



Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic Modeling in Drug Development and Bioequivalence Assessment

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DESCRIPTION

Physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling has emerged as a mechanistic framework for describing the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of therapeutic agents in a structured biological context. This approach integrates anatomical, physiological, physicochemical, and biochemical parameters to simulate drug behavior within virtual populations. By representing the human body as a system of interconnected compartments corresponding to real tissues and organs, this modeling strategy enables prediction of concentration–time profiles under diverse clinical scenarios. The methodology has gained substantial relevance in drug development, regulatory decision-making, and bioequivalence assessment, particularly where conventional clinical studies are difficult, resource intensive, or ethically constrained. The foundation of this model physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling lies in its ability to incorporate drug-specific properties such as solubility, lipophilicity, ionization, permeability, and protein binding along with system-specific parameters including organ blood flow rates, tissue volumes, and enzyme expression levels.

These parameters are integrated into mathematical equations that describe drug movement between compartments. The resulting model is capable of simulating plasma and tissue concentrations over time following different routes of administration. Such simulations provide a deeper understanding of drug disposition mechanisms compared with empirical approaches. Model development typically begins with experimental and *in silico* data collection. Physicochemical properties of the compound are determined through laboratory studies, while metabolic pathways are identified using hepatic microsomes, recombinant enzymes, and transporter assays. These data are combined with physiological databases to construct a structural model. Parameterization and calibration follow, during which model outputs are compared with observed clinical pharmacokinetic data. Iterative refinement is applied

until the model adequately reflects observed behavior within acceptable variability limits.

One of the significant applications of physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling is in the prediction of human pharmacokinetics during early stages of drug development. This approach assists in dose selection for first-in-human studies by extrapolating preclinical findings to expected human outcomes. By simulating different dosing regimens, researchers can evaluate potential exposure ranges without exposing large numbers of volunteers to experimental compounds. This reduces uncertainty in early clinical development and supports more informed decision-making. Virtual bioequivalence trials can be conducted using simulated populations that account for variability in age, weight, genetics, and disease state. These virtual studies can compare test and reference formulations under multiple scenarios, including fasting and fed conditions. Such simulations are particularly useful for modified-release formulations and drugs with complex absorption characteristics, where conventional study designs may not fully capture performance differences.

These models are evaluated based on their predictive performance, transparency, and validation against clinical data. When properly developed, they can support regulatory submissions and reduce reliance on extensive clinical experimentation. Another important application involves assessment of drug–drug interactions. By incorporating enzyme inhibition and induction kinetics, these models can simulate the impact of concomitant medications on systemic exposure. This is particularly relevant for drugs metabolized by cytochrome P450 enzymes or transported by specific membrane proteins. The ability to predict interaction magnitude supports risk assessment and labeling recommendations without requiring exhaustive clinical studies for every possible combination.

Physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling also plays a role in special population analysis. Populations such as pediatrics,

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Received: 12-May-2026, Manuscript No. JBB-26-31801; **Editor assigned:** 14-May-2026, PreQC No. JBB-26-31801; **Reviewed:** 29-May-2026, QC No. JBB-26-31801; **Revised:** 05-June-2026, Manuscript No. JBB-26-31801; **Published:** 12-June-2026, DOI: 10.35248/0975-0851.26.18.698

Citation: Whitmore J (2026). Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic Modeling in Drug Development and Bioequivalence Assessment. J Bioequiv Availab.18:698.

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geriatrics, pregnant individuals, and patients with hepatic or renal impairment exhibit altered physiological characteristics that influence drug disposition. By adjusting model parameters to reflect these differences, simulations can estimate appropriate dosing strategies and exposure levels. This supports safer and more effective therapeutic use across diverse patient groups. Advances in computational power and software platforms have facilitated wider adoption of this modeling approach. Dedicated tools allow integration of large datasets, automation of simulations, and visualization of concentration-time profiles.

The increasing availability of population physiological databases and machine learning techniques has further enhanced model refinement and predictive accuracy. These developments have expanded the role of physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling beyond academic research into routine pharmaceutical development. Despite its advantages, model performance depends heavily on the quality of input data and assumptions used in construction. Incomplete or inaccurate

parameterization can lead to deviations between predicted and observed outcomes. Therefore, continuous validation against experimental and clinical data remains an essential aspect of model application. Transparency in model structure and assumptions is necessary to ensure reproducibility and regulatory acceptance.

In conclusion, Physiologically based pharmacokinetic modeling provides a structured and mechanistic method for predicting drug behavior across different biological systems. Its application spans early drug development, bioequivalence assessment, drug-drug interaction analysis, and special population evaluation. The approach supports more efficient study design and enhances understanding of complex pharmacokinetic processes. Continued advancements in computational tools, physiological databases, and regulatory acceptance are expected to further expand its role in pharmaceutical science. This modeling strategy contributes to improved prediction of human drug exposure and supports informed development of safe and effective therapeutic products.