



Application Note AN-NIR-073

# Determination of water activity in tablets with the OMNIS NIR Analyzer

Fast, non-destructive measurements performed in seconds

Water activity ( $a_w$ ), the partial vapor pressure of water in a substance divided by the vapor pressure of water in standard state, is expressed either as 0–100% equilibrium relative humidity (ERH) or scaled to 0–1  $a_w$ . It is used to assess the safety, quality, and strength of non-sterile drug pharma products. In compounded preparations,  $a_w$  refers to water that is freely available to participate in reactions (e.g., hydrolysis) or provides an environment that supports microbiological growth. Typically, solid dosage pharmaceuticals are

>0.70  $a_w$ , indicating that microbial growth is unlikely [1]. Elevated  $a_w$  in powders affects flow, caking, compaction, and strength properties of solid dosage forms and it is used in the study of shelf-life, aging, and packaging requirements. Measuring  $a_w$  in the pharma environment is described in USP<1112> and USP<922> [2]. Dedicated instruments that measure  $a_w$  require up to 30 minutes per analysis, while the OMNIS NIR Analyzer delivers results in just a few seconds.

## EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT

In this study, 17 tablets of paracetamol with varying water activity (0.23–0.85  $a_w$ ) were measured on an OMNIS NIR Analyzer (Figure 1) to create a prediction model for quantification. Samples were measured in reflection mode (1000–2250 nm) in 15 mm vials using a flexible holder and single-point measurement.

The reference values were measured according to USP<922> Water Activity [3].



**Figure 1.** OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid with 15 mm vial and Flexible holder OMNIS NIR.

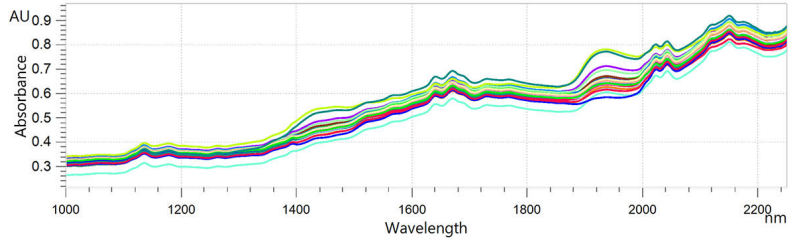
**Table 1.** Hardware and software equipment overview.

Equipment	Article number
OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid	2.1071.0010
Disposable vials, 15 mm, reflection	6.7402.110
Flexible holder OMNIS NIR	6.07402.300
OMNIS Stand-Alone license	6.06003.010
Quant Development software license	6.06008.002

## RESULT

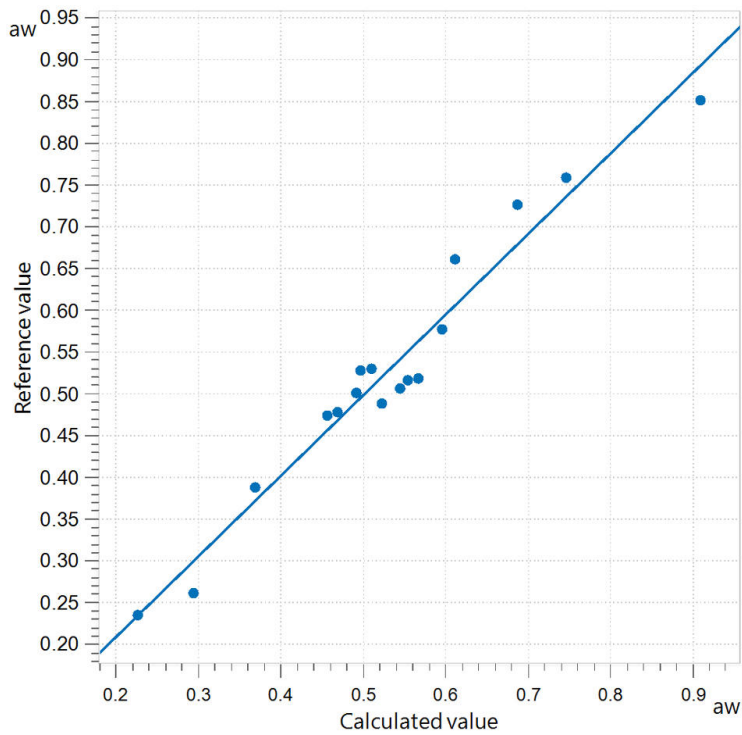
The measured NIR spectra (Figure 2) were used to create a quantification prediction model for the water activity in paracetamol tablets. The quality of the prediction model was evaluated using the correlation diagram (Figure 3) which displays a very high

correlation between the NIR prediction and the reference values. The respective figures of merit (FOM) display the expected precision and confirm the feasibility during routine analysis.



**Figure 2.** Stacked NIR spectra of paracetamol tablets analyzed on an OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid.

## RESULT WATER ACTIVITY IN PARACETAMOL TABLETS



**Figure 3.** Correlation diagram and the respective figures of merit for the prediction of water activity using an OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid. The reference water content was determined using a Novasina LabMaster-aw neo according to USP<922>.

$R^2$	SEC ( $a_w$ )	SECV ( $a_w$ )
0.958	0.0278	0.0322

## CONCLUSION

This Application Note demonstrates the feasibility of determining  $a_w$  in paracetamol tablets quickly and easily. NIR spectroscopy offers users a fast, cost-effective, and highly accurate alternative to other

standard water activity measurement options. Additionally, NIRS analysis is non-destructive, completely reagent-free, and gives results in only a few seconds.

## REFERENCES

1. Pharmaceutical Trends: Water Activity Measurement - International Pharmaceutical Industry, 2021.
2. 922 Water Activity.  
[DOI:10.31003/USPNF\\_M12475\\_02\\_01](https://doi.org/10.31003/USPNF_M12475_02_01)
3. *USP 922 Water Activity Measurement - Novasina - Excellent new Method.*  
<https://www.novasina.ch/application/usp-922-water-activity/> (accessed 2024-08-27).

## CONTACT

Metrohm Suisse SA  
Industriestrasse 13  
4800 Zofingen

[info@metrohm.ch](mailto:info@metrohm.ch)

## CONFIGURATION



### OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid

Spectromètre proche infrarouge pour échantillons solides et visqueux.

L'OMNIS NIR Analyzer est la solution de spectroscopie proche infrarouge (NIRS) développée et produite selon les normes de qualité suisses pour les analyses de routine tout au long de la chaîne de fabrication. L'utilisation des technologies les plus récentes et l'intégration dans le logiciel OMNIS moderne se reflètent dans la vitesse, la facilité d'utilisation et la flexibilité d'utilisation de ces spectromètres NIR.

Vue d'ensemble des avantages de l'OMNIS NIR Analyzer Solid :

- Mesures d'échantillons solides et visqueux en moins de 10 secondes
- Mesures multi-positions automatisées pour des résultats reproductibles même avec des échantillons non homogènes
- Intégration simple dans un système d'automatisation ou liaison avec d'autres technologies d'analyse (titrage)
- Prise en charge de nombreux récipients d'échantillon



### Flacons à usage unique, 15 mm, réflexion

123 flacons en verre à usage unique, refermables, d'un diamètre de 15 mm pour des analyses de matières solides par réflexion. Convient à l'appareil d'analyse de matières solides NIR des familles de produits XDS, DS2500 et OMNIS.



OMNIS  
A WHOLE NEW LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

OMNIS  
A WHOLE NEW LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

#### Support flexible OMNIS NIR

Support flexible avec un diamètre variable jusqu'à 30 mm pour l'examen des échantillons par réflexion dans des flacons.

#### Licence OMNIS autonome

Elle permet l'exploitation autonome du logiciel OMNIS sur un ordinateur Windows™.

Caractéristiques :

- La licence comprend déjà une licence pour appareils OMNIS.
- Elle doit être activée via le portail d'octroi de licences Metrohm.
- Elle ne peut pas être transférée sur un autre ordinateur.

#### Licence logicielle Quant Development

Licence logicielle pour la création et l'édition de modèles de quantification dans une installation du logiciel OMNIS Stand-Alone.