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HIGH-PERFORMANCE LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPHY (HPLC): A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Parth Patel, Dr. Sachin B. Narkhede, Dr. Shailesh Luhar

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ABSTRACT

High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) is a powerful analytical technique used to separate, identify, and quantify the components of a mixture. It has become an indispensable tool in various fields, including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, food safety, and environmental monitoring. This review article provides an overview of HPLC principles, instrumentation, applications, advantages, and limitations.

PRINCIPLES OF HPLC

HPLC is based on the principle of chromatography, where a mixture of compounds is separated based on their interactions with a stationary phase and a mobile phase. The stationary phase is typically a porous material, such as silica or polymers, while the mobile phase is a solvent or a mixture of solvents. The compounds in the mixture are separated based on their affinity for the stationary phase and the mobile phase.

INSTRUMENTATION

A typical HPLC system consists of:
1. Injector: Introduces the sample into the system.
2. Column: Separation occurs in the column, which is filled with the stationary phase.
3. Pump: Delivers the mobile phase at high pressure.
4. Detector: Measures the absorbance or fluorescence of the separated compounds.
5. Data acquisition system: Records and analyzes the chromatographic data.

TYPES OF HPLC

1. Reversed-Phase HPLC (RP-HPLC): Most common type, uses a non-polar stationary phase.
2. Normal-Phase HPLC (NP-HPLC): Uses a polar stationary phase.
3. Size-Exclusion Chromatography (SEC): Separates compounds based on size.
4. Ion-Exchange Chromatography (IEC): Separates compounds based on charge.

APPLICATIONS

1. Pharmaceutical analysis: Identification and quantification of active pharmaceutical ingredients.
2. Biotechnology: Analysis of biomolecules, such as proteins and nucleic acids.
3. Food safety: Detection of contaminants and adulterants.
4. Environmental monitoring: Analysis of pollutants in water and soil.
5. Clinical research: Analysis of biological samples.

ADVANTAGES

1. High sensitivity: Detects trace amounts of compounds.
2. High specificity: Separates compounds with similar properties.
3. Quantitative analysis: Accurate quantification of compounds.
4. Flexibility: Various detection methods and column types.

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LIMITATIONS

1. Cost: HPLC systems are expensive.
2. Complexity: Requires skilled operators.
3. Time-consuming: Method development and analysis can be time-consuming.
4. Limited resolution: May not separate compounds with very similar properties.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

1. Ultra-High Pressure Liquid Chromatography (UHPLC): Increased sensitivity and speed.
2. Nano-Liquid Chromatography (nano-LC): Improved sensitivity and resolution.
3. Hyphenated techniques: Combination with mass spectrometry (MS) and nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy.

CONCLUSION

HPLC is a powerful analytical technique with diverse applications. Its advantages, including high sensitivity and specificity, make it an essential tool in various fields. Despite limitations, ongoing advancements in instrumentation and methodology continue to expand HPLC's capabilities.

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