



## DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF PHYTOSOMES OF QUININE SULPHATE FOR THE TREATMENT OF MALARIA

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### ABSTRACT

Phytosomes containing quinine sulfate were prepared using the anti-solvent precipitation method, with six formulations (F1-F6) developed by varying quinine to soya lecithin ratios. Among these, formulation F3 exhibited superior characteristics, achieving an entrapment efficiency of 75.77% at a ratio of 1:3. Dissolution testing revealed enhanced drug release rates compared to pure quinine, with formulation F3 demonstrating the highest release (95.5%) within 120 minutes. Analysis of release kinetics indicated a first-order release pattern ( $R = 0.9956$ ) and a diffusion-controlled mechanism (Higuchi model,  $R = 0.984$ ). Fourier-transform infrared spectra confirmed the successful incorporation of quinine into phytosomes (F3) without chemical interaction or degradation, retaining characteristic peaks. These findings highlight formulation F3 as a promising candidate for further pharmacological investigation and therapeutic applications in enhancing quinine's bioavailability.

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Phyto" pertains to plants, whereas "some" relates to structures resembling cells [1]. Phytosomes, also known as herbosomes, are vesicular drug delivery systems that improve the absorption and availability of poorly soluble drugs [2]. Phytosomes consist of phospholipids and natural active phytochemicals, combined in their structures through a reaction involving phosphatidylcholine (or other hydrophilic polar head groups) and plant extracts in a solvent that lacks hydrogen ions [3]. These formulations show enhanced pharmacological and pharmacokinetic characteristics compared to standard preparations. The lipid-soluble phosphatidyl component encapsulates the hydrophilic phytoconstituent-choline complexes entirely. Phytosomes offer significant advantages such as high drug encapsulation and demonstrate improved stability due to chemical bonds formed between the polar head of the amphiphile molecule and the phytoconstituent [4], and exhibit enhanced bioavailability [5]. Additionally, increased absorption rates allow for lower dosages of active constituents to achieve biological effects, including for polar phytoconstituents [6]. Quinine, derived from an alkaline extract of cinchona bark found in Andean forests, was initially used as a treatment for malaria infections. Its historical recognition began with its administration to treat tropical fever in the Countess of Chinchon in Peru. Introduced to Europe during the 17th century as Jesuit's bark, its effectiveness varied depending on the nationality of physicians and the quality, notably the bitterness, of the bark [7]. Since the Siege of Belgrade in 1717, cinchona bark has been used to combat malaria among soldiers. In 1777, James Lind, a member of the British Royal Navy, proposed that ships stationed on the Guinea coast of West Africa should carry ample supplies of

powdered bark and wine. These provisions were intended to be distributed as necessary to individuals traveling by boat up rivers and onshore [8].

Quinine was the standard treatment for severe malaria for a prolonged period; however, it has been associated with treatment resistance and various adverse effects such as tinnitus, deafness, and hypoglycemia. Rapid intravenous administration can lead to toxic levels, potentially causing blindness and even death [9].

Malaria gets its name from the Italian term "mal'aria," which translates to "bad air," reflecting the historical association of the disease with marshy environments [10]. It is an endemic parasitic disease transmitted by vectors, caused by protozoan parasites of the genus *Plasmodium*, prevalent in tropical and subtropical regions globally [11]. *Plasmodium* comprises over 200 species that infect mammals, birds, and reptiles. Malaria parasites typically exhibit host specificity [12]. *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Plasmodium vivax*, *Plasmodium malariae*, *Plasmodium ovale*, and *Plasmodium knowlesi* are the five recognized species of the genus *Plasmodium* responsible for causing malaria in humans [13,14].

The parasites go through a complex life cycle in both vertebrate hosts and a mosquito vector, involving both sexual and asexual reproduction. This complexity poses challenges for the development of drugs and vaccines [15].

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Materials**

For the development of phytosomes, quinine sulphate and soya lecithin were obtained from central drug house Pvt. Ltd, Vardaan house, Delhi, India. Acetone was obtained from Shri chemicals, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India and all were of analytical grade.

### **Methodology**

#### **Estimation of UV spectra of quinine sulphate**

The UV spectra of pure drug was examined by UV spectrophotometer Shimadzu.

Stock solution was made Initially, 10 mg of quinine was dissolved in 5 ml of acetone. The volume was then adjusted to 100 ml using phosphate buffer pH 6.8 to obtain a solution of 100 µg/ml.

From the stock solution, various dilutions were prepared as follows: 1 ml of stock solution was diluted to 10 ml to achieve a concentration of 10 µg/ml, 2 ml to 10 ml for 20 µg/ml, 3 ml to 10 ml for 30 µg/ml, 4 ml to 10 ml for 40 µg/ml, and 5 ml to 10 ml for 50 µg/ml.

After preparing the samples, readings were taken using a UV-visible spectrophotometer. Blank readings were first obtained to correct the baseline. The absorption spectrum of quinine sulfate was determined using a concentration of 20 µg/ml, identifying a peak absorption wavelength at 332 nm. Subsequent sample readings were taken at this wavelength using the spectrophotometer [65].

### **Solubility studies**

The solubility of quinine sulfate was evaluated in various solvents, with the drug dissolved in excess amount to ensure saturation. The vials containing the solvent and quinine sulfate mixture were sealed to prevent evaporation. The mixtures were agitated by shaking gently to aid dissolution. They were then allowed to stand at room temperature for a specified period to reach equilibrium. Visual monitoring was conducted for signs of dissolution, such as clarity or the absence of visible particles [66].

### **Melting point**

The melting point of quinine sulphate is determined to be 220°C. This indicates the purity and identity of the quinine sulphate used in the experiment [67].

### **Preparation of quinine phytosomes**

Phytosomes of quinine were prepared by anti-solvent precipitation method Different ratios of quinine and soya lecithin, namely, 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 2:1, 2:3,3:1, were taken in the compositions, as shown in Table 1.1.

In a 100 mL round bottom flask, quinine and soy lecithin were placed, and 15mL acetone was added which was refluxed for 2 h. To obtain the complex as a precipitate, 15mL of n-hexane was added after the solution had been concentrated. The precipitate was collected and stored for 24 h in a desiccator. Through #100 mesh, the dried precipitate was sieved. Powdered complex was stored in ambered colored bottles [68].

**Table 1.1** composition of phytosomes formulation

Formulation	Drug(mg)	Lipid(mg)	Solvent(ml)	Anti solvent(ml)
F1(1:1)	250	250	15	15
F2(1:2)	250	500	15	15
F3(1: 3)	250	750	15	15
F4(2:1)	500	250	15	15
F5(2: 3)	500	750	15	15
F6(3:1)	750	250	15	15

## Evaluation of prepared phytosomes

### Particle size analysis

The particle size analysis of the formulated preparation was conducted using a Malvern Zeta Sizer at 25°C, employing laser light scattering for measurement. This technique utilizes an argon laser-based method and is commonly employed for assessing particle size and distribution. Prior to the study, 100 mg of the phytosome was ground and mixed in 10 ml of distilled water [69].

### Determination of drug content

The drug content of the phytosome was determined by suspending exactly 100 mg of the complex in 10 ml of acetone. After preparing suitable dilutions for absorbance measurement, UV Spectroscopy at 332 nm was used for estimation. The drug content was calculated based on the specific absorbance observed [70].

### Entrapment efficiency

The entrapment efficiency of the phytosome was evaluated using a cooling centrifugation method at 15000 rpm for 15 minutes at 4°C. The ability of the phospholipid complex to entrap the drug was determined using UV spectroscopy [71]. The percentage entrapment efficiency (%EE) was calculated using the following formula:

$$\%EE = \frac{\text{amount of drug added} - \text{amount of drug unentrapped}}{\text{amount of drug added}} \times 100$$

### FT-IR spectroscopy

The confirmation of the phytosome complex was validated using FT-IR spectroscopy, which involved analyzing the complex along with its individual components and physical mixtures across a range of frequencies. FT-IR spectroscopy proved to be a valuable tool in ensuring the stability and integrity of the phytosomal drug formulation, both in micro dispersion in water and after incorporation of the pure drug [72].

### Transmission electron microscopy (TEM)

Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) was employed to visually inspect the morphology of both powdered terbinafine HCL phytosome and various selected terbinafine HCL-phospholipid complex formulations. The phytosome formulation was diluted with a 0.01% solution and shaken for 10 minutes. A drop of the phospholipid complex was then placed onto a carbon-coated copper grid, ensuring a thin coating. Subsequently, the PC film was air-dried before imaging under TEM [73].

**In vitro release profiles**

In vitro drug release studies were conducted for both pure quinine and quinine phytosomes using a USP type II dissolution apparatus. The dissolution was carried out in 900 mL of phosphate buffer pH 6.8 at a temperature of  $37\pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$  and a stirring speed of 100 rpm

Phytosomes equivalent to 5 mg of quinine were introduced into the medium. At specified time intervals (5, 10, 15, 30, 45, 60, 90, and 120 minutes) over a 2-hour period, 5 mL of dissolution fluid was withdrawn through a filter. Each time, an equal volume of fresh medium was replenished, and the withdrawn sample was appropriately diluted and analyzed using a UV-visible spectrophotometer (Shimadzu UV 1800) at 332 nm [74].

**Drug release kinetics**

In this study, the in vitro release of the formulation was analyzed through drug release kinetic studies. The data from the prepared formulation were fitted into various equations to determine the kinetics model and percentage release of the optimized phytosome formulation.

The kinetic models used included the Zero-order equation, First-order equation, Higuchi's model, and Korsmeyer-Peppas equation to assess the percent release of the drug.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Pre-formulation study of drug****Organoleptic properties**

Organoleptic properties of drug quinine found to be as per USP monograph. The organoleptic properties of quinine were found to the given below table 1.2

**Table 1.2** organoleptic properties of quinine

s.no	Properties	Inferences
1	Colour	White
2	Oduor	Odorless
3	Appearance	Fully powder
4	Taste	Bitter

**Melting point****Table 1.3** Melting point of quinine sulfate

Drug	Observed melting point	Reference melting point
Quinine	220°	225°

**UV spectroscopy determination of absorption maxima in acetone**

Absorption maxima was found to be 332nm as shown in Figure 2.1

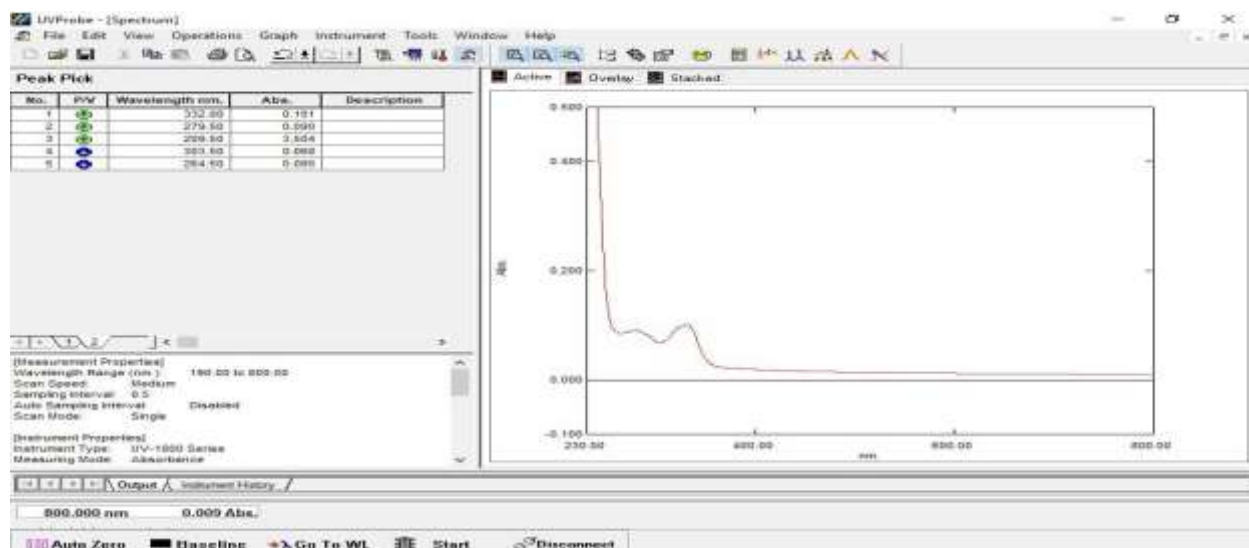


Figure 2.1 UV spectrum of quinine

### Preparation of standard curve of quinine in acetone

The calibration curve of quinine was obtained and the absorbance was measured at 332nm. the calibration curve as shown in graph indicated the regression equation  $Y=0.0077x + 0.0318$  and  $R^2$  value 0.995, which shows good linearity.

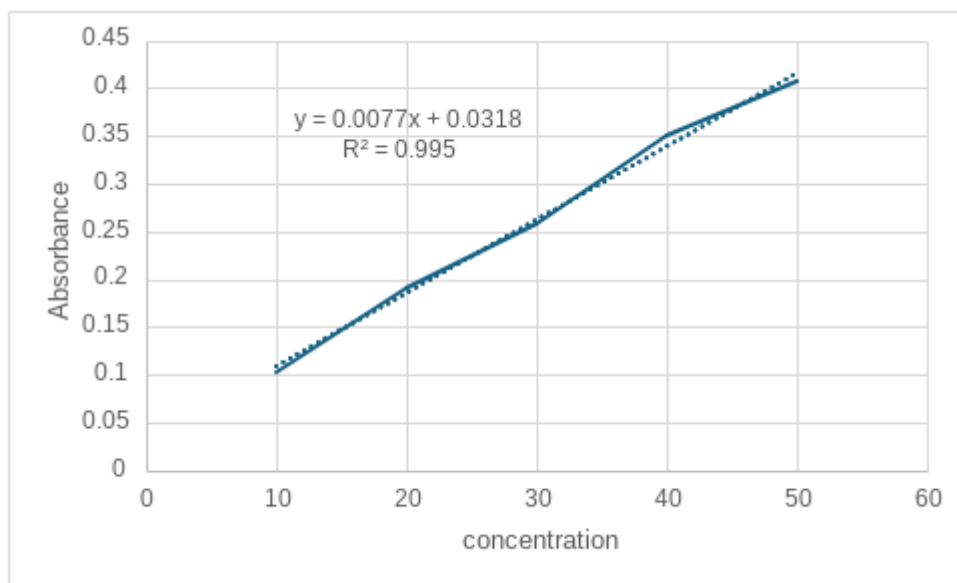


Figure 2.2 Graph of standard calibration curve of quinine in acetone

### Solubility studies

Solubility of quinine is found to be determined with different solvents as shown in fig.2.5. Quinine was found to be highly soluble in acetone as well as DMSO 3mg/ml and 2mg/ml respectively and sparingly soluble in methanol and ethanol.

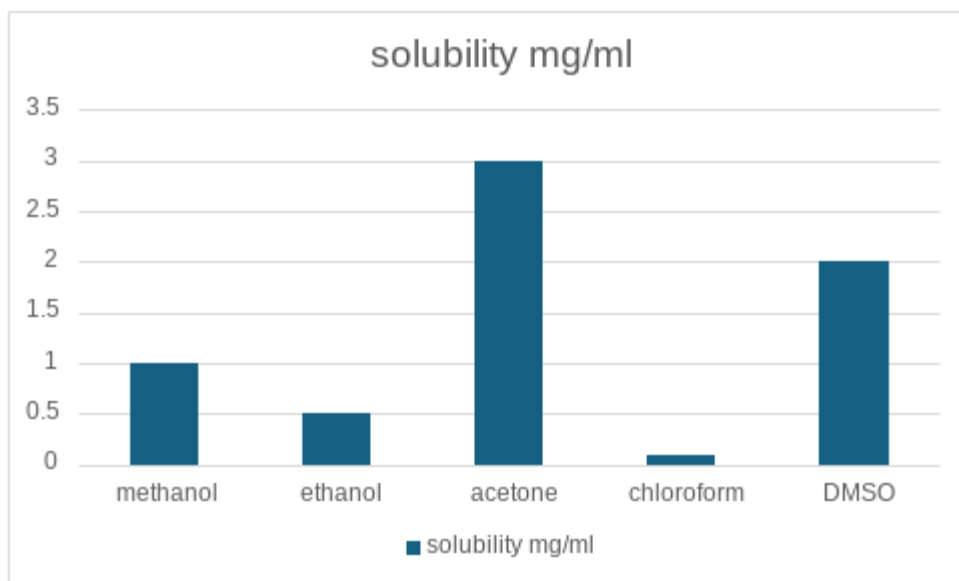


Figure 2.3 solubility of drug in different solvents

### FT-IR Analysis

FT-IR was used to validate the establishment of the phytosomes of quinine sulfate as shown in fig2.4

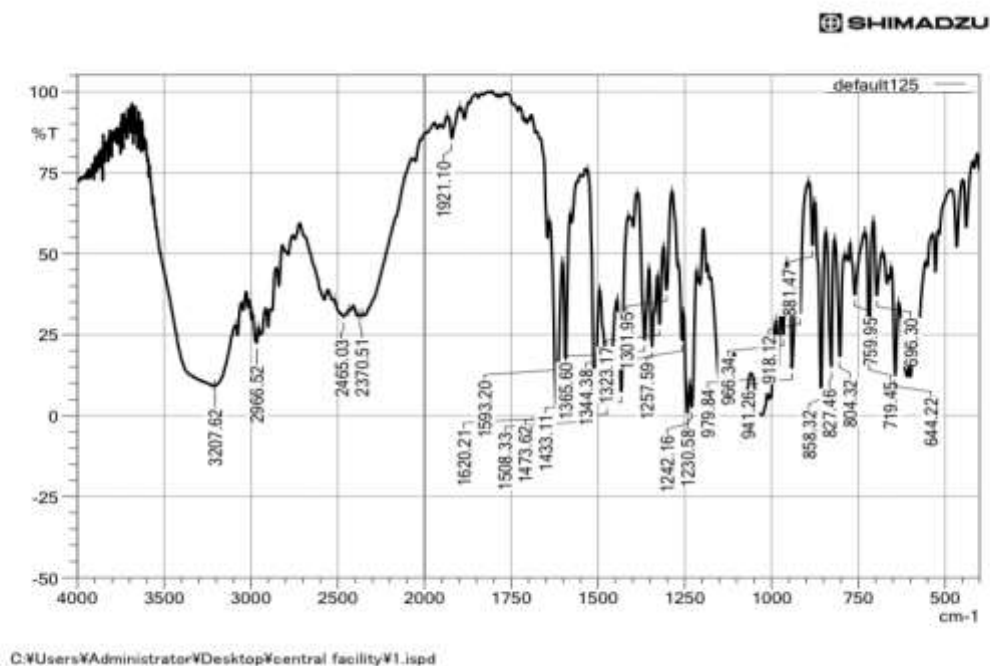
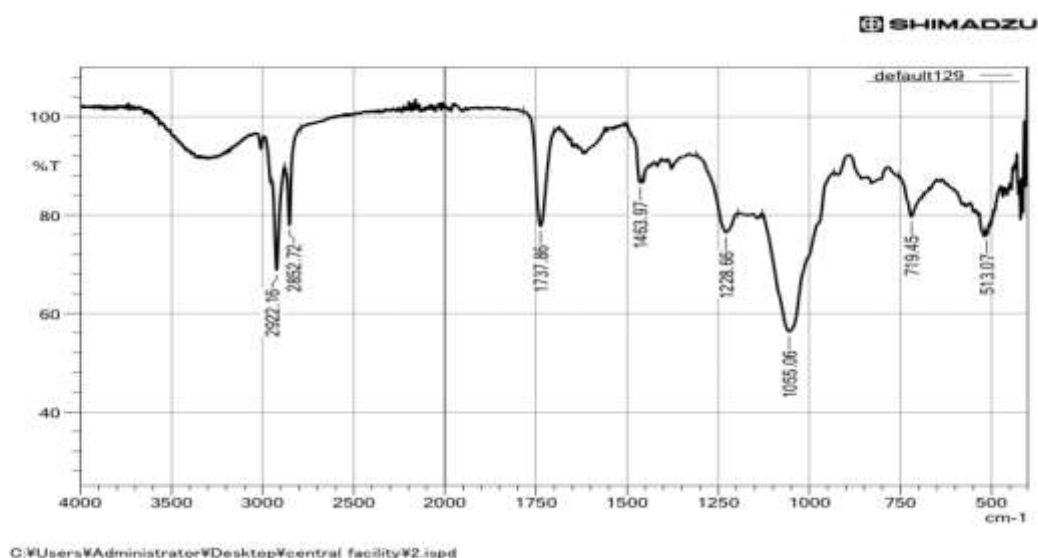


Figure 2.4 FT-IR spectra of pure quinine

Table 1.4 Interpretation of data from fig.2.4 (FT-IR spectra of pure quinine)

S/no	FREQUENCY RANGE (cm <sup>-1</sup> )	FUNCTIONA GROUP	BOND TYPE
1	3207.62	Phenol	O-H stretching vibration
2	2966.52	Alkane	C-H stretching vibration
3	2465.09 and 2370.51	Nitrile	C≡N stretching vibration

4	1602.71 1593.20	and	Aromatic ring	C=C stretching vibration
5	1508.93		Amine	N-H bending vibration
6	1433.31		Alkane	CH <sub>2</sub> bending (scissoring) vibration
7	1365.60 1334.81	and	Alkane and Amine	CH <sub>3</sub> symmetric bending and C-N stretching
8	1242.16 1230.95	and	Amine	C-N stretching
9	1203.58		Ester	C-O stretching vibration
10	1157.30 1127.14	and	Ether	C-O stretching vibration
11	979.84 and 941.26		Aromatic	=C-H out of plane bending vibration
12	881.47		Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending
13	855.32		Aromatic	=C-H out of plane bending
14	822.46 and 804.32		Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending
15	759.95		Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending
16	719.45		Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending
17	644.22		Halogen compound	C-Cl stretching



**Figure 2.5** FT-IR spectra of Soya lecithin

**Table 1.5** Interpretation of data from fig.2.5 (FT-IR spectra of soya lecithin).

S.no	FREQUENCY RANGE (cm <sup>-1</sup> )	FUNCTIONAL GROUP	BOND TYPE
1	2922.16 and 2852.72	Sp <sup>3</sup> C-H stretching	C-H stretching vibration
2	1737.86	Carbonyl	C=O stretching vibration
3	1463.97	Alkane	CH <sub>2</sub> and CH <sub>3</sub> bending vibration
4	1228.66	Ether	C-O stretching vibration
5	1055.06	Ester	C-O stretching vibration

6	719.45	Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending vibration
7	513.07	Halogen compound	C-Br stretching vibration

### Evaluation of prepared phytosomes

#### Appearance of phytosomes

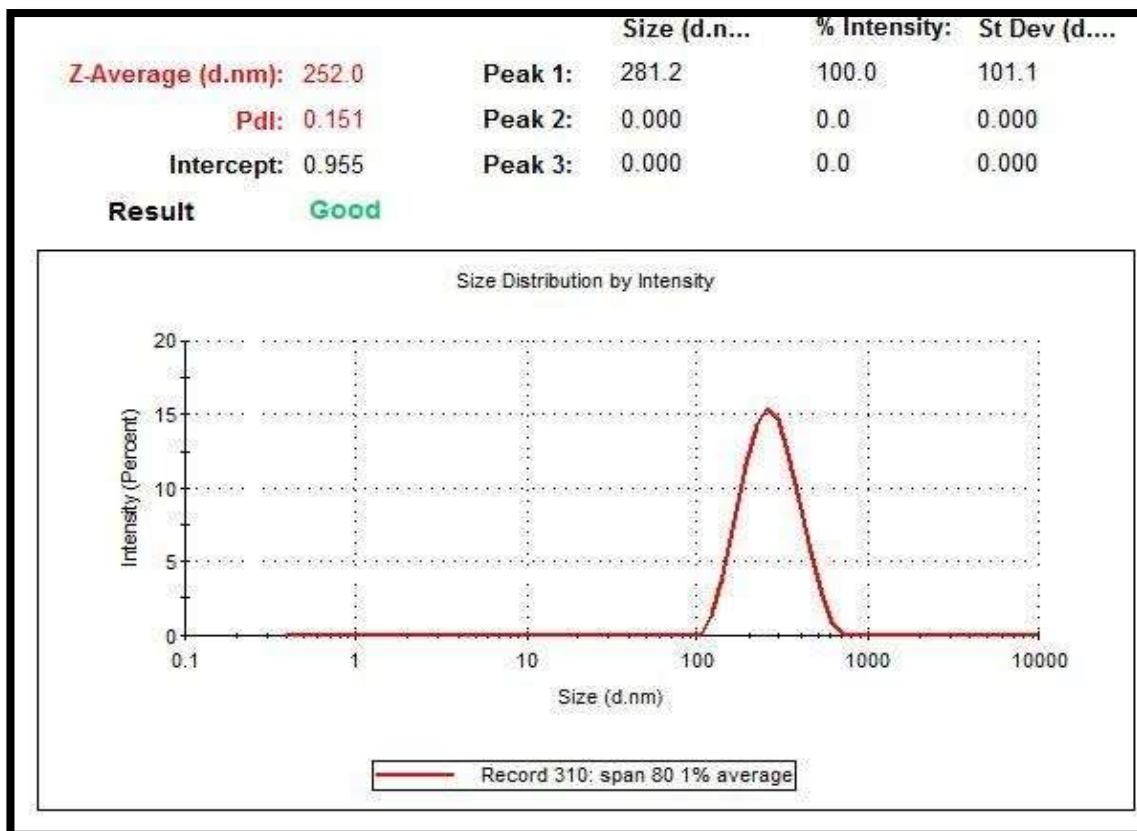
From the fig.2.6 we observe a yellowish color appearance



**Figure 2.6** Quinine – phospholipid complex phytosomes

#### Particle size analysis

The particle size with polydispersity index of formulation (F3) was  $252 \pm 101$ nm with PDI 0.151 in fig.2.7

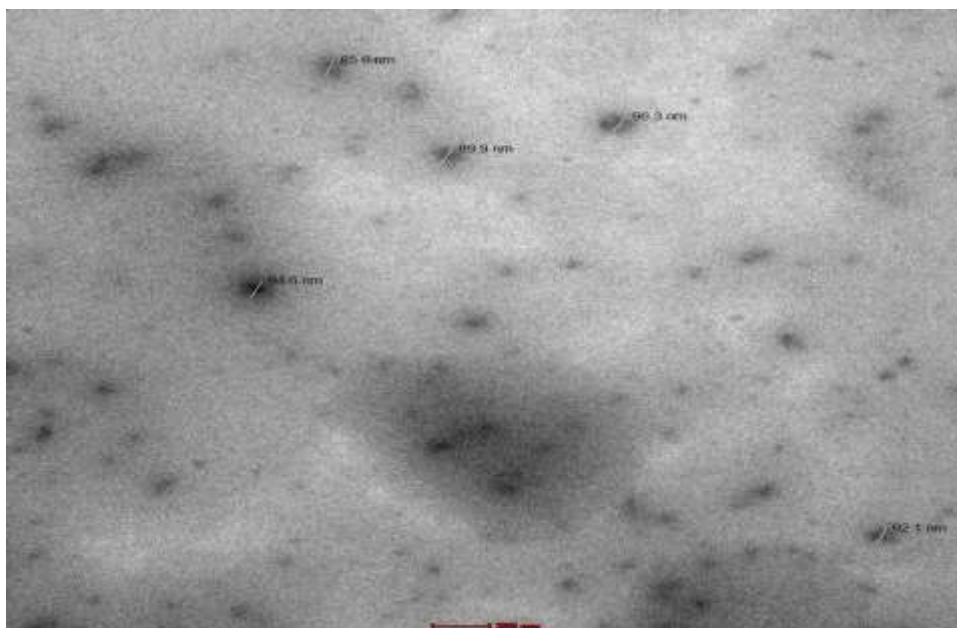


**Figure 2.7** Particle Size Distribution of Phytosomes Formulation



### Transmission electron microscopy (TTEM)

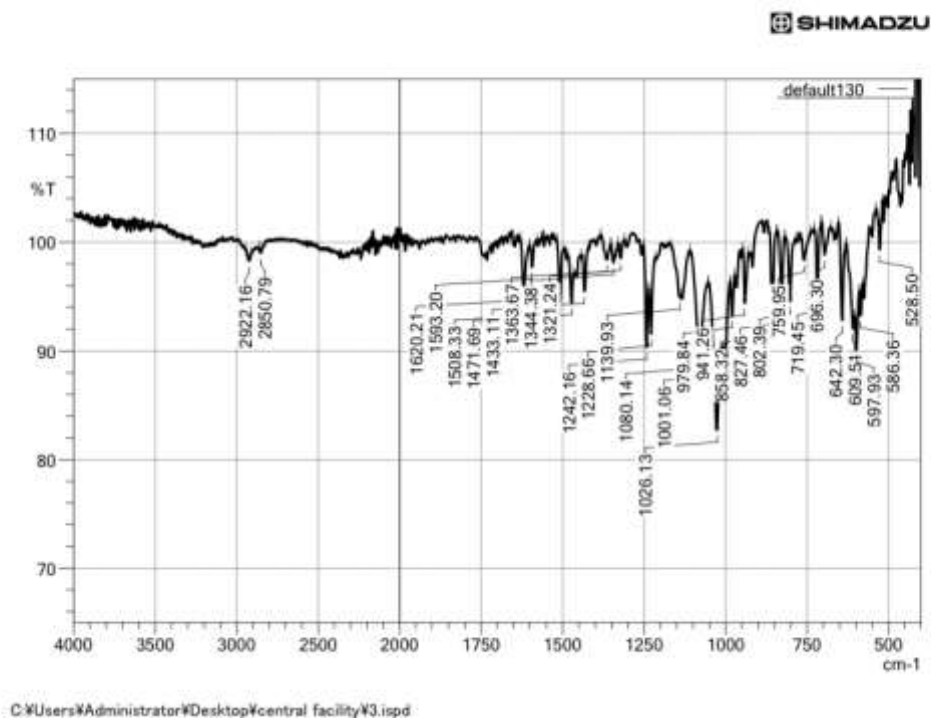
The image was established that the drug is completely encapsulated with the phytosome. The prepared formulation of quinine was exhibiting the effect results of physical entrapment of drug with the phospholipid molecules as shown in fig.2.8



**Figure 2.8** TEM image of selected formulation F3

### FT-IR spectroscopy of phytosome formulation

Fourier-transform infrared spectra (FT-IR) of formulation of quinine sulfate phytosomes (F3) is shown in figure 2.11 and the interpretation of the data was given in table 3.6



**Figure 2.9** FT-IR of final formulation F3

**Table 1.6** Interpretation of data from fig.2.9 (FT-IR spectra of formulation F3)

S.no	FREQUENCY RANGE (cm <sup>-1</sup> )	FUNCTIONAL GROUP	BOND TYPE
1	2922.16 and 2850.79	Alkane	C-H stretching vibration
2	1602.11	Aromatic ring	C=C stretching vibration
3	1508.93	Amine	N-H bending vibration
4	1471.63	Alkane	CH <sub>2</sub> bending (scissoring) vibration
5	1433.31	Alkane	CH <sub>3</sub> bending (asymmetric) vibration
6	1363.67 and 1321.24	Alkane and amine	CH <sub>3</sub> symmetric bending and C-N stretching
7	1242.16 and 1228.66	Amine	C-N stretching
8	1080.14 and 1039.93	Alcohol	C-O stretching
9	1026.13	Alcohol	C-O stretching
10	1001.06	Aromatic	Aromatic C-H in plane bending
11	979.84	Aromatic	=C-H out of plane bending
12	885.34	Aromatic	=C-H out of plane bending
13	820.43 and 719.45	Aromatic	C-H out of plane bending
14	642.30 and 596.30	Halogen compound	C-Cl stretching
15	586.65 and 582.50	Halogen compound	C-Br stretching

### Drug Entrapment Efficiency

The drug entrapment efficiency values of the prepared phytosome of quinine (F1-F6) are shown in table 1.7.

**Table 1.7** Entrapment Efficiency of Quinine Phytosomes

Formulation code	% Entrapment Efficiency
F1	72.71 ± 0.0011
F2	75.17±0.00090
F3	75.77±0.00085
F4	26.15±0.00092
F5	64.40±0.00088
F6	69.63±0.00093

### In vitro drug release study

The invitro release studies of quinine from the phytosomes were studied in Phosphate buffer pH6.8. The results were are shown in table 1.8

**Table 1.8** %Drug Release of Quinine Phytosomes

Time (mins)	pure drug	f1	f2	f3	f4	f5	f6
0	0.00432±0.12 %	0.0036±0.15 %	0.0034±0.14 %	0.00368±0.13	0.00352±0.16 %	0.0038±0.14 %	0.00372±0.15 %
5	0.01359±0.21 %	0.0126±0.24 %	0.0117±0.23 %	9.5±0.28	0.0122±0.26 %	0.01309±0.24 %	0.01294±0.25 %
10	0.01449±0.25 %	0.0135±0.27 %	0.0127±0.26 %	18.17±0.32	0.0133±0.28 %	0.01419±0.27 %	0.01404±0.28 %

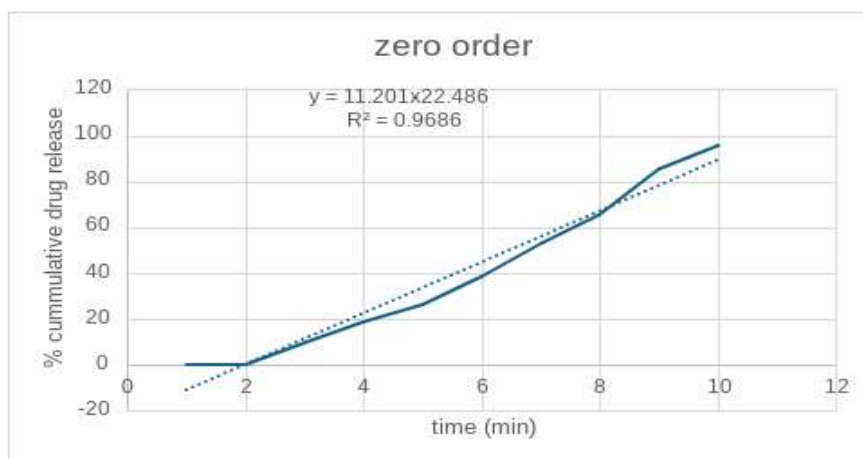
15	0.01449±0.25 %	0.0153±0.32 %	0.0144±0.3 1%	26±0.37	0.0153±0.3 4%	0.01638± 0.32%	0.02343± 0.39%
30	0.01449±0.25 %	0.01998±0.38 %	0.01872±0. 36%	38.5±0.42	0.02166±0. 40%	0.02367± 0.38%	0.02343± 0.39%
45	0.01449±0.25 %	0.02394±0.45 %	0.02196±0. 44%	52.8±0.48	0.02562±0. 46%	0.02763± 0.45%	0.02739± 0.46%
60	0.03141±0.49 %	0.02682±0.52 %	0.0243±0.5 1%	52.8±0.48	0.0288±0.5 3%	0.03114± 0.52%	0.03099± 0.53%
90	0.04041±0.55 %	0.03312±0.58 &	0.02952±0. 57%	85.2±0.60	0.03672±0. 59%	0.03996± 0.58%	0.03969± 0.59%
120	0.04131±0.61 %	0.03456±0.63 %	0.03018±0. 62%	95.5±0.65 %	0.03888±0. 64%	0.04176± 0.63%	0.03969± 0.59%

### Drug Release Kinetics

In vitro drug release kinetics data of formulation F3 was given below

**Table 1.9** Drug Release Kinetics of Quinine Phytosomes

Time (mins)	% cumulative drug release	Log cumulative drug release	% drug remained	Log % drug remained	Log time	$\sqrt{\text{time}}$
0	0.003	-2.434	99.99	1.9998	0.000	0.000
5	9.500	0.978	90.50	1.956	0.699	2.236
10	18.70	1.272	81.30	1.910	1.000	3.162
15	26.00	1.415	74.00	1.869	1.176	3.872
30	38.50	1.586	61.50	1.789	1.477	5.477
45	52.80	1.723	47.20	1.674	1.653	6.708
60	65.00	1.813	35.00	1.544	1.778	7.745
90	85.20	1.930	14.80	1.170	1.954	9.486
120	95.50	1.980	4.500	0.653	2.079	10.95



**Figure 2.10** Zero order graph of formulation F3



Figure 2.11 First order graph of formulation F3

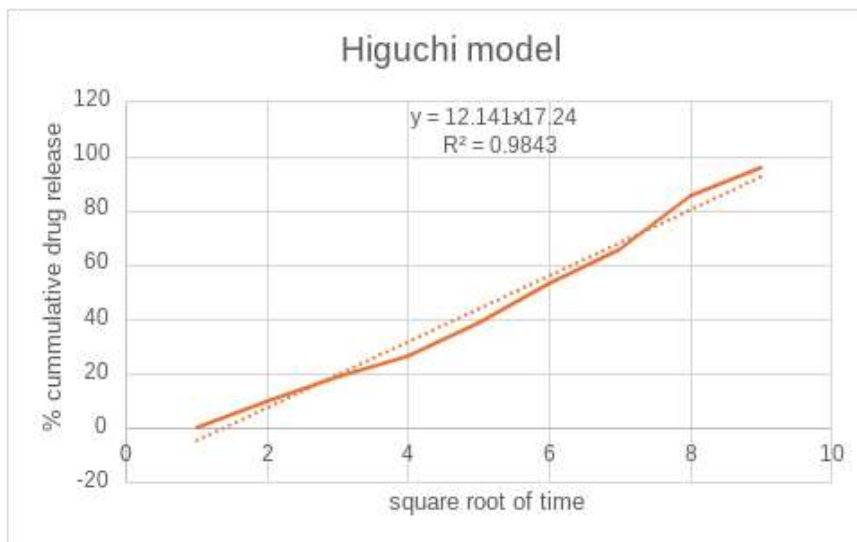


Figure 2.12 Higuchi order graph of formulation F3

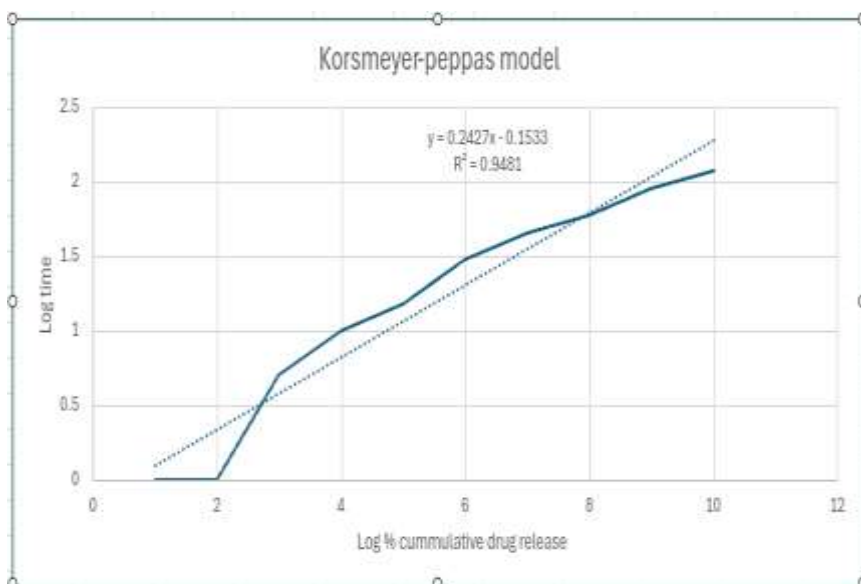


Figure 2.13 Korsmeyer Peppas Oder graph of formulation F3

**Table 1.10** Correlation Coefficient, R<sup>2</sup> values

Plot	R <sup>2</sup>
Zero order	0.968
First order	0.995
Higuchi	0.984
Korsmeyer's Peppas	0.948

## DISCUSSION

Phytosomes containing quinine sulphate were successfully prepared using the anti-solvent precipitation method. Six formulations (F1-F6) were developed by varying the ratios of quinine to soya lecithin.

Among the formulations, F3 exhibited superior characteristics compared to others. The entrapment efficiency ranged from 26.15% to 75.77%, with the highest efficiency (75.77%) achieved in formulation F3, formulated with a quinine to soya lecithin ratio of 1:3. Dissolution testing was conducted on pure quinine and all six formulations. Enhanced drug dissolution rates were observed in the formulated phytosomes. Formulation F3 demonstrated the highest drug release (95.5%) within 120 minutes, prompting further investigation into its drug release kinetics.

Analysis of the release kinetics revealed that the drug follows first-order kinetics, supported by a high correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.9956$ ), indicating a dose-dependent release pattern. The Higuchi plot (% cumulative drug release vs. square root of time) exhibited a linear relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.984, suggesting diffusion as the predominant mechanism of drug release.

Fourier-transform infrared spectra (FTIR) of pure drug and promising formulation of phytosomes (F3) are shown. FTIR spectra of the drug showed its characteristic peak at 3207.62 cm<sup>-1</sup> due to OH stretching, C=O stretching at 1921.10 cm<sup>-1</sup>, aromatic ring C-C stretching at 1620.21 cm<sup>-1</sup>, aromatic C-H bending at 1508.33 cm<sup>-1</sup>, C-O stretching at 1242.16 cm<sup>-1</sup>, and ortho-disubstituted aromatic C-H bending at 710.45 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Phytosomes of formulation F3 revealed OH stretching at 2922.16 cm<sup>-1</sup>, C=O stretching at 1620.21 cm<sup>-1</sup>, aromatic ring C-C stretching at 1508.33 cm<sup>-1</sup>, aromatic C-H bending at 1242.16 cm<sup>-1</sup>, and ortho-disubstituted aromatic C-H bending at 710.45 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The retention of characteristic peaks indicates successful incorporation of the drug into the phytosomes without significant chemical interaction or degradation.

## CONCLUSION

The development of quinines sulphate -loaded phytosomes through the anti-solvent precipitation method proved successful, yielding six formulations (F1-F6) with varying quinine to soya lecithin ratios. Among these, formulation F3 demonstrated notable characteristics, including the highest entrapment efficiency of 75.77% at a ratio of 1:3 (quinine:soya lecithin). Dissolution studies indicated enhanced drug release rates compared to pure quinine, with formulation F3 exhibiting the most rapid release, reaching 95.5% within 120 minutes.

Further investigation into drug release kinetics revealed that quinine released from formulation F3 follows first-order kinetics, indicative of a predictable and dose-dependent release pattern. The Higuchi model analysis suggested that drug release predominantly occurs via diffusion.

FTIR spectroscopy confirmed the successful incorporation of quinine into phytosomes without significant chemical interaction or degradation, as evidenced by the retention of characteristic peaks observed in both the drug and formulation F3 spectra.

In conclusion, the formulation F3 of quinine-loaded phytosomes offers promising attributes for enhanced drug delivery, characterized by high entrapment efficiency, rapid and controlled drug release kinetics, and stability without adverse chemical alterations. These findings underscore the potential of phytosome technology in optimizing the therapeutic efficacy of quinine formulations.

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