

October 13, 2010

Notice

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Adoption of International Conference on Harmonisation (ICH) of Technical Requirements for the Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use Guidance: Q4B Annex 4A(R1): Evaluation and Recommendation of Pharmacopoeial Texts for Use in the ICH Regions on Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests General Chapter

Health Canada is pleased to announce the adoption of the ICH guidance Q4B Annex 4A(R1): Evaluation and Recommendation of Pharmacopoeial Texts for Use in the ICH Regions on Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests General Chapter.

This guidance has been developed by the appropriate ICH Expert Working Group and has been subject to consultation by the regulatory parties, in accordance with the ICH Process. The ICH Steering Committee has endorsed the final draft and recommended its adoption by the regulatory bodies of the European Union, Japan and the United States.

In adopting this ICH guidance, Health Canada endorses the principles and practices described therein. This document should be read in conjunction with this accompanying notice and with the relevant sections of other applicable Health Canada guidances.

It is recognized that the scope and subject matter of current Health Canada guidances may not be entirely consistent with those of the ICH guidances that are being introduced as part of our commitment to international harmonization and the ICH Process. In such circumstances, Health Canada adopted ICH guidances take precedence.

Health Canada is committed to eliminating such discrepancies through the implementation of a phased-in work plan that will examine the impact associated with the adoption of ICH guidances. This will result in the amendment or, depending on the extent of revisions required, withdrawal of some Health Canada guidances.

This and other Guidance documents are available on the Health Canada website (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/tpd-dpt/>).

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the content of the guidance, please contact:

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GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Evaluation and Recommendation of Pharmacopoeial Texts for Use in the ICH Regions on Microbiological Examination of Non-sterile Products: Microbial Enumerations Tests General Chapter

ICH Topic Q4B Annex 4A(R1)

Published by the authority of the
Minister of Health

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Health Products and Food Branch

Canada

Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada

The Health Products and Food Branch's mandate is to take an integrated approach to the management of the risks and benefits to health related products and food by:

- Minimizing health risk factors to Canadians while maximizing the safety provided by the regulatory system for health products and food branch; and
- Promoting conditions that enable Canadians to make healthy choices and providing information so that they can make informed decisions about their health.

Health Products and Food Branch

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Également disponible en français sous le titre : Évaluation et recommandation de textes de pharmacopée pour usage dans les régions de l'ICH sur Le chapitre général relatif au contrôle microbiologique des produits non stériles: essais de dénombrement microbien, Annexe 4A(R1) de la directive Q4B

FOREWORD

This guidance has been developed by the appropriate International Conference on Harmonisation (ICH) Expert Working Group and has been subject to consultation by the regulatory parties, in accordance with the ICH Process. The ICH Steering Committee has endorsed the final draft and recommended its adoption by the regulatory bodies of the European Union, Japan and United States of America (USA).

In adopting this ICH guidance, Health Canada endorses the principles and practices described therein. This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notice and the relevant sections of other applicable guidances.

Guidance documents are meant to provide assistance to industry and health care professionals on **how** to comply with the policies and governing statutes and regulations. They also serve to provide review and compliance guidance to staff, thereby ensuring that mandates are implemented in a fair, consistent and effective manner.

Guidance documents are administrative instruments not having force of law and, as such, allow for flexibility in approach. Alternate approaches to the principles and practices described in this document **may be** acceptable provided they are supported by adequate scientific justification. Alternate approaches should be discussed in advance with the relevant program area to avoid the possible finding that applicable statutory or regulatory requirements have not been met.

As a corollary to the above, it is equally important to note that Health Canada reserves the right to request information or material, or define conditions not specifically described in this guidance, in order to allow the Department to adequately assess the safety, efficacy or quality of a therapeutic product. Health Canada is committed to ensuring that such requests are justifiable and that decisions are clearly documented.

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	Q4B OUTCOME.....	1
2.1	Analytical Procedures	1
2.2	Acceptance Criteria.....	1
3.	TIMING OF ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION	1
4.	CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	1
4.1	General consideration	1
4.2	FDA consideration	2
4.3	EU consideration.....	2
4.4	MHLW consideration	2
4.5	Health Canada Consideration.....	2
5.	REFERENCES USED FOR THE Q4B EVALUATION	2

1. INTRODUCTION

This annex is the result of the Q4B process for Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests.

The proposed texts were submitted by the Pharmacopoeial Discussion Group (PDG).

2. Q4B OUTCOME

2.1 Analytical Procedures

The ICH Steering Committee, based on the evaluation by the Q4B Expert Working Group (EWG), recommends that the official pharmacopoeial texts, Ph.Eur. 2.6.12. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests, JP 4.05 Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: I. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests, and USP <61> Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests can be used as interchangeable in the ICH regions.

2.2 Acceptance Criteria

The proposed texts evaluated did not contain acceptance criteria.

3. TIMING OF ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION

When this annex is implemented (incorporated into the regulatory process at ICH *Step 5*) in a region, it can be used in that region. Timing might differ for each region.

4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 General consideration

When sponsors or manufacturers change their existing methods to the implemented Q4B-evaluated pharmacopoeial texts that are referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex, any change notification, variation, and/or prior approval procedures should be handled in accordance with established regional regulatory mechanisms pertaining to compendial changes.

4.2 FDA consideration

Based on the recommendation above, and with reference to the conditions set forth in this annex, the pharmacopoeial texts referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex can be considered interchangeable. However, FDA might request that a company demonstrate that the chosen method is acceptable and suitable for a specific material or product, irrespective of the origin of the method.

4.3 EU consideration

For the European Union, the monographs of the Ph. Eur. have mandatory applicability. Regulatory authorities can accept the reference in a marketing authorisation application, renewal or variation application citing the use of the corresponding text from another pharmacopoeia as referenced in Section 2.1, in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex, as fulfilling the requirements for compliance with the Ph. Eur. Chapter 2.6.12. on the basis of the declaration of interchangeability made above.

4.4 MHLW consideration

The pharmacopoeial texts referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex can be used as interchangeable in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex. Details of implementation requirements will be provided in the notification by MHLW when this annex is implemented.

4.5 Health Canada Consideration

In Canada, any of the texts cited in section 2.1 of this annex and used in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex can be considered interchangeable.

5. REFERENCES USED FOR THE Q4B EVALUATION

5.1 The PDG Stage 5B sign-off document: *Japanese Pharmacopoeial Forum*, Volume 14, Number 4 (December 2005).

5.2 The pharmacopoeial references for Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests for this annex are:

5.2.1 *European Pharmacopoeia* (Ph. Eur.): 6.3 Edition (official on January 2009)
Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests
(reference 01/2009: 20612);

5.2.2 *Japanese Pharmacopoeia* (JP): 4.05 Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: I. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests as it appears in Supplement I to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia Fifteenth Edition (September 28, 2007, The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Ministerial Notification No. 316). The English version was published on January 9, 2008;

5.2.3 *United States Pharmacopeia* (USP): <61> Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests official in USP 30, January 2007.