

# Simultaneous LC/MS/MS Quantitation of 20 Antiepileptic Drugs in Human Serum

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## Introduction

One major strength of liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC/MS/MS) as a detection method is that it allows the concurrent monitoring of multiple analytes in a single injection. Here, an LC/MS/MS analytical method has been utilized to quantify a panel of 20 antiepileptic drugs in human serum. In contrast, historic assays have traditionally monitored a smaller number of compounds due to large concentration discrepancies of the similar analytes. Compounds included in the panel were: Acetylretigabine, Carbamazepine-10,11-Epoide, Carbamazepine, 10,11-Dihydro-10-Hydroxy-Carbamazepine, Felbamate, Gabapentin, Lacosamide, Lamotrigine, Levetiracetam, Oxcarbazepine, Phenobarbital, Phenytoin, Pregabalin, Retigabine, Rufinamide, Tiagabine, Topiramate, Valproic Acid, Vigabatrin, Zonisamide. The analytical method further utilized the ability of LC/MS/MS to detect compounds over a wide range of concentrations simultaneously, as the calibration concentrations ranged from 12 ng/mL to 200,000 ng/mL for the various analytes. Top concentrations ranged from 1.5 to 200 µg/mL.

Samples were created by spiking drug standards into clean human serum. Samples and controls were prepared for analysis through a simple protein precipitation protocol followed by dilution into water. Injection, separation of analytes, column cleaning, and column reequilibration were accomplished in less than 10 minutes. Two transitions were monitored for each of the 20 compounds of interest, including valproic acid, and 15 isotopically labeled internal standards were included to account for differential suppression and ensure accurate and reproducible quantitation across the chromatogram. A transition for phospholipids was also monitored to verify minimal interference from this class of endogenous molecules.

Calibration curve accuracies were within 20% of the expected concentration at the lowest calibration level, and well within 15% at all higher levels. Reproducibility was good, with all CVs <15% and most well under 10%. R<sup>2</sup> values were all >0.997, with some compounds displaying a linear response across their concentration range, and others requiring a quadratic fit.

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## Experimental

### Sample Prep

Clean human serum was spiked with standards of the 20 drugs to achieve the top concentration sample. Seven lower concentration samples were created by serial 1:2 dilution into clean serum. 40 µL of sample or control were mixed with 40 µL of ISTD solution in methanol and 120 µL of pure methanol. After being vortexed for 30 seconds, samples were spun for 10 min at 10,000 rpm. 50 µL of supernatant were added to 450 µL of water. 4 µL were then injected on to the LC/MS system.

### LC/MS/MS Analytical Method

The LC/MS/MS system consisted of a 1290 binary pump, a thermostatted autosampler, a temperature controlled column compartment and a 6460 triple quadrupole mass spectrometer. Conditions used for the separation of compounds from each other and from regions of phospholipid suppression are given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: LC parameters

Guard Column	Agilent Poroshell 120 EC-C18, 2.1 x 5 mm, 2.7 µm
Analytical Column	Agilent Poroshell 120 EC-C18, 2.1 x 100 mm, 2.7 µm
Injection Volume	4 µL
Mobile Phase A	H <sub>2</sub> O + 2 mM ammonium acetate
Mobile Phase B	Methanol + 2 mM ammonium acetate
Needle Wash	50:50 Isopropanol:Methanol
Autosampler Temp	4 °C
Column Temp	50 °C
Flow Rate	0.4 mL/min
Stop Time	7.5 min
Post Time	1.5 min

Table 2: Gradient table

Time (min)	%B
0	10
1	10
5	50
6.2	60
6.3	95

The 6460 triple quadrupole mass spectrometer was used to detect the 20 compounds in dynamic MRM mode. MS source conditions were as in Table 3 and dMRM acquisition parameters as in Table 4. Positive/negative switching was utilized to monitor compounds of both polarities in a single injection. The total cycle time was ~9.5 minutes injection to injection. Data were acquired with MassHunter Acquisition B.08.00 and analyzed with MassHunter Quantitative Analysis B.08.00 and Qualitative Analysis B.07.00.

Table 3: 6460 Agilent JetStream ESI Source Parameters

	Positive Mode	Negative Mode	Units
Gas Temp	350	350	°C
Gas Flow	12	12	L/min
Nebulizer Pressure	50	50	psi
Sheath Gas Temp	350	350	°C
Sheath Gas Flow	11	11	L/min
Capillary Voltage	3500	2500	V
Nozzle Voltage	0	0	V
Delta EMV	100	800	V

## Experimental

Table 4: MS transitions and dMRM acquisition details. Unit resolution was used for both MS1 and MS2.

Compound Name	ISTD?	Precursor Ion	Product Ion	Ret Time (min)	Delta Ret Time	Fragmentor	Collision Energy	CAV	Polarity
10,11-dihydro-10-hydroxycarbamazepine		255.1	237	5.64	0.92	80	8	4	Positive
10,11-dihydro-10-hydroxycarbamazepine		255.1	194	5.64	0.92	80	20	4	Positive
Carbamazepine		237.1	194.1	6.74	0.9	146	16	5	Positive
Carbamazepine		237.1	193.3	6.74	0.9	146	36	5	Positive
Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide		253.1	210	5.77	0.82	94	12	5	Positive
Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide		253.1	180.1	5.77	0.82	94	28	5	Positive
Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide 13C6	✓	259.1	186.1	5.77	0.78	97	32	4	Positive
Carbamazepine D10	✓	247.2	204.1	6.68	0.92	152	20	4	Positive
Felbamate		178.1	117.1	4.72	0.9	71	15	5	Positive
Felbamate		178.1	91.1	4.72	0.9	71	25	5	Positive
Gabapentin		172.1	154.1	2.3	1.08	106	12	2	Positive
Gabapentin		172.1	137.1	2.3	1.08	106	16	2	Positive
Gabapentin D10	✓	182.2	164.1	2.22	1.1	91	12	4	Positive
Lacosamide		251.1	108	4.53	1.02	80	4	4	Positive
Lacosamide		251.1	91.1	4.53	1.02	80	20	4	Positive
Lacosamide 13C D3	✓	255.3	108	4.51	0.92	88	4	4	Positive
Lamotrigine		256	210.9	5.12	1.06	154	28	3	Positive
Lamotrigine		256	43	5.12	1.06	154	40	3	Positive
Lamotrigine 13C 15N4	✓	261	46	5.12	1.02	157	48	4	Positive
Levetiracetam		171.1	154	2.9	0.94	71	4	3	Positive
Levetiracetam		171.1	126	2.9	0.94	71	12	3	Positive
Levetiracetam D6	✓	177.1	132.1	2.86	1.06	71	16	4	Positive
N-Acetylretigabine		274.1	256.1	6.8	1.2	120	12	4	Positive
N-Acetylretigabine		274.1	109	6.8	1.2	120	36	4	Positive
Oxcarbazepine		253.1	208	6.03	0.82	120	16	3	Positive
Oxcarbazepine		253.1	180	6.03	0.82	120	32	3	Positive
Oxcarbazepine 13C6	✓	259.1	214	6.03	0.7	120	16	4	Positive
Phenobarbital		231.1	188.1	5.17	0.86	91	8	2	Negative
Phenobarbital		231.1	42	5.17	0.86	91	24	2	Negative
Phenobarbital D5	✓	236.1	42	5.15	0.74	91	16	4	Negative
Phenytoin		251.1	208	6.37	0.92	105	12	4	Negative
Phenytoin		251.1	102	6.37	0.92	105	20	4	Negative
Phenytoin D10	✓	261.2	105.9	6.32	0.68	105	20	4	Negative
Phospholipids		184	184	4	8	250	0	3	Positive
Pregabalin		160.1	142.1	2.09	1.14	89	8	2	Positive
Pregabalin		160.1	55.1	2.09	1.14	89	24	2	Positive
Pregabalin D6	✓	166.2	148.1	2.04	1.02	88	8	4	Positive
Retigabine		304.2	230	6.84	0.68	123	16	4	Positive
Retigabine		304.2	109	6.84	0.68	123	36	4	Positive
Retigabine D4	✓	308.2	113	6.8	0.86	126	36	4	Positive
Rufinamide		239.1	127	4.7	1.02	100	20	3	Positive
Rufinamide		239.1	101	4.7	1.02	100	50	3	Positive
Tiagabine		376.1	247	7.17	0.72	143	16	3	Positive
Tiagabine		376.1	111	7.17	0.72	143	32	3	Positive
Tiagabine D6	✓	382.2	253.1	7.16	0.72	149	16	4	Positive
Topiramate D12	✓	350.1	78	5.46	0.9	150	20	4	Negative
Topiramate		338.1	96	5.51	1.02	150	20	4	Negative
Topiramate		338.1	78	5.51	1.02	150	20	4	Negative
Valproic Acid		225.1	143	5.3	0.92	95	11	3	Negative
Valproic Acid		143	143	5.3	0.92	95	15	3	Negative
Valproic Acid D6	✓	231	149	5.3	0.41	95	11	4	Negative
Vigabatrin		130.1	113	0.64	0.84	71	8	2	Positive
Vigabatrin		130.1	71.1	0.64	0.84	71	16	2	Positive
Zonisamide		211	147	3.8	0.8	86	8	4	Negative
Zonisamide		211	118.9	3.8	0.8	86	12	4	Negative
Zonisamide 13C6	✓	217.1	125	3.79	0.9	83	12	4	Negative

## Results and Discussion

### Chromatography

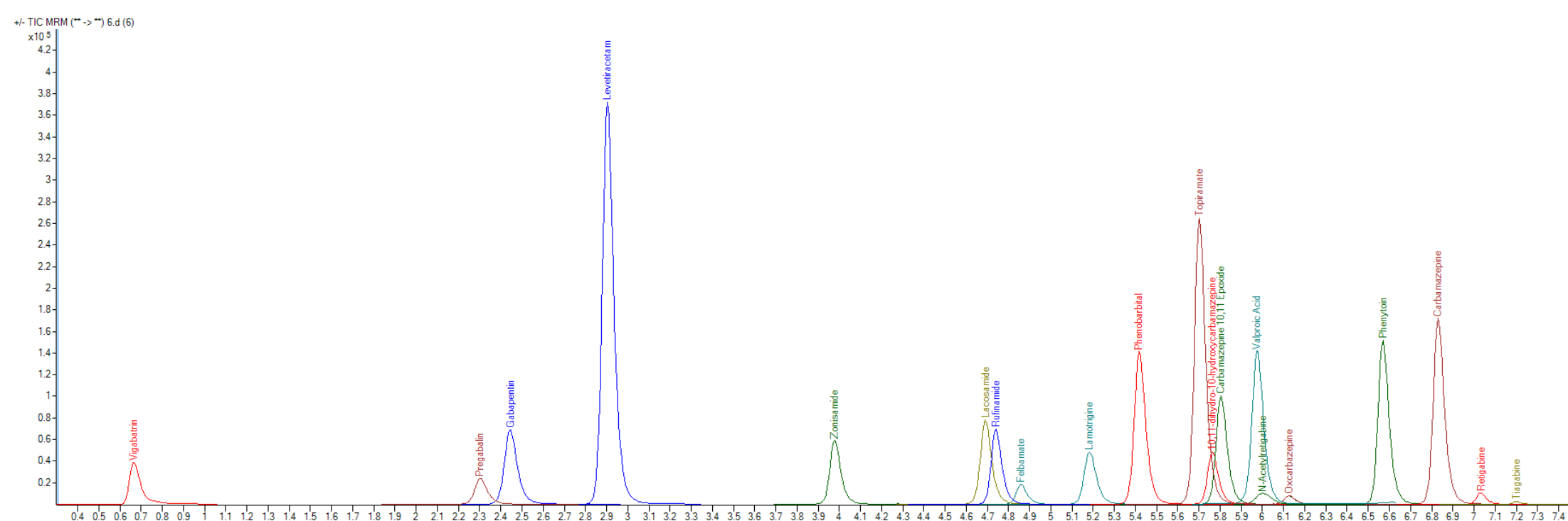


Figure 1: Example dMRM chromatogram showing elution of the 20 compounds.

The method utilized the abilities of LC/MS/MS to detect multiple compounds spanning a wide range of concentrations simultaneously. The calibration concentrations ranged from 12 ng/mL to 200,000 ng/mL for the various analytes. Top concentrations ranged from 1.5 to 200 ug/mL, and are given, along with curve fit parameters, in Table 5. R<sup>2</sup> values were all >0.997, with some compounds displaying a linear response across their concentration range, and others requiring a quadratic fit.

Table 5: Top calibration concentrations and curve fit parameters

Compound	Top Concentration (µg/mL)	Curve Fit	Average R <sup>2</sup> (n=3)
Vigabatrin	180	Quadratic	0.9996
Pregabalin	20	Quadratic	0.9996
Gabapentin	30	Quadratic	0.9989
Levetiracetam	100	Quadratic	0.9987
Zonisamide	40	Linear	0.9996
Lacosamide	20	Quadratic	0.9995
Rufinamide	40	Quadratic	0.9995
Felbamate	80	Linear	0.9987
Lamotrigine	20	Quadratic	0.9992
Phenobarbital	40	Quadratic	0.9988
Topiramate	30	Quadratic	0.9994
10,11-dihydro-10-hydroxycarbamazepine	40	Quadratic	0.9998
Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide	25	Quadratic	0.9998
Valproic Acid	200	Linear	0.9974
N-Acetylretigabine	3.5	Quadratic	0.9994
Oxcarbazepine	5	Quadratic	0.9987
Phenytoin	40	Quadratic	0.9990
Carbamazepine	50	Quadratic	0.9980
Retigabine	5	Quadratic	0.9998
Tiagabine	1.5	Quadratic	0.9973

## Results and Discussion

### Calibration

All calibration curves employed a 1/x weighting factor.

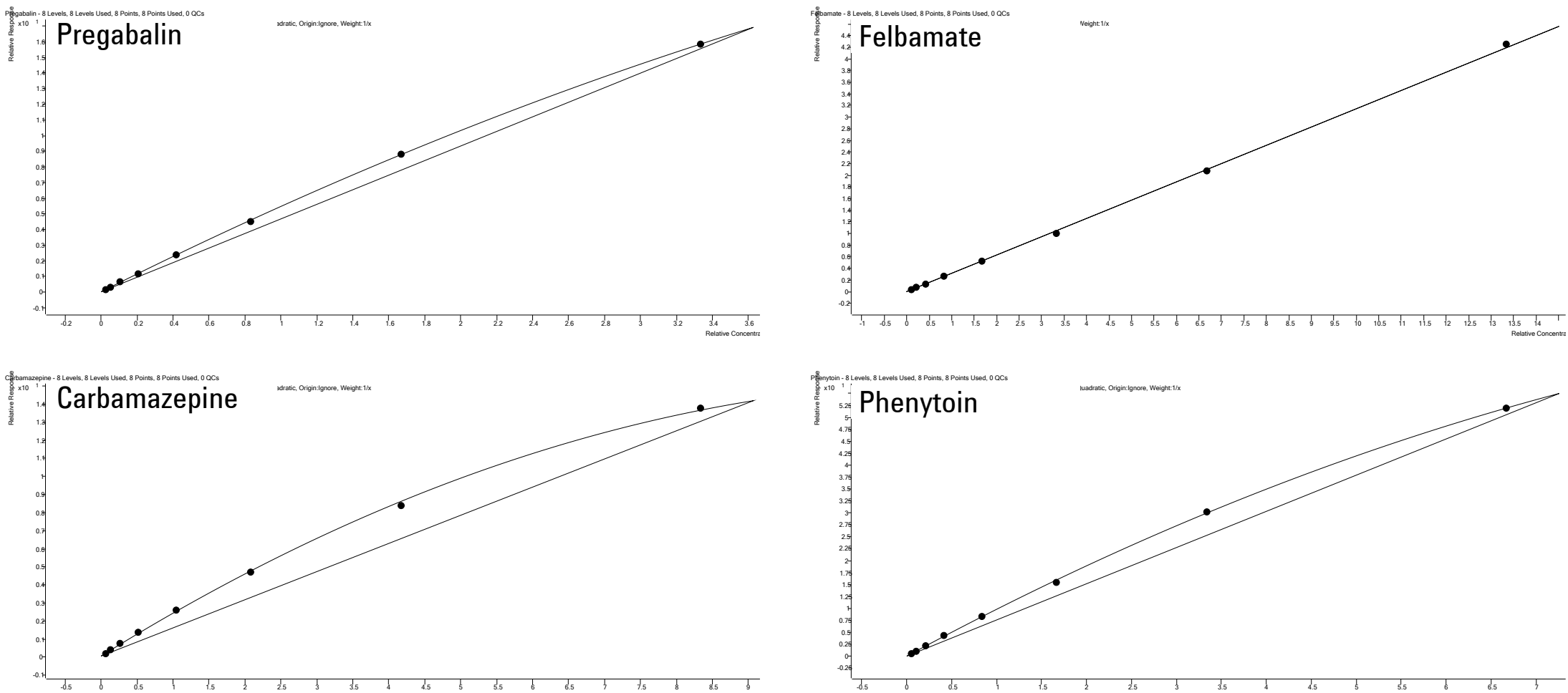


Figure 2: Example calibration curves for compounds dispersed throughout the chromatogram and of both polarities.

### Accuracy and Reproducibility

Calibration curve accuracies were within 20% of the expected concentration at the lowest level, and well within 15% at all higher levels. Reproducibility was good, with all CVs <15% and most well under 10%. Values for 3 replicate curves run on the same day are given in Table 6, while accuracy average and CV values for 3 replicate curves run on three consecutive days are given in Table 7.

Table 6: Accuracy and reproducibility for curves analyzed on the same day (n=3)

	Vigabatrin	Pregabalin	Gabapentin	Levetiracetam	Zonisamide	Lacosamide	Rufinamide	Felbamate	Lamotrigine	Phenobarbital
Level	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV
1	89.6	3.6	94.2	3.7	88.1	4.4	87.1	2.2	105.1	6.7
2	101.6	1.6	97.9	1.4	98.5	2.8	98.5	1.9	96.0	2.2
3	104.4	2.2	103.3	2.8	106.9	1.4	106.3	0.7	96.2	3.4
4	104.1	2.5	103.5	1.6	105.4	1.1	107.1	0.8	99.7	1.2
5	102.3	1.2	103.5	1.2	104.7	2.1	104.9	0.7	101.5	2.8
6	99.6	0.8	99.1	1.5	99.0	1.1	99.3	1.3	101.4	2.1
7	97.8	1.1	97.8	0.6	96.0	0.8	95.4	1.6	100.8	1.7
8	100.6	0.3	100.7	0.2	101.6	0.4	101.8	0.3	99.2	1.1

	Topiramate	10,11-dihydro-10-hydroxycarbamazepine	Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide	Valproic Acid	N-Acetylretigabine	Oxcarbazepine	Phenytoin	Carbamazepine	Retigabine	Tiagabine
Level	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV
1	98.4	3.5	95.4	3.8	96.1	1.9	89.0	10.2	97.2	6.0
2	96.6	2.3	99.2	0.1	99.3	2.9	97.2	3.4	103.5	7.3
3	101.1	2.3	102.6	1.5	101.8	1.0	100.5	3.4	98.3	3.0
4	102.3	3.4	102.0	3.0	102.1	0.8	101.8	7.6	99.6	6.8
5	101.9	4.6	102.5	2.0	102.1	1.4	107.2	3.5	102.8	0.1
6	101.9	0.7	99.2	0.3	99.6	0.7	104.7	2.7	98.6	4.4
7	97.1	1.4	98.8	1.1	98.7	1.2	103.2	3.0	100.1	2.2
8	100.7	0.2	100.3	0.3	100.3	0.2	96.3	2.6	100.0	0.3

Table 7: Accuracy and reproducibility for curves analyzed on consecutive days (n=3)

	Vigabatrin	Pregabalin	Gabapentin	Levetiracetam	Zonisamide	Lacosamide	Rufinamide	Felbamate	Lamotrigine	Phenobarbital
Level	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV
1	89.0	2.9	93.0	5.5	87.5	5.1	84.1	4.4	101.3	8.1
2	101.7	1.2	100.0	2.8	100.5	5.3	101.4	3.3	101.0	3.7
3	104.4	2.3	103.9	3.1	106.4	1.0	106.6	0.7	98.8	1.3
4	104.3	2.7	101.4	2.7	103.8	2.8	107.0	2.7	96.9	2.4
5	102.9	0.6	103.8	2.5	105.7	2.4	104.6	1.9	98.8	4.9
6	99.4	0.5	99.6	1.2	98.4	1.2	99.6	0.8	101.9	1.6
7	97.7	1.1	97.7	2.6	96.4	2.6	95.2	2.4	102.6	2.1
8	100.6	0.3	100.7	0.7	101.6	0.9	101.7	0.8	98.5	0.4

	Topiramate		10,11-dihydro-10-hydroxycarbamazepine		Carbamazepine 10,11 Epoxide		Valproic Acid		N-Acetylretigabine		Oxcarbazepine		Phenytoin		Carbamazepine		Retigabine		Tiagabine	
Level	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV	Average	CV
1	100.4	5.9	94.4	5.6	92.7	6.2	91.6	14.6	98.2	6.9	97.5	8.7	95.7	5.9	81.8	1.9	94.4	2.7	93.0	13.6
2	98.6	0.9	100.2	2.1	99.1	2.6	94.6	5.1	101.3	3.6	97.6	3.2	96.3	2.7	100.0	3.0	100.6	4.1	107.1	5.5
3	101.0	2.1	104.6	2.8	104.8	1.7	99.9	2.4	98.0	3.0	105.0	10.0	101.3	1.8	109.7	0.7	100.9	3.2	97.3	5.8
4	99.1	5.9	100.4	2.3	102.7	3.1	104.4	4.7	105.0	2.8	97.6	5.5	106.6	5.8	108.0	2.4	103.6	4.3	105.9	5.4
5	100.8	5.0	101.7	2.2	102.8	1.4	106.1	6.9	99.3	3.1	104.1	10.4	104.4	3.3	105.8	2.3	102.8	1.5	98.9	5.4
6	99.7	0.9	99.4	0.4	99.0	1.3	102.6	1.6	96.4	2.6	98.3	5.3	96.2	1.0	98.2	0.5	98.5	1.6	95.4	5.5
7	100.3	4.0	99.2	1.7	98.5	2.1	104.7	2.5	102.1	1.8	99.7	5.9	99.2	1.9	94.6	2.0	99.0	1.7	102.9	3.8
8	100.2	1.0	100.2	0.4	100.4	0.5	96.1	0.9	99.7	0.4	100.1	1.1	100.7	0.8	103.4	1.4	100.3	0.4	99.5	0.9