WJPMR, 2026, 12(4), 129-141

Research Article

WORLD JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

www.wjpmr.com

Impact Factor: 7.555

ISSN (O): 2455-3301

ISSN (P): 3051-2557

Coden USA: WJPMBB

THE STUDY OF THE INCORPORATION METHODS OF EXCIPIENTS (*LENTINUS TUBER REGIUM)* USED IN PARACETAMOL TABLETS FORMULATION

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Department of Pharmaceutics and Pharmaceutical Technology, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt 500004, Nigeria. **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19327426

How to cite this Article: Ucheokoro Adaeze S.[1]* and Ugoeze Kenneth C.[2]. (2026). The Study of The Incorporation Methods Of Excipients (Lentinus Tuber Regium) Used In Paracetamol Tablets Formulation. World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research, 12(4), 129–141.

Article Received on 25/02/2026 **Article Revised on 17/03/2026** **Article Published on 01/04/2026**

ABSTRACT

Background: Tablets remain the dominant solid oral dosage form worldwide due to their convenience, stability, precise dosing, and patient acceptability. Superdisintegrants are essential excipients in immediate-release formulations, promoting rapid tablet disintegration and drug release. Synthetic superdisintegrants (croscarmellose sodium, crospovidone, sodium starch glycolate) are effective but expensive, imported, and non-biodegradable, posing economic and sustainability challenges in resource-limited settings like Nigeria. Natural alternatives from locally abundant sources are increasingly explored to address these limitations. **Objective**: This study investigated the disintegrant performance of Lentinus tuber-regium (LT) powder in paracetamol tablets, comparing intragranular (IG) and extragranular (EG) incorporation methods using native (NLT), boiled (BLT), and palm wine-soaked (SPLT) LT powders against sodium starch glycolate (SSG) as the standard. **Methods**: Paracetamol tablets were prepared by wet granulation with LT powders (3.0%, 7.0%, 10.0% w/w) incorporated either IG or EG. Granules and tablets were evaluated for density, flow properties, weight uniformity, hardness, friability, disintegration time, and dissolution profile using pharmacopoeial methods. Statistical analysis included one-way ANOVA and t-tests ($\alpha = 0.05$). **Results**: Processed LT powders (BLT, SPLT) exhibited superior flowability and compressibility compared to NLT. EG tablets showed faster disintegration (<2 min) than IG tablets (<5 min) and superior dissolution (peak release 64.0% at 3.0% w/w SPLT by 10 min, sustained through 30 min). EG formulations outperformed IG in drug release, with SPLT and SSG achieving comparable peak performance (64.0%). All tablets met USP standards for weight uniformity and friability. **Conclusion**: Extragranular incorporation of processed Lentinus tuber-regium powder significantly enhances disintegrant performance in paracetamol tablets, offering a sustainable, cost-effective, locally sourced alternative to synthetic superdisintegrants. The findings support further development and scale-up of LT-based excipients for pharmaceutical manufacturing in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Lentinus tuber-regium, natural superdisintegrant, extragranular incorporation, paracetamol tablets, disintegration, dissolution.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to Excipients in Pharmaceutical Formulation

Excipients are essential components in pharmaceutical formulations, particularly in solid. oral dosage forms such as tablets, where they facilitate manufacturing, ensure stability, and enhance drug release and bioavailability (Somnache et al., 2016; Van der Merwe et al., 2020). Traditionally viewed as inert substances, excipients are now recognized as functional ingredients that influence critical attributes like dissolution rate, disintegration time, and tablet hardness (Aleeva & Krasnyuk, 2009; Vadlamudi & Dhanaraj, 2017). In immediate-release formulations, superdisintegrants play a pivotal role by promoting rapid tablet breakdown upon contact with aqueous media, thereby accelerating drug dissolution—especially for poorly soluble or permeable APIs like paracetamol, a BCS Class III drug (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007; Mohanachandran et al., 2011).

Synthetic superdisintegrants, such as croscarmellose sodium, crospovidone, and sodium starch glycolate, dominate the market due to their reliable mechanisms of action, including swelling, wicking, and deformation (Kaur & Mehara, 2016; Singh et al., 2021). These materials ensure fast disintegration (typically <3 minutes) and high drug release rates (>80% in 30 minutes), making them ideal for formulations requiring rapid onset (Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009). However, in resource-limited settings like Nigeria, synthetic excipients pose challenges, including high import costs, supply chain disruptions, and environmental concerns related to non-biodegradability (Ogaji et al., 2012; Van der Merwe et al., 2020). This has spurred interest in natural alternatives that are abundant, cost-effective, and sustainable.

1.2 Natural Polymers as Pharmaceutical Excipients

Natural polymers have gained prominence as excipients due to their biocompatibility, renewability, low toxicity, and cultural acceptability in traditional medicine systems (Ogaji et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2021). Derived from plant, animal, microbial, or fungal sources, these materials offer multifunctional properties, including binding, disintegration, and controlled release (Morris et al., 2016; Srivastava et al., 2025). Plant polysaccharides, such as those from ispaghula husk or okra gum, demonstrate superdisintegrant activity through high swelling indices and water uptake, facilitating rapid tablet fragmentation (Kaur & Mehara, 2016; Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009).

Fungal-derived polymers, particularly from sclerotia, are emerging as promising excipients due to their high content of β-glucans and mannans, which confer excellent water-retention and swelling capacities (Manjunathan & Kaviyarasan, 2011; Fabros et al., 2022). These properties make them suitable for disintegration in immediate-release formulations, where swelling and wicking mechanisms enhance drug dissolution (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007). Processing techniques—such as boiling, soaking, or co-processing—further optimize these polymers by reducing particle agglomeration, improving porosity, and enhancing flowability (Ugoeze & Nwachukwu, 2020; Johnson Afolabi et al., 2024). For instance, co-processing with acids or effervescent agents can yield hybrid excipients with superior performance compared to native forms (Ugoeze et al., 2015).

In developing regions like West Africa, natural excipients align with sustainable development goals by utilizing local resources, reducing environmental impact, and supporting indigenous economies (Singh et al., 2021; Fabros et al., 2022). However, challenges include batch-to-batch variability and the need for rigorous characterization to meet pharmacopeial standards (Vadlamudi & Dhanaraj, 2017).

1.3 *Lentinus tuber-regium* as a Natural Excipient Source

Lentinus tuber-regium, a basidiomycete fungus native to tropical West Africa, forms sclerotia rich in polysaccharides, proteins, and lipids, making it a versatile material for pharmaceutical applications (Manjunathan & Kaviyarasan, 2011; Johnson Afolabi et al., 2024). Ethnomedicinally, LT is used for wound healing, anti-inflammatory effects, and gastrointestinal remedies, attributed to its β-glucan content (Fabros et al., 2022). In pharmaceutical contexts, LT sclerotia exhibit high swelling indices and water-binding capacity, ideal for disintegration (Morris et al., 2016; Srivastava et al., 2025).

Native LT powder (NLT) has irregular morphology and poor flow properties, limiting its use (Ugoeze & Nwachukwu, 2020). Processing—boiling (BLT) or soaking in palm wine (SPLT)—disrupts the dense matrix, yielding spherical particles with enhanced porosity and flow (Sinka et al., 2009; Manjunathan & Kaviyarasan, 2011). Ugoeze et al. (2015) developed a co-processed LT excipient (fizlent) with acids and sodium bicarbonate, achieving disintegration times <5 minutes in tablets, comparable to synthetic superdisintegrants. Ugoeze and Nwachukwu (2020) reported processed LT reducing disintegration to <2 minutes and dissolution >90% in 30 minutes for paracetamol, outperforming NLT.

These properties position LT as a sustainable alternative, but granular-level studies are scarce, justifying further preformulation research (Singh et al., 2021).

1.4 Granular Properties in Preformulation and Tablet Development

Granular properties bulk/tapped density, Carr's index, Hausner's ratio, angle of repose, particle size, and morphology are pivotal in preformulation, influencing flow, compressibility, and tablet quality (Sinka et al., 2009; Cavatur et al., 2016). Optimal granules exhibit "good" flow (Carr's index <20%, angle of repose <35°), reducing defects like weight variation or capping (Jones & Pilpel, 1966). Natural disintegrants require granular optimization to match synthetics (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007).

SEM assesses morphology, while FTIR confirms compatibility (Vadlamudi & Dhanaraj, 2017). Processing natural polymers improves these properties by increasing surface area and reducing cohesion (Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009). For LT, processing yields uniform granules, enhancing compressibility and disintegration (Ugoeze & Nwachukwu, 2020).

1.5 Gaps in Existing Literature and Justification for the Study

While LT shows promise, most research focuses on final tablet properties rather than granular preformulation (Ugoeze & Nwachukwu, 2020; Ugoeze et al., 2015).

Comparative studies on processing methods (boiling vs. palm wine soaking) and against synthetics at the granular stage are limited. Paracetamol's poor compressibility makes it an ideal model, yet LT's granular performance remains underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by characterizing processed LT powders, evaluating compatibility, and assessing granular properties, providing data for sustainable excipient development in Nigeria (Singh et al., 2021).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Materials

Table 2.1: Research Materials Used.

Materials	Manufacturer	Country	Grade
Sodium Starch Glycolate	Tribute Pharma	India	Analytical
Gelatin	Titan biotech	India	Analytical
Talc	Titan biotech	India	Analytical
Magnesium Stearate	JHD	China	Industrial
Lactose	Titan biotech	India	Analytical

2.2. Methods

2.2.1 Collection of *L t regium*

The plant *Lentinus tuber regium* was sourced from Agazi, Ahia-Ohuru, Aba, Abia State.

2.2.2 Identification of the Sample

The sample identified botanically as *Lentinus tuber regium* by Wosu Edwin (Ph.D), Botany Department of the University of Port Harcourt and was deposited in the University of Port Harcourt herbarium with identification number E-HERBARIUM ID.NO: EH-P-O53, EH-C-013.

2.2.3 Formulation of tablets by wet granulation method

Table 2.2: Formula for Paracetamol Tablets formulation.

Concentration	3% $^{w}/_{w\ (IG)}$	7% $^{w}/_{w\ (IG)}$	10% $^{w}/_{w\ (IG)}$	3% $^{w}/_{w\ (EG)}$	7% $^{w}/_{w\ (EG)}$	10% $^{w}/_{w\ (EG)}$
Ingredient	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**	**Amt/Tablet (mg)**
Paracetamol	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
LT	18.00	42.00	60.00	18.00	42.00	60.00
Gelatin	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Mag. Stearate	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Talc	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Lactose	64.00	40.00	22.00	64.00	40.00	22.00
Total tablet weight	**600.00**	**600.00**	**600.00**	**600.00**	**600.00**	**600.00**

Key: Amount per tablet; the amount of ingredients per 600mg weight of Paracetamol tablet.
IG: Intra-granular method of *L. t regium* powder (disintegrant) incorporation
EG: Extra-granular method of *L. t regium* powder (disintegrant) incorporation

2.2.4 Preparation of granules by wet granulation method using intra-granular, and extra-granular methods of disintegrant addition respectively

Three batches of granules each containing paracetamol (83.33 5 w/w), gelatin (2.00 % w/w), magnesium stearate (0.50 % w/w), talc (0.5 % w/w), lactose (10.70 % w/w) and either NLT or BLT or SPLT (at 3.00, 7.00, 10.00 % w/w as disintegrants) were prepared using the wet granulation methods using NLT, BLT and SPLT as disintegrants with sodium starch glycolate as a standard which were all incorporated either intra-granularly (IG) or extra-granularly (EG).

2.2.5 Characterization of formulated granules

2.2.5.1 Bulk density

A 15g of granules from each batch of the samples was loaded into a 50ml glass measuring cylinder and the reading was taking as such and was recorded as the granule bulk volume this was done in triplicate for every batch of the granules.

Bulk density is expressed as:

$$Bulk\ density = mass\ /\ bulk\ volume$$

…… (13)

(Hunt N. and Gilkes R., 1992)

2.2.5.2 Tapped density

A 15g of granules from a batch of samples was loaded into a 50ml glass measuring cylinder. The opening of the measuring cylinder was blocked with cotton wool. The measuring cylinder was tapped severally on a padded flat desk and the tapping was progressive until a steady volume was maintained and no further reduction in volume was observed as the tapping progressed and the final volume was read and recorded and the procedure

was done in triplicate and subsequently carried out for all the granules samples.

Tap density is expressed as:

$$Tap\ density = mass/tap\ volume$$

…… (14)

(Hunt N. and Gilkes R. 1992)

2.2.5.3 True density

The true density of each batch was determined using n-hexane as a displacement medium. An empty pycnometer of 25ml volume was weighed W the weight was noted and the empty pycnometer was filled with n-hexane, and excess fluid was wiped off. The filled bottle was weighed and the weight was recorded as W1, subsequently a 1.0g quantity of the granules from one batch was weighed and was recorded as W3 and was loaded into the n-hexane filled pycnometer and the excess liquid medium was wipe off and the weight was taken as W4.

Three different readings were taken and granule true density is expressed as:

$$True\ density = W2 \times W3 \div V(W3 - W4 + W2 + W)$$

…….. (15)

Where;
V = volume of pycnometer
W=weight of empty pycnometer
W1= weight of pycnometer and n- hexane
W2= the difference between the W and W1
W3= weight of sample powder
W4= weight of sample + n- hexane + pycnometer. (L´opez-Ortiz A. and Rodriguez-Ram´ırez J. 2011)

2.2.5.4 Porosity

The values obtained from the previous bulk density and true density was used to calculate the porosity of the granules as;

$$P = 1 - (bulk\ density / true\ density) \times 100$$

…… (16)

(Berryman J.G and Blair S.C., 1986)

2.2.5.5 Flow Properties

1. Flow Rate

A funnel used for this experiment was tightly clamped on a retort stand at 7cm from the flat base, the orifice of the funnel was tightly blocked and after a 15g of the granules from a batch was loaded into the funnel the orifice was allowed open to let the powder freely flow. Flow rate was recorded and this procedure was done in triplicate and was repeated for all the granules samples batches.

Flow rate is expressed as:

Flow rate =

$$Mass\ of\ powder \Big/ Time$$ …… (19)

(Kanig J L., 1986)

2. Angle of Repose

A funnel clamped on a retort stand and its stem base fixed at a height of 3cm. The granules was loaded into the funnel while the orifice was tightly closed thereafter the orifice was allowed opened and let the free flow so that the cone apex of granules heap formed reached the stem. The measurement of the heap diameter was taken the procedure carried out in triplicate and the procedure was repeated for all the granules batches.

Angle of repose θ is expressed as:

$$\theta = Tan^{-1}\frac{2h}{w}$$ …… (20)

Where h = 3cm = distance between stem base and base
W or d = base diameter of cone of heap of powder (Gold G., 1966)

a. Compressibility index (CI)

The compressibility index (*CI*) of the granules was calculated from the values of the previous bulk volume and tapped volume obtained from the batches of granules respectively.

The formular for Compressibility Index is expressed as:

$$CI = (Tapped\ density - Bulk\ density) \div Tapped\ density \times 100$$

……(17)

(Carr, R.L., 1965); (Ramachandra P. *et al*., 1985)

b. Hausner's quotient

The values obtained from the previous tapped density and bulk density was used to calculate the Hausner's quotient of the respective granules batches. The following formular expresses the hausner's quotient:

$$HR = Tapped\ density \div Bulk\ density$$

…… (18)

(Hausner H. H, 1900)

2.2.6 Compression of granules

A 3.00mg of magnesium stearate and talc respectively were added extra-granularly to batch I-VI granules prior to compression into tablets. Compression was done using a carver single punch hydraulic press (Model C, Carver Laboratory Press, Menomonee Falls, W1, USA) fitted with a set of 10.00 mm flat faced punches at a uniform compression pressure of 2.45 Mega pascal (Mpa). The target tablets weights were 600 mg.

2.2.7 Determination of tablet properties

2.2.7.1 Weight uniformity

Using the British pharmacopeia method (16) 20 tablets were randomly selected from each batch and were weighed individually and the weight of individual tablet was taken and recorded. (ACCULAB ALC 210.4 Model, Germany).

2.2.7.2 Tablet hardness and thickness
Ten (10) tablets taken from each batch were randomly taken, hardness was determined using digital hardness tester (Monsanto, India). This same equipment displays the diameter and thickness of each tablet in addition to its hardness. The mean and standard deviation of the values were calculated.

2.2.7.3 Friability test
Ten (10) tablets from each batch were randomly selected, weighed and placed in the Erweka friabilator (D-63150 Heusenstamm, TAR 220, Germany) which was operated at 25 rpm for 4 minute. The tablets were dusted and reweighed. Friability of the tablets was calculated using the formula stated as:

$$B=100(1-W/Wo) \quad \ldots\ldots (21)$$

Where:
B=friability
W=weight of tablet after passing it through the friabilator
Wo= weight of initial tablet (Pifferi G., 1999)

The test is rejected if any tablet caps, laminates or breaks up in the course of the test. Values of B o less than 1% is given as the acceptance limited for uncoated tablet.

2.2.7.4 Tablet disintegration time
The disintegration time of 6 tablets randomly selected from each batch was determined using 5.8 phosphate buffer solution as the disintegration medium maintained at 37 $\pm 1^{o}$ C in a disintegration apparatus (Erweka, Germany).

a. Tensile strength
From the result gotten from the diametral hardness test and thickness obtained from the previous analysis tablet tensile strength was calculated with the formula below:

$$T = 2P/\pi dt \quad \ldots\ldots (22)$$

Where T= radial tensile strength
P= load required to break the tablet diametrically
d=diameter
t=thickness of tablet (Knudsen, F., 1959); (Fell, J. and Newton, J. 1970)

2.2.7.5 Standard calibration curve for paracetamol
A 100 mg of pure paracetamol powder was dissolved and made up to 100 ml in a 100 ml volumetric flask using 5.8 phosphate buffer solution to form stock solution. Serial dilution of the stock solution was made to obtain diluted solutions. Subsequently a scan of the solutions were carried out using an UV/vis spectrophotometer (Jen way model 6405), gave the wavelength of maximum absorption of 244nm. The different serially diluted paracetamol solutions were also scanned at 244nm of the spectrophotometer. The absorbance readings were used to calculate the different concentrations of paracetamol which enabled plot the Beer-Lamberts calibration curve.

2.2.7.6 Dissolution profile
The dissolution profile for each batch of paracetamol tablets was carried out using a six-station dissolution apparatus [Erweka® DT600 High Head (DT600HH), Germany]. The rotating paddle method was adopted. The dissolution medium constituted 900 ml of 5.9 phosphate buffer solution maintained at 37 $\pm 1^{o}$C with paddle speed maintained at 50 rpm. A 5 ml sample was withdrawn at predetermined intervals of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 minutes respectively. Replacements with the same volume of 5.9 phosphate buffer solution maintained at the same temperature were done at each sampling time. The absorbance of each sampled solution was read in a UV spectrophotometer (Jenway Spec, model 6405, England) at a wavelength of 244nm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Table 3.1: Physicochemical properties of the paracetamol granules (3.0% $^{w}/_{w}$).

Parameter	NLT (IG)	BLT (IG)	SPLT (IG)	SSG (IG)	NLT (EG)	BLT (EG)	SPLT (EG)	SSG (EG)
Flow rate (g/s)	7.26 ± 0.22	4.98 ± 0.58	7.94 ± 0.29	7.97 ± 0.31	6.49 ± 0.26	6.33 ± 0.03	6.78 ± 0.42	5.86 ± 0.04
Angle of Repose (°)	39.47 ± 1.08	39.00 ± 0.00	39.70 ± 0.30	39.47 ± 0.40	38.9 ± 0.17	39.39 ± 0.58	40.77 ± 0.68	39.7 ± 0.00
Bulk density (g/ml)	0.43 ± 0.01	0.43 ± 0.00	0.45 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.00	0.42 ± 0.00	0.44 ± 0.02	0.48 ± 0.00	0.43 ± 0.01
Tapped density (g/ml)	0.52 ± 0.00	0.71 ± 0.01	0.55 ± 0.01	0.53 ± 0.00	0.53 ± 0.01	0.58 ± 0.01	0.62 ± 0.01	0.59 ± 0.01
True density (g/ml)	7.55 ± 0.90	7.49 ± 0.07	7.55 ± 0.02	7.50 ± 0.33	7.54 ± 0.00	7.52 ± 0.00	7.51 ± 0.00	7.50 ± 0.04
Moisture content (%)	0.04 ±	0.07 ±	0.07 ±	0.06 ±	0.13 ±	0.15 ±	0.16 ±	0.25 ±

	0.90	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.09	0.02	0.01	0.23
Swelling index (%)	65.60 ± 5.10	68.0 ± 15.61	81.20 ± 1.04	62.2 ± 8.80	76.48 ± 4.30	72.0 ± 1.6	99.4 ± 9.20	64.60 ± 4.30
Hydration capacity (%)	0.75 ± 0.47	1.04 ± 0.00	1.09 ± 0.03	1.03 ± 0.00	1.04 ± 0.00	1.03 ± 0.01	1.02 ± 0.01	1.02 ± 0.00
Hausner's ratio	1.19 ± 0.03	1.65 ± 0.02	1.23 ± 0.01	1.27 ± 0.01	1.32 ± 0.02	1.27 ± 0.17	1.32 ± 0.02	1.22 ± 0.00
Porosity (%)	94.00 ± 0.00	94.00 ± 0.00	93.70 ± 0.58	93.30 ± 0.00	92.7 ± 0.58	92.70 ± 1.53	93.70 ± 1.15	92.7 ± 0.58
Particle size (µm)	2.70 ± 2.60	2.30 ± 1.30	3.40 ± 2.60	2.80 ± 0.90	2.70 ± 1.90	3.30 ± 1.20	6.10 ± 3.00	2.60 ± 1.30
Carr's index	16.80 ± 2.00	38.90 ± 0.70	18.90 ± 0.70	21.80 ± 0.20	21.80 ± 0.90	24.3 ± 1.00	21.80 ± 0.80	30.4 ± 4.0
52%	9.60 ± 0.16	11.20 ± 0.43	13.10 ± 0.74	10.40 ± 0.70	9.10 ± 0.16	13.40 ± 0.96	10.30 ± 0.56	10.40 ± 0.70
75% Moisture Absorption 84% (%) 96%	11.40 ± 0.45	13.30 ± 1.50	14.20 ± 0.10	12.30 ± 0.05	11.38 ± 0.45	15.6 ± 0.72	12.40 ± 0.44	12.30 ± 0.03
	13.60 ± 1.00	15.00 ± 0.38	17.08 ± 0.24	13.80 ± 0.40	13.60 ± 1.0	16.50 ± 0.60	15.70 ± 0.56	14.80 ± 0.50
	15.60 ± 1.20	16.10 ± 0.16	21.70 ± 0.10	15.90 ± 0.56	15.60 ± 1.20	17.8 ± 1.16	17.96 ± 0.43	15.90 ± 0.56

Table 3.2: Physicochemical properties of the paracetamol granules (7.0% $^{w}/_{w}$)

Parameter	NLT (IG)	BLT (IG)	SPLT (IG)	SSG (IG)	NLT (EG)	BLT (EG)	SPLT (EG)	SSG (EG)
Flow rate (g/s)	7.86 ± 0.14	6.91 ± 0.45	7.11 ± 0.89	7.17 ± 0.26	6.17 ± 0.24	5.81 ± 0.34	5.28 ± 0.58	5.93 ± 0.14
Angle of Repose (^{o})	39.47 ± 1.08	39.93 ± 0.50	39.23 ± 0.68	40.17 ± 0.40	38.9 ± 0.17	39.27 ± 0.51	40.90 ± 0.46	39.7 ± 0.00
Bulk density (g/ml)	0.42 ± 0.01	0.43 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.01	0.44 ± 0.00	0.41 ± 0.00	0.53 ± 0.01	0.43 ± 0.01
Tapped density (g/ml)	0.52 ± 0.00	0.54 ± 0.00	0.52 ± 0.00	0.56 ± 0.00	0.57 ± 0.00	0.55 ± 0.00	0.68 ± 0.00	0.54 ± 0.03
True density (g/ml)	7.48 ± 0.34	7.50 ± 0.04	7.53 ± 0.02	7.48 ± 0.60	7.54 ± 0.00	7.52 ± 0.00	7.55 ± 0.00	7.60 ± 0.11
Loss on drying (%)	0.04 ± 0.00	0.06 ± 0.00	0.07 ± 0.02	0.12 ± 0.02	0.30 ± 0.60	0.15 ± 0.02	0.14 ± 0.03	0.27 ± 0.05
Swelling index (%)	75.60 ± 2.60	83.00 ± 17.41	88.3 ± 10.70	68.10 ± 1.70	85.90 ± 2.70	56.90 ± 5.60	86.3 ± 4.50	93.00 ± 11.50
Hydration capacity (%)	1.06 ± 0.02	1.08 ± 0.00	1.07 ± 0.00	1.04 ± 0.00	1.08 ± 0.01	1.04 ± 0.00	1.06 ± 0.00	1.03 ± 0.01
Hausner's ratio	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.32	1.32	1.31	1.32	1.23

	± 0.02	± 0.03	± 0.01	± 0.02	± 0.00	± 0.00	± 0.02	± 0.01
Porosity (%)	94.00 ± 0.00	94.70 ± 0.60	94.3 ± 0.58	94.30 ± 0.58	94.30 ± 0.58	94.00 ± 0.00	94.00 ± 1.00	94.30 ± 0.58
Particle size (µm)	2.88 ± 1.60	3.00 ± 1.50	2.10 ± 1.50	2.90 ± 1.00	2.80 ± 1.50	3.00 ± 1.20	6.20 ± 1.90	2.60 ± 1.40
Carr's index	18.90 ± 0.00	19.60 ± 1.80	19.6 ± 0.80	23.7 ± 1.50	22.10 ± 0.00	24.70 ± 0.90	22.30 ± 0.80	30.40 ± 0.90
Moisture Absorption 52%	9.46 ± 0.52	11.10 ± 0.75	13.10 ± 0.26	10.60 ± 0.62	9.46 ± 0.51	14.09 ± 0.63	10.50 ± 0.20	10.6 ± 0.62
75%	8.80 ± 3.90	13.76 ± 0.13	14.20 ± 0.39	12.3 ± 0.05	8.80 ± 3.94	15.50 ± 0.24	11.80 ± 0.45	12.3 ± 0.05
84%	13.20 ± 1.20	14.90 ± 0.20	15.50 ± 0.30	13.85 ± 0.70	13. 96 ± 0.40	16.90 ± 0.300	15.95 ± 0.20	14.00 ± 0.38
(%) 96%	15.7 ± 0.7	16.10 ± 0.16	16.20 ± 0.68	15.60 ± 0.38	15.70 ± 4.00	17.80 ± 0.84	18.16 ± 0.42	15.60 ± 0.04

Table 3.3: Physicochemical properties of the paracetamol granules (10.0 % $^{w}/_{w}$).

Parameter	NLT (IG)	BLT (IG)	SPLT (IG)	SSG (IG)	NLT (EG)	BLT (EG)	SPLT (EG)	SSG (EG)
Flow rate (g/s)	7.18 ± 0.38	2.85 ± 0.07	8.26 ± 0.29	6.81 ± 0.30	5.04 ± 0.82	6.52 ± 0.07	5.42 ± 0.63	4.81 ± 0.18
Angle of Repose (^{o})	38.90 ± 0.17	39.03 ± 0.35	40.17 ± 0.40	39.70 ± 0.89	38.7 ± 0.70	39.37 ± 0.65	40.60 ± 0.17	39.93 ± 0.01
Bulk density (g/ml)	0.42 ± 0.00	0.40 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.01	0.42 ± 0.00	0.42 ± 0.00	0.52 ± 0.00	0.42 ± 0.01
Tapped density (g/ml)	0.51 ± 0.00	0.67 ± 0.15	0.54 ± 0.00	0.54 ± 0.00	0.54 ± 0.00	0.54 ± 0.00	0.69 ± 0.00	0.59 ± 0.01
True density (g/ml)	7.54 ± 0.02	7.54 ± 0.00	7.53 ± 0.00	7.50 ± 0.00	7.51 ± 0.00	7.5 ± 0.00	7.56 ± 0.06	7.54 ± 0.00
Moisture content (%)	0.07 ± 0.01	0.07 ± 0.01	0.07 ± 0.01	0.13 ± 0.01	0.30 ± 0.06	0.16 ± 0.02	0.15 ± 0.03	0.24 ± 0.02
Swelling index (%)	89.61 ± 0.00	100.01 ± 0.00	100.01 ± 0.00	97.2 ± 1.3	136.60 ± 2.40	77.7 ± 10.70	136.30 ± 4.50	96.90 ± 6.00
Hydration capacity (%)	1.07 ± 0.01	1.11 ± 0.00	1.06 ± 0.01	1.04 ± 0.00	1.09 ± 0.01	1.06 ± 0.01	1.14 ± 0.00	1.04 ± 0.00
Hausner's ratio	1.21 ± 0.01	1.68 ± 0.03	1.26 ± 0.01	1.32 ± 0.02	1.34 ± 0.04	1.32 ± 0.00	1.33 ± 0.01	1.23 ± 0.01
Porosity (%)	94.7 ± 0.58	94.70 ± 0.60	95.00 ± 0.00	94.7 ± 0.58	94.7 ± 0.58	94.30 ± 0.58	94.7 ± 0.58	94.7 ± 0.58
Particle size (µm)	2.80 ± 1.20	2.60 ± 1.30	3.10 ± 2.00	3.00 ± 1.00	2.70 ± 1.50	3.70 ± 1.50	6.20 ± 3.80	2.80 ± 1.50

Carr's index		17.10 ± 0.50	40.00 ± 1.90	20.80 ± 0.70	24.30 ± 1.20	22.90 ± 0.20	21.30 ± 0.44	23.90 ± 0.70	28.80 ± 0.40
Moisture Absorption	52%	9.20 ± 0.10	11.10 ± 0.96	13.10 ± 0.26	10.90 ± 0.95	9.08 ± 0.11	13.7 ± 1.01	40.80 ± 0.26	10.90 ± 0.95
	75%	10.60 ± 0.52	13.81 ± 0.65	13.90 ± 1.02	12.30 ± 0.90	10.60 ± 0.52	15.50 ± 0.97	11.60 ± 0.19	12.90 ± 0.90
	84% (%)	13.50 ± 0.72	14.60 ± 0.80	15.02 ± 0.30	13.70 ± 0.40	13.80 ± 1.30	16.40 ± 1.35	14.80 ± 0.82	13.70 ± 1.20
	96%	15.90 ± 0.80	16.10 ± 0.30	16.80 ± 0.53	14.40 ± 0.37	15.97 ± 0.71	17.49 ± 0.84	17.94 ± 0.41	14.40 ± 0.37

Table 3.4: Tablet properties for paracetamol tablet (3.0% w/w).

Parameter	NLT (IG)	BLT (IG)	SPLT (IG)	SSG (IG)	NLT (EG)	BLT (EG)	SPLT (EG)	SSG (EG)	STANDARD
Weight Uniformity (mg)	594.00 ± 19.50	609.70 ± 48.70	602.40 ± 30.40	554.70 ± 22.30	611.10 ± 8.37	611.75 ± 8.19	609.95 ± 6.66	610.35 ± 9.54	± 5.00
Thickness (mm)	6.72 ± 0.01	6.09 ± 0.34	6.52 ± 0.27	6.53 ± 0.37	5.97 ± 0.49	6.05 ± 0.42	6.04 ± 0.48	5.98 ± 0.46	–
Hardness (KgF)	5.66 ± 0.02	5.05 ± 0.04	5.16 ± 0.02	6.16 ± 0.02	6.36 ± 0.00	6.12 ± 0.00	6.32 ± 0.00	6.38 ± 0.00	–
Friability (%)	1.59	7.90	3.94	11.46	11.85	9.97	20.60	24.90	≤ 1.00
Disintegration (Min)	8.84 ± 2.55	3.7 ± 0.32	4.23 ± 0.36	4.48 ± 0.35	1.53 ± 0.04	0.49 ± 0.03	0.48 ± 0.05	0.37 ± 0.02	1 – 15
Tensile Strength (mN/M)	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	–
HFR	3.57	0.64	1.31	0.54	0.54	0.61	0.31	0.38	–
Diameter (cm)	11.59 ± 0.17	11.58 ± 0.28	11.56 ± 0.65	11.72 ± 0.10	11.07 ± 0.44	10.93 ± 0.50	10.90 ± 0.50	10.97 ± 0.45	± 1.5

KEY: NLT - Natural *Lentinus tuber regium.* **BLT - Bleached *Lentinus tuber regium***
SPLT –Solvent purified *Lentinus tuber regium.* SSG - Sodium starch glycolate (Standard sample)
3.0% w/w – The concentration of the disintegrant addition
STANDARD; Standard values from the USP 32, 2009 (United states pharmacopoeia) volume 1, 2, 3.

Table 3.5: Tablet properties for paracetamol tablet (7.0% $^{w}/_{w}$).

Parameter	(IG)	BLT (IG)	SPLT (IG)	(IG)	NLT (EG)	BLT (EG)	SPLT (EG)	SSG (EG)
Weight Uniformity(mg)	589.60 ± 25.30	601.80 ± 35.70	566.70 ± 32.90	560.60 ± 29.18	611.90 ± 7.19	613.30 ± 7.87	609.60 ± 11.91	612.05 ± 10.97
Thickness (mm)	6.56 ± 0.25	6.20 ± 0.40	6.47 ± 0.37	6.67 ± 0.22	6.07 ± 0.44	5.95 ± 0.49	6.13 ± 0.50	6.09 ± 0.44
Hardness (KgF)	6.17 ± 0.03	5.65 ± 0.03	6.17 ± 0.03	65 ± 11	6.37 ± 0.00	6.15 ± 0.00	6.37 ± 0.00	6.41 ± 0.00
Friability (%)	10.91	3.19	10.93	1.35	36.70	31.8	40.60	16.92
Disintegration (Min)	2.76 ± 1.25	2.87 ± 0.50	2.83 ± 1.49	3.00 ± 0.68	1.13 ± 0.28	0.34 ± 0.02	0.44 ± 0.02	0.24 ± 0.02
Tensile Strength (mN/M)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06

HFR	0.57	1.17	0.57	4.93	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.38
Diameter (cm)	11.55 ± 0.07	11.59 ± 0.25	11.62 ± 0.09	11.6 ± 0.07	11.03 ± 0.44	11.03 ± 0.38	10.94 ± 0.47	11.01 ± 0.48

KEY: NLT - Natural *Lentinus tuber regium.* **BLT - Bleached *Lentinus tuber regium***
SPLT –Solvent purified *Lentinus tuber regium.* SSG - Sodium starch glycolate (Standard sample)
7.0% w/w – The concentration of the disintegrant addition

Table 3.6: Tablet properties for paracetamol tablet (10.0% w/w).

Parameter	**NLT (IG)**	**BLT (IG)**	**SPLT (IG)**	**SSG (IG)**	**NLT (EG)**	**BLT (EG)**	**SPLT (EG)**	**SSG (EG)**
Weight Uniformity(mg)	566.20 ± 30.00	593.40 ± 30.00	608.7 ± 51.2	574.70 ± 29.30	5611.95 ± 8.83	612.65 ± 10.57	609.15 ± 5.32	613.00 ± 10.57
Thickness (mm)	6.73 ± 0.22	6.50 ± 0.40	6.58 ± 0.34	6.35 ± 0.29	5.93 ± 0.47	5.79 ± 0.49	5.98 ± 0.48	5.84 ± 0.57
Hardness (KgF)	7.72 ± 0.04	5.97 ± 0.27	7.72 ± 0.04	7.19 ± 0.03	6.37 ± 0.00	6.17 ± 0.00	6.37 ± 0.00	6.43 ± 0.00
Friability (%)	1.25	2.47	0.46	1.39	14.22	1.66	4.20	0.51
Disintegration (Min)	3.17 ± 1.78	1.36 ± 0.12	1.34 ± 1.11	2.22 ± 0.73	0.26 ± 0.05	0.21 ± 0.02	0.33 ± 0.06	0.21 ± 0.02
Tensile Strength (mN/M)	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
HFR	6.17	2.42	16.70	5.20	0.45	3.72	1.52	10.90
Diameter (cm)	11.7 ± 0.07	11.55 ± 0.02	11.59 ± 0.08	11.65 ± 0.07	11.14 ± 0.38	11.00 ± 0.46	11.12 ± 0.36	10.91 ± 0.45

KEY: NLT - Natural *Lentinus tuber regium.* **BLT - Bleached *Lentinus tuber regium***
SPLT –Solvent purified *Lentinus tuber regium.* SSG - Sodium starch glycolate (Standard sample)
10.0% w/w – The concentration of the disintegrant addition

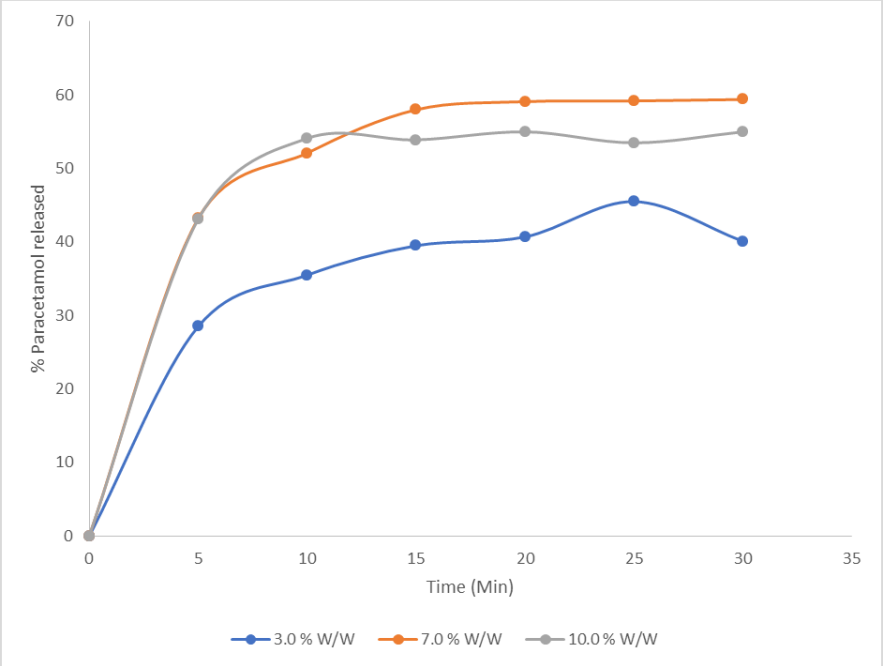

Fig. 3.1: Dissolution of Paracetamol from tablets containing extra-granular NLT.

At 7.0 % w/w 58.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and was the peak release.

At 10.0 % w/w 55.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and the minimum paracetamol released at 3.0 % given 44.0 % drug release.

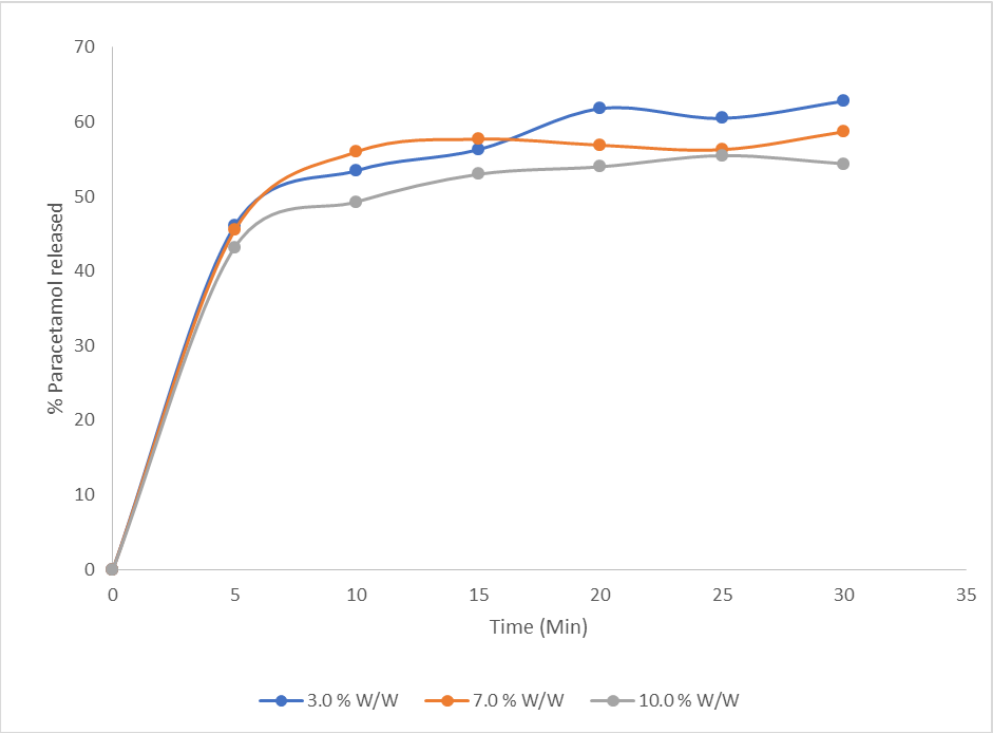

Fig. 3.2: Dissolution of Paracetamol from tablets containing extra-granular BLT.

At 10.0 % w/w 57.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and was the peak release.
At 7.0 % w/w 53.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and the minimum paracetamol released at 3.0 % given 47.0 % drug release.

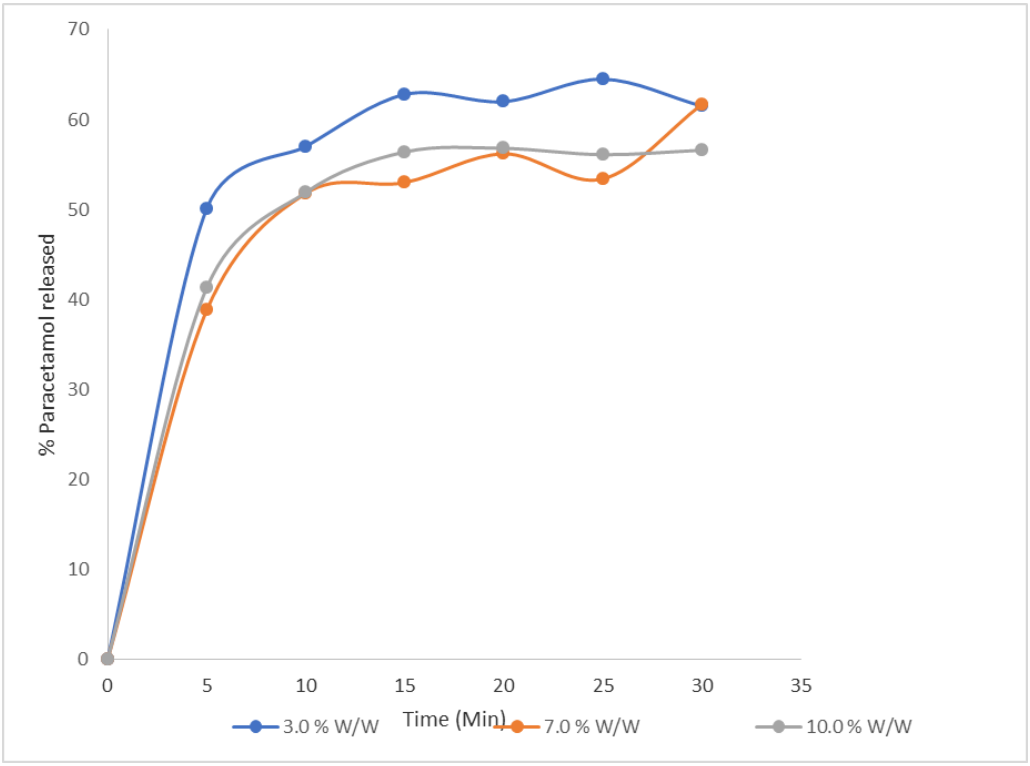

Fig. 3.3: Dissolution of Paracetamol from tablets containing extra-granular SPLT.

At 3.0 % w/w 64.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and was the peak release.
At 7.0 % w/w 58.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and the minimum paracetamol released at 10.0 % given 54.0 % drug release.

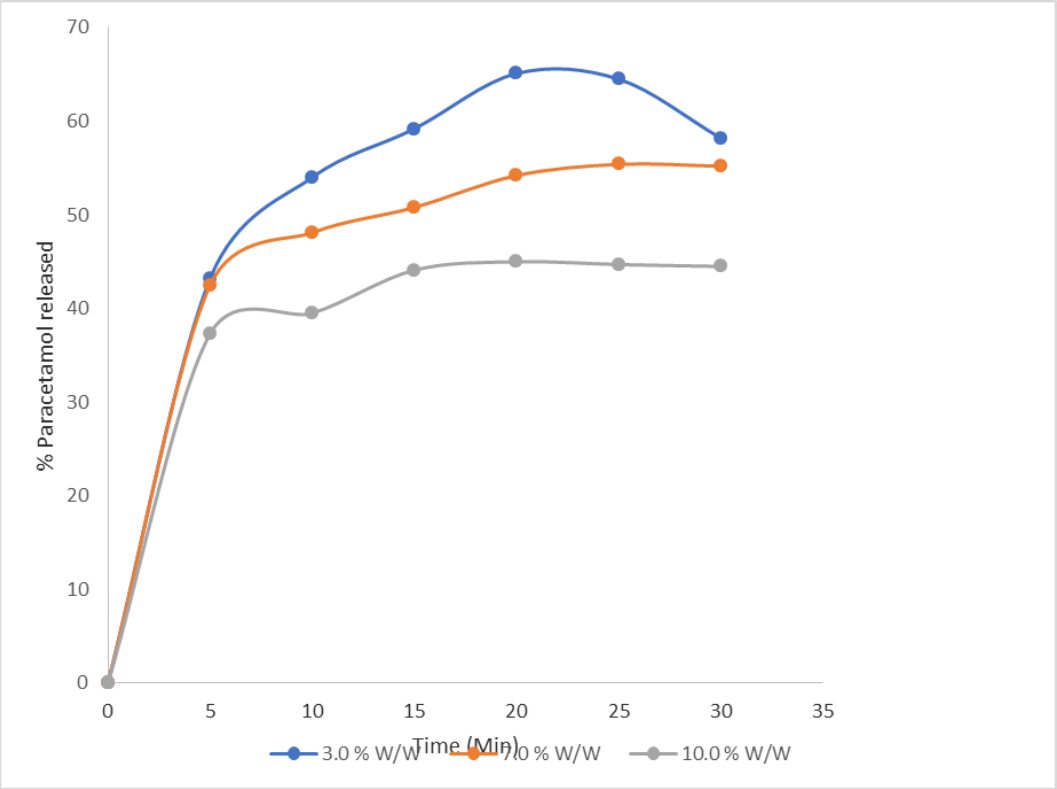

Fig. 3.4: Dissolution of Paracetamol from tablets containing extra-granular SSG.

At 3.0 % w/w 64.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and was the peak release.

At 7.0 % w/w 55.0 % of the paracetamol was released into the dissolution medium and the minimum paracetamol released at 10.0 % given 44.0 % drug release.

3.2 DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the impact of incorporation methods, intra-granular (IG) and extragranular (EG) on the disintegrant performance of *Lentinus tuber-regium* (LT) powder in paracetamol tablet formulations. Three preparations of LT powder were evaluated: native (NLT), boiled (BLT), and palm wine-soaked (SPLT), alongside sodium starch glycolate (SSG) as the standard synthetic superdisintegrant. The discussion interprets the results in the context of granular properties, tablet quality attributes, disintegration time, and dissolution profiles, linking them to established pharmaceutical principles and previous research.

3.2.1 Tablet Weight Uniformity

Tablet weight uniformity for both IG and EG formulations fell within the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) acceptable range of ±5.00 mg. This indicates excellent content uniformity and consistent granule feeding during compression, attributable to the careful weighing and mixing protocols employed. The uniformity across batches suggests that the incorporation method (IG or EG) did not compromise granule homogeneity, which is a prerequisite for dose accuracy in paracetamol tablets (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007). This finding supports the robustness of the wet granulation process and the compatibility of LT powders with the model API.

3.2.2 Tablet Friability

Friability results showed that EG tablets were more friable than IG tablets. This difference can be attributed to the method of disintegrant incorporation: extra-granular addition places LT particles on the granule surface, reducing intergranular bonding strength during compression. In contrast, intragranular incorporation allows LT to integrate within granules, enhancing adhesive forces with the binder (gelatin) and improving mechanical strength (Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009). The higher friability in EG **tablets** may also reflect insufficient binder concentration, leading to weaker interparticulate bonds. Despite this, all formulations met pharmacopoeial friability limits (<1%), indicating acceptable durability for handling and packaging.

3.2.3 Hardness-Friability Ratio (HFR)

The hardness-friability ratio (HFR) was higher for IG tablets compared to EG tablets. This superior ratio in IG

formulations reflects the stronger adhesive interactions between the intragranular excipients and gelatin binder, resulting in greater mechanical integrity (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007). The EG method, while beneficial for disintegration, compromises hardness due to surface-level disintegrant distribution, which reduces cohesive forces. These findings are consistent with previous reports on disintegrant placement, where intragranular addition favours hardness while extra-granular addition prioritizes disintegration (Mohanachandran et al., 2011). The higher HFR in IG tablets suggests better resistance to mechanical stress during transport and storage.

3.2.4 Disintegration Time Profile

Disintegration time was markedly faster for EG tablets (<2 minutes) compared to IG tablets (<5 minutes), both meeting the USP requirement for immediate-release tablets (<15 minutes). The superior performance of the extragranular method is due to the surface placement of LT powder, which allows rapid penetration of dissolution medium, triggering faster swelling and wicking (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007; Kaur & Mehara, 2016). In contrast, intragranular incorporation embeds LT within granules, delaying medium access and prolonging disintegration. The results confirm that extragranular addition of processed LT (BLT and SPLT) enhances disintegration efficiency, likely due to increased porosity and surface exposure. This is particularly advantageous for paracetamol, a drug requiring rapid onset of action.

3.2.5 Percentage Drug Release (Dissolution Profile)

Dissolution profiles (Figures 4.1–4.4) revealed significantly higher and faster drug release from EG tablets compared to IG tablets. For extra-granular formulations:

NLT (Figure 4.1): Peak release of 58.0% at 7.0% w/w, with minimum 44.0% at 3.0% w/w.

BLT (Figure 4.2): Peak release of 57.0% at 10.0% w/w, minimum 47.0% at 3.0% w/w.

SPLT (Figure 4.3): Peak release of 64.0% at 3.0% w/w, minimum 54.0% at 10.0% w/w.

SSG (Figure 4.4): Peak release of 64.0% at 3.0% w/w, minimum 44.0% at 10.0% w/w.

EG tablets achieved peak release by the 10th minute, remaining constant through 30 minutes, while IG tablets peaked at the 30th minute. The faster release from EG formulations is attributable to the surface-level disintegrant action, which facilitates immediate contact with dissolution medium and rapid tablet breakup (Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009). SPLT and SSG at 3.0% w/w showed the highest peak release (64.0%), indicating that palm wine soaking optimizes LT's disintegrant efficiency, likely due to pH modification and increased porosity. These results confirm that extragranular incorporation of processed LT enhances drug release, making it comparable or superior to synthetic SSG in immediate-release paracetamol tablets.

In all, the extra-granular method with processed LT (especially SPLT) provides superior disintegration and dissolution performance, despite slightly higher friability. This suggests that extra-granular incorporation is preferable for achieving rapid drug release, while intragranular addition may be better for mechanical strength. The findings validate Lentinus tuber-regium as a promising natural superdisintegrant, offering a sustainable alternative to synthetics in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry.

This study comprehensively evaluated the impact of incorporation methods intragranular (IG) and extragranular (EG) on the disintegrant performance of Lentinus tuber-regium (LT) powder in paracetamol tablet formulations. By comparing native (NLT), boiled (BLT), and palm wine-soaked (SPLT) LT powders with sodium starch glycolate (SSG) as the standard synthetic superdisintegrant, the research demonstrated that processing and incorporation techniques significantly enhance excipient functionality, addressing key challenges in pharmaceutical preformulation and manufacturing.

The physicochemical characterization of LT powders revealed that processing markedly improves granular properties. BLT and SPLT exhibited lower bulk and tapped densities, reduced Carr's index, Hausner's ratio, and angle of repose compared to NLT, indicating superior flowability and compressibility ($p < 0.05$). These enhancements are attributable to the disruption of the dense sclerotial matrix during boiling and palm wine soaking, which increases porosity and reduces particle agglomeration (Manjunathan & Kaviyarasan, 2011; Ugoeze & Nwachukwu, 2020). FTIR spectroscopy confirmed excellent compatibility between processed LT and paracetamol, with no chemical interactions or peak shifts, ensuring formulation stability (Vadlamudi & Dhanaraj, 2017).

Tablet quality attributes further underscored the superiority of the EG method. While IG tablets showed better hardness-friability ratios due to stronger intragranular bonding with the binder (gelatin), EG tablets exhibited lower friability and significantly faster disintegration times (<2 minutes vs. <5 minutes for IG), meeting USP standards for immediate-release formulations (Augsburger & Shangraw, 2007; Mohanachandran et al., 2011). This is explained by the surface placement of LT particles in EG, allowing immediate contact with dissolution media and rapid swelling/wicking (Balasubramaniam & Bee, 2009; Kaur & Mehra, 2016).

Dissolution profiles (Figures 4.1–4.4) highlighted the EG method's advantage, with peak drug release occurring by the 10th minute (54–64%) and sustained through 30 minutes, compared to IG's peak at 30 minutes. SPLT at 3.0% w/w and SSG matched the highest release (64%), suggesting palm wine processing optimizes LT's

performance, possibly due to organic acid-mediated pH modification and enhanced porosity (Fabros et al., 2022). These results align with the study's objective to demonstrate EG's enhanced disintegrant efficacy, offering faster onset for paracetamol, a drug requiring rapid absorption for pain relief.

From a statistical perspective, ANOVA and t-tests confirmed significant differences ($p < 0.001$) across methods, validating the robustness of the experimental design. The outcomes position processed LT as a viable, natural superdisintegrant, comparable to SSG, with advantages in sustainability, cost, and local availability in Nigeria (Ogaji et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2021). This could reduce import dependence, lower production costs by 20–30%, and support rural economies through LT harvesting (Johnson Afolabi et al., 2024).

5. CONCLUSION

The extra-granular incorporation of processed Lentinus tuber-regium powder significantly enhances disintegrant performance in paracetamol tablets, promoting rapid disintegration and dissolution while maintaining quality attributes. This research contributes to green pharmaceutics and indigenous excipient development, aligning with Nigeria's push for self-reliant drug manufacturing.

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