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## Short communication

# Determination of dialysate creatinine by micellar electrokinetic chromatography

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### **Abstract**

Micellar electrokinetic chromatography with UV absorbance detection has been applied for fast and selective determination of creatinine in samples of postdialysate fluid. Optimization of the method was performed, with the best results being obtained using a 30 m*M* borate–100 m*M* sodium dodecyl sulphate background electrolyte, pH 9, with the detector set at 235 nm and an applied voltage of 17 kV across a fused-silica capillary of 67 cm/75  $\mu$ m I.D. The linear range of the technique was over 2 orders of magnitude  $(5-1000 \mu)$ . The developed analytical procedure is useful for the monitoring of clinical hemodialysis treatment, because creatinine levels in real undiluted samples of postdialysate range from 80 to 350  $\mu$ *M*. The separation system allows the analysis of about six to seven samples of spent dialysate per hour in almost real time. The determinations are not influenced by other components of dialysate fluid nor by other surrogates extracted from patient blood. The results of analysis using the developed procedure and the kinetic spectrophotometric Jaffe method conventionally used in clinical settings for creatinine determination are fully comparable. Successful clinical evaluation of the analytical system was performed. The developed system is useful for bloodless estimation of bioanalytical parameters of hemodialysis sessions such as creatinine–time profiles and total creatinine removal. Both these parameters are important in clinical models of hemodialysis therapy.

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*Keywords*: Creatinine

ucts of protein metabolism are accumulated in the clinical setting it is impossible to identify and body and are dangerous for the health of man. In determine all of them. While the whole spectrum of such a case blood purification by an artificial kidney these products is unknown, urea and creatinine have is an effective life-saving therapy [1]. Moreover, become the markers for these unidentified toxins replacement of renal functions by hemodialysis (HD) [1,2], as nearly 95 and 5% of protein nitrogen is aims at restoring a relative control of fluids, elec- metabolized to urea nitrogen and creatinine nitrogen, trolytes and acid–base balance. However, the main respectively. In a patient on dialysis, urea is consid-

**1. Introduction** goal of this clinical treatment is the removal of toxic metabolites from a patient's body. Over 200 uremic Owing to diminished renal functions, toxic prod- toxins are reported in the medical literature. In a ered to be the molecule of reference for removing *\**Corresponding author. Fax: <sup>1</sup>48-22-8225-996. low-molecular mass toxic solutes. An estimation of *E*-*mail address*: [rkoncki@chem.uw.edu.pl](mailto:rkoncki@chem.uw.edu.pl) (R. Koncki). changes in the creatinine level is useful in the

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evaluation of HD effectiveness with regards to toxic simpler, less hazardous sample than blood or serum. molecules of intermediate size. However, it should be noted that dialysate levels of

major criterion for assessing treatment adequacy, lytes and interfering species, are 1–2 orders of because morbidity and mortality are strongly corre- magnitude lower than in the biofluids. lated with malnutrition in dialysis patients [3]. Urea Bloodless methodologies for UKM are well degeneration reflects the protein catabolism rate of the scribed in the literature [4,5]. For on-line analysis of patient, including rapid changes both in dietary dialysate urea, various conductometric [11], potenprotein intake and patient protein turnover. Con- tiometric [12,13] and spectrophotometric [14] versely, creatinine produced from phosphocreatine bioanalytical systems were recently developed and and creatine is a marker of muscle mass and its some of them are now commercially available [15]. generation reflects the slow turnover of muscle Determination of creatinine in spent dialysate and protein. Biomedical modelling of both urea and consequently bloodless CKM is much more difficult. creatinine, far from being redundant, should provide The traditional colorimetric Jaffe method based on complementary information about patient protein reaction of the analyte with picric acid is widely status. Urea kinetic modeling (UKM) [4,5] and accepted by clinicians, although this method is not creatinine kinetic modeling (CKM) [6–10] are com- specific (serious interferences from glucose, ketoplementary tools for clinicians. While UKM is useful acids, amines and proteins) and is time- and workfor evaluation of HD dose and protein catabolism consuming. Enzymatic assays that have enhanced rate, CKM would provide information on muscle selectivity for creatinine have also been developed. mass and nutritional status. The creatinine index may Only recently, a potentiometric bioanalytical system be regarded as an index of amino acid pool stored in [12] and an amperometric biosensor [16] for the muscle mass (patients with muscular dystrophy dialysate creatinine determination have been rehave low creatinine output), and any reduction in the ported. However, these analytical devices are not index over time means a proportional loss of nitro- free of all interferences and are rather expensive in gen reserve and therefore these changes are a strong exploitation. predictor of patient morbidity and mortality [7,8]. On the other hand, chromatographic and electro-

because HD treatment should, just like any other recommended for biomedical measurements because therapy, be adequately administered and assessed. of the inherent ability to determine the analytes of The models have been applied using pre- and post- interest with minimal interference from other dialysis concentrations of the markers in blood. species. The use of capillary electrophoresis (CE) for However this approach is complex, time-consuming, analysis of biological fluids is an attractive alterrequires blood sampling and is inaccurate. Evalua- native to many other analytical schemes because of tion of toxin removal by serum analysis is an indirect the speed of analysis, high selectivity, possibility of methodology and its popularity stems from the multicomponent analysis and minimal waste propractice of measuring serum concentrations of a wide duction. Only recently Kochansky and Strein [17] variety of analytes important for clinical diagnostic. reviewed modern instrumental separation techniques Since the major effect of HD is solute removal, for the determination of uremic toxins in biofluids. measurements of urea and creatinine in spent Electrophoretic methods have been successfully apdialysate constitute direct methods for control of the plied for determination of creatinine in urine [18–22] effectiveness of the therapy. Moreover, direct and serum [22–25]. In order to separate creatinine dialysate methods eliminate inaccuracy problems from other UV absorbing neutral species micellar caused by disequilibrium in the body of the patient electrokinetic capillary chromatography (MEKC) is on dialysis (rebound phenomena) and offer the employed. In MEKC, separation takes place through ability of real-time control of the HD therapy the equilibrium distribution of a solute between two process. Finally, from the analytical point of view, phases that are moving at different velocities in

The nutritional status of dialysis patients is a all surrogates extracted from blood, including ana-

Both the models are important for clinicians phoretic techniques are powerful analytical tools spent dialysate is more easily available, and a opposite directions. The slow moving phase is composed of molecular aggregates/micelles, which blood flow ranged from 0.20 to 0.25 l/min. The will interact with/retain neutral species [26]. flow-rate on the dialysate side was 0.5 l/min. Creatinine has  $pK_a$  values of 4.8 and 9.2 and its For reference spectrophotometric determinations zwitterionic form, predominant between these  $pH$  of creatinine in spent dialysate, a Shimadzu 2401/PC zwitterionic form, predominant between these pH values, does not interact hydrophobically with mi- spectrophotometer (Japan) and disposable cuvettes celles. Therefore, MEKC is much better suited to (Sarstedt, Germany) were used. separation of creatinine from various neutral solutes than standard CE. The most common pseudo-station- 2 .2. *Reagents and materials* ary phase in MEKC applied for biofluids analysis [20–26] is formed by adding sodium dodecyl sul- All chemicals were of analytical reagent grade. phate (SDS) to the background electrolyte/buffer. Carrier electrolyte was prepared using sodium tetra-

electrophoretic analysis of serum and urine samples (Fluka, Switzerland). Creatinine was purchased from [17–25], in this work the utility of MEKC for simple Sigma (St. Louis, MO, USA). and accurate determination of creatinine in spent The dialysis liquids were obtained in the form of dialysate is presented. The major aim of this contri- two separate concentrates from Karima (Poland). bution was to develop a rapid, reliable, accurate and The concentrates were mixed with deionised water in efficient analytical procedure for real biomedical the HD machine. The final composition of the liquid uses. Therefore clinical evaluation of the developed for HD was: 140 mM sodium, 2 mM potassium, analytical system and its utility for control of HD 1 mM magnesium, 3 mM calcium, 29 mM total session progress as well as for estimation of total acetate, 35 m*M* total carbonate and 111 m*M* chlocreatinine removal useful for CKM of HD are also ride. demonstrated. For reference creatinine determination a Sigma

All the CE experiments were performed with a Beckman P/ACE MDQ Capillary Electrophoresis System (USA) equipped with a multiwavelength UV **3. Results and discussion** detector. Separations were carried out in a fusedsilica capillary (Beckman Instruments, Fullerton, 3 .1. *Optimization of the analytical procedure* USA) 67 cm total length/50 cm effective length, 75  $\mu$ m I.D., 375  $\mu$ m O.D, The temperature of the Preliminary experiments were performed to estabcapillary cartridge was maintained at  $25^{\circ}$ C. All lish instrumental parameters. Increasing the injection injections were made hydrodynamically with a pres-<br>time in the range  $3-10$  s did not change the sure of 0.5 p.s.i.. For conditioning, the capillary was migration time of creatinine, and only slightly inpretreated with 0.1 *M* NaOH for 5 min. Next, it was creased the sensitivity, as determined using peak rinsed with deionised water (from Milli-Q system, height. However, changes in the shape of peaks Millipore, USA) for 5 min, and with the electrolyte resulting from 10-s injections suggested that an 8-s for 5 min. This procedure was repeated everyday injection was optimal. After numerous test runs, we prior to the measurements and prior to each change chose a run voltage of 17 kV as a compromise of the running electrolyte. Between measurements between stability of measurements, migration time the capillary was rinsed with electrolyte. and effectiveness of separation. The maximum cur-

Clinical dialysis treatments were performed on rent generated was 95 mA. Fresenius HD machines (Germany). The rate of Spectrophotometric UV detection of creatinine

Although there are many cited papers devoted to borate, (POCh, Poland) and sodium dodecyl sulphate

diagnostic test kit (spectrophotometric kinetic procedure No. 555) was used.

**2. Experimental** All standard, test and sample solutions were prepared immediately prior to use, and if necessary 2 .1. *Instrumentation and measurements* filtered using disposable syringe filters (Millipore, USA).

could be carried out at a wide variety of different wavelengths ranging from 210 to 254 nm [17–25]. Higher sensitivities were obtained at shorter wavelengths (usually 210 or 214 nm), but then other metabolites/toxins could be also detected and strongly interfered in the creatinine determination. In this study we used 235 nm, because at this wavelength there is a local absorbance maximum specific for creatinine [19] and absorbance from the matrix (ionic dialysate fluid components) is not observed. Moreover at this wavelength, some blood surrogates that extracted into dialysate (for example urea), did not absorb the light.

Optimization of the background buffer composition is discussed below. Our particular interest was to find a CE procedure for dialysate creatinine determination, which would be selective and fast and not require any sample pretreatment or dilution. To achieve this goal we tried to implement methodology, earlier reported by Tran et al. [24] and Shirao et al. [20], developed for the analysis of serum and urine, respectively. Postdialysate samples contain creatinine and other metabolites at lower levels than in these biofluids, but the content of electrolytes is much higher (see Section 2). In the cited papers, phosphate buffer, pH 7 [20], and borate buffer, pH 9 [24], both with added SDS, were used as the electrolytes. In our application the use of phosphates<br>is risky because of the possibility of slow precipi-<br>is risky because of the possibility of slow precipi-<br>levels of 10 and 100  $\mu$ M. Concentrations of SDS (in mM) ar tation of calcium and magnesium phosphates and given in the figure. As background electrolyte 30 m*M* borate blocking of the capillary. Due to the high content of buffer, pH 9, was used. carbonate in the samples, buffers of pH over 7, that prevent gas  $(CO_2)$  bubbles forming in the capillary, celles carried the analyte against electroosmotic flow.<br>
2 are necessary. For both these reasons borates rather As can be seen from Fig. 1, the addition of SDS are necessary. For both these reasons borates rather than phosphates are recommended as the buffering caused both inversion of the peak from the dialysate agent in the background electrolyte. Preliminary CE matrix and its separation from the creatinine peak. experiments showed that addition of SDS to the An increase of the SDS amount in the buffer only buffer is necessary. In the course of pure dialysate slightly increased the migration time for creatinine. electrophoresis without SDS a negative peak origina- On the other hand, with higher concentrations of ting from electrolytes and water from the fluid was SDS worse reproducibility of the measurements was obtained (Fig. 1). The migration times for both observed, mainly due to a large increase in the creatinine and dialysate matrix were practically conductivity of the background electrolyte. The SDS identical. concentration did not influence the sensitivity of the

Separation of the peaks was possible using MEKC analyte determination. with SDS as the micelle-forming agent. The zwit-<br>In the next part of the study, the influence of the terionic form of creatinine only interacts electro- concentration and pH of the borate buffer on the statically with the micelles. However, these weak determination of dialysate creatinine by MEKC was interactions are sufficiently effective because mi- investigated, using 0.1 *M* SDS. With an increase of



the buffer concentration from 10 to 50 m*M*, the toxins. We have found that creatinine peaks are not velocity of the electroosmotic flow decreased. Im- affected by a large excess of alkaline cations, urea proved separation was observed with an increase in and uric acid in the sample. An interference from ionic strength of the buffer. On the other hand, creatine was observed in the case of an 100-fold migration time decreased and the electric current excess of creatine:creatinine, but not in the case of a flowing through the capillary increased. As high 10-fold excess. As the creatine concentration in real electric current should be avoided in order to sup- postdialysate samples is well below this, creatine press the Joule heating effect, 30 m*M* borate was does not pose a problem. We can conclude that the chosen for further investigations. These findings are developed method can be used for effective sepain agreement with those reported by Shirao et al. ration and selective determination of creatinine in [20] for phosphate buffer. The influence of buffer pH postdialysate fluid. was investigated in the range of the effective buffer In CE, contrary to other separation techniques (i.e. capacity of borate i.e., from pH 8 to 10. Migration HPLC), components which migrate more slowly times and sensitivities found in the pH range 8.5–10 than the peaks of interest can be removed by were nearly the same. A pH of 9 was chosen as capillary purging after the peaks of interest have optimal. passed the detector, thus considerably increasing

background buffer is 30 m*M* sodium borate and 100 peak has a migration time of 7 min. One to 2 min m*M* SDS. It is worth noting, that the solution has a capillary rinsing between consecutive samples inpH of about 9.0, and therefore it could be easily jections only with background electrolyte (without prepared by simple mixing of the appropriate com- caustic rinsing) is sufficient to give reproducible ponents, without need of pH adjustment and use of results for standards prepared in dialysate fluid pH-meter. Moreover, this background electrolyte and (Table 1). the dialysate fluid have similar ionic strengths and therefore nonspecific effects from the dialysate ma- 3 .2. *Biomedical application of the analytical* trix are minimized. The optimized electrolyte com- *method* position is similar to that recommended for MEKC analysis of deproteinized serum samples [24]. The optimized procedure developed in this work

from 10 to 1000  $\mu$ *M* creatinine with a determination session. In the inset of Fig. 2 a whole-time eleclimit around 5  $\mu$ *M* (figure not shown), and fully tropherogram of postdialysate sample is shown. As covers the range of the analyte concentrations expected, creatinine had the shortest migration time, noted that height of peaks and migration times for creatinine standards prepared in the dialysate fluid<br>and hackground electrolyte are the same. The use of Reproducibility of the method tested on creatinine standards and background electrolyte are the same. The use of<br>the developed procedure gave good resolution of the<br>dialysate fluid (artificial samples without other ex-<br>dialysate matrix peak, creatinine and other blood surrogates extracted into dialysate. The zwitterionic form of creatinine does not interact with the hydrophobic interior of micelles and therefore eluted early in the separation. In consequence, creatinine was the<br>first dialysed blood toxin to elute. The other neutral and anionic toxins expected to be present in postdialysate fluid are eluted next. This observation is in agreement with an earlier report by Tran et al. [24] on the separation of creatinine from 20 other uremic

We have found that the optimal composition of the sample throughput. In our system, the creatinine

In this work, peak height was used as the ana- has been applied for analysis of posthemodialysate lytical signal. The obtained calibration graph is linear effluent from artificial kidney in the course of HD founded in samples of postdialysate. It should be as confirmed by a CE run of the same sample spiked

	Standard 1	Standard 2
Number of repetitions	24	18
Creatinine level	$20 \mu M$	$100 \mu M$
Average migration time	$6.88$ min	$7.02$ min
Range of migration time	$6.78 - 6.96$	$6.88 - 7.08$
SD of migration time	$0.07$ min	$0.05$ min
SEM of migration time	$0.01$ min	$0.01$ min
Average height of peak	$0.75$ mAU	3.46 mAU
SD of peak height	$0.015$ mAU	$0.038$ mAU
SEM of peak height	$0.003$ mAU	$0.009$ mAU



Fig. 2. Electropherogram of real sample of postdialysate fluid (A) and the same sample spiked with  $100 \mu M$  creatinine (B). Full electropherogram of the real sample is shown in the inset.

recovery test illustrated by Fig. 2 was repeated five times. The concentration of added standard was 100 treatment dialysate creatinine levels fall exponential-<br> $\mu$ *M* and the concentrations determined were: 97.7,  $\mu$  and this is a sommon to in time profile. Any  $\mu$  and the concentrations determined were: 97.7,<br>100.6, 98.0, 101.5 and 99.6  $\mu$ M. Respective migra-<br>tion times varied from 6.9 to 7.1 min. The repro-<br>ducibility of real sample analysis was comparable<br>ducibility of rea ducibility or real sample analysis was comparable<br>with that found for artificial samples (Table 1). With<br>20 injections the migration times stayed nearly the<br>same (7.00 min, SD=0.09, SEM=0.02) with average peak height of 3.45 mAU (SD=0.031, SEM= 0.007).

In this work creatinine was analyzed directly from its peak height by reference to a standard calibration curve. The results of dialysate creatinine analyses using the developed MEKC procedure and kinetic colorimetric Jaffe method conventionally used in clinical settings are collected in Fig. 3. The correlation equation for analyses of 48 real postdialysate samples was:  $Y=1.031(\pm 0.014)X-8.23(\pm 2.58)$  $(\mu M)$  with a regression coefficient of 0.997 and a standard deviation of 4.2  $\mu$ *M*. These results clearly confirm the excellent agreement between the developed analytical technique and the standard clinical

Fig. 4. As can be seen from this figure, during HD treatment.



with creatinine (Fig. 2). Migration times for other<br>uremic toxins were longer, as reported earlier [24]. A<br>method.



method.<br>The analytical system reported in this paper can be creatinine level using the developed (open points) and reference The analytical system reported in this paper can be<br>used as an at-line monitor for control of HD treat-<br>used as an at-line monitor for control of HD treat-<br>dialysate creatinine level in the course of HD session. Lines (B) ment. Such a biomedical application is illustrated by represent amount of creatinine removed from patient body by HD

Table 2

Biomedical CKM parameters of HD session monitored using both, the developed and reference method. The results correspond with experimental data showed in Fig. 4 CKM parameter by MEKC by Jaffe

CKM parameter	by MEKC	by Jaffe
Initial level of dialysate creatinine, $C_0$ ( $\mu$ <i>M</i> )	269	261
Final level of dialysate creatinine, $C_r$ ( $\mu$ <i>M</i> )	111	112
Creatinine reduction ratio, calculated as	58.8	56.7
$(1 - C_r / C_o) \times 100$ (%)		
$KT/V$ , calculated as $\ln(C_0/C_{\tau})$ (dimensionless)	0.89	0.84
$K/V$ ( $\times 10^{-3}$ ; 1/min)	3.70	3.50
Total creatinine removal (mmol), calculated	21.5	21.1
as $F \times C_0/(K/V) \times [1 - \exp(-KT/V)]$ , where		
$F$ is flow-rate of dialysate fluid		

ing the area under the dialysate creatinine–time **4. Conclusions** curve (line A in Fig. 4) by the flow-rate of the dialysate fluid. Taking into account that toxin remov- To the best of our knowledge this is the first report al by an artificial kidney is a first-order process it is on the application of CE for control of HD treatment. possible to predict the final dialysate creatinine level The developed procedure is easy to operate (no as well as total creatinine removal before the end of sample pretreatment) and enables fast, sensitive and HD session. Selective determination of creatinine in real clinical

creatinine levels as well as total creatinine removal is that MEKC is useful as an at-line HD monitor useful in kinetic modelling of HD therapy. Although conventional CKM is based on blood levels of the allowing estimation of biomedical parameters imtoxin, it is known that the relationship between portant for CKM and in consequence for quantitative concentrations of any surrogate at the start and the administration and assessment of HD therapy. concentrations of any surrogate at the start and the end of HD session is the same in blood and dialysate. Therefore, in many cases blood-side and<br>dialysate-side measurements can lead to the same<br>**Acknowledgements** results. Kinetic modelling utilizing  $KT/V$  as a param-<br>
eter (where K, V and T are, the dialysator clearance,<br>
body water volume and total time of HD, respective-<br>
ly) is a standard biomedical methodology of HD<br>
quantifica by clinicians for quantitative description of the delivered HD dose. An alternative parameter is **References** creatinine reduction ratio or percentage removal of creatinine. For calculation of each of these parame ters the initial/final creatinine level ratio is useful [1] W.L. Heinrich, in: The Principles and Practice of Dialysis,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Williams & Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, MD, 1994. Table 2). Estimation of the total amount of  $\begin{array}{c} \text{Willians } \alpha \text{ Willains, Baulinore, M.D., 1994.} \\ \text{[2] S. Ringoir, A. Schoots, R. Vanholder, Kidney Int. 33 (1988). \end{array}$ creatinine removed by HD is necessary for calcula-  $S4$ . tion of creatinine index and body lean muscle [6– [3] E.G. Lowrie, N.L. Lew, Am. J. Kidney Dis. 15 (1990) 458. 10]. As can been seen from Fig. 4 and Table 2, the [4] R.M. Hakim, T.A. Depner, T.F. Parker, Am. J. Kindey Dis.<br>
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Estimation of pre-, post- and interdialytic samples of spent dialysate. The results clearly show<br>eatinine levels as well as total creatinine removal is that MEKC is useful as an at-line HD monitor

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