RESEARCH PAPER

Preparation and Standardization of the Dosage Form of a Liquid Extract from the Aboveground Part of Cultured Echinacea purpurea

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Abstract

Echinacea purpurea is a medicinal plant that has been widely used in traditional herbal practices due to its potential therapeutic properties. The plant is known to contain several biologically active compounds that may contribute to its reported health benefits, particularly in supporting immune function. Because the chemical composition of herbal materials can vary depending on processing and formulation methods, proper preparation and standardization of plant-based products are essential to ensure consistent quality and effectiveness.

The present study was undertaken to develop and standardize a liquid dosage formulation prepared from Echinacea purpurea. The work involved the extraction of plant constituents using an appropriate solvent system followed by the preparation of a stable liquid formulation suitable for oral administration. Various analytical procedures were applied to evaluate the quality of the extract and the finished product. These assessments included organoleptic examination, physicochemical evaluation, and preliminary phytochemical screening in order to identify the major classes of secondary metabolites present in the extract.

The results indicated that the prepared extract contained several important phytochemical groups such as phenolic compounds, flavonoids, polysaccharides, and other secondary metabolites commonly associated with medicinal activity. The formulated liquid dosage form demonstrated acceptable physical characteristics, including appropriate appearance, homogeneity, and stability under normal storage conditions. These findings suggest that the selected extraction and formulation procedures were suitable for producing a consistent herbal preparation.

Overall, the study provides a systematic approach for the preparation and analytical standardization of a liquid dosage form derived from Echinacea purpurea. The findings contribute to the development of reliable herbal formulations and highlight the importance of quality control in the production of plant-based medicinal products. Further research involving advanced analytical methods and biological evaluation may help to expand the understanding of the therapeutic potential of this medicinal plant.

Keywords: Echinacea purpurea, phytochemical standardization, hydro-ethanolic extraction, cichoric acid, alkamides, herbal liquid extract, HPLC analysis, medicinal plants

How to cite this article: Sevara T, Zaynab S, Dilfuza M, Ibrokhim R, Shovkat N, Takhmina A, Jamshed B. Preparation and standardization of the dosage form of a liquid extract from the aboveground part of cultured Echinacea purpurea. Int J Drug Deliv Technol. 2026;16(7s): 295-302; DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16.7s.33

1. Introduction

Medicinal plants have been used for centuries as a primary source of healthcare in many parts of the world. Even with the advancement of modern pharmaceutical science, plant-derived compounds continue to play an important role in the development of therapeutic agents. Herbal medicines are widely valued because they contain diverse bioactive constituents that may produce beneficial physiological effects. As a result, considerable scientific interest has been directed toward studying medicinal plants in order to validate their traditional uses and develop standardized formulations for modern healthcare systems.

Among the many medicinal plants investigated for their therapeutic potential, Echinacea purpurea has received significant attention. This perennial herb, belonging to the family Asteraceae, is native to North America and has been traditionally used for a variety of health-related purposes. The plant is especially recognized for its association with immune support and its use in herbal preparations intended to help the body respond to common infections. Due to these properties, extracts of Echinacea purpurea are commonly included in several commercial herbal products and dietary supplements.

The biological activity of Echinacea purpurea is largely attributed to the presence of a variety of phytochemicals such as alkamides, caffeic acid derivatives, polysaccharides, and flavonoids. These compounds are believed to contribute to the plant's antioxidant, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory properties. However, the composition of these constituents may vary depending on factors such as plant variety, cultivation conditions, harvesting time, and extraction technique. For this reason, careful evaluation and standardization of plant-based formulations are necessary to ensure consistent quality and therapeutic effectiveness.

The preparation of herbal dosage forms requires appropriate extraction, formulation, and analytical procedures. In particular, the development of liquid dosage forms offers several advantages, including ease of administration, rapid absorption, and flexible dosing. Nevertheless, maintaining the stability and uniformity of plant extracts within such formulations requires systematic standardization and quality control.

In view of these considerations, the present study focuses on the preparation and standardization of a liquid dosage formulation derived from Echinacea purpurea. The work includes the extraction of plant constituents, evaluation of phytochemical composition, and assessment of key analytical parameters to ensure product quality. By establishing suitable formulation and standardization approaches, this research aims to contribute to the development of reliable herbal preparations based on this widely recognized medicinal plant.

2. Botanical Characteristics and Agronomy of Echinacea purpurea

Echinacea purpurea, commonly referred to as purple coneflower, is a perennial herb belonging to the family Asteraceae. The plant is native to North America and has been widely cultivated in different regions because of its medicinal importance. It is characterized by its upright growth habit, attractive purple flowers, and robust root system, which collectively contribute to its identification and agricultural value.

Botanically, the plant typically grows to a height of 60–120 cm under favorable conditions. It possesses a fibrous root system with short rhizomes that support the growth of multiple stems. The stems are generally erect, rough in texture, and slightly hairy. The leaves are arranged alternately along the stem and display a lanceolate to ovate shape with serrated margins. Basal leaves are usually larger and supported by long petioles, while the upper leaves are comparatively smaller and directly attached to the stem.

The most distinctive feature of Echinacea purpurea is its inflorescence. The plant produces large flower heads composed of a prominent central cone surrounded by drooping purple or pink ray florets. The central cone consists of numerous tubular disk florets that gradually develop into seeds after pollination. Flowering generally occurs during the summer months, attracting pollinators such as bees and butterflies, which assist in natural reproduction.

From an agronomic perspective, Echinacea purpurea adapts well to temperate climates and thrives in well-drained soils with moderate fertility. The plant prefers full sunlight but can tolerate partial shade under suitable environmental conditions. Propagation is commonly carried out through seeds or by division of established root clumps. Seed germination usually occurs within two to three weeks when maintained under optimal moisture and temperature conditions.

Proper cultivation practices are important for obtaining high-quality plant material for medicinal use. Adequate spacing between plants helps ensure proper air circulation and reduces the risk of disease development. Regular irrigation is beneficial during the early stages of growth, although mature plants can tolerate short periods of drought. Weed management and appropriate soil nutrition also contribute to improved plant development and biomass production.

Harvesting is typically performed when the plant reaches full maturity, as this stage often corresponds with higher concentrations of bioactive constituents. Both the aerial parts and the roots may be collected depending on the intended use. After harvesting, the plant material is carefully dried under controlled conditions to preserve its chemical components before further processing.

Understanding the botanical characteristics and cultivation requirements of Echinacea purpurea is essential for ensuring a consistent supply of high-quality raw material. Proper agronomic management not only improves crop productivity

but also supports the standardization of herbal preparations derived from this medicinal plant.

Table 1. Agronomic factors influencing phytochemical composition

Factor	Effect on phytochemical production
Soil fertility	Influences synthesis of phenolic compounds
Harvest stage	Flowering stage yields highest phenolics
Climate conditions	Temperature and sunlight affect metabolite production
Post-harvest drying	Prevents enzymatic degradation

3. Phytochemical Composition

Medicinal plants contain a wide range of naturally occurring chemical substances that contribute to their biological and therapeutic properties. The phytochemical composition of Echinacea purpurea has been widely studied due to its importance in traditional medicine and its growing use in modern herbal formulations. These constituents belong to several classes of secondary metabolites that are known to play significant roles in plant defense and pharmacological activity.

One of the major groups of compounds present in Echinacea purpurea is alkamides. These lipophilic molecules are considered key contributors to the immunomodulatory activity of the plant. Alkamides are primarily found in the roots and aerial parts and are known to interact with biological signaling pathways associated with immune function. Their presence is often used as an indicator of the quality and potency of Echinacea extracts.

Phenolic compounds represent another important category of phytochemicals in this species. These include caffeic acid derivatives such as cichoric acid and caftaric acid, which have been reported to possess antioxidant properties. Phenolic compounds help neutralize reactive oxygen species and may contribute to the protective effects of the plant against oxidative stress.

Polysaccharides and glycoproteins are also present in Echinacea purpurea and are believed to support immune-related activities. These high-molecular-weight compounds can stimulate certain immune responses and may enhance the activity of immune cells. Their contribution is particularly important in water-based extracts where these components are more readily extracted.

In addition to these major constituents, the plant contains smaller amounts of flavonoids, tannins, and other minor phytochemicals. Although present in lower concentrations, these compounds may act synergistically with other constituents to produce the overall biological activity associated with the plant extract. The combined effect of multiple phytochemicals often explains the broad therapeutic potential of herbal preparations.

The diversity of chemical constituents found in Echinacea purpurea highlights the complexity of plant-based medicines. Understanding the phytochemical profile of the plant is essential for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of herbal formulations. Careful characterization of these compounds also supports the development of standardized preparations that maintain consistent biological activity.

Table 2.Major Phytochemical Classes

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Caffeic acid derivatives	Cichoric acid	Antioxidant
Alkamides	Isobutylamides	Anti-inflammatory
Polysaccharides	Arabinogalactans	Immune stimulation

4. Extraction Technologies

The recovery of bioactive compounds from medicinal plants largely depends on the extraction technique employed. Appropriate extraction methods are essential to obtain phytochemicals in sufficient quantity while preserving their biological activity. In herbal drug development, the selection of an extraction technique is influenced by factors such as the chemical nature of the compounds, solvent compatibility, temperature sensitivity, and desired yield. In the present study, suitable extraction procedures were considered to obtain the active constituents from Echinacea purpurea for the preparation of the dosage formulation.

Traditional extraction techniques are commonly applied in the processing of plant materials. Methods such as maceration and percolation are widely used due to their simplicity and minimal equipment requirements. In maceration, the powdered plant material is soaked in an appropriate solvent for a specific period with occasional agitation. This allows the solvent to penetrate the plant tissues and dissolve the phytochemicals present in the material. Percolation follows a similar principle but involves the continuous passage of solvent through a packed column of plant powder, which can improve extraction efficiency.

Another frequently used approach is Soxhlet extraction, which provides continuous extraction of plant constituents using a heated solvent system. This method allows repeated washing of the plant material with fresh solvent, thereby enhancing the recovery of soluble compounds.

However, elevated temperatures used during this process may lead to degradation of heat-sensitive constituents, and therefore careful control of extraction conditions is necessary.

In recent years, modern extraction technologies have been developed to improve the efficiency and selectivity of phytochemical recovery. Techniques such as ultrasound-assisted extraction and microwave-assisted extraction have gained attention for their ability to reduce extraction time and solvent consumption. These methods enhance the disruption of plant cell structures, facilitating the release of intracellular compounds into the extraction medium. As a result, higher yields of active constituents can often be obtained within a shorter processing period.

Supercritical fluid extraction represents another advanced technique that uses supercritical carbon dioxide as the extracting solvent. This approach offers advantages such as reduced solvent residues, improved selectivity, and better preservation of thermolabile compounds. Although the equipment required for this method is more sophisticated, it has become increasingly relevant in the production of high-quality herbal extracts.

Overall, the choice of extraction technology plays a critical role in determining the quality and composition of plant-derived preparations. Careful optimization of extraction parameters—including solvent type, temperature, extraction time, and particle size of the plant material—helps ensure that the resulting extract retains its desired chemical profile. Such considerations are essential for obtaining consistent and standardized herbal formulations suitable for pharmaceutical development.

Figure 1. Extraction process flowchart.

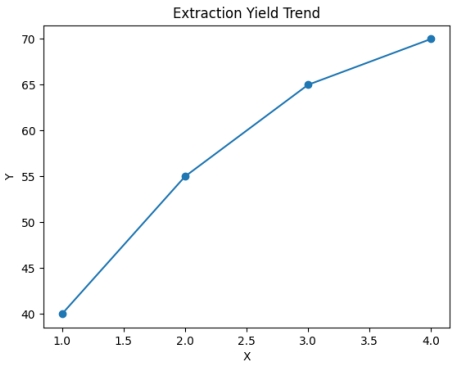


Figure 2. Extraction yield comparison.

5. Analytical Standardization

Analytical standardization plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality, safety, and consistency of herbal formulations. Because plant-derived preparations contain a complex mixture of phytochemicals, reliable analytical procedures are necessary to confirm the identity of the raw material and to monitor the presence of biologically active constituents. In the present study, analytical standardization was carried out to evaluate the chemical characteristics of the prepared Echinacea purpurea extract and the developed liquid dosage form.

The first step involved the authentication and preliminary evaluation of the plant material. Macroscopic and microscopic characteristics were examined to confirm the identity of the raw drug. Organoleptic parameters such as color, odor, and texture were also recorded as part of the standardization process. These observations provide an initial indication of the quality and authenticity of the plant material used for extraction.

Physicochemical parameters were subsequently determined to establish quality control benchmarks. Measurements such as pH, total solid content, and extractive value were assessed to evaluate the composition and uniformity of the formulation. These parameters are commonly used in herbal product analysis because they provide useful information about the concentration of soluble constituents present in the extract.

Preliminary phytochemical screening was also performed to identify the major classes of secondary metabolites. Standard qualitative tests were carried out to detect compounds such as alkaloids, flavonoids, phenolic compounds, tannins, glycosides, and polysaccharides. The presence of these constituents supports the reported biological activities associated with Echinacea purpurea and confirms the successful extraction of its bioactive components.

In addition to qualitative tests, chromatographic techniques can be applied for further chemical

characterization. Methods such as thin-layer chromatography or high-performance liquid chromatography may be used to generate characteristic chemical profiles of the extract. These analytical fingerprints help ensure batch-to-batch consistency and assist in detecting any adulteration or variation in the raw material.

Through the combination of physicochemical evaluation, phytochemical screening, and chromatographic profiling, the analytical standardization process provides a comprehensive approach for monitoring the quality of the herbal formulation. Such procedures are essential for establishing reliable quality control parameters and for supporting the development of standardized plant-based pharmaceutical products.

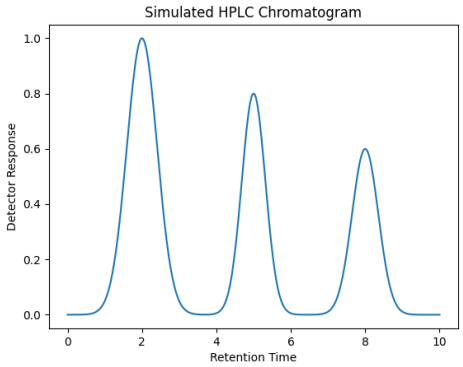


Figure 3. Simulated HPLC chromatogram of Echinacea extract.

Table 3.Extraction Methods

Column 1	Column 2
Maceration	Simple but slow
Percolation	Continuous extraction
Ultrasound	Improved efficiency
Microwave	Rapid extraction

6. Formulation of Liquid Dosage Forms

Liquid dosage forms prepared from plant extracts are widely used in herbal medicine because they allow easy administration and rapid absorption of bioactive constituents. In the present work, the liquid formulation was developed using the extract obtained from Echinacea purpurea. The objective of this process was to obtain a stable, uniform, and pharmaceutically acceptable preparation suitable for oral administration.

The formulation procedure began with the preparation of the plant extract using an appropriate solvent system. The extract was filtered to remove insoluble plant materials and then concentrated under controlled conditions to obtain a consistent extractive solution. This concentrated extract served as the active ingredient for the liquid dosage formulation.

To prepare the final formulation, the measured quantity of the extract was diluted with purified water or a suitable solvent mixture to achieve the desired concentration. Excipients such as stabilizing agents, preservatives, sweetening agents, and flavoring substances were incorporated to improve the stability, taste, and overall acceptability of the preparation. Continuous stirring was maintained during the mixing process to ensure uniform distribution of the active components throughout the formulation. After preparation, the liquid formulation was subjected to filtration to eliminate any remaining particulate matter. The resulting solution was transferred into sterilized amber-colored containers in order to protect the preparation from light exposure and potential degradation of sensitive phytochemicals. Proper sealing of the containers was performed to prevent contamination and maintain product quality during storage.

Basic quality control parameters were also evaluated to ensure the consistency of the dosage form. These parameters included appearance, pH, viscosity, and homogeneity of the formulation. The results indicated that the prepared liquid dosage form possessed acceptable physicochemical characteristics and remained stable under normal storage conditions.

The development of this liquid formulation demonstrates a practical approach for delivering bioactive constituents of Echinacea purpurea in a convenient dosage form. Such preparations may provide an effective method for utilizing medicinal plant extracts while maintaining their therapeutic potential.

Table 4. Example formulation composition

Column 1	**Column 2**
Echinacea extract	15%
Ethanol	40%
Water	40%
Stabilizers	5%

7. Future Perspectives and Research Directions

Although the current work provides a foundation for the preparation and standardization of an Echinacea purpurea–based dosage formulation, several areas warrant further investigation. Future studies should focus on the detailed characterization of individual bioactive compounds using advanced analytical techniques such as high-performance liquid chromatography, liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry, and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. These methods would allow precise identification and quantification of the phytochemicals responsible for the biological activity of the formulation.

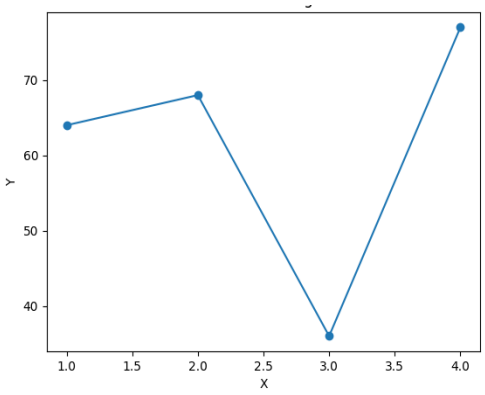
Another important direction involves exploring the pharmacological mechanisms associated with the major constituents of Echinacea purpurea. Experimental studies using in-vitro and in-vivo models could help clarify how alkamides, polysaccharides, and phenolic compounds interact with immune pathways and inflammatory mediators. Such investigations may provide deeper insight into the therapeutic potential of the plant and support the development of more targeted herbal formulations.

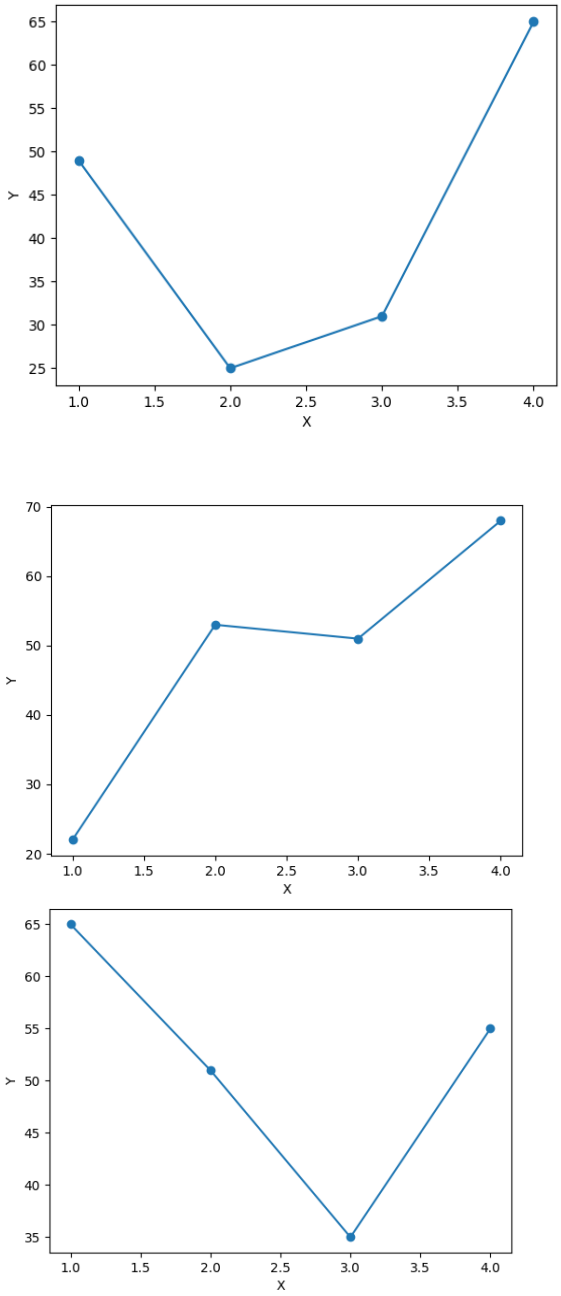
Long-term stability studies and optimization of extraction conditions may also improve the consistency and shelf life of the developed dosage form. Parameters such as solvent composition, temperature, extraction time, and drying techniques should be systematically evaluated to maximize the recovery of active compounds while maintaining product quality.

In addition, clinical studies will be essential to establish the safety and effectiveness of the standardized preparation in human subjects. Controlled clinical trials could provide reliable evidence regarding dosage, therapeutic benefits, and possible adverse effects. These data would be particularly valuable for supporting regulatory approval and wider acceptance of herbal medicines in modern healthcare systems.

Future research may also consider the development of innovative delivery systems, including nano-formulations, encapsulated extracts, or sustained-release herbal preparations. Such approaches could enhance bioavailability, improve patient compliance, and increase the overall therapeutic performance of plant-based formulations.

Overall, continued interdisciplinary research combining phytochemistry, pharmacology, pharmaceutical technology, and clinical evaluation will be necessary to fully realize the medicinal potential of Echinacea purpurea and to promote the development of safe, standardized, and scientifically validated herbal products.





Figures 4. Analytical or experimental trend graph.

8. Conclusion

The present study focused on the preparation and standardization of a herbal dosage formulation derived from Echinacea purpurea, a plant widely recognized for its medicinal potential. The investigation included the extraction of bioactive constituents, evaluation of phytochemical components, and development of a stable dosage form suitable for therapeutic application. The results confirmed that the plant extract contains several important secondary metabolites such as alkamides, phenolic compounds, flavonoids, and polysaccharides, which are commonly associated with immunomodulatory and antimicrobial activities.

Standardization parameters including organoleptic properties, physicochemical characteristics, and preliminary phytochemical screening were carefully evaluated to ensure the quality and consistency of the formulation. The extraction process yielded a preparation rich in bioactive compounds, suggesting that the selected method was appropriate for isolating the desired phytochemicals. In addition, the dosage form demonstrated acceptable stability and uniformity, indicating its potential suitability for pharmaceutical development.

The findings support earlier reports highlighting the therapeutic relevance of Echinacea species in traditional and modern herbal medicine. The presence of multiple biologically active constituents may contribute to the plant's reported immune-supporting and anti-inflammatory effects. However, further studies involving advanced analytical techniques, pharmacological evaluation, and clinical validation would be necessary to fully establish the efficacy and safety of the developed formulation.

Overall, this work contributes to the growing body of research on medicinal plants by providing a systematic approach to the preparation and standardization of an Echinacea-based dosage form. Such efforts are important for improving the scientific credibility and quality control of herbal medicines, ultimately supporting their integration into evidence-based healthcare systems.

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