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Review Article

From Formulation to Delivery: Understanding the Importance of Emulsifying Agents in Pharmaceuticals

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ABSTRACT

In the pharmaceutical business, emulsifying agents are essential ingredients that are used in the formulation and administration of different dosage forms. Exploring the role of emulsifiers in improving medication stability, bioavailability, and controlled release, the article "From Formulation to Delivery: Understanding the Importance of Emulsifying Agents in Pharmaceuticals" Emulsifiers are surfactants that make it possible for immiscible liquids, such as water and oil, to disperse and create stable emulsions, which are necessary for efficient medication administration. When creating parenteral, topical, and oral formulations, these agents are especially crucial because they provide consistent drug delivery and avoid phase separation. Emulsifiers stabilize emulsions by lowering surface tension, encouraging the creation of tiny droplets, and inhibiting coalescence, as the article explains. It also examines the several kinds of emulsifiers, such as natural, synthetic, and semi-synthetic agents, and the criteria used to choose them depending on the properties of the medicine, its therapeutic needs, and its mode of administration. There is a thorough discussion of how emulsifying agents affect drug release characteristics and how they help make hydrophobic medications more soluble. The difficulties in choosing suitable emulsifiers, including their compatibility with active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), safety concerns, and regulatory considerations, are also highlighted in the paper. The article also discusses technological developments in emulsifier utilization, including the emergence of nanotechnology and the use of biocompatible emulsifiers to improve pharmaceutical formulations' therapeutic efficacy. The review highlights how emulsifying agents are becoming increasingly important in the pharmaceutical business and how crucial they are to the success of contemporary drug delivery systems. Overall, the article provides a comprehensive overview of the formulation, mechanism, and application of emulsifiers in pharmaceutical science, demonstrating their critical importance in achieving optimal therapeutic outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION:

Emulsifying agents, sometimes referred to as emulsifiers, are compounds that help two immiscible liquids—usually water and oil—form stable combinations. These substances are essential to many industries, including as food, medicine, cosmetics, and even the manufacturing of industrial chemicals. Emulsifying agents enable the formation of emulsions that are necessary for the intended qualities in a variety of products by lowering the surface tension between two liquids. The purpose of this review is to examine the types, uses, and difficulties of emulsifying agents as well as their nature. A molecule or chemical that possesses both hydrophilic (attracting water) and lipophilic (attracting fat) qualities is known as an emulsifying agent. Fig 1 Usually, these molecules consist of two separate components: a hydrophilic (attracted to water) and a lipophilic (attracted to fat or oil). Emulsifying chemicals can interact with both water and oil, which lowers the interfacial tension between the two liquids and encourages the creation of a stable emulsion[1]

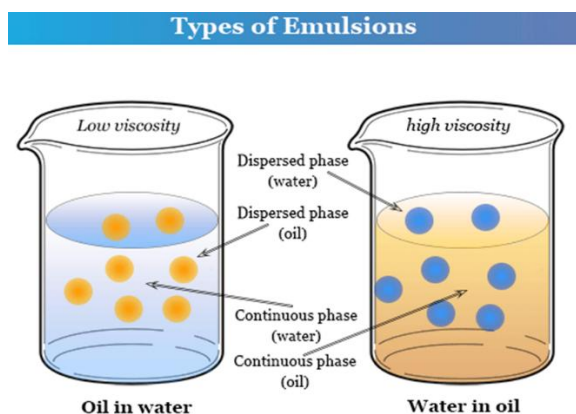


Figure 1: Types of Emulsion

In order to keep the combination homogenous over time, emulsifying agents are frequently used to stop the phases (oil and water) in emulsions from separating. In pharmaceutical formulations, emulsifying agents—also referred to as emulsifiers—are crucial components that stabilize

emulsions, which are mixes of two immiscible liquids, such water and oil. Emulsifiers' primary function is to make it easier for liquids to disperse into one another, resulting in a stable, consistent product that stays homogenous throughout time. Emulsions are frequently utilized in pharmaceuticals when a medicine has poor water solubility or when targeted administration, controlled release, or enhanced bioavailability are required^[2]. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of emulsifying agents in pharmaceutical formulations. Lipophilia is the term used to describe the inability of many active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) to dissolve in water. Emulsifiers aid in the solubilization of these hydrophobic medications, facilitating their efficient administration and absorption inside the body. This is especially crucial for injectable or topical formulations that need stable, reliable drug distribution, as well as oral formulations where the medication must travel through the digestive system before entering the bloodstream^[3]. Emulsifying chemicals have a solubilizing action, but they also influence texture, viscosity, and consistency—all important components of pharmaceutical formulations. Additionally, by avoiding phase separation and guaranteeing that the active components stay uniformly distributed, emulsifiers can help compositions have a longer shelf life. Emulsifiers are essential for improving the efficacy and performance of pharmaceutical products, whether they are utilized in topical creams, oral suspensions, intravenous emulsions, or ocular formulations^[4]. Drug compatibility, safety profile, intended route of administration, and chemical characteristics are typically taken into consideration when choosing pharmaceutical emulsifiers. These agents fall into four major groups: amphoteric, cationic, nonionic, and anionic. Depending on the needs of the formulation, each group has unique benefits and drawbacks^[5]. The purpose of this review is to

examine the numerous kinds of emulsifying agents that are employed in pharmaceutical applications, as well as their specific applications in various pharmaceutical dosage forms and their modes of action. It will also cover the difficulties and factors to be taken into account when choosing and utilizing emulsifiers in medication compositions. To improve drug delivery systems and increase the therapeutic efficacy of pharmaceuticals, it is crucial to comprehend the significance of emulsifiers in pharmaceutical research.

Role of Emulsifying Agents in Pharmaceutical Formulations

Emulsifying agents play an essential role in the formulation of many different types of medicinal medicines. By combining two immiscible liquids, usually water and oil, they allow for the production of emulsions, which offer special benefits in terms of stability, medication delivery, and overall product performance. Phase separation is avoided and the emulsion is stabilized when emulsifying agents are present because they reduce the surface tension between the two phases. Fig 3 Emulsifying agents are essential in pharmaceutical formulations for the reasons listed below

1. **Improved Solubility and Bioavailability of Lipophilic Drugs:** Enhancing the solubility and bioavailability of hydrophobic (lipophilic) medications is one of the most significant functions of emulsifying agents. Many medicinal substances have limited water solubility, such as certain antibiotics, antifungals, and anticancer medications. Their low solubility restricts their ability to be absorbed in the digestive system, which lowers their bioavailability. By spreading the medication in an emulsion and increasing its body accessibility, emulsifiers aid in getting around this restriction. The hydrophilic emulsifier creates a stable contact between the water and oil phases, increasing the solubility

of the medicine, while the hydrophobic drug molecules are dissolved within the oil phase. Therefore, when taken orally, emulsions provide improved absorption of these medications. For instance, medications that are extremely lipophilic, such as griseofulvin and certain antifungal drugs, might be made into emulsions to increase their solubility and absorption^[6].

2. **Controlled and Sustained Drug Release:** Especially oil-in-water (O/W) emulsions, can release active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a regulated and prolonged manner. Emulsifying chemicals aid in formulation stabilization, guaranteeing the drug's prolonged, progressive release into the body. This helps to prolong the duration of therapeutic drug levels in the bloodstream and decrease the frequency of delivery. By affecting the rate at which the medication diffuses from the oil droplets into the aqueous phase and then into the body, emulsifiers help regulate the rate of drug release in sustained-release formulations. Emulsifiers can efficiently regulate the drug's release rate by altering the droplets' size and makeup.

For instance, emulsifiers are necessary to ensure a gradual and consistent release of the active component in injectable emulsions used in parenteral nutrition and prolonged-release versions of medications such as the anesthetic propofol^[7].

1. **Enhancing Stability of the Formulation:** In pharmaceutical formulations, emulsion stability is a crucial consideration. Emulsifying agents are crucial for preserving the physical stability of emulsions because they keep the two immiscible liquids evenly distributed throughout the product by avoiding phase separation. Emulsions would rapidly split into their two phases (oil and



water) in the absence of an efficient emulsifier, making the final product useless. Emulsifiers help regulate the size of the dispersed droplets, enhancing the stability of the emulsion and preventing phase separation. Due to their increased surface area, which enhances the interaction between the water and oil phases, smaller droplets produce a more stable formulation. Emulsifiers also aid in preventing droplet aggregation by preventing the droplets from coalescing through steric or electrostatic repulsion. To prevent issues like embolism, parenteral emulsions used for intravenous (IV) delivery, for instance, need to be stable and uniform. These emulsions are stabilized by emulsifiers such as polysorbates or lecithin^[8].

- 2. Improved Texture, Viscosity, and Consistency:** Additionally, emulsifying agents affect the consistency, viscosity, and texture of medicinal formulations. For instance, the emulsifier helps achieve the appropriate viscosity in oral suspensions and creams, which facilitates application and swallowing. Additionally, a product's "feel" can be influenced by the emulsifying agent, which is crucial for patient compliance. The emulsifier is in charge of giving topical compositions, such as creams and lotions, a smooth, spreadable consistency. This is especially crucial for dermatological treatments, as the emulsion must provide patients both medicinal advantages and a visually appealing product. The emulsion's stickiness, spreadability, and rate of skin absorption can all be impacted by the emulsifier selection. For instance, emulsifiers such as cetyl alcohol or polysorbates are used in topical corticosteroid creams to improve the absorption of the active ingredient into the skin and give the cream a smooth feel^[9].

- 3. Enhanced Drug Absorption via Topical and Transdermal Delivery:**

To help medications absorb through the skin, emulsifying agents are frequently employed in topical and transdermal pharmaceutical formulations. By rupturing the stratum corneum, the skin's outermost layer, several emulsifiers can increase the skin's permeability and facilitate the absorption of lipophilic medications. Anti-inflammatory medications and analgesics used for localized pain treatment are two examples of medications that can be delivered directly to the site of action via topical creams and gels, which frequently contain emulsifying agents. Emulsifiers in transdermal formulations may also lessen the requirement for oral delivery by enabling medications to cross the skin barrier and enter the bloodstream for systemic effects.

For instance, emulsifiers are used in the composition of transdermal patches for hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or nicotine to facilitate the skin's absorption of active substances^[10].

- 1. Enhancing Oral Formulation's Palatability:**

Emulsifiers in oral formulations aid in making liquid treatments more palatable, which is crucial for elderly or juvenile patients who might have trouble swallowing tablets or pills. By reducing the taste or odor of some medications and making them easier to swallow, emulsions provide a more palatable dose form. Emulsifiers can also improve the overall taste experience by stabilizing sugars and flavorings in the formulation. For instance, emulsifiers are frequently used in pediatric oral suspensions, such as those for antibiotics like amoxicillin, to enhance flavor and guarantee consistent medication dispersion^[11].



2. **Drug Degradation Prevention:** Over time, some medications may lose their strength or effectiveness, especially those that are susceptible to light, air, or moisture. By encasing the active component in the oil phase and protecting it from external elements like light and oxygen, emulsions offer these medications a protected environment. By preserving the formulation's integrity, the emulsifying agents help stop medication deterioration and increase the product's shelf life. As an illustration, injectable medications such as the anticancer medication paclitaxel are frequently made in lipid emulsions to enhance their stability and shield them from oxidative destruction^[12].

3. **Site-Specific and Targeted Drug Administration:** Targeted and site-specific drug delivery can also be made possible by emulsifying agents, particularly when it comes to lipophilic medications that must be administered to particular tissues or organs. The active components in emulsions can be engineered to release at specific locations inside the body, including the skin, the gastrointestinal tract, or even the brain (in the case of targeted central nervous system therapy). Pharmaceutical experts can create emulsions to target specific tissues or cellular structures by altering the emulsifier's features (such as the size of the droplets or the charge on the surface), improving therapeutic results and minimizing negative effects^[13].

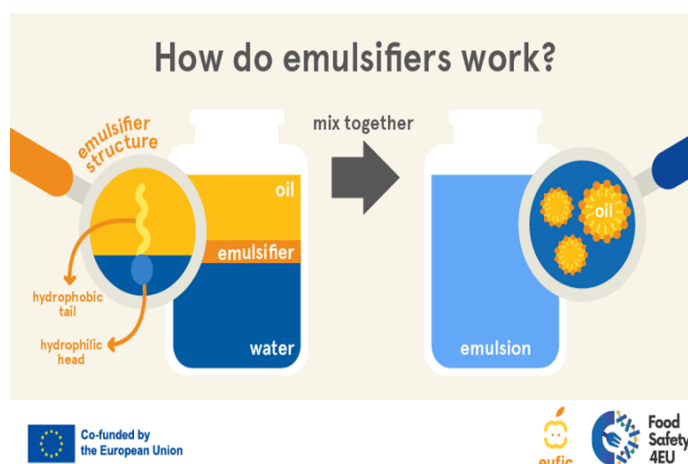


Figure 2: Work of Emulsifier

Emulsifying agents are essential to the creation of pharmaceutical formulations because they provide a number of benefits, including increased stability, improved drug solubility, regulated release rates, and improved patient compliance. Emulsifiers facilitate efficient medication administration and guarantee that pharmaceutical products maintain their homogeneity and therapeutic efficacy by creating stable emulsions. Their significance in the creation of contemporary pharmaceutical products is highlighted by their function in boosting the physical characteristics of formulations, as well as

the bioavailability and controlled release of medications^[14].

Types of Emulsifying Agents

By lowering the surface tension between two immiscible phases (usually water and oil), emulsifying agents, also known as emulsifiers, are crucial for producing stable emulsions. Emulsifying agents in pharmaceutical formulations can be categorized according to their charge, chemical structure, and behavior in various conditions^[15]. Emulsifying agents fall into four

main categories: amphoteric, cationic, nonionic, and anionic. Table 1 Because each type of emulsifier has unique qualities, benefits, and drawbacks, they can be used in a variety of medicinal applications.

1. Anionic Emulsifying Agents

Surfactants with a negative charge on their hydrophilic (water-attracting) group are known as anionic emulsifiers. Although they can occasionally be used in oil-in-water (O/W) emulsions, these agents are usually employed in the creation of water-in-oil (W/O) emulsions. These emulsifiers' negative charge contributes to the electrostatic repulsion that keeps the dispersed phase's droplets from aggregating and coalescing^[16].

Characteristics:

- **Charge:** The hydrophilic group has a negative charge.
- **Mechanism:** The emulsion is stabilized by the electrostatic repulsion between droplets.
- **Use:** They can stabilize oil-in-water emulsions but are frequently employed in water-in-oil emulsions

Anionic emulsifier examples include

- **Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS):** A common surfactant and emulsifier in topical and oral preparations. By decreasing surface tension and encouraging the dispersion of hydrophobic substances, SLS effectively stabilizes emulsions
- **Sodium Stearate:** This fatty acid salt is frequently employed as a lubricant in tablet formulations and in topical formulations, such as creams and lotions. It gives the product uniformity and stabilizes emulsions.
- **Sodium Oleate:** Derived from oleic acid, sodium oleate is frequently found in topical products and contributes to the stability of

emulsions by reducing the surface tension between the water and oil phases.

Pharmaceutical applications include:

- Oral syrups and suspensions (such as formulations with antibacterial or anti-inflammatory properties)
- Lotions and creams for topical dermatological care
- Ointments and tablets that need stable emulsions to deliver drugs effectively^[17].

2. Cationic Emulsifying agents: Cationic emulsifiers have a hydrophilic group that is positively charged. Because of their greater potential for toxicity and irritation, particularly when used in formulations intended for sensitive areas like mucous membranes, eyes, or open wounds, these emulsifiers are less frequently utilized than anionic or nonionic emulsifiers. But in compositions where antibacterial action is sought, cationic emulsifiers work very well.

Characteristics:

- **Charge:** The hydrophilic group has a positive charge
- **Mechanism:** The negatively charged surface of the emulsion's droplets and the cationic emulsifier interact electrostatically. +**Use:** Usually utilized in emulsions that must remain stable at neutral or acidic pH levels and in formulations that require for antibacterial qualities.

Cationic emulsifier examples include:

- **CTAB or cetyltrimethylammonium bromide:** a quaternary ammonium compound that is utilized in a variety of medicinal formulations as a surfactant. It is frequently used as an antibacterial agent and to stabilize emulsions.

Pharmaceutical applications include:

- Sterile formulations such as nasal sprays and ophthalmic solutions.
- Formulations for topical antiseptics.
- Dual-purpose emulsions, such as those having antibacterial and medicinal qualities^[18].

3. Nonionic Emulsifying Agents:

Because of their benign nature, compatibility with a variety of medications, and little potential for discomfort, nonionic emulsifiers are the most commonly employed type in pharmaceutical formulations. Since nonionic emulsifiers don't have a charge like anionic or cationic emulsifiers do, they are less likely to interact with other ingredients in the formulation. Depending on the particular formulation, nonionic emulsifiers can stabilize both water-in-oil (W/O) and oil-in-water (O/W) emulsions^[19].

Characteristics:

- **Charge:** The hydrophilic group has no charge (neutral).
- **Mechanism:** Steric hindrance or the development of a protective barrier surrounding droplets, which inhibits coalescence, are the two ways stabilization is accomplished.
- **Use:** Because of their mildness, biocompatibility, and efficiency in both O/W and W/O emulsions, they are most frequently utilized in pharmaceutical emulsions.

Nonionic Emulsifier Examples:

- **Polysorbates:** These are some of the most widely used emulsifiers in pharmaceutical formulations, such as Polysorbate 20 and Polysorbate 80. Because of their capacity to stabilize emulsions, increase solubility, and boost bioavailability, they are utilized in a broad range of oral, injectable, and topical treatments.
- **Spans (such as Span 20 and Span 80):** These fatty acid esters of sorbitan are commonly

used to stabilize emulsions when combined with polysorbates. Spans are frequently utilized in parenteral formulations and are particularly helpful for creating W/O emulsions.

- **Glycerol Esters (such as Glycerol Monostearate):** These are utilized in pharmaceutical emulsions that are applied topically and taken orally. They offer consistency and stability while causing little irritation to the skin or mucous membranes

Pharmaceutical Applications:

- Oral suspensions and emulsions, especially for medications that are poorly soluble.
- Injectable formulations, particularly those that call for the solubilization of medications that are hydrophobic.
- Creams, lotions, and topical emulsions, particularly in formulas for sensitive skin.
- Applied to compositions where the active components must have a longer release^[20].

4. Amphoteric Emulsifying Agents

Depending on the surrounding pH, amphoteric emulsifiers can have both positive and negative charges. These substances are especially helpful in formulations that must adjust to different pH levels. Amphoteric emulsifiers are ideal for sensitive applications, particularly for mucosal or dermatological products, because they are mild and unlikely to irritate skin. Additionally, they have surfactant qualities that can aid in moderate washing, emulsification, and solubilisation^[21].

Characteristics:

- **Charge:** Depending on pH, there are both positive and negative charges.
- **Mechanism:** Depending on the formulation's pH, amphoteric emulsifiers can create both ionic and nonionic interactions. They are hence extremely adaptable in a variety of



settings.

- **Use:** In applications that call for softer, non-irritating emulsifiers or in formulations that must be active across a pH range^[22].

Examples of Amphoteric Emulsifiers:

- **Lecithin:** Lecithin, a naturally occurring phospholipid included in soybeans and egg yolks, is frequently utilized in culinary and medicinal emulsions. It works well to stabilize O/W and W/O emulsions and is moderate and biocompatible. Lecithin is commonly utilized in intravenous emulsions, oral formulations, and topical treatments.
- **Cocamidopropyl Betaine:** This amphoteric emulsifier, a surfactant made from coconut oil, is frequently found in dermatological goods such as shampoos, lotions, and creams.

It is used to stabilize emulsions and has mild cleaning qualities.

- **Betaine derivatives:** Because of their non-irritating and skin-friendly qualities, these are utilized in a range of pharmaceutical applications, such as topical and oral formulations.

Pharmaceutical Applications:

- Emulsions for sensitive skin or mucous membranes that are injectable, topical, and oral.
- Emulsions, such eye drops and nasal sprays, where pH stability is crucial.
- Cosmetic and dermatological compositions that call for gentle, biocompatible emulsifiers^[23].

Type of Emulsifier	Charge	Mechanism of Action	Example	Pharmaceutical Applications
Anionic	Negative	Electrostatic repulsion	Sodium Lauryl Sulfate, Sodium Stearate	Oral suspensions, topical creams
Cationic	Positive	Electrostatic attraction	Cetyltrimethylammonium Bromide, Benzalkonium Chloride	Ophthalmic solutions, antiseptic creams
Nonionic	Neutral	Steric hindrance or protective layer	Polysorbates, Spans, Glycerol Monostearate	Oral emulsions, injectable formulations, topical products
Amphoteric	Both (depending on pH)	Adaptable charge interaction	Lecithin, Cocamidopropyl Betaine	Dermatological products, oral emulsions, injectable formulations

Table 1: Summary of Types of Emulsifying Agents

When creating stable and efficient pharmaceutical emulsions, the emulsifying agent selection is crucial. Depending on the intended use, each type of emulsifier—cationic, nonionic, amphoteric, and anionic—offers distinct advantages that can be utilized. Although anionic, cationic, and amphoteric emulsifiers also play significant roles in certain formulations, especially those that call for antimicrobial properties, pH adaptability, or improved solubility of lipophilic drugs, nonionic emulsifiers are the most widely used in the

pharmaceutical industry due to their mild qualities and versatility. Pharmaceutical medicines are guaranteed to be both effective and well-tolerated by patients when the proper emulsifier is carefully chosen^[24].

Functions of Emulsifying Agents

The creation and stabilization of emulsions in pharmaceutical formulations depend heavily on emulsifying agents, sometimes referred to as emulsifiers. A dispersion of two immiscible liquids, such water and oil, is called an emulsion.



The emulsifier serves as a stabilizing ingredient to keep the emulsion uniform throughout time. Emulsifying agents serve a number of crucial purposes in pharmaceutical formulations, enhancing their stability, effectiveness, and safety^[25]. The main purposes of emulsifying agents in pharmaceutical formulations are listed below:

1. Emulsion Stabilization: Stabilizing emulsions by keeping the two immiscible liquids (oil and water) from gradually separating is one of the main purposes of emulsifying agents. Because of their intrinsic immiscibility, these liquids have a tendency to phase-separate in the absence of an emulsifier. By creating a protective barrier over the scattered droplets and lowering the interfacial tension between the two phases, emulsifiers stabilize emulsions. By doing this, phase separation, creaming, and coalescence (droplet fusion) are avoided and the emulsion remains stable.

How it Operates:

- The emulsifier molecule has both hydrophilic (which loves water) and hydrophobic (which loves oil) components. Whereas the hydrophobic component interacts with the oil phase, the hydrophilic component interacts with the aqueous phase.
- Emulsifiers keep the scattered droplets evenly distributed by lowering the surface tension between the two phases, which keeps the system from breaking up into its component phases.

For instance, emulsifiers such as lecithin or polysorbates are employed in injectable emulsions (like propofol emulsions) to stabilize the emulsion and stop phase separation while it is being stored^[20].

2. Surface Tension Reduction: Emulsifiers facilitate the dispersion of one liquid into another by lowering the surface tension between two immiscible liquids. Emulsifiers enable the development of smaller droplets of the dispersed phase by reducing the interfacial tension, leading to a more stable and consistent emulsion. Because there is more surface area available for interaction with the emulsifier, the emulsion is more stable when the droplet size is smaller.

How it Operates:

- The emulsifier reduces the interfacial tension by adsorbing at the interface between the water and oil phases. This improves the emulsion's stability and homogeneity by facilitating the oil phase's dispersion into smaller droplets.

For instance, emulsifiers like polysorbates aid in lowering surface tension in oral emulsions for poorly soluble medications (such as griseofulvin), which improves the drug's dispersion and absorption^[26].

3. Enhancement of Bioavailability and Solubility: Many medications, particularly those that are lipophilic (fat-soluble), have poor water solubility. By creating an emulsion in which the lipophilic medication dissolves in the oil phase, emulsifying agents can aid in increasing the solubility of such compounds. By increasing the medicine's absorption in the body, especially in the gastrointestinal system, where the emulsion aids in breaking the drug down into smaller particles that are easier to absorb, this increases the drug's bioavailability. The way it works is that the emulsifier makes it possible for the poorly soluble medication to dissolve in the oil phase of a stable emulsion. Because of its enhanced solubility, the medication is more readily

absorbed through the intestinal wall when the emulsion is ingested.

For instance, emulsions made using emulsifiers like lecithin or polysorbates can increase the solubility and bioavailability of drugs like griseofulvin, an antifungal agent, which are poorly soluble in water^[27].

4. Sustained and Controlled Release of Active Substances:

Emulsifiers can help regulate the release of active chemicals in pharmaceutical formulations. The rate at which the active component is released can be regulated by changing the emulsion's composition (such as the size of the droplets, the proportion of water to oil, or the kind of emulsifier used). This is especially advantageous for formulations that need prolonged or sustained release, which can lower the frequency of drug delivery and sustain therapeutic drug levels for a longer amount of time.

- When emulsions have the right emulsifiers, they can produce an environment in which the medicine is released gradually from the emulsion droplets. The drug's diffusion rate from the dispersed phase into the continuous phase and into the systemic circulation is regulated by the emulsifier.

For instance, emulsifiers like lecithin can be used in injectable emulsions for prolonged-release formulations of medications like propofol or specific vitamins to guarantee a consistent release of the active ingredient^[28].

Improvement in Viscosity, Texture, and Appearance:

Pharmaceutical formulations' texture, viscosity, and general aesthetic qualities are greatly influenced by emulsifying agents. Emulsifiers aid in achieving the appropriate consistency in topical formulations such as creams, lotions, or ointments, which facilitates application and enhances the patient's sensory

experience^[29]. Additionally, emulsifiers affect the product's smoothness, spreadability, and skin absorption—all of which are critical for dermatological treatments.

How It Works:

- Emulsifiers have the ability to alter the emulsion's rheological characteristics, which might impact its viscosity or thickness. Certain emulsifiers have the capacity to gel, which improves the formulation's stability and application.

For instance, emulsifiers such as cetyl alcohol are necessary to provide topical creams used to treat dermatological problems (such as hydrocortisone creams) the proper consistency and texture, which enhances patient compliance and product performance.

- #### 5. Prevention of Phase Separation:
- Phase separation can result in the concentration of active ingredients in one phase, which reduces the consistency and reliability of the formulation. Emulsifying agents help prevent this by maintaining the uniform distribution of the dispersed phase within the continuous phase, even under conditions of temperature or time-induced stress^[30].

How It Works:

- Emulsifiers form a protective layer around the dispersed droplets, preventing them from aggregating and coalescing into larger droplets. This keeps the droplets evenly distributed throughout the emulsion, maintaining uniformity and preventing separation.

Example: To avoid phase separation and guarantee that the formulation is stable during storage and delivery, parenteral emulsions used for intravenous administration (such as lipid-

based nutritional emulsions) depend on emulsifiers like lecithin^[27].

6. Masking Unpleasant Taste or Odor: Active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in oral pharmaceutical formulations can occasionally have a disagreeable taste and odor, which lowers patient compliance. By encasing some medications in the oil phase of the emulsion and minimizing their direct interaction with taste receptors, emulsifying agents can help cover up the disagreeable taste or odor of those medications. Emulsions can also make liquid formulations more palatable, which make it simpler for patients to take their prescription drugs^[31].

How it Works:

- The emulsifier creates a stable emulsion that conceals the taste or odor by trapping the API in the oil phase. The addition of flavoring compounds may also be facilitated by certain emulsifiers, which enhances the overall flavor profile.

For instance, emulsifiers are frequently used in pediatric oral suspensions, such as those for antibiotics like amoxicillin, to help cover up the taste and make the formulation more palatable^[32].

7. Improving Drug Absorption via Topical and Transdermal Administration:

Emulsifying chemicals are used in topical and transdermal medicine delivery systems to enhance the skin's ability to absorb active substances. By changing the outer layer of the skin's characteristics, the emulsifier can increase its permeability and promote the absorption of lipophilic medications. This is especially advantageous for transdermal patches meant to gradually provide medications systemically or for topical formulations meant for localized treatment^[33].

How it Works:

- Emulsifiers can either improve drug solubility or decrease the skin's resistance to drug penetration by interacting with the lipid layer of the skin. Lecithin is one example of an emulsifier that can improve a drug's capacity to penetrate the stratum corneum by acting as a penetration enhancer.

For instance, emulsifiers boost drug absorption via the skin in transdermal patches used for hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), allowing for a controlled and prolonged release of the active ingredients^[34].

In conclusion from maintaining emulsions to boosting solubility and bioavailability, regulating drug release, increasing texture and viscosity, and covering up offensive tastes and odors, emulsifying agents play a variety of vital roles in pharmaceutical formulations. They are essential in the creation of numerous pharmaceutical products, such as oral suspensions, injectable emulsions, topical creams, and transdermal patches, due to their capacity to inhibit phase separation, enhance drug absorption, and regulate the rate of release of active ingredients. Pharmaceutical scientists can optimize drug delivery systems to enhance treatment outcomes and patient compliance by choosing the appropriate emulsifier for each unique formulation^[23].

Pharmaceutical Applications of Emulsifying Agents

Because they can stabilize emulsions, increase the bioavailability of poorly soluble medications, and enhance the overall patient experience with pharmaceutical goods, emulsifying agents are frequently utilized in the pharmaceutical business. These substances are essential to many pharmaceutical dosage forms, including topical formulations, injectables, oral liquids, and even transdermal patches. Because of their adaptability,



they can be used in a variety of products with various therapeutic objectives. Some of the main medicinal uses for emulsifying agents are listed below:

i. Oral Emulsions: When administering poorly water-soluble medications, oral emulsions are frequently utilized, especially in juvenile and geriatric populations where palatability is a major problem. Emulsions aid in the solubilization of lipophilic medications, enhancing the GI tract's absorption and rate of disintegration. Manufacturers can improve medication solubility, which in turn improves bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy, by adding emulsifiers to these formulations^[35].

Applications:

- **Enhanced Solubility and Bioavailability:** Lipophilic medications, including some antibiotics (like ampicillin), antifungals (like griseofulvin), and vitamins (like A and D), are frequently poorly soluble in water. Emulsifying substances, such as lecithin or polysorbates, aid in the oil phase solubilization of these medications, improving their bioavailability and solubility in the aqueous gastrointestinal system.

- **Taste Masking:** Emulsifying chemicals can make oral medications more palatable by masking the disagreeable taste of some drugs, especially those having a bitter or medicinal flavor. This is especially significant for pediatric formulations, because patient compliance is greatly influenced by taste.

For instance, griseofulvin's absorption in the body is enhanced when it is formulated as an emulsion. For this reason, lecithin and polysorbates are often employed emulsifiers to produce a stable emulsion^[36].

ii. Injectable Emulsions: Lipophilic medications that are difficult to dissolve in aqueous solutions are frequently administered via injectable

emulsions. Bypassing the digestive system, these emulsions offer an intravenous medication delivery method. Additionally, injectable emulsions provide a controlled or sustained release method, which might be useful for sustaining therapeutic medication levels over time.

Applications:

- **Parenteral Nutrition (IV Lipid Emulsions):** Patients undergoing long-term total parenteral nutrition (TPN) who are unable to eat orally can get energy and necessary fatty acids through IV lipid emulsions. Lecithin and other emulsifying agents stabilize the emulsion and guarantee the safe and efficient delivery of nutrients.

- **Injectable Drugs:** A number of medications, including the sedative propofol, are made as oil-in-water emulsions that are administered intravenously. By maintaining stability and preventing the oil phase from separating, the emulsifying agent makes sure that the medication is delivered to the patient in a safe and efficient manner. To prevent phase separation and ensure patient safety during anesthesia, propofol, a common anesthetic, is made as an injectable emulsion using lecithin and other emulsifiers to stabilize the oil-in-water emulsion^[37].

iii. Topical Formulations (Lotions, Ointments, and Creams): Creams, lotions, and ointments are examples of topical formulations that are frequently used for the targeted treatment of various skin problems. These products' emulsifying ingredients aid in the creation of stable emulsions that offer the best possible balance of texture, spreadability, and absorption. They ensure that the product is non-irritating and easy to apply while also assisting in the delivery of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) to the skin^[38].

Applications:

- **Dermatological Treatments:** Topical creams



and lotions that include emulsions are frequently used to treat skin disorders such as psoriasis, acne, eczema, and fungal infections. The product's smooth and consistent texture is guaranteed by the emulsifying agent, which facilitates the efficient application and skin penetration of the active components.

For instance, emulsifiers such as cetyl alcohol or stearyl alcohol are frequently used in hydrocortisone creams to enhance their texture and spreadability and guarantee that the drug is efficiently absorbed by the skin. These creams are used to treat inflammatory skin disorders^[39].

iv. Ophthalmic Emulsions Specialized emulsions designed for use in the eye, ophthalmic emulsions are frequently used to treat disorders including ocular inflammation and dry eye disease, as well as to administer medications that are not very soluble in water. In ophthalmic emulsions, emulsifying agents aid in formulation stabilization, controlled drug release, and enhanced drug absorption via the ocular surface^[40].

Applications include:

- **Drug Delivery to the Eye:** Ophthalmic emulsions can be used to administer a range of medications to the eye, such as antibiotics to treat infections and anti-inflammatory treatments like corticosteroids.

- **Moisturizing Drops for Dry Eyes:** People with dry eye syndrome can also benefit from lubricating emulsions in the form of eye drops. These formulations' emulsifiers contribute to the water phase's continued dispersion, resulting in comfortable and long-lasting hydration.

For instance, the emulsion version of Cyclosporine A (Restasis), which is used to treat dry eye illness, contains emulsifiers that improve the drug's bioavailability and absorption at the ocular surface^[35].

v. Systems for Transdermal Drug Delivery Transdermal drug delivery systems (TDDS), which enable the passage of medications through the skin and into the bloodstream, also use emulsifiers. These systems are made to distribute the medication gradually and under control over a long period of time. The medicine is dissolved in the emulsion and allowed to pass through the lipid barrier of the skin with the help of emulsifying agents.

Applications:

- **Transdermal Patches:** Transdermal patches are frequently used to provide medications such as nicotine, hormones (like estrogen or testosterone), and analgesics (like fentanyl). In these formulations, emulsifying ingredients aid in the drug's solubilization and enhance its skin absorption.

- **Topical Therapeutic Products:** Topical patches or gels for ailments like hormone replacement therapy (e.g., estradiol patches) or pain management (e.g., lidocaine patches) contain emulsifiers.

For instance, emulsifiers are necessary for the regulated release of fentanyl and its efficient skin absorption in fentanyl transdermal patches, which are used to treat pain^[41].

vi. Nasal and Pulmonary Emulsions: Drugs for the treatment of rhinitis, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are increasingly being delivered by nasal and pulmonary drug delivery systems, such as sprays or aerosols. These formulations' emulsifying ingredients aid in the uniform dispersion of the medication in a fine mist or spray, facilitating effective administration to the nasal or respiratory mucosa.

Applications include:

- **Nasal Sprays:** Emulsions in nasal sprays are frequently used to administer medications for the

local treatment of infections, allergic rhinitis, and congestion of the nose. The emulsifying ingredients enhance the drug's retention in the nasal cavity and guarantee the formulation's stability.

- **Pulmonary Drug Delivery:** Emulsifiers aid in formulation stabilization and consistent drug particle distribution inside aerosolized droplets, enhancing lung deposition and efficacy in inhalation products.

For instance, emulsifiers are necessary to produce a stable, uniform spray and enhance medication delivery to the intended location in fluticasone nasal sprays and inhalers, which are used to treat allergies and asthma^[42].

vii. Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Combination Products: Emulsifiers are also frequently found in combination products with both medicinal and cosmetic uses. These products, which include anti-aging creams, sunscreen formulas, and anti-inflammatory ointments, are frequently used to treat skin conditions. In these situations, emulsifiers improve the product's overall effectiveness in addition to stabilizing the formulation.

Applications include:

- **Anti-aging Items:** Emulsions are frequently found in anti-aging lotions and creams that mix cosmetic and medicinal qualities. Active compounds like retinoids or peptides, which are more absorbed and more effective when prepared in emulsion systems, are commonly found in these emulsions^[43].

- **Sunscreens:** Emulsions in sunscreen formulations offer a stable medium for UV filter inclusion, improving the product's overall ability to shield skin from damaging UV rays. As an illustration, sunscreens frequently include emulsifiers such as polysorbates or stearyl alcohol to produce a stable emulsion that equally

distributes UV filters throughout the skin and offers efficient sun protection.

In conclusion the pharmaceutical industry uses emulsifying agents in a wide variety of products, including topical treatments, transdermal systems, oral formulations, injectable therapies, and even inhalation products. Emulsifiers are essential for creating dependable and efficient drug delivery systems because they stabilize emulsions and increase the solubility and bioavailability of medications that are poorly soluble in water. By enhancing taste, texture, and simplicity of application—all of which are crucial for elderly and pediatric patients—they also improve patient compliance. Emulsifying agents' adaptability in a broad range of pharmaceutical products emphasizes their significance in contemporary pharmaceutical formulations and their critical role in enhancing therapeutic results^[44].

Challenges with Emulsifying Agent Use

Although emulsifying agents are essential in pharmaceutical formulations, there are certain difficulties in using them. These compounds are essential for emulsion stabilization and enhancing the bioavailability of poorly soluble medications; nevertheless, their efficacy depends on a number of parameters. When choosing and using emulsifying agents, problems with stability, toxicity, regulatory issues, and patient safety frequently come up. The main obstacles to use emulsifying agents in pharmaceutical formulations are listed below:

- i. **Problems with Stability:** Ensuring the emulsion's long-term stability is one of the main issues when utilizing emulsifying agents. Even though emulsifiers are made to stabilize emulsions, a number of variables, including temperature swings, pH variations, and microbial contamination, can eventually

impact an emulsion's physical and chemical stability.

ii. Phase Separation: Over time, emulsions, especially water-in-oil (W/O) or oil-in-water (O/W) systems, are susceptible to phase separation. The emulsion may collapse as a result of the dispersed phase (either water or oil) coalescing. Although emulsifiers are designed to stabilize these droplets and lessen surface tension, phase separation may happen if the system is subjected to harsh conditions or if the emulsifier concentration is insufficient. Emulsions are especially vulnerable to high shear conditions, such as those that occur during processing or storage, which can lead to instability. Under mechanical stress, improperly formed emulsions may fracture or agglomerate, losing their intended qualities and performing poorly in medication administration^[45].

- **Particle Size Distribution:** The stability and functionality of emulsions depend heavily on the droplet size distribution. Inadequate formulation methods or poorly chosen emulsifiers can yield unstable emulsions with big droplets that are prone to phase separation and coalescence. Emulsifying agents must provide a fine and consistent droplet size.

For instance, to guarantee the safe delivery of nutrients, injectable emulsions—like those used in parenteral nutrition—must maintain a constant droplet size. Uneven medication delivery or embolism may result from instability or improper emulsifier use^[46].

2. Safety and Toxicity Issues

Emulsifying agents' safety profile is a major worry, particularly for injectable and intravenous formulations. Certain emulsifiers may be harmful to human health, especially when used in high doses. From minor discomfort to serious reactions

including inflammation, allergic reactions, or organ damage, the toxicity can vary widely.

- **Systemic Toxicity:** When used in high concentrations or over extended periods of time, certain emulsifiers, particularly non-ionic surfactants like polysorbates, have been related to the possibility of systemic toxicity. This may result in negative side effects such histamine release or immune system activation, which can induce fever, skin rashes, or allergic reactions.
- **Local Toxicity and Irritation:** Emulsifying agents, especially in formulations meant for intravenous or subcutaneous administration, may result in local irritation at the injection site. Patients' level of irritation or discomfort might be directly impacted by the emulsifier type and concentration.
- **Long-Term Effects:** Chronic exposure to some emulsifiers may be harmful to one's health, particularly when long-term medication regimens (such as sustained-release formulations or parenteral nourishment) are involved. These include possible renal problems, liver damage, or other long-term systemic consequences that need to be carefully considered while developing a formulation.

As an illustration, polysorbate 80, which is frequently used in parenteral formulations, has been linked to microbubble generation and toxicity in certain patients, particularly when administered in high dosages or over prolonged periods of time. To reduce these dangers, it is crucial to monitor and modify formulations and concentrations^[47].

3. Difficulties with Regulation and Quality Control:

Strict regulatory requirements, which differ by area, govern the use of emulsifying agents in pharmaceutical goods. The European Medicines Agency (EMA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other national regulatory organizations have established safety, effectiveness, and quality standards that



emulsifiers must meet. Manufacturers face formulation and compliance issues in meeting these regulatory standards.

- **Emulsifier Selection:** Regulatory agencies frequently demand a comprehensive assessment of the safety profile of the emulsifying agent, taking into account its toxicity, sensitization potential, and stability in various formulations. Because of worries about their safety in particular formulations or patient populations, some emulsifiers may be prohibited or subject to restrictions.
- **Quality Management in Production:** For emulsions to satisfy the necessary requirements for droplet size, stability, and drug release, the emulsification process must be consistent. The performance of the finished product may be impacted by changes in the emulsification process, such as adjustments to the temperature, speed of mixing, or concentration of the emulsifier. To maintain consistency in large-scale production and guarantee that the finished product satisfies all safety and efficacy standards, manufacturers must set up strict quality control procedures.
- **Adherence to New criteria:** Formulators need to keep up with the most recent emulsifier standards because regulatory criteria are always changing. Guidelines changes may necessitate further testing, documentation, and even reworking of current products, all of which can be expensive and time-consuming.

For instance, a comprehensive evaluation of the safety data of novel emulsifiers in injectable goods, including toxicity studies, stability testing, and biocompatibility evaluations, is necessary before they can be approved. For manufacturers, this procedure can be time-consuming and difficult, particularly when utilizing more recent or obscure emulsifiers^[48].

4. Problems with Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) Compatibility: The

emulsifying agent in pharmaceutical emulsions needs to work well with the formulation's excipients and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API). Particular APIs may interact with particular emulsifiers, changing their stability, chemical makeup, or bioavailability. These interactions could cause the API to deteriorate or lose some of its therapeutic effectiveness.

Interactions between drugs and excipients: When some emulsifiers interact with APIs, the drug's effectiveness may be reduced or unwanted byproducts may occur. In injectable formulations, where any medication degradation could have major repercussions for the patient, this is particularly important.

- **Incompatibility with Other Excipients:** Some excipients, like stabilizers, antioxidants, and preservatives, may not mix well with emulsifiers. The existence of Phase separation, precipitation, or aggregation formation can result from formulation instability brought on by such incompatibilities^[48].
- **API Chemical Degradation:** Sensitive APIs may be hydrolyzed or oxidized by certain emulsifiers. For instance, in oil-based systems, some emulsifiers might hasten the oxidation of lipophilic medications, lowering their stability and efficacy.

For instance, emulsifiers like polysorbate 80 may interact with the active ingredient (such as the anticancer medication paclitaxel) in some parenteral formulations, leading to protein aggregation or degradation that could compromise the therapeutic effect^[49].

5. Issues with Microbial Contamination and Sterility: The safety of pharmaceutical emulsions is seriously threatened by microbial contamination, especially in aqueous-based emulsions. Since emulsifiers don't usually serve as preservatives, the formulation may need to contain additional antimicrobial agents to stop the growth of bacteria or fungi. Making sure that the



emulsifying ingredient doesn't affect the preservative's efficacy or raise new safety issues is the difficult part.

- **Effectiveness of Preservatives:** The emulsifying agent used in some emulsions may conflict with the preservatives' antibacterial qualities. Certain emulsifiers, for instance, have the potential to destabilize preservatives or lessen their ability to inhibit microbial growth. In injectable and ophthalmic emulsions, where sterility is essential, this is particularly significant^[50].

For instance, ophthalmic emulsions used to treat eye infections need to be meticulously made to ensure sterility for the duration of the product's shelf life. In order to keep the product free from microbiological contamination, the use of emulsifiers such as polysorbates in certain formulations may necessitate the addition of extra antimicrobial agents^[49].

6. Emulsifier Availability and Cost: Emulsifier supply and pricing can be problematic, particularly when creating pharmaceutical formulations on a big scale. Certain premium emulsifiers could be costly to make or call for certain manufacturing techniques. Supply chain interruptions may also impact the sourcing and acquisition of emulsifiers, which may have an impact on production schedules and cost-effectiveness.

- **High-Cost Emulsifiers:** Some specialty emulsifiers, such as those made from natural sources (like complex phospholipids or lecithin), can cost more than synthetic ones. This may raise the formulation's total cost, particularly when manufactured on a large scale.

Supply Chain Problems: Supply chain interruptions may affect the sourcing of particular emulsifiers, especially for new or uncommon emulsifiers. Any sourcing problems could postpone the development and approval of a product in situations where a particular emulsifier is essential to the formulation.

For instance, complex emulsifiers like lecithin or egg phospholipids, which are more costly and might raise the final product's cost, may be used in high-end lipid emulsions for parenteral nutrition, potentially making it unaffordable for patients.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion although the effective development of many pharmaceutical formulations depends on emulsifying agents, using them presents a number of difficulties. Stability, toxicity avoidance, regulatory compliance, active ingredient compatibility, microbiological contamination prevention, cost and availability management, and other obstacles are among them. The choice of emulsifiers needs to be carefully considered, taking into account the hazards and the particular formulation requirements. Formulators can produce stable, safe, and effective emulsions that satisfy patients' treatment demands by tackling these issues^[27].

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