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Foreign Organic Matter in Crude Drugs

Experiment 11 - Practical Notes

Name: _____ Roll no.: _____ Date: _____

Aim

To separate and weigh foreign matter in a representative crude-drug portion and report the defined category.

Principle

Foreign matter can include unwanted plant parts, material from another species and extraneous contaminants. The drug's prescribed definition determines what is counted. Sand or stones are inorganic foreign matter, so a result labelled foreign organic matter should not silently combine both categories.

Requirements

- Representative intact or cut crude drug and the prescribed definition.
- Balance, clean tray, forceps, hand lens and separate tared containers.

Procedure

1. Inspect the lot

Note the drug identity, form and visible distribution of unwanted material. Obtain the representative test portion by the prescribed selection method.

2. Weigh

Record the original test-portion mass before separating matter.

3. Sort

Spread the material on a clean tray and separate unwanted organic matter using the defined criteria. Keep inorganic material in a separate category when applicable.

4. Check borderline pieces

Use the hand lens and instructor authentication for uncertain fragments. Do not discard legitimate drug parts solely because they are a different size.

5. Calculate

Weigh each category and divide by the original test-portion mass. State exactly which categories the reported percentage includes.

Introduction to Pharmacognosy

Observations and Record

Category	Mass	Percentage
Original portion	___ g	100%
Foreign organic matter	___ g	___%
Other defined foreign matter	___ g	___%

Worked Example

The numbers below are illustrative; enter your own observations in the record.

- Illustrative 50.0 g portion contains 1.2 g unwanted organic material and 0.3 g sand.
- Foreign organic matter = $1.2 \div 50.0 \times 100 = 2.4\%$.
- If the prescribed total-foreign-matter definition includes both categories: total = $1.5 \div 50.0 \times 100 = 3.0\%$. Do not label that 3.0% as organic matter alone.

Result

Foreign organic matter = ____%. Other defined matter = ____%. The categories and drug-specific criterion are stated.

Precautions

- Choose a representative portion; selecting only clean pieces biases the result.
- Do not confuse unwanted matter with legitimate parts covered by the drug definition.
- Use the specified portion mass and limit; no one cutoff applies to all crude drugs.

Viva Questions and Answers

1. What is the denominator?

The original test-portion mass before sorting.

2. Is sand organic foreign matter?

No; report it under the appropriate inorganic or total category.

3. Why define the drug part?

A stem may be acceptable in whole-plant material but unwanted in a leaf-only drug.

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