

Guidance for Industry

Toxicity Grading Scale for Healthy Adult and Adolescent Volunteers Enrolled in Preventive Vaccine Clinical Trials

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For questions on the content of this guidance, contact the Division of Vaccines and Related Products Applications, Office of Vaccines Research and Review at 301-827-3070.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Preventive vaccines are usually developed to prevent disease in a healthy population. The Office of Vaccines Research and Review, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, regulates preventive vaccines under authority of section 351 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262), as well as specific sections of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and reviews investigational new drug applications (INDs) and biologics license applications (BLAs). (See, for example, Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 312, 600, and 601). Most of the clinical trials of preventive vaccines conducted to support INDs and BLAs enroll healthy volunteers in all phases of vaccine testing. The enrollment of healthy volunteers warrants a very low tolerance for risk in those clinical trials.

This guidance provides you, sponsors, monitors, and investigators of vaccine trials, with recommendations on assessing the severity of clinical and laboratory abnormalities in healthy adult and adolescent volunteers enrolled in clinical trials. The grading system described in the table can also be useful in defining a particular study's stopping rules (e.g., a certain number of adverse events, as defined in the table, may call for stopping the study). Less extreme observations (e.g., mild) may not require discontinuing the study vaccine but can still contribute to evaluating safety by identifying parameters to focus upon in subsequent product development. Uniform criteria for categorizing toxicities in healthy volunteers can improve comparisons of safety data among groups within the same study and also between different studies. We, FDA, recommend using toxicity grading scale tables, provided below, as a guideline for selecting the assessment criteria to be used in a clinical trial of a preventive vaccine. We recommend incorporation of such appropriate, uniform, criteria into the investigational plan, case report forms, and study reports and correspondence with FDA, sponsors, monitors, investigators, and IRBs.

This guidance finalizes the draft guidance of the same title dated April 2005 (70 FR 22664, May 2, 2005).

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II. BACKGROUND

Standardized toxicity assessment scales have been widely used to evaluate products treating specific diseases. For example, the National Cancer Institute's Common Toxicity Criteria Scale and the Division of AIDS' Toxicity Grading Scale standardize the evaluation of adverse events among patients with cancer and HIV/AIDS, respectively (Refs. 1, 2). The defined toxicity parameters in those scales are designed for patients who may already experience mild, moderate, or severe adverse clinical or laboratory events due to the disease process, and may not be appropriate for healthy volunteers.

In the development of the toxicity grading scales for healthy volunteers, we chose parameter limit values based on published information, when such values were available (Refs. 1-6). For example, the Brighton Collaboration has developed case definitions and guidelines to evaluate some adverse events associated with administering vaccines (Ref. 3). In some cases, parameter limit values were based on clinical experience and experience reviewing vaccine clinical trials that enroll normal healthy subjects.

Toxicity grading scales for laboratory abnormalities should consider the local laboratory reference values when the parameter limit values are defined. The characterization of laboratory parameters among some populations of healthy adults and adolescents may require the exercise of clinical judgment, for example, consideration of the potential for ethnic differences in white blood cell (WBC) counts or sex differences in creatine phosphokinase (CPK) values.

III. TOXICITY GRADING SCALE TABLES

Adverse events in a clinical trial of an investigational vaccine must be recorded and monitored and, when appropriate, reported to FDA and others involved in an investigation (sponsors, IRBs, and investigators). (See, for example, 21 CFR 312.32, 312.33, 312.50, 312.55, 312.56, 312.60, 312.62, 312.64, 312.66). Although the use of a toxicity grading scale for adverse events would not replace these regulatory requirements, using a scale to categorize adverse events observed during a clinical trial may assist you in monitoring safety and making required reports. Nonetheless, we believe that categorization or grading of data as outlined in this document is supplementary to and should not replace full and complete data analysis.

These guidelines for toxicity grading scales are primarily intended for healthy adult and adolescent volunteers. The parameters in the tables below are not necessarily applicable to every clinical trial of healthy volunteers. The parameters monitored should be appropriate for the specific study vaccine. For some preventive vaccines under development, it may be appropriate

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to include additional parameters to be monitored during a clinical trial or to alter the choice of values in the toxicity table. For example, additional parameters might be added based on one or more of the following: safety signals observed in pre-clinical toxicology studies, the biological plausibility of the occurrence of certain adverse events, or previous experience with a similar licensed product.

As discussed above, the tables do not represent a recommendation to monitor all the listed parameters in all clinical trials of healthy volunteers, nor do the tables represent all possible parameters to be monitored. In addition, these tables do not represent study inclusion or exclusion criteria. We recommend that the parameters monitored be appropriate for the study vaccine administered to healthy volunteers participating in the clinical trial.

A. Tables for Clinical Abnormalities

Local Reaction to Injectable Product	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate(Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Pain	Does not interfere with activity	Repeated use of non-narcotic pain reliever > 24 hours or interferes with activity	Any use of narcotic pain reliever or prevents daily activity	Emergency room (ER) visit or hospitalization
Tenderness	Mild discomfort to touch	Discomfort with movement	Significant discomfort at rest	ER visit or hospitalization
Erythema/Redness *	2.5 – 5 cm	5.1 – 10 cm	> 10 cm	Necrosis or exfoliative dermatitis
Induration/Swelling **	2.5 – 5 cm and does not interfere with activity	5.1 – 10 cm or interferes with activity	> 10 cm or prevents daily activity	Necrosis

* In addition to grading the measured local reaction at the greatest single diameter, the measurement should be recorded as a continuous variable.

** Induration/Swelling should be evaluated and graded using the functional scale as well as the actual measurement.

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Vital Signs *	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate(Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Fever (°C) ** (°F) **	38.0 – 38.4 100.4 – 101.1	38.5 – 38.9 101.2 – 102.0	39.0 – 40 102.1 – 104	> 40 > 104
Tachycardia - beats per minute	101 – 115	116 – 130	> 130	ER visit or hospitalization for arrhythmia
Bradycardia - beats per minute***	50 – 54	45 – 49	< 45	ER visit or hospitalization for arrhythmia
Hypertension (systolic) - mm Hg	141 – 150	151 – 155	> 155	ER visit or hospitalization for malignant hypertension
Hypertension (diastolic) - mm Hg	91 – 95	96 – 100	> 100	ER visit or hospitalization for malignant hypertension
Hypotension (systolic) – mm Hg	85 – 89	80 – 84	< 80	ER visit or hospitalization for hypotensive shock
Respiratory Rate – breaths per minute	17 – 20	21 – 25	> 25	Intubation

* Subject should be at rest for all vital sign measurements.

** Oral temperature; no recent hot or cold beverages or smoking.

*** When resting heart rate is between 60 – 100 beats per minute. Use clinical judgement when characterizing bradycardia among some healthy subject populations, for example, conditioned athletes.

Systemic (General)	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate(Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Nausea/vomiting	No interference with activity or 1 – 2 episodes/24 hours	Some interference with activity or > 2 episodes/24 hours	Prevents daily activity, requires outpatient IV hydration	ER visit or hospitalization for hypotensive shock
Diarrhea	2 – 3 loose stools or < 400 gms/24 hours	4 – 5 stools or 400 – 800 gms/24 hours	6 or more watery stools or > 800gms/24 hours or requires outpatient IV hydration	ER visit or hospitalization
Headache	No interference with activity	Repeated use of non-narcotic pain reliever > 24 hours or some interference with activity	Significant; any use of narcotic pain reliever or prevents daily activity	ER visit or hospitalization
Fatigue	No interference with activity	Some interference with activity	Significant; prevents daily activity	ER visit or hospitalization
Myalgia	No interference with activity	Some interference with activity	Significant; prevents daily activity	ER visit or hospitalization

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Systemic Illnes	Mild (Grade 1)	(Moderate(Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Illness or clinical adverse event (as defined according to applicable regulations)	No interference with activity	Some interference with activity not requiring medical intervention	Prevents daily activity and requires medical intervention	ER visit or hospitalization

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B. Tables for Laboratory Abnormalities

The laboratory values provided in the tables below serve as guidelines and are dependent upon institutional normal parameters. Institutional normal reference ranges should be provided to demonstrate that they are appropriate.

Serum *	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate (Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)**
Sodium – Hyponatremia mEq/L	132 – 134	130 – 131	125 – 129	< 125
Sodium – Hypernatremia mEq/L	144 – 145	146 – 147	148 – 150	> 150
Potassium – Hyperkalemia mEq/L	5.1 – 5.2	5.3 – 5.4	5.5 – 5.6	> 5.6
Potassium – Hypokalemia mEq/L	3.5 – 3.6	3.3 – 3.4	3.1 – 3.2	< 3.1
Glucose – Hypoglycemia mg/dL	65 – 69	55 – 64	45 – 54	< 45
Glucose – Hyperglycemia Fasting – mg/dL Random – mg/dL	100 – 110 110 – 125	111 – 125 126 – 200	>125 >200	Insulin requirements or hyperosmolar coma
Blood Urea Nitrogen BUN mg/dL	23 – 26	27 – 31	> 31	Requires dialysis
Creatinine – mg/dL	1.5 – 1.7	1.8 – 2.0	2.1 – 2.5	> 2.5 or requires dialysis
Calcium – hypocalcemia mg/dL	8.0 – 8.4	7.5 – 7.9	7.0 – 7.4	< 7.0
Calcium – hypercalcemia mg/dL	10.5 – 11.0	11.1 – 11.5	11.6 – 12.0	> 12.0
Magnesium – hypomagnesemia mg/dL	1.3 – 1.5	1.1 – 1.2	0.9 – 1.0	< 0.9
Phosphorous – hypophosphatemia mg/dL	2.3 – 2.5	2.0 – 2.2	1.6 – 1.9	< 1.6
CPK – mg/dL	1.25 – 1.5 x ULN***	1.6 – 3.0 x ULN	3.1 – 10 x ULN	> 10 x ULN
Albumin – Hypoalbuminemia g/dL	2.8 – 3.1	2.5 – 2.7	< 2.5	--
Total Protein – Hypoproteinemia g/dL	5.5 – 6.0	5.0 – 5.4	< 5.0	--
Alkaline phosphate – increase by factor	1.1 – 2.0 x ULN	2.1 – 3.0 x ULN	3.1 – 10 x ULN	> 10 x ULN
Liver Function Tests –ALT, AST increase by factor	1.1 – 2.5 x ULN	2.6 – 5.0 x ULN	5.1 – 10 x ULN	> 10 x ULN
Bilirubin – when accompanied by any increase in Liver Function Test increase by factor	1.1 – 1.25 x ULN	1.26 – 1.5 x ULN	1.51 – 1.75 x ULN	> 1.75 x ULN
Bilirubin – when Liver Function Test is normal; increase by factor	1.1 – 1.5 x ULN	1.6 – 2.0 x ULN	2.0 – 3.0 x ULN	> 3.0 x ULN
Cholesterol	201 – 210	211 – 225	> 226	---
Pancreatic enzymes – amylase, lipase	1.1 – 1.5 x ULN	1.6 – 2.0 x ULN	2.1 – 5.0 x ULN	> 5.0 x ULN

* The laboratory values provided in the tables serve as guidelines and are dependent upon institutional normal parameters. Institutional normal reference ranges should be provided to demonstrate that they are appropriate.

** The clinical signs or symptoms associated with laboratory abnormalities might result in characterization of the laboratory abnormalities as Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4). For example, a low sodium value that falls within a grade 3 parameter (125-129 mEq/L) should be recorded as a grade 4 hyponatremia event if the subject had a new seizure associated with the low sodium value.

***ULN” is the upper limit of the normal range.

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Hematology *	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate (Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Hemoglobin (Female) - gm/dL	11.0 – 12.0	9.5 – 10.9	8.0 – 9.4	< 8.0
Hemoglobin (Female) change from baseline value - gm/dL	Any decrease – 1.5	1.6 – 2.0	2.1 – 5.0	> 5.0
Hemoglobin (Male) - gm/dL	12.5 – 13.5	10.5 – 12.4	8.5 – 10.4	< 8.5
Hemoglobin (Male) change from baseline value – gm/dL	Any decrease – 1.5	1.6 – 2.0	2.1 – 5.0	> 5.0
WBC Increase - cell/mm ³	10,800 – 15,000	15,001 – 20,000	20,001 – 25,000	> 25,000
WBC Decrease - cell/mm ³	2,500 – 3,500	1,500 – 2,499	1,000 – 1,499	< 1,000
Lymphocytes Decrease - cell/mm ³	750 – 1,000	500 – 749	250 – 499	< 250
Neutrophils Decrease - cell/mm ³	1,500 – 2,000	1,000 – 1,499	500 – 999	< 500
Eosinophils - cell/mm ³	650 – 1500	1501 - 5000	> 5000	Hypereosinophilic
Platelets Decreased - cell/mm ³	125,000 – 140,000	100,000 – 124,000	25,000 – 99,000	< 25,000
PT – increase by factor (prothrombin time)	1.0 – 1.10 x ULN**	1.11 – 1.20 x ULN	1.21 – 1.25 x ULN	> 1.25 ULN
PTT – increase by factor (partial thromboplastin time)	1.0 – 1.2 x ULN	1.21 – 1.4 x ULN	1.41 – 1.5 x ULN	> 1.5 x ULN
Fibrinogen increase - mg/dL	400 – 500	501 – 600	> 600	--
Fibrinogen decrease - mg/dL	150 – 200	125 – 149	100 – 124	< 100 or associated with gross bleeding or disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC)

* The laboratory values provided in the tables serve as guidelines and are dependent upon institutional normal parameters. Institutional normal reference ranges should be provided to demonstrate that they are appropriate.

** “ULN” is the upper limit of the normal range.

Urine *	Mild (Grade 1)	Moderate (Grade 2)	Severe (Grade 3)	Potentially Life Threatening (Grade 4)
Protein	Trace	1+	2+	Hospitalization or dialysis
Glucose	Trace	1+	2+	Hospitalization for hyperglycemia
Blood (microscopic) – red blood cells per high power field (rbc/hpf)	1 - 10	11 – 50	> 50 and/or gross blood	Hospitalization or packed red blood cells (PRBC) transfusion

* The laboratory values provided in the tables serve as guidelines and are dependent upon institutional normal parameters. Institutional normal reference ranges should be provided to demonstrate that they are appropriate.

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IV. REFERENCES

1. National Cancer Institute Common Toxicity Criteria, April 30, 1999.
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2. Division of AIDS Table for Grading Severity of Adult Adverse Experiences; August 1992.
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