 34±12 h to 30±19 h) in ten subjects.^[49]

271 In patient populations the following observations have been reported: In twelve subjects with
272 constipation-predominant irritable bowel syndrome, treatment with linalotide (dose 100 µg or 1000 µg)

273 did not affect the gastric or small intestinal transit time.^[45] However, the ascending colon transit time
274 was decreased by 54% at a high dose of 1000 µg of linaclotide. At a lower dose of 100 µg there was a
275 decrease of 33%, although this was not statistically significant. In line with these observations, the total
276 colonic transit time was only significantly accelerated by the higher dose.^[45] In nine subjects with chronic
277 nonorganic constipation, treatment with an isosmotic electrolyte solution containing polyethylene glycol
278 4000 (14.6 g) for eight weeks did not significantly alter the transit time through the proximal colon, while
279 the transit through the left colon and rectum was significantly accelerated (46±29 h vs. 62±20 h and
280 37±42 vs. 78±21 h, respectively).^[48] The results in eight patients with slow transit constipation were
281 similar after administration of 60 g polyethylene glycol 4000 daily for six weeks; the right colon transit
282 time was not significantly different compared to placebo, while the transit time through the left colon
283 was significantly accelerated (13 h vs. 45 h) resulting in a reduction of total colonic transit time from 91 h
284 to 43 h.^[47] In summary, laxatives decrease transit times in healthy subjects throughout the GI tract, while
285 in constipated patients the effects are mainly limited to the colon.

286 Changes in GI transit times induced by laxatives can lead to changes in bioavailability. For example, co-
287 administration of senna (20 mL of Liquidepur, Fa. Nattermann, Cologne, Germany) with a sustained-
288 release quinidine formulation (0.5 g every 12 hours) reduced quinidine plasma levels by 25% in nine
289 patients with cardiac arrhythmia on long-term treatment, resulting in reoccurrence of supraventricular
290 extrasystoles.^[55] Similarly, polyethylene glycol 4000 reduced the absorption of digoxin by 30% when co-
291 administered with digoxin tablets (dose 0.5 mg) in eighteen healthy subjects.^[56] However, it is not clear
292 whether the same effect would be observed in cardiac patients or what the clinical ramifications would
293 be. Further, a trend (although not statistically significant) to decreased AUC of estradiol glucuronide
294 (dose 1.5 mg) was observed when co-administered for ten days with the maximum tolerated dose of
295 wheat bran (-13%) and senna (-10%) in twenty healthy postmenopausal women.^[57]

296 Many laxatives have been shown to alter the production of short chain fatty acids (SCFA). SCFA are
297 usually associated with a decrease in luminal pH. After treatment with senna or wheat bran, fecal SCFA

298 concentrations were increased in healthy subjects (n=13) by 82% and 19%, respectively.^[46] After
299 administration of senna, the pH in the middle and distal colon was decreased (6.39 vs. 6.85, 6.66 vs.
300 7.14).^[46] Lactulose significantly acidified the contents in the lower small intestine as well as in the right
301 colon.^[58-60] Sodium sulphate also decreased the pH, with the greatest effect in the left colon.^[58] By
302 contrast, wheat bran reduced the pH in the distal colon of thirteen healthy subjects only slightly (6.88 vs.
303 7.08).^[46] But mechanisms other than via SCFA can also be at play. For example, the increase in the pH in
304 the lower small intestine, colon and rectum observed after administration of magnesium sulphate is
305 postulated to be the result of gastric conversion to magnesium chloride and subsequent reconversion to
306 insoluble magnesium carbonate in the colon prompted by increased colonic bicarbonate secretion.^[58]
307 The possible pH changes observed with laxatives are not clearly associated with changes in drug product
308 performance. For example, mesalazine release from a delayed-release, pH-dependent formulation of
309 mesalazine (Asacol®, SmithKline Beecham, UK) was not affected by the co-administration of ispaghula
310 husk or lactulose despite their known pH-lowering effect in the colon.^[61,62] Nonetheless, the UK
311 manufacturers of delayed-release mesalazine formulations (Asacol®, Allergan Ltd, Bucks, UK and
312 Salofalk® granules, Dr. Falk Pharma UK Ltd, Bourne End, UK) suggest that drug release might be impaired
313 by preparations with pH-lowering effect.^[63,64]
314 With respect to the gut microbiota, the fecal microbiota of patients with chronic idiopathic constipation
315 (n=65) treated with lactulose over twenty-eight days was increased in Anaerobes by 3% and
316 Bifidobacteria by 8%, while treatment with polyethylene glycol 4000 resulted in a reduced fecal amount
317 of Bifidobacteria (-14%).^[65] Lactulose administration in patients taking coumarins (acenocoumarol,
318 phenprocoumon) increased their risk of over-anticoagulation, as assessed in a population-based cohort
319 study, because of changes in the vitamin K production of the colonic bacterial flora. By contrast,
320 concomitant intake of ispaghula with coumarins did not alter the risk of over-anticoagulation.^[66]
321 The importance of the gut microbiota on oral pharmacotherapy is discussed in section 2.6 “Antibiotics”.

322 2.1.4 Antidiarrheal agents

323 Antidiarrheal agents provide symptomatic relief of diarrhea by decreasing fluid loss, by slowing down the
324 passage of the gastrointestinal contents through the digestive tract, by increasing fluid absorption
325 and/or by reducing intestinal secretions.^[67] They can be classified according to their mechanism of action
326 (Table 2). Opioids (such as loperamide, diphenoxylate and codeine phosphate) inhibit intestinal transit by
327 activating μ -opioid receptors. Adsorbents and bulking agents (kaolin, isphagula, methylcellulose) adsorb
328 water and increase the fecal mass, while the antisecretory action of racecadotril, an enkephalinase
329 inhibitor, is linked to reducing chloride and fluid flux into the GI lumen.

330 Differences in the GI transit time have been observed after oral loperamide administration (Figure 4).
331 The total GI transit time was increased after loperamide administration in healthy subjects (74.0 h vs.
332 50.3 h, n=11), as measured by radiopaque marker pellets, presumably due to reduced, irregular motor
333 activity and therefore, prolonged transit time in the jejunum.^[46,68,69] Gastric emptying time was not
334 significantly different in twenty-four healthy subjects treated with 4 mg loperamide compared to
335 placebo as measured with a radio-labeled meal.^[70] However, gastric residence time measured with a
336 radiotelemetry capsule was increased two-fold in five healthy subjects treated with 8 mg loperamide (4
337 doses, every 6 hours).^[71] Small intestinal transit time, as measured with the hydrogen breath test, was
338 increased by 80-130% in healthy subjects receiving 4 to 8 mg of loperamide.^[70-72]

339 With respect to the composition of GI fluids, loperamide has been shown to decrease prostaglandin-E2
340 induced water and electrolyte secretion in the jejunum of healthy volunteers and reduce postprandial
341 secretion of trypsin and bilirubin by more than 50% in patients with short bowel syndrome.^[69,73,74]

342 Similarly, basal and amino acid stimulated gallbladder motility was decreased by loperamide (dose 8 mg)
343 in eight healthy subjects as measured by ultrasonography and bilirubin output in the duodenum.^[75] After
344 loperamide administration fecal SCFA concentrations were decreased in healthy subjects (82.0 $\mu\text{mol/g}$
345 wet weight vs. 152.0 $\mu\text{mol/g}$ wet weight; n=13).^[46]

346 In terms of DDIs, administration of 4 mg loperamide 24 h, 12 h and 1 h before desmopressin
347 administration increased the bioavailability of desmopressin in eighteen healthy subjects (AUC 3.1-fold,
348 C_{max} 2.3-fold) and prolonged the time to reach the maximum plasma concentration (2 h vs. 1.3 h)
349 without affecting the elimination half-life.^[76] These effects could be explained by the decrease in GI
350 motility. Desmopressin is highly soluble but poorly permeable (bioavailability approx. 0.1%), so longer
351 transit times are expected to lead to a longer contact time of the drug with the absorptive mucosa.^[77]
352 Co-administration of loperamide at the maximum tolerated dose over 10-12 days also increased the AUC
353 of estradiol glucuronide (dose 1.5 mg) by 15% in twenty healthy postmenopausal women, although the
354 difference did not reach statistical significance.^[57]

355 On the other hand, a single dose of loperamide (16 mg) decreased the bioavailability of the poorly
356 soluble drug saquinavir (dose 600 mg) by 54% in twelve healthy subjects when administered
357 concomitantly. This could be explained by the decreased motility and/or a reduction of electrolyte and
358 fluid secretion which could hinder dissolution.^[78] Additionally, it is possible that a decreased secretion of
359 bile salts secondary to reduced gallbladder motility^[75] impeded the solubilisation of saquinavir.

360 On the other hand, loperamide co-administration (8 mg every 6 hours) in twelve healthy male subjects
361 decreased the absorption rate of theophylline from a sustained-release 600 mg formulation (C_{max} 3.2
362 mg/L vs. 4.6 mg/L, t_{max} 20 h vs. 11 h), which could be explained by impeded release from the
363 formulation due to a decrease in hydrodynamics (decreased motility) or perhaps a prolonged gastric
364 residence time of the formulation/released drug. However, the AUC was not affected.^[79]

365 Last but not least, the surface of bulk laxatives and bulking agents offers a site for drug adsorption.
366 Concomitant administration of kaolin-pectin decreased the absorption of tetracycline (20%), aspirin (5-
367 10%), procainamide (30%), quinidine (58%), trimethoprim (12-20%), lincomycin (90%), chloroquine (29%)
368 and digoxin (15-62%), which is most likely the result of adsorption of the drugs onto kaolin.^[80-88] Drug

369 adsorption is also observed onto dietary fibers and therefore, similar DDIs to those observed with dietary
370 fibers are further considered in section 2.2.

371 An overview of the effects of antidiarrheal agents on gastrointestinal physiology is given in Table 3.

372 **2.2 Dietary fibers**

373 The use of dietary fibers in the treatment of various diseases, such as diabetes, hypercholesterolemia,
374 obesity, chronic constipation and gastrointestinal motility disorders, has increased over the last years.
375 However, there are few studies that have investigated the impact of concomitant use of dietary fibers
376 with other drugs. From the studies available it seems that the effect of the concomitant use of dietary
377 fibers depends on the type of fiber used.

378 The interaction of levothyroxine with dietary fibers is well established. Concomitant use of dietary fibers,
379 such as oat bran, soy fiber and ispaghula husk, result in decreased bioavailability of levothyroxine, due to
380 adsorption of the drug to the fibers in the GI tract.^[89] The authors commented that the adsorption of
381 levothyroxine to soluble fibers and the consequent reduction in bioavailability might be greater than its
382 adsorption to insoluble fibers. The interaction with levothyroxine is also noted by FDA in a consumers'
383 information leaflet regarding drug interactions with food.^[90]

384 In a case study reported by Perlman, the blood levels of lithium were decreased by 48%, when a patient
385 was treated simultaneously with lithium and ispaghula husk .^[91] There is also some evidence that fibers
386 interact with some tricyclic antidepressants. The clinical effectiveness of tricyclic antidepressants
387 appears usually after an administration period of 2-6 weeks. During this period, due to anticholinergic
388 effects of the drugs, constipation is a common side effect. Therefore, patients receiving antidepressant
389 medication often ingest dietary fibers. Already in 1992, Stewart observed a decrease in plasma
390 concentrations of three tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline, doxepin and imipramine) in three
391 patients, who concurrently ingested a diet rich in fibers.^[92]

392 There are conflicting inputs in the literature about the interaction of dietary fibers and digoxin. Brown et
393 al., 1977, reported a significant decrease in the bioavailability of digoxin when given to twelve healthy
394 volunteers with regular or high fiber diet concomitantly, as opposed to administering digoxin alone in
395 the fasted state.^[93] Albert et al., 1978, reported that when kaolin-pectin suspension was given
396 simultaneously with digoxin, the total amount of digoxin absorbed was decreased by 62%. However, no
397 significant interactions were observed when digoxin was given 2 h before the administration of the fiber
398 suspension.^[85] However, studies by Lembcke et al., 1982, and Kasper et al., 1979, found no effect on the
399 bioavailability of digoxin when it was administered together with guar gum or other fibers.^[94,95] In a later
400 study Huupponen et al., 1984, investigated the effect of guar gum on the absorption of digoxin in ten
401 healthy volunteers. It was demonstrated that co-administration of guar gum with digoxin resulted in
402 reduced plasma concentrations of digoxin and a decrease of 15% of the AUC for the first six hours ($p <$
403 0.05).^[96]
404 Holt et al., 1979, investigated the effect of co-administration of the soluble fibers guar gum and pectin
405 on the absorption of acetaminophen. Concomitant administration with these fibers resulted in delayed
406 absorption and decreased C_{max}. However, the total absorption of acetaminophen was not significantly
407 reduced. The authors attributed their results to delayed gastric emptying. Moreover, they argued that
408 because guar gum, when hydrated, forms a viscous colloidal suspension, the high viscosity of this
409 suspension could be a possible reason for the observed delay in gastric emptying.^[97] The results from this
410 study correlate well with the study conducted by Reppas et al., 1998, in mongrel dogs, in which the
411 effect of elevated luminal viscosity on the absorption of acetaminophen, hydrochlorothiazide, cimetidine
412 and mefenamic acid was investigated.^[98] Elevated luminal viscosity was achieved by administering saline
413 solutions of the water-soluble guar gum. When given concurrently with the guar gum solutions, the
414 C_{max} and AUC of the highly soluble acetaminophen and hydrochlorothiazide were significantly
415 decreased, suggesting that the decreased rate of dissolution, due to the higher luminal viscosity, led to
416 lower concentrations at the absorption sites. In the case of cimetidine, concurrent administration of the

417 guar gum solution led only to a decrease in C_{max} and not AUC. For the poorly soluble but highly
418 permeable mefenamic acid, neither the C_{max} nor the AUC were significantly affected by the
419 concomitant administration of the guar gum in dogs.^[98] Huupponen et al., 1984, reported a decrease in
420 C_{max} and AUC of penicillin when given together with guar gum.^[96] Finally, Astarloa et al., 1992,
421 investigated the effect of a diet rich in insoluble fiber on the pharmacokinetics of levodopa. Consumption
422 of two months of the dietary supplement with the usual dose of levodopa led to elevated plasma levels
423 of levodopa especially at 30 and 60 minutes after oral administration.^[99,100]

424 It is evident from these studies that it is currently not possible to make any generalizations about DDIs
425 with dietary fibers although it seems that there is a tendency for decreased maximum plasma
426 concentrations of the co-administered drug. These events are likely attributable to slower gastric
427 emptying, higher viscosity and, perhaps in some cases, adsorption phenomena.^[101] It also seems that the
428 type of interaction, if any, is highly dependent on the type of dietary fiber used. It remains to be
429 investigated whether these interactions, such as they exist, lead to clinically significant differences.

430 **2.3 Antiemetics**

431 Antiemetics are classified according to their mechanism of action. There are five receptors that play a
432 key role in the vomiting reflex; muscarinic, dopaminergic, histaminic, serotonergic and substance
433 P/neurokinin receptors.

434 Aprepitant is a very potent neurokinin-1 receptor antagonist used for the prevention of acute and
435 delayed chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.^[102,103] Aprepitant is metabolized primarily by
436 CYP3A4 and secondarily by CYP1A2 and CYP2C19. It also acts as a moderate inhibitor of CYP1A2, CYP2C9,
437 CYP2C19, CYP2E1 and as a weak inducer of CYP2C.^[102,103] Caution is therefore necessary, especially when
438 administered concomitantly with chemotherapy agents that are metabolized primarily by CYP3A4, as
439 inhibition by aprepitant may lead to higher plasma levels and toxic side effects. According to the Public
440 Assessment Report, EMEND® capsules (which contain aprepitant as API), should not be concomitantly

441 administered with ergot alkaloid derivatives, pimozide, terfenadine, astemizole, or cisapride, as the
442 competitive inhibition of the CYP3A4 by aprepitant results in elevated plasma concentrations, leading to
443 adverse effects.^[103] Further pharmacokinetic interactions that have been reported for aprepitant in the
444 literature are those with midazolam, warfarin, dexamethasone and methylprednisolone.^[22,104]

445 Majumdar et al., 2003, investigated the effect of aprepitant on the pharmacokinetics of single dose
446 midazolam on day 1 and on day 5 during daily administration of aprepitant for five days. In this study,
447 two dose regimens of aprepitant were used; 125/80 mg and 40/25 mg. It was concluded that co-
448 administration of midazolam with the 125/80 mg regimen (125 mg on day 1 and 80 mg on days 2-5)
449 resulted in a 2.3-fold increase in midazolam AUC on day 1 and a 3.3-fold increase on day 5. The plasma
450 concentrations achieved 1 h after dosing (C_{1h}) and the half-life ($t_{1/2}$) were also increased due to the
451 inhibition of first pass and systemic metabolism and subsequent reduction in clearance. Although co-
452 administration of midazolam with the 40/25 mg dose regimen did not result in any significant change in
453 the pharmacokinetics of midazolam, this lower dose is not used in clinical practice.^[105] Majumdar et al.,
454 2007, later investigated the effect of aprepitant on intravenously administered midazolam and the
455 findings were consistent with the first study, but with an increase in AUC of 1.47-fold. The authors
456 suggested that the lower increase in AUC observed after intravenous administration of midazolam, might
457 be due to lack of inhibition of presystemic metabolism when midazolam is given intravenously.^[106]

458 In an analogous study by McCrea et al., 2003, the effect of a 5-day administration of 125/80 mg
459 aprepitant regimen on the pharmacokinetics of orally administered methylprednisolone and
460 dexamethasone was evaluated. Due to the inhibition of CYP3A4 by aprepitant, the C_{max} of
461 methylprednisolone was increased 1.5-fold while the AUC increased 2.5-fold. An increase of 2.2-fold in
462 AUC was observed for dexamethasone.^[107] Clinically, unnecessary high exposure to corticosteroids
463 should be avoided due to the potential risk of adverse effects such as hyperglycemia and increased
464 susceptibility to infections. For these reasons, it is suggested that the oral doses of dexamethasone and
465 methylprednisolone should be reduced by half when used for the management of chemotherapy-

466 induced nausea and vomiting concurrently with aprepitant.^[107] The interaction of aprepitant with
467 warfarin is less clear.^[108] In a study by Takaki et al., 2016, a decrease in warfarin plasma levels was
468 observed, but no significant interaction between warfarin and aprepitant was established. One possible
469 reason for the lack of interaction could be the fact that the volunteers who took part in this clinical study
470 were also receiving several other chemotherapeutic agents. In any case, careful monitoring of patients
471 on chronic warfarin therapy is required.^[104,109]

472 Serotonin plays an important role in various body functions. Most serotonin is synthesized in the GI tract
473 and it affects various aspects of intestinal physiology. Multiple subtypes of 5-HT receptors exist on
474 various types of cells, such as smooth muscle and enterocytes, and agonists or antagonists of 5-HT
475 receptors are used in the treatment of different gastrointestinal disorders.^[21] 5-HT₃ receptor antagonists,
476 for example ondansetron and granisetron, have been successfully used in the treatment of
477 chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. Recommendations, published by the American Society of
478 Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for the use of the 5-HT₃ receptor antagonists, do not distinguish among them
479 with regard to their safety and efficacy. Nonetheless, these compounds differ significantly in their
480 pharmacokinetic properties and especially with respect to their potential to interact with CYP
481 enzymes.^[110,111] Granisetron, for example, does not inhibit any of the CYP enzymes which are commonly
482 involved in drug metabolism, whereas ondansetron inhibits both CYP1A2 and CYP2D6 and can thus
483 interact with various concurrently used drugs.

484 However, the interactions reported in literature are not solely attributed to their enzyme inhibitory
485 properties. Concomitant use of ondansetron with cyclophosphamide resulted in reduced systemic
486 exposure, probably due to increased systemic clearance.^[112,113] In any case, there is a need for more
487 studies to increase knowledge about drug interactions of chemotherapeutic agents with commonly used
488 antiemetics, as even a slight change in the pharmacokinetic parameters or pharmacodynamics of the
489 anti-cancer medication could jeopardize the effectiveness of chemotherapy.^[112]

490 **2.4 Gastric acid reducing agents and Antacids**

491 Proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs), H₂-receptor antagonists (H₂RAs) and antacids are widely used in the
492 treatment of various gastric acid related disorders, such as peptic ulcers and gastroesophageal reflux
493 disease. In fact, PPIs and H₂RAs are classified among the three most prescribed drug classes for the years
494 2011-2014 and the situation is similar today.^[114] Indeed, esomeprazole, a proton-pump inhibitor, ranks
495 among the top five most prescribed medications worldwide.^[115] Of particular concern for these drugs is
496 their increasing OTC use. Despite the fact that gastric antisecretory agents or antacids are tolerated well,
497 with a low overall frequency of adverse reactions,^[116] their concurrent use with other medications can
498 have a great effect on drug absorption. If prescribed, identification of potential interactions by the
499 prescribing physician and/or dispensing pharmacist is possible, but this control mechanism is largely lost
500 if the drugs are obtained OTC or via e-pharmacies.

501 *2.4.1 Proton Pump Inhibitors*

502 Proton-pump inhibitors are a group of substituted benzimidazole sulfoxide drugs with strong inhibitory
503 effects on gastric acid secretion from the parietal cells in the stomach. At present, six PPIs
504 (dexlansoprazole, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, omeprazole, pantoprazole, rabeprazole) are available on
505 the market.^[117] PPIs are used in the treatment of acid-related disorders and for the prevention of
506 gastrointestinal bleeding in patients receiving dual antiplatelet therapy of clopidogrel and aspirin.
507 Furthermore, they are used as a component of combination therapy for the eradication of H. pylori,
508 because their properties enhance the anti-H. pylori activities of the co-administered antibacterials
509 (clarithromycin and amoxicillin).^[118] PPIs can affect the absorption of the co-administered drugs to a
510 great extent, mainly due to the increase in gastric pH. In a recent study, the effect of 40 mg of
511 pantoprazole administered orally once per day for four days and 20 mg of the H₂RA famotidine
512 administered orally twice within 12 hours, on the GI physiology of eight healthy male volunteers was
513 investigated.^[119] In both cases, the gastric pH differed significantly in comparison to the control group

514 (Figure 5). However, PPIs can also affect the pharmacokinetics of co-administered drugs through other
515 mechanisms,^[120] and several excellent reviews have been written regarding the drug-drug interactions of
516 PPIs.^[121–123]

517 As already mentioned, gastric pH is an important parameter that can affect absorption of drugs,
518 especially these which are poorly soluble weak bases. For example, Jaruratanasirikul et al., 1998,
519 investigated the effect of 40 mg oral omeprazole on the pharmacokinetics of a single 200 mg capsule of
520 itraconazole in eleven healthy volunteers. Concomitant use of omeprazole resulted in reduction of the
521 mean AUC and Cmax of itraconazole by 64% and 66% respectively. No interaction due to omeprazole's
522 inhibition of CYP3A4 was reported.^[124] On the other hand, Johnson et al., 2003, investigated the effect of
523 concomitant use of 40 mg oral omeprazole with a 40 mg dose oral solution of itraconazole in twenty
524 volunteers. It was reported that there was no statistically significant difference on the AUC, tmax and
525 Cmax with the co-administration of omeprazole.^[125] The results of these two clinical studies (one with a
526 solid dosage form, one with itraconazole in solution) suggest that co-administration of omeprazole and
527 elevation of gastric pH, affects the dissolution of itraconazole capsules rather than the permeability of
528 itraconazole. The results regarding ketoconazole are similar. In 1995, Chin et al., conducted a clinical
529 study with nine healthy volunteers, in which the effects of 60 mg oral omeprazole or an acidic beverage
530 on the pharmacokinetics of orally administered 200 mg ketoconazole were investigated. Pre-treatment
531 with omeprazole resulted in significantly lower AUC and Cmax and a prolongation of tmax.^[126]
532 Ketoconazole and itraconazole are both practically insoluble at pH>4. Co-administration of PPIs with
533 poorly soluble imidazole antifungal agents when given as capsules or tablets is, therefore, not
534 recommended.^[127] Interestingly, the elevated gastric pH does not affect the bioavailability of fluconazole
535 tablets.^[128] This lack of interaction is underscored by the high solubility of fluconazole over the whole pH
536 range of the GI tract. Thus, stomach acidity does not limit the dissolution rate of fluconazole or its
537 absorption.^[129,130]

538 The increase in the gastric pH caused by PPIs can also greatly affect the bioavailability and effectiveness
539 of anti-retroviral agents, depending on their pH/solubility profiles. Tappouni et al., 2008, conducted a
540 clinical study with sixteen patients, in which the effect of omeprazole on indinavir was evaluated. With
541 pre-treatment and co-administration of 20 mg oral omeprazole, the C_{max} of indinavir decreased by 29%
542 and the AUC by 34%, whereas at a higher dose of 40 mg omeprazole, the C_{max} and AUC of indinavir
543 decreased by 41% and 47% respectively.^[131] Co-administration of omeprazole resulted in reduction to
544 the systemic exposure to both nelfinavir and its metabolite. In particular, the AUC of nelfinavir was
545 decreased by 36%.^[132] Tomilo et al., 2006, reported a 94% and 91% decrease in AUC and C_{max},
546 respectively, of 400 mg oral atazanavir, when co-administered with 60 mg lansoprazole in ten healthy
547 volunteers.^[133] The results were similar when omeprazole was co-administered.^[134] However, the clinical
548 impact of this drug-drug interaction on the clinical effect of atazanavir is not clear.^[135,136] It seems that
549 co-administration of PPIs with an atazanavir/ritonavir regimen does not affect the ability of atazanavir to
550 achieve the minimum plasma concentration necessary for the virologic response, i.e. the concomitant
551 use of atazanavir/ritonavir regimen and PPIs was not associated with higher virologic failure rate.^[135]
552 Nonetheless, further studies, in which both the pharmacokinetic parameters and the clinical response
553 rates are simultaneously investigated, are needed to understand the interaction and its consequences
554 more fully.

555 In contrast to the results mentioned so far, in the study of Winston et al., 2006, co-administration of 40
556 mg oral omeprazole with 1000 mg saquinavir (given orally as 1000 mg saquinavir/100 mg ritonavir
557 combination) resulted in an 82% increase in the mean AUC of saquinavir in eighteen healthy volunteers.
558 The increase did not result in an increase in adverse effects. The authors commented that further work is
559 necessary in order to understand the mechanism of this DDI and to address whether the effects of
560 omeprazole on saquinavir's pharmacokinetics would be the same even in the absence of ritonavir. The
561 authors also discussed the possibility of whether the increase could be the result of inhibition of
562 transmembrane-transporters, such as P-gp or MRP by omeprazole.^[137]

563 As for most of the antifungal and antiviral drugs, the absorption of mycophenolate mofetil is impaired by
564 concomitant administration of PPIs. Kofler et al., 2009, measured the levels of mycophenolic acid (active
565 metabolite) in thirty-three patients concurrently receiving 40 mg oral pantoprazole. C_{max} and AUC of
566 mycophenolic acid were significantly lower when patients were pretreated with pantoprazole.^[138] As
567 anticipated, co-administration of pantoprazole with an enteric coated formulation of mycophenolic acid
568 had no significant effect on its pharmacokinetics.^[139]

569 Apart from affecting the solubility of APIs in the stomach, an increase in the gastric pH can jeopardize the
570 bioavailability of formulations with pH-dependent release. The effect of concomitant administration of
571 esomeprazole on the bioavailability of risedronate sodium DR was evaluated in a clinical study involving
572 eighty-seven postmenopausal women. The results showed that esomeprazole administration one hour
573 before dinner or one hour before breakfast resulted in 32% and 48% reduction in the bioavailability of
574 risedronate sodium DR, respectively. In the report, it was suggested that an increase in the gastric pH
575 may compromise the enteric coating of risedronate delayed release formulation, thus resulting in release
576 of risedronate sodium in the stomach, where it could convert to the less soluble free acid.^[140] However,
577 as it has been shown that PPIs (pantoprazole) decrease buffer capacity as well as increase gastric pH,^[119]
578 a premature release due to enteric coating failure appears unlikely.

579 A review of all the available clinical data from literature describing the effect of the administration of
580 various gastric acid reducing agents on the absorption and bioavailability of co-administered weakly
581 basic anticancer drugs was published by Budha et al.^[141] The authors attempted to correlate the
582 physicochemical properties and pH-solubility profiles of the different anticancer drugs with the observed
583 effect on the absorption caused by the elevation of the gastric pH after the administration of the acid
584 reducing agents (PPIs, H₂RAs and antacids). It was concluded that the impact of the elevation of gastric
585 pH is more prominent for the anticancer drugs which exhibit an exponentially decreasing solubility in the
586 pH range 1-4 and for which the maximum dose strength is not soluble in 250 mL of water. Elevation of

587 gastric pH is expected to substantially decrease the dissolution rate of these drug products, thus leading
588 to incomplete dissolution of the dose and impaired absorption.

589 In 2013, Mitra and Kesisoglou described strategies to minimize or avoid reduced absorption of weakly
590 basic drugs resulting from elevated gastric pH.^[142]

591 The observed DDIs with PPIs occur not only because of their elevation of gastric pH, but can also arise
592 from other properties. It has been shown that concurrent administration of 10 mg of nifedipine with 20
593 mg of omeprazole for eight days (short-term treatment) resulted in an AUC increase of 26%, whereas no
594 increase was observed after co-administration of a single 20 mg dose of omeprazole.^[143] The authors
595 hypothesize that the higher levels might be due to inhibition of CYP3A4, but they note that this increase
596 is not likely to have major clinical relevance, especially when taking into account the intra- and inter-
597 individual variability observed for nifedipine.^[143] In contrast, in the study by Bliesath et al., 1996, co-
598 administration of 20 mg of nifedipine with 40 mg of pantoprazole for ten days, had no effect on the
599 pharmacokinetics of nifedipine.^[144] This apparent discrepancy in DDI tendency might be due to the
600 different CYP-isoenzymes inhibitory properties of the two PPIs. It is believed that among all PPIs,
601 omeprazole is the one which has the greatest potential for drug interactions, since it has a high affinity
602 for CYP2C19 and CYP3A4.^[145–148]

603 Another example of a non-pH related DDI with PPIs is the delayed elimination of plasma methotrexate,
604 independent of renal function.^[149]

605 Last, but not least, there has been an increasing interest in investigating the mechanism of drug
606 interactions of PPIs with clopidogrel. Clopidogrel is a prodrug that requires activation via cytochrome
607 P450 isozymes (CYP2C19, CYP3A4, CYP3A5) in order to transform to its pharmacologically active form.
608 Therefore, inhibition of the cytochrome isoenzymes, which are involved in the metabolic pathway of
609 clopidogrel, may reduce its antiplatelet activity and potentially increase the risk of thrombosis. In fact, in
610 2009 FDA published a warning note on the drug label of Plavix® (clopidogrel, Sanofi Clir SNC, France) and
611 continues to warn the public against concomitant use of clopidogrel and omeprazole. It should be noted

612 that, although studies have demonstrated that concomitant use of clopidogrel and PPIs, especially
613 omeprazole, reduces the antiplatelet effect of clopidogrel, the mechanism behind this interaction and
614 the clinical importance (cardiovascular risk) has not yet been clearly established.^[150–155]

615 *2.4.2 H₂ receptor antagonists*

616 The H₂RAs are another drug class used to treat gastric acid related disorders. These compounds bind to
617 histamine H₂ receptors on parietal cells and antagonize the action of histamine, which is the major
618 transmitter for stimulation of acid secretion.^[156] As with the PPIs, there are DDIs with different classes of
619 drugs and these are mainly attributed to the elevation of the gastric pH (see Figure 5). For example,
620 ketoconazole and itraconazole demonstrate impaired drug absorption when they are concomitantly
621 used with H₂RAs as well as with PPIs. Piscitelli et al., 1991, investigated the effect of 150 mg orally
622 administered ranitidine on 400 mg oral ketoconazole in six healthy volunteers. The decreased C_{max} and
623 AUC and bioavailability of ketoconazole in this study was attributed to the elevated gastric pH, which
624 resulted in a decreased and incomplete ketoconazole dissolution.^[157] The results were similar when the
625 effect of cimetidine on the absorption and pharmacokinetics of ketoconazole was investigated.^[122] Lim et
626 al., 2007, investigated the effect of famotidine on the absorption of fluconazole and itraconazole. Twenty
627 healthy volunteers received orally 40 mg famotidine with 200 mg itraconazole or 100 mg fluconazole.
628 Co-administration of famotidine resulted in a 52.9% decrease in C_{max} and a 51.1% decrease in the AUC
629 of itraconazole, but no difference was observed in the pharmacokinetics of fluconazole.^[158] This different
630 behavior of fluconazole had previously been observed by Blum et al., 1991 and can be explained by its
631 much higher solubility (see 2.4.1).^[159]

632 The situation is similar with anti-retroviral medications.^[160] Analogous to the PPIs/saquinavir interaction,
633 co-administration of cimetidine resulted in increased exposure to saquinavir.^[137,161]
634 Russell et al., investigated the effect of a single dose of 40 mg of famotidine on the pharmacokinetics of
635 the weak base dipyridamole in eleven elderly adults with normal gastric acid secretion. After co-

636 administration of famotidine, the C_{max} and absorption constant (k_a) of dipyridamole decreased
637 significantly. The total AUC decreased by 37%, but this decrease was not found to be statistically
638 significant. The authors attributed the observed differences to slower dissolution rate of dipyridamole
639 tablets at elevated gastric pH.^[162] In other studies, co-administration of ranitidine with two weak bases,
640 enoxacin and cefpodoxime, resulted in decreased bioavailability, which was again attributed to
641 decreased solubility in the gastric environment at elevated pH.^[163,164]

642 As with the PPIs, DDIs with H₂RAs can occur not only because of their elevation of gastric pH, but can
643 also arise from their other properties. In particular, it has been shown that, among the various H₂RAs,
644 cimetidine is the most potent inhibitor of the CYP450 enzymes. The inhibition is attributable to the
645 imidazole ring in its structure, and results in changes in the metabolism of various co-administered
646 drugs.^[165] In cases where a clinical significant interaction is suspected, other H₂RAs (e.g. ranitidine,
647 famotidine) are preferred over cimetidine.^[166,167] Among the various metabolic interactions that have
648 been reported after co-administration of cimetidine,^[165] the metabolic interactions observed with
649 warfarin and propranolol have been most intensively studied and the clinical significance of these
650 interactions has also been evaluated. Toon et al., investigated the effect of a nine-day short treatment of
651 cimetidine and ranitidine (800 mg oral dose daily and 300 mg oral dose daily respectively) on the
652 pharmacokinetics of 25 mg of racemic warfarin, administered orally starting on the fourth day of
653 cimetidine treatment and continuing for the next five days, in nine healthy volunteers.^[168] The
654 prothrombin time and Factor VII clotting time were also evaluated. Whilst ranitidine had no effect on the
655 pharmacokinetics of either of the two enantiomers of warfarin, cimetidine significantly increased the
656 elimination half-life and decreased the clearance of the (R)-enantiomer of warfarin. In contrast, the
657 pharmacokinetics of the (S)-enantiomer of warfarin were not affected by co-administration of
658 cimetidine. Nonetheless, co-administration of either ranitidine or cimetidine did not result in a clinically
659 significant difference in terms of the anti-coagulation effect of warfarin.^[168] These results were further

660 confirmed by a later study from Niopas et al.^[169] It should be noted however, that both studies were
661 conducted in healthy volunteers and therefore, the clinical effects on patient populations could differ.
662 The effect of a daily oral dose of 1000 mg cimetidine on the steady state plasma levels of propranolol,
663 administered as a 160 mg sustained-release formulation daily, was evaluated in seven healthy volunteers
664 during a thirteen-day treatment (administration of cimetidine started on the eighth day).^[170] It was
665 concluded that co-administration of cimetidine resulted in decreased clearance of propranolol and thus
666 increased propranolol plasma levels at steady state. In a similar study, Reimann et al. investigated the
667 effect of cimetidine (1000 mg daily, one day oral pretreatment) and ranitidine (300 mg daily oral dose,
668 one and six days pretreatment) on the steady state propranolol plasma levels (160 mg sustained-release
669 capsule, once daily) of five healthy volunteers.^[171] It was shown that one-day pretreatment with
670 cimetidine resulted in elevated propranolol plasma levels at steady state, while ranitidine pretreatment
671 for one or six days did not affect significantly the propranolol plasma levels at steady state. However, the
672 authors stated that the elevated plasma levels of propranolol observed after pretreatment with
673 cimetidine did not lead to a clinically significant effect.^[171] Again, the study was conducted in healthy
674 volunteers and the clinical effects on patient populations could differ. Nonetheless, it should be noted
675 that the companies are required by the regulatory authorities to inform the patients that there is a
676 potentially clinically significant DDI of cimetidine and propranolol in the patient information leaflets.^[172]
677 It is obvious that there are many interactions of PPIs and H₂RAs with other concomitantly used drugs,
678 especially poorly soluble weak bases, and that their use should be monitored, particularly in cases where
679 the DDI is well established. Besides the elevation of gastric pH and the interactions with metabolic
680 pathways, it should be noted that PPIs and H₂RAs can also affect other aspects of the physiology in the
681 gastrointestinal tract. Recent data in literature suggest that administration of PPIs or H₂RAs can be
682 accompanied by reduced buffer capacity, chloride ion concentration, osmolality and surface tension in
683 stomach and an increase in the pH of the upper small intestine of up to 0.7 units, an increase that would
684 be especially relevant for compounds (basic or acidic) with pK_as between 6 and 7.^[119] Carefully designed

685 DDI studies, in terms of dosing and duration of treatment, are needed in order to accurately determine
686 the effect of H₂RAs or PPIs on the pharmacokinetics of co-administered drugs and investigate the clinical
687 consequences of these interactions.

688 *2.4.3 Antacids*

689 The term “antacids” describe a category of salts, formulated as the combination of polyvalent cations
690 such as calcium, aluminium, or magnesium with a base, such as hydroxide, trisilicate or carbonate.
691 Aluminium hydroxide alone, or in combination with magnesium hydroxide, is the main ingredient of
692 many antacid products. Since the appearance of the PPIs and H₂RAs, which are more potent drugs and
693 can be used for a wide variety of gastrointestinal disorders, antacids have been mainly marketed as OTC
694 medications. However, the concomitant use of antacids with other drugs can significantly affect their
695 absorption or even their therapeutic effect. Considering the fact that the use of OTC antacids is
696 widespread, there is a particular need for appropriate information for patients, doctors and pharmacists.
697 Besides interactions associated with increased pH, the major DDIs with antacids involve chelation
698 reactions. Various categories of drugs, such as quercetin, catechol derivatives and tetracyclines, are
699 known to form drug/metal chelates.^[173–175] Fluoroquinolones also interact with multivalent cations and
700 this interaction can lead to reduced antimicrobial activity.^[176]

701 Deppermann et al., 1989, and Garty et al., 1980, investigated the effect of H₂RAs or antacids (mixture of
702 aluminium hydroxide and magnesium hydroxide) on the oral absorption of various tetracycline
703 antibiotics. The antacids resulted in reduction of the oral bioavailability of tetracyclines by 80% or more,
704 whereas co-administration of the H₂RAs did not affect the pharmacokinetic parameters of
705 tetracyclines.^[177,178] For this reason, it was concluded that chelation rather than elevation of gastric pH is
706 the probable mechanism of this DDI. The complexes that are formed by chelation are insoluble and
707 therefore they precipitate, preventing absorption. The results are similar with co-administration of
708 antacids and fluoroquinolones. Aluminium ions form a stable and insoluble complex with quinolones,

709 thus preventing their intestinal absorption and reducing their bioavailability.^[179,180] By contrast,
710 concomitant administration of an H₂RA did not have a significant effect on the AUC of ciprofloxacin.^[177]
711 Since the formation of the chelate complex is the limiting factor to absorption of quinolone antibiotics,
712 many studies have been conducted in order to establish an optimal interval of antacid dosing before or
713 after the administration of the antimicrobial agents. With regard to fluoroquinolones, it has been
714 concluded that administration of antacids four hours earlier or two hours later than the administration
715 of the antibiotic, would circumvent the interaction.^[181–185]

716 As with the PPIs and H₂RAs, the elevation of gastric pH that is observed after administration of antacids
717 could also impact the dissolution or oral solid formulations and change their pharmacokinetics. Indeed,
718 co-administration of itraconazole with antacids resulted in decreased AUC.^[186] However, in a pilot study
719 by Brass et al. (n=4) the absorption of ketoconazole was not significantly decreased.^[187]

720 The interaction of antacids and NSAIDs is also an interesting case. NSAIDs are among the most popular
721 OTC and frequently prescribed medications for acute or short-term pain and chronic inflammatory
722 diseases. Since NSAIDs cause dyspepsia and damage in the upper gastrointestinal mucosa they are often
723 given with antacids. Interactions of antacids with NSAIDs are not clearly established and no general
724 recommendations can be made for this drug category. However, there are studies indicating that co-
725 administration with antacids containing magnesium hydroxide or sodium bicarbonate could enhance the
726 rate and possibly the extent of absorption of some NSAIDs, i.e. ibuprofen, tolfenamic and mefenamic
727 acid, diflunisal and naproxen.^[188–191] This has been attributed to the fact that magnesium hydroxide, in
728 addition to increasing gastric pH, also accelerates gastric emptying. Such effects have not been observed
729 for aluminium hydroxide, which in contrast to magnesium hydroxide prolongs gastric emptying^[192]

730 There have been many further studies investigating the interactions of antacids with APIs from various
731 drug classes, including corticosteroids, cardiovascular agents and antidiabetic agents. However, it has not
732 been possible to make any generalizations about the observed interactions. Furthermore, in some cases

733 there is no evidence that differences in pharmacokinetic parameters translate into clinically significant
734 differences.^[192]

735 **2.5 Probiotics**

736 It is well known that the intestinal microflora plays a key role in physiological, metabolic, immunological
737 and nutritional processes in the human body. For this reason, there is currently great interest in
738 influencing the composition of the microflora and its activity using probiotics for both the prevention
739 and treatment of various diseases.^[193] According to WHO, probiotics are “live microorganisms which,
740 when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host”.^[194] There are several
741 clinical studies that have illustrated their beneficial effects on gastrointestinal disorders such as diarrhea
742 and irritable bowel syndrome. The gram-negative bacterium *Escherichia coli* Nissle 1917, for example,
743 has been used since 1920 for the treatment or prevention of irritable bowel syndrome, chronic
744 constipation, non-ulcer dyspepsia and other gastrointestinal disorders.^[195] The mechanism of action of
745 the probiotics is not yet fully understood. It seems that they may modulate the intestinal epithelial
746 barrier and transport across it, noting that in inflammatory bowel diseases, e.g. ulcerative colitis and
747 Crohn’s disease, the barrier properties of the epithelium are compromised due to secreted cytokines
748 and/or medication.^[196]

749 Despite the wealth of evidence regarding their advantageous and well-tolerated use, the literature on
750 interactions between concomitantly administered probiotics and drugs with respect to drug
751 pharmacokinetics is mainly limited to animal experiments. In the study of Mikov et al., 2006, the effect of
752 co-administration of probiotics (oral 2 g dose of freeze dried powder of a mixture of the strains
753 *Lactobacillus acidophilus* L10, *Bifidobacterium lactis* B94 and *Streptococcus salivarius* K12 every 12 h for
754 three days) on sulfasalazine metabolism (sulfasalazine administered as an oral dose of 100 mg/kg
755 dissolved in saline via gavage 6 h after completing the three day treatment with probiotics) in the rat gut
756 lumen was investigated. The authors showed that administration of probiotics significantly increased the

757 conversion of sulfasalazine to sulfapyridine and 5-aminosalicylic acid by increasing azoreductase activity.
758 This could possibly enhance sulfasalazine therapy, which would be important in patients with reduced
759 gut microflora, subsequent to antibiotic therapy, or in severe diarrhea.^[197] Lee et al., 2012, confirmed an
760 increase of azoreductase activity in *ex vivo* colon rat fluids. However, no differences were found in the
761 pharmacokinetic parameters of sulfasalazine and sulfapyridine.^[198] Kunes et al., 2011, investigated the
762 effect of *E. coli* Nissle 1917 probiotic medication on the absorption kinetics of 5-aminosalicylic acid in
763 rats. The results showed that there was no difference in the pharmacokinetics of 5-aminosalicylic acid
764 and that *E. coli* Nissle 1917 medication did not affect the absorption of 5-aminosalicylic acid.^[199] Al
765 Salami et al., 2008, investigated the effect of a mixture of three probiotics in diabetic rats on gliclazide
766 pharmacokinetics. They observed that gliclazide's absorption and bioavailability were reduced in healthy
767 rats. The authors attributed this change to several possible causes, most of which had to do with
768 intestinal efflux drug transporters.^[200] Saksena et al., 2011, reported that Lactobacilli or their soluble
769 factors significantly enhanced P-gp expression and function under normal and inflammatory conditions
770 in mice.^[201] Finally, Matuskova et al., 2014, investigated the effect of administration of *E. coli* Nissle 1917
771 on amiodarone absorption in rats. This resulted in 43% increase in the AUC of amiodarone. Interestingly,
772 this effect was not observed when *E. coli* Nissle 1917 was replaced by a reference non-probiotic *E. coli*
773 strain suggesting that the increase in AUC of amiodarone was due to the administration of the
774 probiotic.^[202]

775 Clearly, studies in humans are needed in order to investigate whether these results can be extrapolated
776 well to patients with altered intestinal microflora.

777 **2.6 Antibiotics used for gastrointestinal infections**

778 Antibiotics aim to attack targets specific to bacterial organisms such as bacterial cell walls, bacterial cell
779 membranes, bacterial metabolism or replication, in order to avoid damage to human cells. However,
780 antibiotics are not 100% selective for bacteria that are pathogenic for the host organism. As a result, the

781 GI microbiota is frequently disturbed after treatment with antibiotics.^[203,204] In fact depending on the
782 antibiotic, 5-25% of patients treated experience diarrhoea.^[205,206]

783 Sullivan et al. reviewed the effect of various antibiotics on the abundance of bacterial types and
784 species.^[204] Differences in the composition of the microbiota could alter the composition of colonic fluids
785 and permeability of the gut wall as well as the abundance of bacterial enzymes.

786 Colonic bacteria are involved in the cleavage of dietary fibres to oligosaccharides and monosaccharides
787 and their further fermentation to short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate and
788 butyrate.^[207] Patients treated with antibiotics showed a decreased colonic carbohydrate fermentation
789 and consequently lower fecal concentrations of SCFAs.^[208-212] In other studies it was shown that SCFAs
790 stimulate ileal and colonic motility.^[213-215] The inhibition of gastric emptying by nutrients that reach the
791 ileo-colonic junction, the so-called "ileocolonic brake", is also associated with SCFAs.^[216] But GI transit
792 times can also be affected by certain antibiotics through other mechanisms: for example, erythromycin
793 accelerates gastric emptying (-25% to -77%) by acting as a motilin agonist, while prolonging small
794 intestinal transit time (+20% to +45%) for liquids and solids in healthy volunteers and patients.^[217-222] For
795 example, when erythromycin was co-administered with a controlled-release formulation of pregabalin,
796 designed to remain for a prolonged time in the stomach, in eighteen healthy subjects there was a
797 reduction of AUC and C_{max} by 17% and 13% respectively, due to erythromycin's prokinetic action.^[223]
798 Since the pregabalin exposure was still in the range calculated for patients receiving an immediate
799 release formulation of pregabalin, the interaction was deemed not to be clinically relevant.

800 If bacterial enzymes are involved in the biotransformation of a drug, the intake of antibiotics can affect
801 its metabolism by changing the composition of the microbiota and thus altering the bacterial enzyme
802 activity.^[224,225] At least thirty commercially available drugs have been reported to be metabolised by
803 bacterial enzymes in the gastrointestinal tract.^[224] The serum concentrations of digoxin, which is partly
804 metabolised by gut microbiota, increased two-fold after administration of erythromycin or tetracycline
805 for five days in four healthy volunteers.^[226] In another report, toxic digoxin plasma levels were observed

806 in a patient after co-treatment with erythromycin, possibly due to the inhibition of *Eubacterium lentum*
807 which converts digoxin to its reduced derivatives.^[227] Incubation of flucytosine with fecal specimens of
808 neutropenic patients before and after treatment with antibiotics (ciprofloxacin, penicillin, co-
809 trimoxazole) and antimycotics (amphotericin B, fluconazole, nystatin) indicated that the transformation
810 of flucytosine to its active metabolite, fluorouracil, was reduced.^[228] Similarly, concomitant
811 administration with ampicillin (250 mg four times daily for five days) with sulfasalazine (single dose 2 g)
812 led to a decrease in the AUC of sulfapyridine by 35% in five healthy subjects suggesting a decrease in
813 azoreductase activity and prodrug activation.^[229]

814 An altered colonic microflora could also adversely affect the drug release from colon-targeting
815 formulations coated with water-insoluble polysaccharides.^[230] Since polysaccharides such as guar gum,
816 pectin and chitosan are degraded by bacterial enzymes in the colon, release of the drug relies on the
817 abundance and activity of the polysaccharide-specific bacterial enzymes. Samples (fecal slurries) from
818 volunteers treated with antibiotics within the last three months should be excluded from the evaluation
819 of such formulations in *in vitro* dissolution tests.^[230]

820 The microbiota is also involved in the modification of primary bile acids to secondary bile acids, such as
821 deoxycholic acid and lithocholic acid, via microbial 7 α -dehydroxylase and in the deconjugation of
822 conjugated bile acids.^[231] Unconjugated bile acids are less likely to be reabsorbed in the terminal ileum
823 and therefore, bacterial action promotes the excretion of bile acids.^[232] Thus, antibiotic treatment may
824 cause changes in the bile acid pool. Indeed, treatment with oral vancomycin decreased fecal levels of
825 secondary bile acids and increased fecal levels of primary bile acids in healthy volunteers (n=10). By
826 contrast, treatment with oral amoxicillin showed no such effect.^[233] It has also been hypothesized that
827 antibiotic-induced differences in the bile acid composition could affect the solubilisation of lipophilic
828 drugs. However, a recent study evaluating the differences in the solubilisation capacity of primary and
829 secondary bile acids for nine poorly water-soluble drugs revealed at most minor differences between

830 conjugated and unconjugated bile acids. Only dehydroxylation at C-7 improved drug solubilisation
831 significantly for the compounds investigated.^[234]

832 With regard to DDIs at the level of metabolism, the effect of antibiotics on metabolic enzymes is often
833 specific to the antibiotic agent. Macrolide antibiotics interact with substrates metabolized by CYP3A4
834 (i.e. carbamazepine, terfenadine, cyclosporine) depending on the macrolide's specific affinity for
835 CYP3A4. The interaction potential can be high (troleandomycin, erythromycin), moderate
836 (clarithromycin, roxithromycin) or low (azithromycin).^[235] For example, concomitant administration of
837 erythromycin (500 mg three times daily for seven days) with midazolam (single dose 15 mg) resulted in a
838 4-fold increase of the AUC of midazolam in fifteen healthy subjects.^[236] Similarly, when administered
839 with clarithromycin (500 mg twice daily for 7 days), the bioavailability of midazolam (single dose 4 mg)
840 was increased 2.4-fold in sixteen healthy subjects.^[237] But, after pretreatment with azathioprine (500 mg
841 daily for three days), no significant effect on the pharmacokinetics of midazolam (single dose 15 mg) was
842 observed in twelve healthy subjects.^[238]

843 For the fluoroquinolones, depending on the fluoroquinolone's specific affinity for CYP1A2, interactions
844 with CYP1A2 substrates (i.e. clozapine, theophylline) have been observed.^[239] Concomitant oral
845 administration of enoxacin (400 mg twice daily for six days) with theophylline (250 mg twice daily for
846 eleven days) resulted in a reduction in total clearance of theophylline by 74% in six healthy subjects,^[240]
847 while ciprofloxacin (500 mg twice daily for two and a half days) reduced theophylline's total clearance by
848 19% after a single oral dose of theophylline syrup (3.4 mg/kg) in nine healthy subjects.^[241] In contrast,
849 concomitant administration of norfloxacin (400 mg twice daily for four days) with theophylline (200 mg
850 three times daily for four days) had no significant effect on theophylline's total clearance in ten healthy
851 subjects.^[242] For more detailed information, the reader is referred to several review articles.^[235,239,243]

852 **2.7 Anti-inflammatory drugs for IBD**

853 Anti-inflammatory agents, such as aminosalicylates and corticosteroids, are the most commonly used
854 drugs in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Treatment with aminosalicylates includes a range of prodrugs
855 (sulfasalazine, olsalazine, balsalazine) or modified release formulations to deliver aminosalicylates to
856 their target site in the intestine. If remission cannot be achieved with aminosalicylates, the next
857 treatment option consists of different corticosteroids ranging from locally acting drugs (budesonide) to
858 systemic acting ones (hydrocortisone, prednisolone, dexamethasone).

859 Aminosalicylates have shown to alter the GI physiology. In terms of GI transit time, olsalazine accelerated
860 transit, with a mean gastric emptying time of 45.3 ± 24.2 min vs. 67.3 ± 33.1 min, a mouth to caecum
861 transit time of 242 ± 41 min vs. 325 ± 33 min and whole gut transit time of 37.8 ± 17.8 h vs. 60.5 ± 26 h in six
862 patients with ulcerative colitis whereas intake of sulfasalazine had no effect in six healthy subjects
863 (measured by scintigraphy of a solid radio-labelled meal or hydrogen breath test).^[244-246] The authors
864 commented that this may be the result of a direct action of olsalazine on contractile activity in the small
865 intestine, inducing hypersecretion or decreasing fluid absorption.^[245]

866 With respect to luminal pH, treatment with sulfasalazine in patients with ulcerative colitis in remission
867 resulted in a decrease in colonic pH to 4.90 ± 1.3 compared to treatment with Asacol® (mesalazine) with a
868 colonic pH of 5.52 ± 1.13 or Dipentum® (olsalazine) with a pH of 5.51 ± 0.37 .^[247] Nugent et al. postulated
869 that reduced colonic pH may impair drug release from delayed-release formulations targeting the
870 terminal ileum/colon (trigger pH for release is $>6-7$) or alter bacterial enzyme activity.^[248]

871 Regarding permeability, jejunal perfusion studies showed a decreased absorption of water, sodium,
872 potassium and chloride in the presence of olsalazine or sulfasalazine.^[249] In ileal perfusion studies,
873 reduced absorption of water and glucose was observed, when olsalazine was present, which in turn
874 could explain the higher volume of ileostomy fluid observed after oral administration of this drug.^[249,250]

875 By contrast, no changes in absorption or volume of fluids was observed in ileal perfusion studies in the
876 presence of sulfasalazine.^[249] With regard to specific uptake mechanisms, sulfasalazine reduced the

877 uptake of folic acid and methotrexate by folate transporters in biopsy specimens taken from the
878 duodenojejunal region while olsalazine only decreased folic acid uptake.^[251] In an intervention study,
879 sulfasalazine treatment was discontinued in rheumatoid arthritis patients who had previously received a
880 combination of sulfasalazine and methotrexate. The intervention resulted in a more than 2-fold increase
881 of methotrexate serum concentrations, in line with the ability of sulfasalazine to compete with
882 methotrexate for the folic acid transporter.^[252]

883 After treatment with sulfasalazine the fecal microbiota of patients with rheumatoid arthritis was richer in
884 *Bacillus*, whereas decreased numbers of aerobic bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, *Clostridium perfringens* and
885 *Bacteroides* were observed.^[253-255] Treatment with mesalazine resulted in a decreased diversity of the
886 intestinal microbiota and also reduced the quantity of fecal bacteria in patients with diarrhea-
887 predominant irritable bowel syndrome.^[256,257] These changes in colonic bacteria may have ramifications
888 for drugs like digoxin, which are partly metabolised by bacterial enzymes (see section 2.6
889 “Antibiotics”).^[258-260]

890 With regard to DDIs, pre-treatment with sulfasalazine (500 mg for six days) in ten healthy subjects
891 decreased the AUC of digoxin by 25% after being administered as oral solution (dose 0.5 mg).^[261] The
892 mechanism of the interaction is not yet understood. Differences in bioavailability could possibly be
893 attributed to a direct action of sulfasalazine on the intestinal mucosa or induced differences in the gut
894 microbiota enhancing digoxin metabolism. For a patient on concomitant treatment with cyclosporin (480
895 mg daily) and sulfasalazine (1.5 g daily), increased plasma concentrations of cyclosporine were observed
896 five days after the treatment of sulfasalazine was stopped making it necessary to reduce the dose of
897 cyclosporine by 60%.^[262] While the interaction is not yet understood, an induction of metabolic enzymes
898 is plausible considering the time course of the observation. For 6-mercaptopurine (50-75 mg), a
899 metabolic interaction was observed with concomitantly administered olsalazine (1000-1750 mg) in a
900 patient with Crohn’s disease, resulting in bone marrow suppression and required dose reduction of 6-
901 mercaptopurine.^[263] This interaction may be caused by the inhibition of thiopurine methyltransferase,

902 which is responsible for 6-mercaptopurine metabolism; inhibition of this enzyme by aminosalicylates has
903 been demonstrated in *in vitro* enzyme kinetic studies.^[264]

904 After treatment with corticosteroids, the phospholipid mucus layer can be fluidized, resulting in a
905 thinner mucus barrier.^[265] Impairment of membrane integrity can cause side-effects such as
906 gastrointestinal bleeding and bowel perforation.^[266] The corticosteroids can also affect active transport
907 mechanisms such as bile salt reuptake and exo-transport. Treatment with budesonide results in
908 upregulation of the apical sodium-dependent bile acid transporter in the terminal ileum, which enhances
909 bile acid absorption in both healthy controls and patients with Crohn's disease.^[267,268] Consequently,
910 lower luminal bile salt concentrations may impede solubilisation and absorption of lipophilic poorly
911 soluble compounds.^[269] In terms of transporters, budesonide and prednisone are substrates of the efflux
912 transporter P-glycoprotein.^[270] However, it is unclear whether these alterations result in clinically
913 significant DDIs.

914 The main elimination pathway of corticosteroids is the metabolism by intestinal and hepatic CYP3A4
915 which is especially important for high-clearance corticosteroids such as budesonide and prednisone.^[271]
916 Co-administration of prednisone with metronidazole in six patients with Crohn's disease reduced the
917 bioavailability of metronidazole by 31%, most likely attributed to the induction of liver enzymes
918 responsible for metabolizing metronidazole.^[272] Likewise, co-treatment with prednisone resulted in
919 decreased serum concentrations of salicylates in a 11-year-old child with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
920 due to the induction of salicylate clearance by prednisone.^[273] On the other hand, drugs inhibiting
921 CYP3A4 in the intestinal wall and liver such as ketoconazole, itraconazole, clarithromycin and HIV-
922 protease inhibitors reduce the metabolism of corticosteroids and increase their bioavailability.^[274-277]

923 **2.8 Immunosuppressive agents for IBD**

924 Immunosuppressive agents are frequently used in gastroenterology for the treatment of inflammatory
925 bowel disease, autoimmune hepatitis, autoimmune pancreatitis, sclerosing cholangitis and in the post-

926 transplantation setting.^[278] Especially in IBD, therapy with immunosuppressive agents has gained in
927 importance over the last few years.^[279] Immunosuppressive agents can be classified in
928 immunomodulators (e.g., thiopurines (6-mercaptopurine, azathioprine), methotrexate, tacrolimus,
929 sirolimus, everolimus, cyclosporine A) and biologics (e.g., monoclonal antibodies: infliximab,
930 adalimumab, vedolizumab, golimumab).^[279] Depending on the specific immunosuppressive agent,
931 gastrointestinal transit time, bile flow and/or permeability can be altered, which could further affect
932 drug product performance of co-administered drugs.

933 Regarding transit time, gastric emptying time (as measured with magnetic markers after a standardized
934 meal using Alternating Current Biosusceptometry) was decreased in patients treated with tacrolimus
935 after kidney transplant (47 ± 34 min) compared to healthy subjects (176 ± 42 min) or patients treated with
936 cyclosporine A (195 ± 42 min).^[280]

937 In terms of drug absorption, immunosuppressants can result in increased permeability on the one hand,
938 but decreased surface area on the other hand. Intestinal permeability was increased (75% of median
939 value; indicated by an increased lactulose/L-rhamnose excretion ratio) in liver graft recipients treated
940 with tacrolimus (n=12) compared to healthy subjects (n=9) and by 48% compared to untreated liver
941 transplant patients (n=5).^[281] Only the permeability via the transcellular pathway seems to be increased
942 by tacrolimus, as indicated by an increased lactulose/L-rhamnose ratio (+160%) and unchanged excretion
943 of lactulose in treated orthotopic liver transplantation patients.^[281,282]

944 Another side-effect of immunosuppressive therapy, especially with methotrexate (including low-dose
945 therapy) is GI mucositis resulting in the loss of villi in the duodenum, crypts in the colon and
946 enterocytes.^[283-287] Oral mucositis is a side-effect of azathioprine therapy.^[288] In patients with oral
947 mucositis, bupivacaine absorption from lozenges was increased and a trend to higher fentanyl
948 absorption administered with a sublingual spray was observed but did not reach statistical
949 significance.^[289,290] The effect may be due to impairment of the barrier function of the mucosa.

950 In terms of transporter systems and metabolism, immunosuppressants (cyclosporine A, tacrolimus,
951 everolimus and sirolimus) are substrates of P-glycoprotein and CYP3A4.^[291–293] As a result, various drug
952 interactions with P-gp substrates such as aliskiren and anthracyclines have been reported for
953 cyclosporine A.^[294–296] Additionally, concomitant administration of inhibitors (e.g. azole antifungal drugs,
954 macrolide antibiotics) and inducers (e.g. anti-convulsants, rifampicin) of CYP3A4 can modify therapeutic
955 response and toxicity of the abovementioned immunosuppressants.^[297–299] Methotrexate intra muscular
956 or subcutaneous co-treatment in patients with Crohn’s disease or oral co-treatment in patients with
957 rheumatoid arthritis resulted in increased infliximab concentrations, most likely due to a decrease in the
958 development of infliximab antibodies.^[300,301] Co-administration of azathioprine in patients treated with
959 warfarin resulted in higher warfarin doses needed to reach therapeutic anticoagulant effects but the
960 mechanism of the interaction is unclear.^[302–304]

961 **2.9 Bile acid sequestrants**

962 Bile acid sequestrants (BAS) such as cholestyramine, colesevelam and colestipol are used for the
963 treatment of primary hyperlipidaemia, as monotherapy or in combination with statins or ezetimibe, and
964 in the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases.^[305] Cholestyramine is indicated for diarrhea associated with
965 Crohn’s disease, ileal resection, vagotomy, diabetes, diabetic vagal neuropathy and radiation.^[306] Whilst
966 colesevelam is not licensed for the treatment of bile acid malabsorption, several clinical trials have
967 demonstrated positive outcomes which has provoked its off-label use in this indication.^[307–309]

968 Bile acid sequestrants are positively charged ion-exchange resins which bind bile acids in the intestine to
969 form insoluble complexes and as a consequence reduce the bile acid pool.^[306] As a result of decreased
970 luminal bile acid concentrations, BAS are expected to interfere with the bioavailability of lipophilic, low-
971 soluble compounds by impeding their solubilization. For several drugs, such as rifaximin^[310] and
972 troglitazone^[311] the presence of bile acids was shown to increase drug solubility and therefore, their
973 absorption may be impeded by co-therapy with BAS.

974 The positive charge of BAS leads to a high affinity for deprotonated acidic drugs in the intestine. Binding
975 of these anions increases the excretion and impedes the absorption of acidic co-administered drugs.
976 Drugs that are known to be affected by this mechanism are furosemide,^[312] warfarin,^[313]
977 phenprocoumon,^[314,315] sulindac,^[316] cerivastatin,^[317] levothyroxine,^[318] glipizide,^[319] mycophenolic
978 acid,^[320] folic acid^[321] and valproate^[322]. The binding affinity for co-administered drugs can vary among
979 the different BAS e.g., cholestyramine, which has a high affinity for hydrophobic compounds,^[305,323]
980 decreased ibuprofen and diclofenac absorption to a higher extent than colestipol; and colesevelam has a
981 favorable DDI-profile compared to other BAS.^[324–326]

982 High-molecular lipophilic drugs are typical substrates for enterohepatic recirculation.^[327] By binding
983 drugs or drug metabolites that undergo enterohepatic recirculation, BAS can enhance drug elimination
984 of the victim drug even if the administration was not concomitant. Drugs affected by this mechanism
985 include oral anticoagulants,^[313–315] cardiac glycosides^[328] and mycophenolate mofetil^[320]. It is difficult to
986 predict which drugs that undergo enterohepatic recirculation will be affected by BAS, since various
987 factors such as polarity, ionization properties and metabolism by liver and microbiota all influence biliary
988 excretion.^[329] Prolonging the interval between administration of BAS and co-medication often reduces
989 the potential for drug interactions and must be adapted for extended-release formulations.

990 BAS can also affect gastrointestinal transit time: Cholestyramine prolonged the transit time in the
991 transverse colon by up to eight hours in thirteen patients with idiopathic bile acid diarrhea (as measured
992 with radiopaque markers), while total colonic transit was not altered.^[330] After concomitant
993 administration of a sustained-release formulation of verapamil (dose 240 mg) with colesevelam (dose 4.5
994 g), a reduction in AUC of 11% and decreased plasma levels of verapamil were observed in thirty-one
995 healthy subjects.^[331] This interaction was deemed not to be clinically relevant.^[331]

996 An overview of DDIs of bile acid sequestrants and their mechanism is given in Table 4.

997 **3. Conclusions and future perspectives**

998 Gastrointestinal events and conditions play a key role in the bioavailability of an orally administered drug
999 and its therapeutic action. Concomitant use of various medications can affect the absorption and the
1000 pharmacokinetics of the administered drugs and therefore, their performance. As presented in this
1001 review article, various interactions between drugs used to treat gastrointestinal diseases and co-
1002 administered drugs have been identified. These interactions are of particular concern, since GI drugs are
1003 commonly prescribed and many of them are also available OTC. Prescribing physicians and pharmacists
1004 need to be aware of and monitor these potential interactions. Furthermore, information involving
1005 interactions with GI drugs should be made available not only to clinical practitioners, but also to patients,
1006 in order to prevent the appearance of adverse effects, on the one hand, and failure of treatment on the
1007 other hand.

1008 It should be noted, however, that despite the large number of DDI studies with GI drugs reported in
1009 literature, most studies have only investigated the effects of short-term treatment and little is known
1010 about the ramifications of long-term administration on DDIs. Furthermore, most DDI studies have been
1011 conducted in healthy volunteers and may not necessarily reflect the degree of interaction in patients. As
1012 most of the DDIs have been based on changes in pharmacokinetics, it is also not clear in all cases
1013 whether the DDI has any ramifications for the therapeutic effect. Indeed, some studies have suggested
1014 that even quite significant changes in pharmacokinetics do not always lead to a change in the clinical
1015 response. More work on pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics (PK/PD) relationships and the influence
1016 of DDIs on them will be necessary to tease out the clinical implications of DDIs.

1017 However, the number of studies that can be conducted to test for potentially clinically relevant DDIs is
1018 limited, due to both ethical and cost-related issues. So there is a need for innovative evaluation methods
1019 to address knowledge gaps and provide key information on safe and effective drug use.^[332] In the last ten
1020 years, there has been an increasing use of Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic (PBPK) modelling and

1021 simulation at different stages of drug development.^[333] To date, PBPK modelling and simulation has been
1022 mostly used for predicting enzyme interactions which, as mentioned in this article, can also occur with
1023 concomitant administration of GI drugs.^[334–339] PBPK modelling is gaining acceptance at the various
1024 regulatory agencies as a tool to qualitatively and quantitatively predict DDIs and, in some cases, the
1025 simulation results may even be used to support labeling, depending on the clinical importance of the
1026 interaction.^[8]

1027 One of the advantages of PBPK modelling is that it is able to account for both formulation characteristics
1028 and physiological parameters. As such, it can be used to help define a “safe space” by identifying the
1029 range of dosing conditions under which the pharmacokinetic parameters will not be significantly affected
1030 by changes in the release properties of the dosage form. This approach, which is sometimes referred to
1031 as “virtual bioequivalence”, has already been used to explore whether bioequivalence decisions based
1032 on clinical trials in healthy adults can be extrapolated to special populations, such as the hypochlorhydric
1033 or achlorhydric population, in whom the gastrointestinal physiology differs from that of healthy
1034 adults.^[340–342]

1035 The same approach could be extended to predict pre-absorptive DDIs with GI drugs, since these are
1036 intended to modify gastrointestinal physiology. First attempts have already been made for acid reducing
1037 agents, with results from *in vitro* dissolution experiments, which are tailored to mimic the changes in the
1038 upper gastrointestinal tract after the administration of these drugs, combined with PBPK models for
1039 healthy adults.^[340,341,343] This approach should be broadened to encompass other classes of GI drugs.
1040 Possible future steps include tailoring dissolution tests and PBPK models to the physiological conditions
1041 observed in special populations, thus allowing for predictions of the *in vivo* performance of drug
1042 products in special populations (pediatrics, geriatrics, ethnic groups, the obese, hepatically impaired etc.)
1043 who concomitantly receive GI drugs. This approach will provide the way forward to predicting
1044 pharmacokinetic differences resulting from these combinations and, especially when coupled with PK/PD

1045 relationships, whether these are likely to be clinically significant, in a wide variety of populations and
1046 dosing conditions.

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2005 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9649012>. Accessed September 25, 2017.
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2009 *Table 1: Reported Pharmacokinetic Interactions with Metoclopramide*

	Interaction with:	Effect				References
		Rate of absorption	Cmax	Tmax	AUC	
Drug-Drug Interactions with Metoclopramide	Acetaminophen	↑	↑	↓		Nimmo et al., 1973 ^[30]
	Cimetidine		↓		↓	Gugler et al., 1981 ^[36]
			↓			Lee et al., 2000 ^[344]
	Cyclosporine		↑	↓	↑	Wadhwa et al., 1986 ^[42]
	Digoxin			↓	↓ (only for tablet)	Johnson et al., 1984 ^[41]
			↓			Manninen et al., 1973 ^[40]
	Droxicam			↓		Sánchez et al., 1989 ^[33]
	Levodopa	↑	↑	↓		Morris et al., 1976 ^[35]
Lithium			↓		Crammer et al., 1974 ^[32]	

	Methotrexate				↓ (pediatrics)	Mahony et al., 1984 ^[37]
	Mexiletine	↑				Wing et al., 1980 ^[31]
	Morphine			↓		Manara et al., 1988 ^[34]
	Salicylic acid		↑ plasma levels (in patients with migraine attacks)			Volans et al., 1975 ^[28]
	Tetracycline			↓		Gothoni et al., 1972 ^[29]
	Tolfenamic acid	↑				Tokola et al., 1984 ^[27]

2010

2011 *Table 2: Classification of laxatives and antidiarrheal agents* ^[43–45]

	Class	Subgroup	Examples
Laxatives	Osmotic laxatives	Indigestible disaccharides	Lactulose
		Sugar alcohols	Sorbitol
		Synthetic macromolecules	Polyethylene glycol 4000
		Saline laxatives	Sodium sulphate Magnesium sulphate

	Stimulant laxatives		Bisacodyl Senna Phenolphthalein Casanthranol Sodium picosulfate
	Bulk laxatives		Wheat bran Isphagula Sterculia
	Others		Linaclotide
Antidiarrheal agents	Opioids		Loperamide Diphenoxylate Codeine phosphate
	Adsorbents/Bulking agents		Kaolin Isphagula Methylcellulose
	Miscellaneous		Racecadotril

2012

2013 *Table 3: Effects of laxatives and antidiarrheal agents on gastrointestinal conditions*^[45,46,49,51-54,58-60,65,345,346]

Drug category	Implication on gastrointestinal conditions	
Laxatives	↓Gastrointestinal transit time	Small intestinal transit time (bisacodyl) Colonic transit time (bisacodyl, linaclotide, lactulose, polyethylene glycol) Whole gastrointestinal transit time (wheat bran,

		senna, bisacodyl)
	pH in the colon	↓ pH (lactulose, senna, wheat bran, sodium sulphate) ↑ pH (magnesium sulphate)
	Fecal short chain fatty acids	↑ (bisacodyl, senna, wheat bran)
	Differences in gut microbiota	↑ Anaerobes, Bifidobacteria (lactulose) ↓ Bifidobacteria (polyethylene glycol-4000)
	Haustra (small pouches in the colon)	↓ (chronic use of stimulant laxatives)
Antidiarrheal agents	↑ Gastrointestinal transit time	↑ intestinal transit time (loperamide)
	Fecal short chain fatty acids	↑ (loperamide)

2014

2015 *Table 4: Drug-Drug Interactions with concomitant administration of bile acid sequestrants*

Implication on gastrointestinal conditions	Associated risk for co-medication	Reported interactions
Binding of weakly acidic drugs	↓ Bioavailability of co-administered drug	Furosemide ^[312] warfarin, ^[313] phenprocoumon, ^[314,315] sulindac, ^[316] cerivastatin, ^[317] levothyroxine, ^[318] glipizide, ^[319] mycophenolic acid, ^[320] folic acid, ^[321] valproate ^[322]
Disruption of enterohepatic recirculation of drugs	↑ Excretion of co-administered drug	Anticoagulants, ^[313-315] cardiac glycosides, ^[328] mycophenolate

		mofetil ^[320]
Possible impact on gastrointestinal transit time	↓↑Time available at gastrointestinal absorption site, effect on tmax	Sustained-release formulation of verapamil ^{[331]*}
Reduced concentrations of bile acids for drug solubilization	↓ Absorption of low-soluble compounds	

2016 **not clinically significant due to high variability in the pharmacokinetics of verapamil*

2017

2018 **Figure Captions**

2019

2020 **Figure 1:** Gastrointestinal drugs discussed in this review.

2021

2022 **Figure 2:** Gastric emptying results in twelve gastroesophageal reflux patients with delayed basal
 2023 emptying rates (A) and in fourteen gastroesophageal reflux patients with normal basal emptying rates
 2024 (B), in a two-way crossover design consisting of a control phase and a phase in which 10 mg
 2025 metoclopramide was ingested orally. The data are expressed as the mean percent (\pm 1 SEM) isotope
 2026 remaining in the stomach for a period of 90 min after ingestion of an isotope-labeled test meal.^[25] Figure
 2027 reprinted from Fink et al. with permission from Springer Nature.

2028

2029 **Figure 3:** Impact of laxatives on colonic transit times of a) healthy subjects and b) patients, measured by
 2030 scintigraphy (¹), metal detector (²) or radiopaque markers method (³); patterned bars represent
 2031 controls.^[45,47-49,53,54]

2032

2033 **Figure 4:** Effect of loperamide on gastrointestinal transit time after oral administration in healthy
 2034 subjects.^[46,70-72]

2035

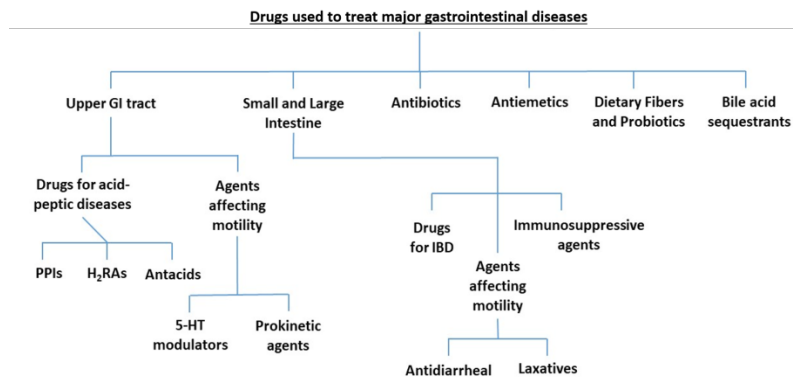
2036 **Figure 5:** pH in the stomach of fasted healthy adults as a function of time, after administration of 240 mL
2037 table water into the antrum of the stomach. Key: (From left to right boxes) White boxes, Phase 1 (control
2038 phase); Light pink boxes, Phase 2 (pantoprazole phase); Dark blue boxes, Phase 3 (famotidine phase).
2039 Each box was constructed by using 7–8 individual values.^[119]

2040

2041 **Figures**

2042

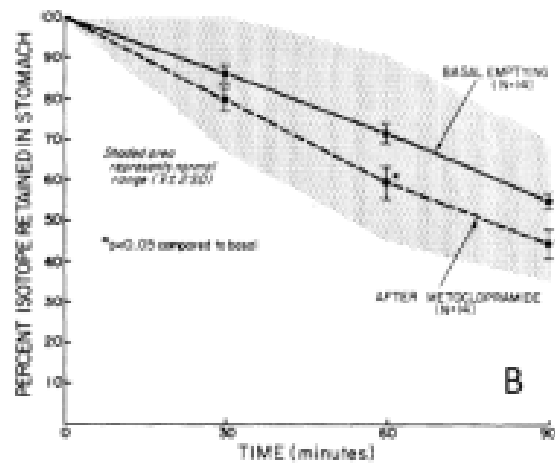
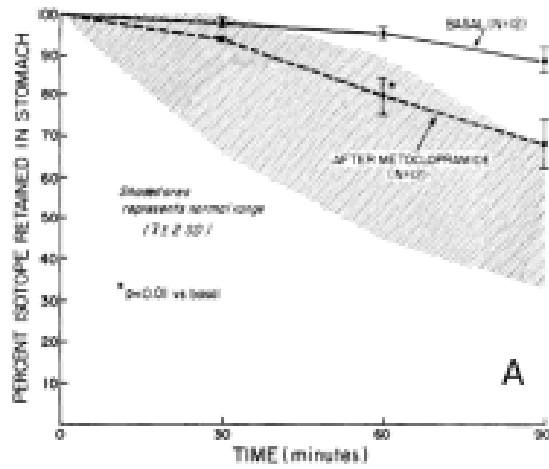
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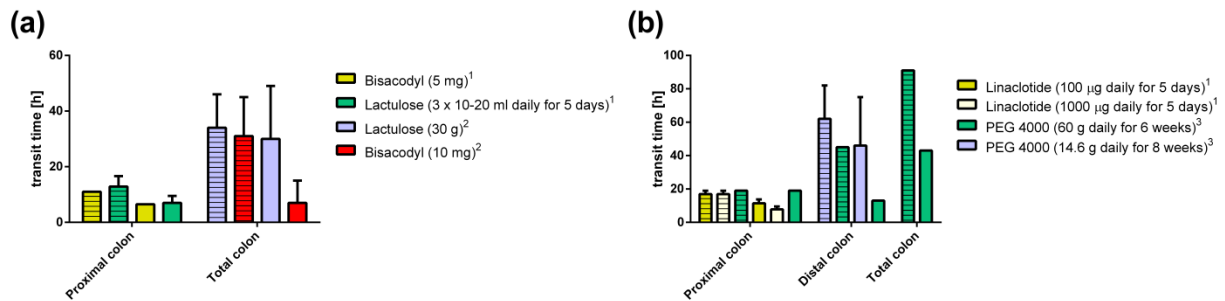


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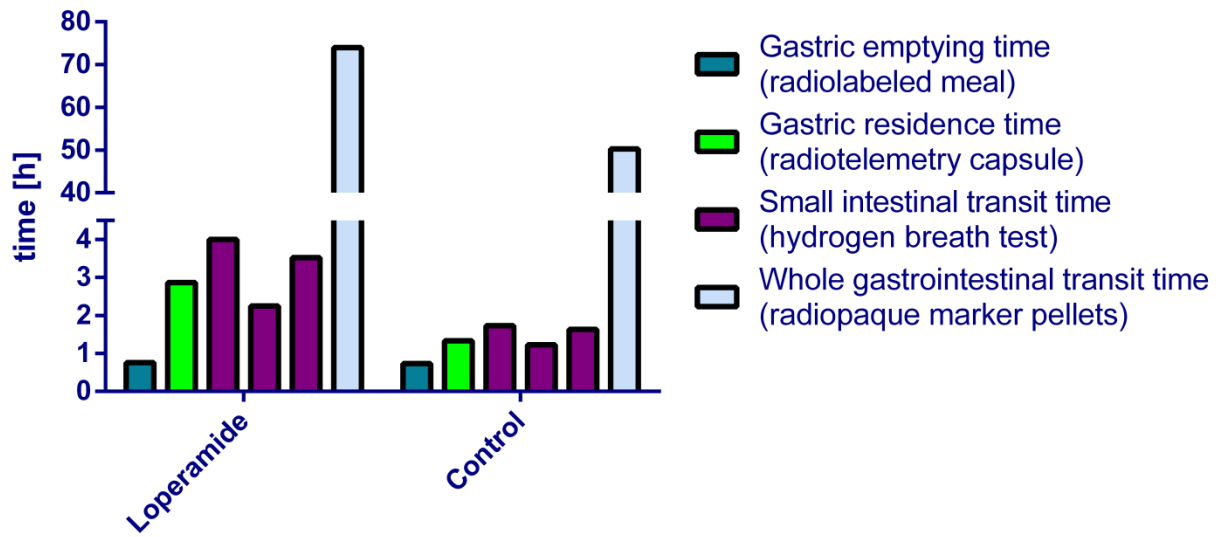
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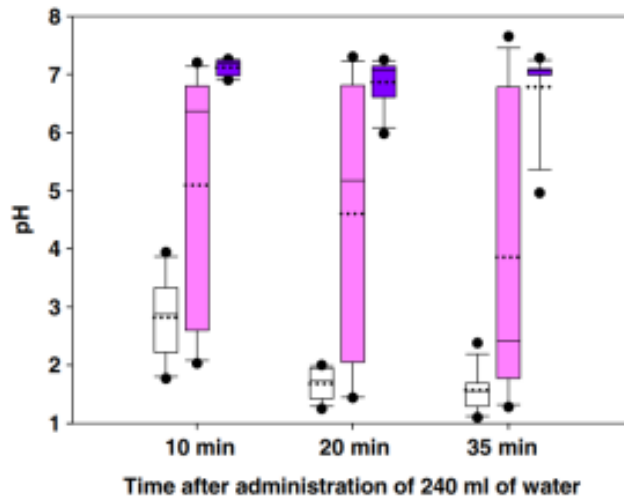
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5



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