

1 **Stability of extemporaneously compounded amiloride**
2 **nasal spray**

3 Venkata Yellepeddi^{1,2*}, Casey Sayre^{2,3}, Anna Burrows³, Kevin Watt¹, Simon Davies^{4,5},
4 John Strauss^{4,5}, Marco Battaglia^{4,5}

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6 ¹Division of Clinical Pharmacology, Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine,
7 University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America

8 ²Department of Pharmaceutics and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, College of Pharmacy,
9 University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America

10 ³College of Pharmacy, Roseman University of Health Sciences, South Jordan, Utah,
11 United States of America

12 ⁴Center for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

13 ⁵Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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17 *Corresponding author

18 E-mail: venkata.yellepeddi@hsc.utah.edu (VY)

19 **Abstract**

20 Anxiety disorders (AD) are the most common mental illnesses affecting an estimated 40
21 million adults in the United States. Amiloride, a diuretic agent, has shown efficacy in
22 treating AD in preclinical models by inhibiting the acid-sensing ion channels (ASIC). By
23 delivering amiloride via nasal route, rapid onset of action can be achieved due to direct
24 “nose-to-brain” access. Therefore, this study reports the formulation, physical, chemical,
25 and microbiological stability of an extemporaneously prepared amiloride 2 mg/mL nasal
26 spray. The amiloride nasal spray was prepared by adding 100 mg of amiloride
27 hydrochloride to 50 mL of sterile water for injection in a sterile reagent bottle. A stability-
28 indicating high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) method was developed and
29 validated. Forced-degradation studies were performed to confirm the ability of the HPLC
30 method to identify the degradation products from amiloride distinctively. The physical
31 stability of the amiloride nasal spray was assessed by pH, clarity, and viscosity
32 assessments. For chemical stability studies, samples of nasal sprays stored at room
33 temperature were collected at time-points 0, 3 hr., 24 hr., and 7 days and were assayed
34 in triplicate using the stability-indicating HPLC method. Microbiological stability of the
35 nasal spray solution was evaluated for up to 7 days based on the sterility test outlined in
36 United States Pharmacopoeia (USP) chapter 71. The stability-indicating HPLC method
37 identified the degradation products of amiloride without interference from amiloride. All
38 tested solutions retained over 90% of the initial amiloride concentration for the 7-day
39 study period. There were no changes in color, pH, and viscosity in any sample. The
40 nasal spray solutions were sterile for up to 7 days in all samples tested. An
41 extemporaneously prepared nasal spray solution of amiloride hydrochloride (2 mg/mL)

42 was physically, chemically, and microbiologically stable for 7 days when stored at room
43 temperature.

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60 Introduction

61 Anxiety disorders (AD) are the most common mental illnesses in every age group,
62 affecting 25% of children and an estimated 40 million adults in the United States [1].
63 Risk factors for developing AD include genetics, life adversities, and subtle brain
64 chemistry alterations [1].

65 Pharmacological and cognitive-behavioral interventions, alone or in combination, are
66 typically employed to treat AD [2, 3]. Contemporary first-line pharmacological agents for
67 AD include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and some serotonin
68 noradrenaline-reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs). SSRIs and SNRIs are better tolerated than
69 older generation tricyclic antidepressants and show moderate-to-good effectiveness.
70 However, the effectiveness and duration of treatment are not significantly different
71 compared with tricyclic antidepressants, and many people experience relapse [4]. This
72 highlights the unmet need for improved therapeutics in AD [2, 3].

73 In a series of comparative human and preclinical studies of responses to CO₂ (an
74 unconditioned stimulus that evokes panic-like responses in humans at risk for panic
75 disorder and hyperventilation in rodents) [5-7], we reported that life adversities enhance
76 the liability to anxiety and pain through the enrichment of acid-sensing ion channel
77 (ASIC) genes -1 and -2 [8, 9]. Coherent with these findings, ASIC-antagonist amiloride
78 (nebulized to bypass the blood-brain barrier) normalizes the enhanced anxious and
79 nociceptive responses that are proper of mice exposed to early disrupted maternal care
80 and the nociceptive responses of rats that underwent prenatal maternal stress [9].

81 Taken together, these data suggest that amiloride has the potential to provide effective
82 treatment in humans both in certain AD and for some conditions characterized by pain.
83 Amiloride hydrochloride is a pyrazine-carbonyl-guanidine [10, 11] salt of a moderately
84 strong base (pKa 8.7), and an antikaliuretic-diuretic agent. Amiloride is currently
85 approved by the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) as adjunctive treatment with
86 thiazide diuretics or other kaliuretic diuretic agents in congestive heart failure, or
87 hypertension [10]. Amiloride is available only as a tablet formulation for oral
88 administration with an onset of action time of 2 hours, with peak plasma levels reached
89 within 3 to 4 hours [10, 11]. This time to onset of action is too slow for panic attacks,
90 which have a very rapid onset. However, rapid onset of action can be achieved via the
91 intranasal route of administration that allows for rapid absorption of drugs into the
92 central nervous system (CNS) via the “nose-to-brain” route [12, 13]. Intranasal
93 administration also provides a non-invasive point of access into the CNS and reduces
94 the risk of needle-stick injuries due to parenteral administration in hospital and
95 emergency department settings [14]. Furthermore, intranasal administration allows for
96 simple, self-administration, which facilitates patients’ adherence [15].

97 Because amiloride is an FDA-approved drug, we can extemporaneously compound
98 amiloride nasal spray for the treatment of AD. However, currently, there are no reports
99 on the formulation and stability of amiloride nasal spray that can be adapted by the
100 compounding pharmacists to prepare amiloride nasal spray. Therefore, the objective of
101 this study is to develop amiloride nasal spray formulation and report its stability at room
102 temperature. In this study, we report on the extemporaneous formulation of amiloride
103 nasal spray and its physical, chemical, and microbiological stability.

104 **Materials and Methods**

105 **Materials**

106 Amiloride hydrochloride powder was purchased from EMD Millipore Corporation,
107 Temecula, CA. Lot. 3224630. The United States Pharmacopeia (USP) reference
108 standard of amiloride hydrochloride was purchased from, USP Convention, Rockville,
109 MD. Lot. R052W0. The USP reference standard was used for the HPLC method
110 development and validation. The USP grade sterile water for injection used for the
111 preparation of amiloride nasal spray was purchased from RMBIO, Missoula, MT, USA.
112 HPLC grade glacial acetic acid and methanol were purchased from EMD Millipore
113 Corporation, Temecula, CA, USA. The chemicals and reagents used for the forced
114 degradation studies were purchased from Millipore Sigma, St. Louis, MO, USA. The
115 reversed-phase C18 HPLC column used was Waters Nova-Pak[®] purchased from
116 Waters Corporation, Milford, MA. Lot. 1130380642.

117 **Extemporaneous preparation of amiloride nasal spray**

118 Amiloride nasal spray was formulated by dissolving 20 mg of amiloride hydrochloride in
119 10 mL sterile water for injection (2 mg/mL) in a laminar flow hood. The sterile water for
120 injection was previously heated to 40°C using a water bath. Whenever possible,
121 amiloride was protected from light to avoid photodegradation. The formulation was
122 filtered using 0.22 µm nylon syringe filters into 10-mL sterile syringes in a laminar-
123 airflow hood, Labconco, Logic⁺ A2, Kansas City, MO. Details of the steps involved in the
124 procedure are provided as S1 Appendix in the supporting information.

125 **Stability-indicating high-performance liquid chromatography**

126 **method**

127 The stability-indicating high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) method used to
128 analyze amiloride and its degradation products was developed and validated according
129 to FDA guidelines for bioanalytical method validation [16]. Briefly, the mobile phase
130 consisted of a 25:75 ratio of methanol: water with the final pH adjusted to 3.6 with
131 glacial acetic acid. Amiloride was detected using a photodiode array detector at a
132 maximum wavelength of 284 nm. The chromatographic separation was achieved using
133 a 5- μ m particle size, 3.9 mm \times 15 cm L1 column. The runs for each injection involved a
134 gradient elution programmed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. HPLC gradient elution flow program for analysis of amiloride

Time (min)	Flow rate (mL/min)	% Water	% Methanol
0.00	1	75	25
21.00	1	75	25
22.09	1	100	-
26.10	1	100	-
27.99	1	75	25

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136 HPLC analysis was performed by injecting 20 μ L of the amiloride sample into the
137 separation module equipped with a photodiode array detector, PDA detector, Model
138 No.2998, Waters Corporation, Milford, MA. Data acquisition and analysis were
139 performed using Empower; version 3 (Waters Corp., Milford, MA). The HPLC method

140 was validated according to the International Council on Harmonisation (ICH) guidelines
141 for linearity, accuracy and precision, robustness, and ruggedness [17]. A standard 5-
142 point calibration curve was constructed by linear regression of the peak areas of the
143 amiloride peak obtained from amiloride hydrochloride USP reference standard solutions
144 at concentrations 12.5, 25, 50, 100, and 200 µg/mL ($r^2 = 0.9998$).

145 The specificity of the HPLC method to degradation products of amiloride was assessed
146 by subjecting amiloride to forced-degradation conditions including hydrolysis, oxidation,
147 photodegradation, thermal degradation, and ultraviolet (UV) irradiation. Stability
148 indicating forced-degradation studies involved treatment of 100 µg/mL amiloride
149 hydrochloride solution with 0.1M hydrochloric acid for 1 hour to assess for acid
150 hydrolysis, 0.1M sodium hydroxide for 1 hour to evaluate for alkaline hydrolysis, 0.1M
151 hydrogen peroxide overnight to determine for oxidation, UV radiation (UV light of
152 laminar-airflow hood) overnight to assess for photostability, and temperature of 60°C
153 (using a laboratory hot plate) overnight to determine for thermal stability studies.

154 **Chemical stability studies**

155 For the chemical stability analysis, a batch of 20 amiloride nasal sprays (2 mg/mL) were
156 prepared as described earlier. Five syringes were randomly selected from the batch and
157 placed on a dry ventilated surface (mean ± S.D. temperature of 22.7 ± 0.8 °C and
158 relative humidity [RH] of $32.5\% \pm 5\%$). At 0 (immediately after preparation), 3 hours, 24
159 hours, and 7 days, a pipette was used to transfer a 100-µL sample of nasal spray into
160 15 mL centrifuge tube. The solution was diluted to obtain a final concentration of 200
161 µg/mL. The final solution was injected into HPLC in triplicate for analysis. The

162 percentage assay values for stability samples were calculated using the calibration
163 curve described above, using peak areas of amiloride obtained after integrating peaks
164 from chromatograms of stability samples.

165 **Physical stability tests**

166 Color, visual clarity, pH, and viscosity were also evaluated at 0, 3 hours, 24 hours, and
167 7 days. The samples were visually inspected against black and white backgrounds
168 using a high-intensity lamp at each time point to evaluate the characteristics of color
169 and clarity. The pH meter, Seven Easy, Model No. S20, Mettler Toledo, Columbus, OH,
170 was calibrated with standard buffer solutions of pH 4, 7, and 10, was used for pH
171 analysis. Viscosity was measured using a rheometer, Kinexus ultra⁺ rheometer, Malvern
172 PANalytical, Malvern, UK.

173 **Microbiological stability analysis**

174 For microbiological stability analysis, 20 syringes of amiloride nasal spray, prepared as
175 described above, were placed on a ventilated surface at room temperature (median \pm
176 S.D. temperature of 22.7 ± 0.8 °C and RH of $32.5\% \pm 5\%$). Microbiological stability was
177 evaluated at 0 and 7 days after storage at room temperature. To ascertain
178 microbiological stability, samples were subjected to sterility tests described in USP
179 Chapter 71 [18]. The sterility test was carried out using the membrane filtration
180 technique with appropriate negative controls. Briefly, the sample was hand filtered
181 across two separate filters, followed by the addition of tryptic soy broth medium (TSB) to
182 one filter and fluid thioglycollate medium (FTM) to the other. The filter with TSB medium
183 was incubated at 20 - 25°C and the filter with FTM was incubated at 30-35 °C for over 2

184 weeks. During these 2 weeks, the media were examined for macroscopic evidence of
185 microbiological growth. Data are presented as the presence or absence of microbial
186 growth as determined by visual examination. All microbiological analyses were
187 performed at Compounder's International Analytical Laboratory, Castle Rock, Colorado,
188 USA.

189 **Data analysis**

190 The stability was defined as the retention of at least 90% of the initial concentration of
191 amiloride nasal spray. The chemical stability experiments were performed in triplicate
192 after 3 samples were randomly collected from 20 nasal sprays. Data were represented
193 as the mean \pm S.D. percent of the initial concentrations remaining. For pH, particulate
194 matter, and viscosity tests, differences between samples at different time points were
195 compared using 1-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The *a priori* level of significance
196 was 0.05. Statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism, Version 8,
197 GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA. For sterility testing, three samples from each time
198 point (0 and 7 days) were filtered in triplicate for each medium.

199 **Results and discussion**

200 The amiloride nasal spray solutions were successfully prepared and were colorless with
201 no visible particulate matter when inspected against dark and light backgrounds. The
202 validated HPLC method showed that amiloride was eluted at \sim 10.3 minutes. A freshly
203 prepared solution of amiloride hydrochloride was analyzed using the HPLC method and
204 compared with the USP reference standard of amiloride hydrochloride. The retention

205 time and the shape of the peaks were similar between the sample and the standard
206 solutions. The mean \pm S.D. percentage assay of amiloride hydrochloride was 96.8% \pm
207 0.4%. The chromatograms showed sharp and distinct peaks for each analyte without
208 interference or co-elution from the contents of the mobile phase (Fig 1).

209 **Fig 1. Amiloride hydrochloride pure drug and reference standard chromatograms.**

210 Chromatograms representing 0.1 mg/mL amiloride hydrochloride solutions in sterile
211 water for injection. A) 0.1 mg/mL amiloride hydrochloride USP reference standard
212 solution. B) 0.1 mg/mL amiloride hydrochloride solution used for the preparation of
213 nasal spray.

214 Relative S.D. for replicate injections was 0.4% (USP limit of $\leq 2\%$), indicating the
215 suitability of the HPLC method for the assay of amiloride nasal spray. The standard
216 curve of amiloride nasal spray was linear over the range of concentrations (12.5 to 200
217 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, $r^2 = 0.999$). The chromatograms representing amiloride at various
218 concentrations used for the standard curve are provided as Fig 2. Results from the
219 validation studies showed that the parameters accuracy, precision, robustness, and
220 ruggedness were within the specified limits outlined in ICH guidelines (S2 appendix)
221 [17].

222 **Fig 2. Overlay of chromatograms representing standard curve of amiloride.** From
223 left to right, chromatograms represent amiloride concentrations 200, 100, 50, 25, and
224 12.5 $\mu\text{g/mL}$.

225 Hydrolysis and photodegradation are the major degradation pathways of amiloride [19,
226 20]. Therefore, it is essential that the HPLC method can identify the degradation

227 products of amiloride. The forced degradation studies were performed to assess the
228 capability of the HPLC method to identify the degradation products from intact amiloride
229 distinctly. The chromatograms of amiloride samples subjected to hydrolysis and
230 photodegradation identified the degradation products of amiloride. These results
231 indicate that the HPLC method used has the potential to identify major degradation
232 products of amiloride, and can be successfully used for stability studies of amiloride
233 nasal spray.

234 The amiloride 2-mg/mL nasal spray stored at room temperature showed good physical
235 and chemical stability for up to 7 days (Table 2). The percentage of the initial amiloride
236 concentration remaining at 7 days was 98.7%, indicating satisfactory chemical stability
237 of amiloride nasal spray (Fig 3). However, due to its potential for photodegradation,
238 caution must be exercised by compounding pharmacists to avoid exposing amiloride to
239 light. Furthermore, the nasal spray must be dispensed in containers that preserve
240 amiloride by protection from photodegradation. The data from the physical stability
241 studies (pH and viscosity) showed no significant differences among the samples at time
242 points 0, 3 hours, 24 hours, and 7 days ($p > 0.05$).

243 **Fig 3. Chemical stability of amiloride nasal spray.** Overlay of chromatograms
244 representing amiloride nasal spray samples assayed after storage in bottles at room
245 temperature. From left to right, chromatograms represent USP reference standard, 0, 3
246 hrs, 24 hrs, and 7 days samples of 0.2 mg/mL amiloride hydrochloride solutions.

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Table 2.

Stability of 2 mg/mL amiloride nasal spray solution

Stability Parameter Analyzed	0	3 hours	24 hours	7 days
% Assay of amiloride^a	96.51 ± 0.34	96.64 ± 0.19	95.24 ± 0.1	98.23 ± 0.44
pH^b	4.47 ± 0.23	4.52 ± 0.16	4.51 ± 0.33	4.54 ± 0.26
Viscosity (cP)^c	0.89 ± 0.04	0.91 ± 0.02	0.9 ± 0.01	0.94 ± 0.01

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250 ^a Values represent mean ± S.D. after triplicate analysis of three samples obtained from
251 three nasal sprays. The % assay values are calculated from a calibrated curve prepared
252 from a standard solution of USP amiloride hydrochloride.

253 ^b Values represent mean ± S.D. pH after triplicate analysis from three nasal sprays. The
254 pH reported is the final pH of the nasal spray after addition of amiloride hydrochloride
255 solution to water. No significant difference in pH was observed between samples at
256 various time points based on results from ANOVA ($p > 0.05$).

257 ^c Values represent mean ± S.D. after triplicate analysis from three nasal sprays. No
258 significant difference in viscosity was observed between samples at various time points
259 based on results from ANOVA ($p > 0.05$).

260 FDA requires that all nasal spray solutions for human use must be free of
261 microbiological contamination due to their direct interaction with mucosal surfaces [21].
262 Therefore, we evaluated the microbiological stability of amiloride nasal spray by
263 confirming its sterility after storage at room temperature for 7 days using the method
264 outlined in USP 71. The results from this testing revealed that the extemporaneously

265 prepared amiloride nasal spray was microbiologically stable for up to 7 days. In all
266 samples, tested, there were no signs of microbiological growth over two weeks.

267 **Conclusions**

268 An extemporaneously prepared nasal spray solution of amiloride hydrochloride 2 mg/mL
269 exhibited physical, chemical, and microbiological stability over 7 days when stored at
270 room temperature in sterile syringes.

271 **Acknowledgements**

272 We would like to thank Dr. Hamid Ghandehari for providing access to the rheometer in
273 his laboratory.

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372 **Supporting information**

373 **S1 Appendix. Formulation of amiloride nasal spray.** Document with step-by-step
374 directions for extemporaneously compounding amiloride nasal spray 2 mg/mL.

375 **S2 Appendix. HPLC method validation results.** Excel file containing HPLC method
376 validation data for amiloride hydrochloride.

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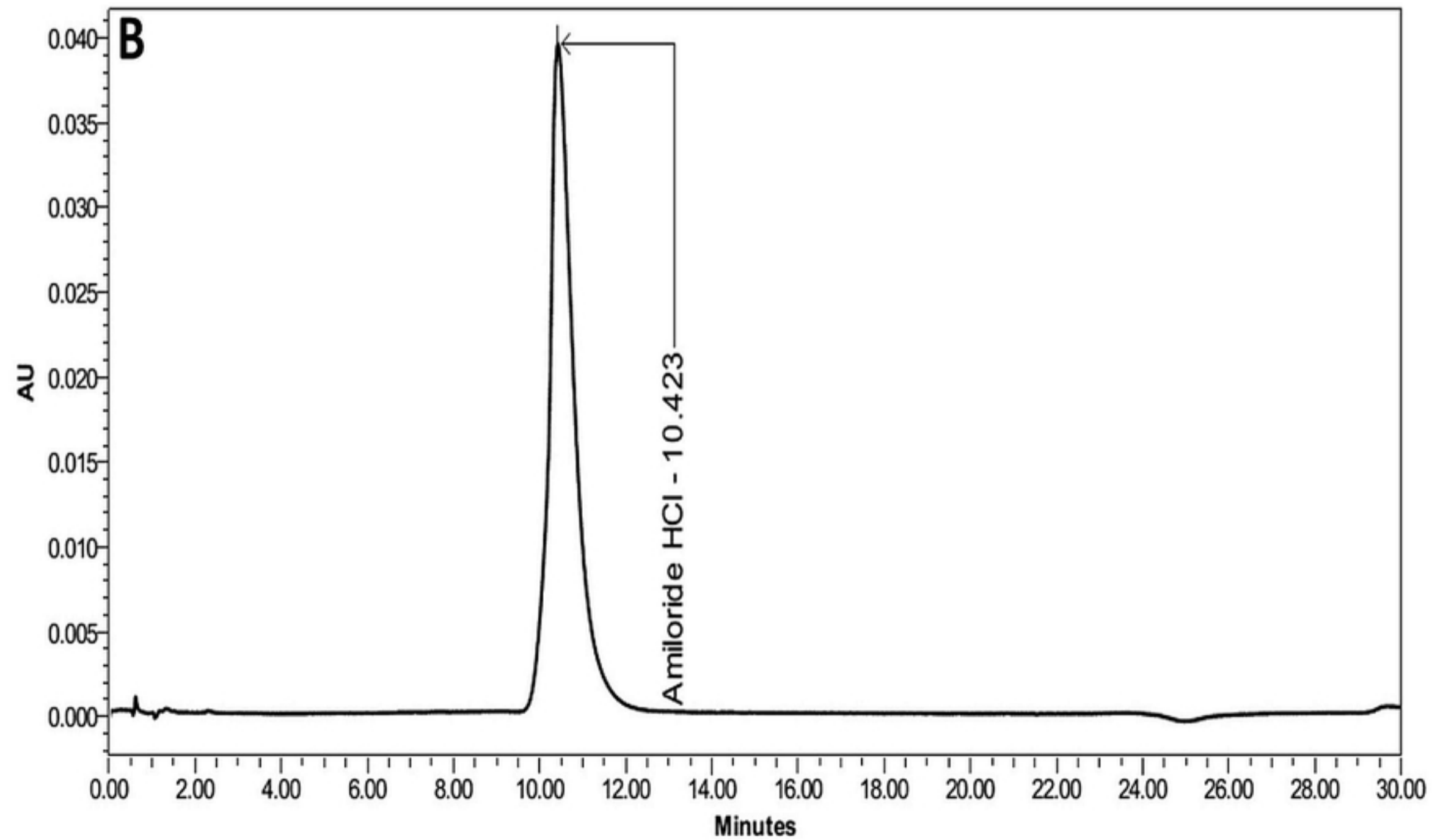
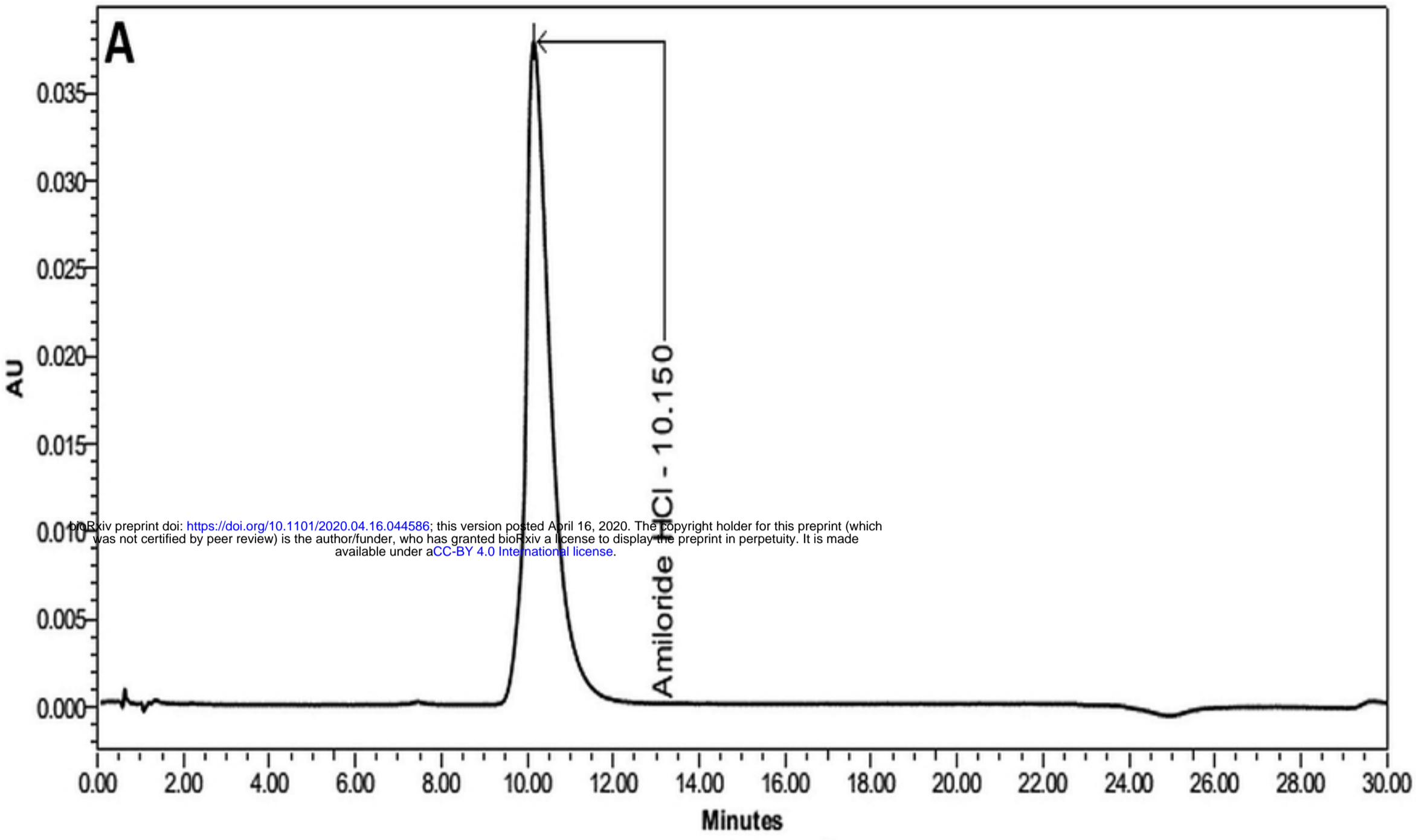


Figure 1

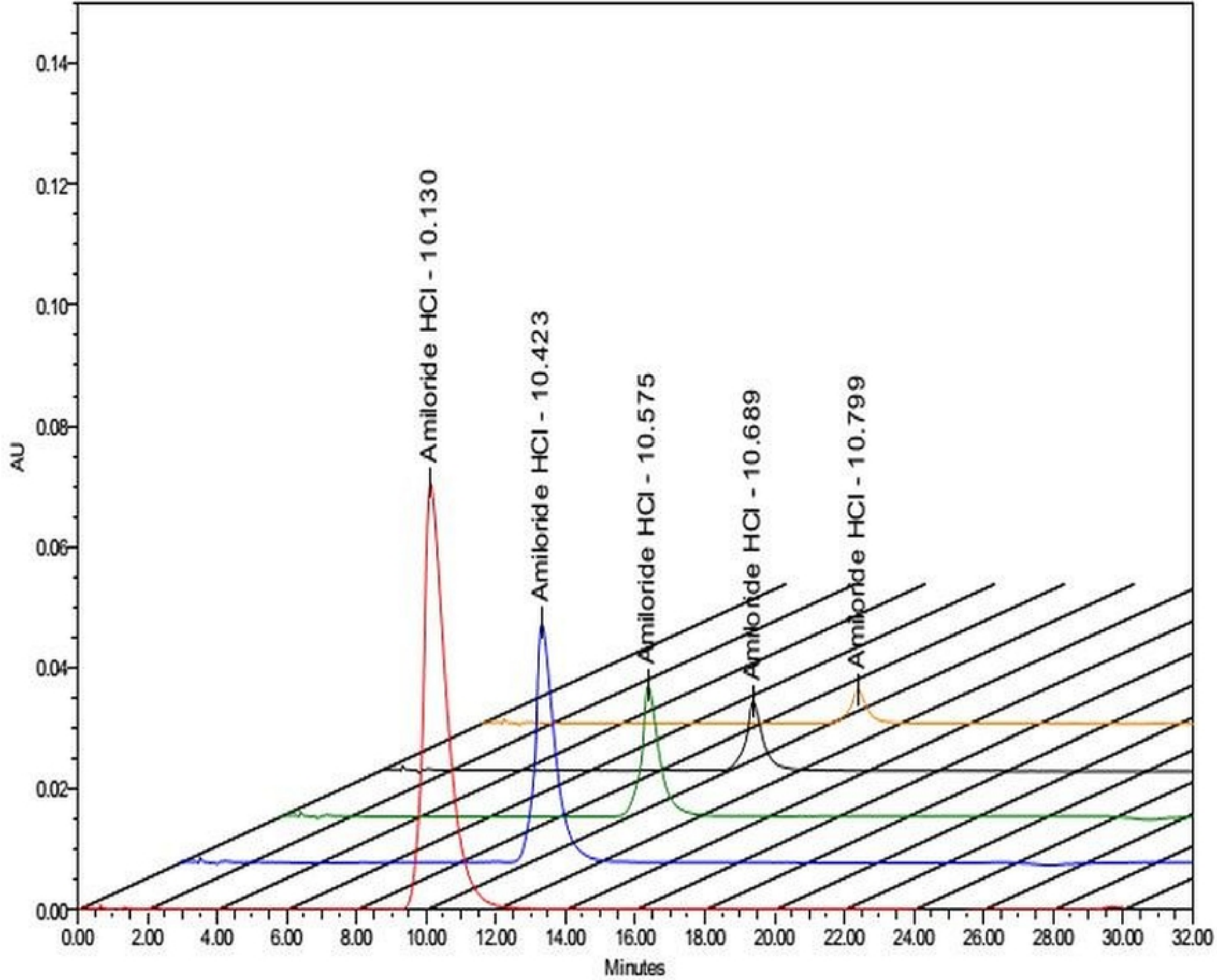


Figure 2

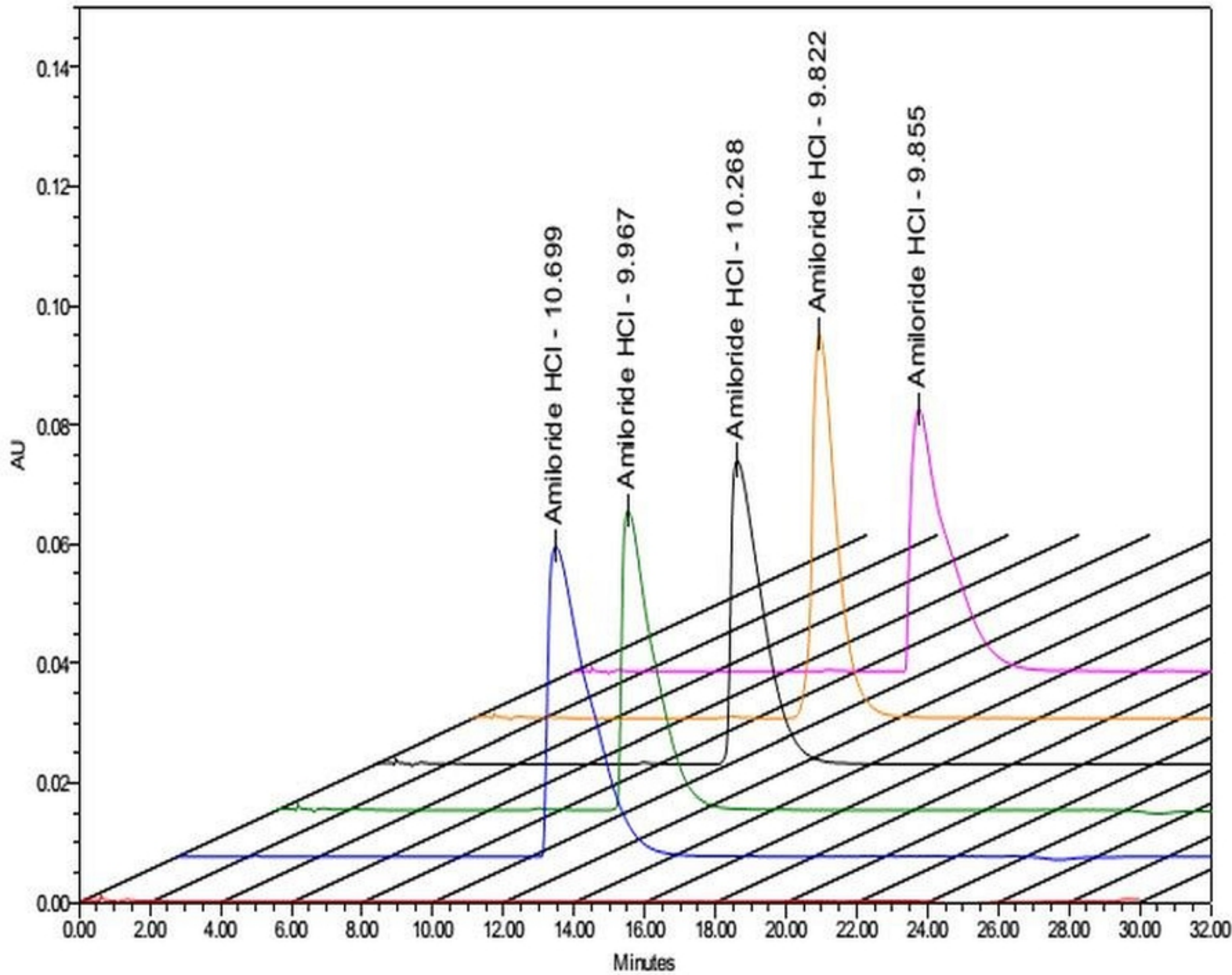


Figure 3