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(54) Title: BUOYANT CONTROLLED RELEASE POWDER FORMULATION

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A buoyant controlled release pharmaceutical powder formulation is provided which may be filled into capsules and releases a pharmaceutical of a basic character at a controlled rate regardless of the pH of the environment, which formulation includes a basic pharmaceutical, up to about 45% by weight of a pH dependent polymer which is a salt of alginic acid, such as sodium alginate, up to about 35% by weight of a pH-independent hydrocarbon gelling agent having a viscosity of up to about 100,000 centipoises in 2% solution at 20°C and excipients.



AbstractBUOYANT CONTROLLED RELEASE POWDER FORMULATION

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BUOYANT CONTROLLED RELEASE POWDER FORMULATION

The present invention relates to a buoyant
or floating controlled release powder formulation,
5 preferably a powder-filled capsule, for releasing a
pharmaceutical of a basic character at a controlled
rate regardless of the pH of the environment and
which formulation includes up to about 45% by weight
of a pH dependent polymer which is a salt of a poly-
10 uronic acid such as alginic acid, and a pH indepen-
dent hydrocarbon gelling agent, such as hydroxy-
propylmethyl cellulose.

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In accordance with the present invention, a buoyant controlled release pharmaceutical formulation is provided in the form of a powder which preferably is formulated as a powder-filled capsule, and which has prolonged drug release equivalent to a tablet of similar composition, pH independence of release rate equivalent to a tablet of similar composition, and yet has floating or buoyancy properties. This is especially surprising inasmuch as until now it was not thought possible that loose powder filled capsules could perform in the same way as granulated material that had undergone compression to form tablets (as disclosed in Howard et al., U. S. Patent No. 4,792,452), and also be buoyant so that it will float on gastric juices and thereby improve drug availability.

The buoyant controlled release powder formulation of the invention will release a pharmaceutical of a basic character at a controlled rate relatively independent of the pH of the environment such that in vivo consistent release is achieved throughout

the gastrointestinal tract and will have buoyant properties so that it will have extended residence time in the stomach. This is achieved without gas generation in situ, or by the incorporation of fats or waxy solids into the matrix. Dissolution properties are also maintained essentially independent of pH without the need for calcium to effect gelation.

The controlled release pharmaceutical formulation of the invention will be in the form of a powder (having an average particle size of within the range of from about 25 to about 1000 microns, preferably from about 50 to about 400 microns, and a bulk density of within the range of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 g/cm³, and preferably from about 0.15 to about 0.55 g/cm³), which may be filled into a capsule and includes a pharmaceutical of a basic character; a pH-dependent polymer which is a water soluble salt of a polyuronic acid, preferably alginic acid, in an amount of up to about 45% by weight depending upon the nature of the pharmaceutical present, preferably from about 15 to about 45% by weight and more preferably from about 20 to about 35% by weight of the formulation; a pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent having a viscosity within the range of from about 15 to about 100,000 centipoises and preferably from about 50 to about 15,000 centipoises in 2% solution at 20°C, in an amount of up to about 35% by weight, preferably within the range of from about 5 to about 20% by weight and more preferably from about 8 to about 17% by weight of the formulation; and excipients and other conventional powder

ingredients. The powder formulation of the invention will not contain calcium ions so there will be no calcium ions available to interact with the polyuronic acid salts. Additionally there will be no gas generation or incorporation of lipid materials to bring about buoyancy.

It is theorized that upon oral ingestion of the sustained release buoyant powder-filled capsules of the invention, in an acid aqueous environment, such as the stomach, water penetrates the capsule shell initiating surface hydration of the pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent to form a gel layer and trapping air within the less dense powder bulk to account for the buoyant behavior of the capsule. At this low pH environment alginic acid is formed from the alginate salt and this modifies the gel layer. Erosion of the gel layer gradually exposes more dry matrix that hydrates to replenish the gel layer. Drug dissolves in the gel layer and diffuses out into the surrounding aqueous environment. Some interaction between the basic drug and the polyuronic acid may also be involved.

After buoyancy is lost the dosage form is emptied from the stomach and changes in pH are encountered. During passage of the drug, contained in the form of a gelled powder plug, from the stomach down the digestive tract, the pH increases, using alginic acid as an example, this causes conversion of the acid form in the stomach to a more soluble salt. The gelling agent will then be less structured and more fluid in nature. Drug can diffuse more readily through the gel layer now and the ensuing increase in release rate from the matrix compensates

for the reducing driving force for dissolution at the elevated pH values, where solubility of a basic drug is lower.

5 The controlled release powder formulation of the invention does not contain calcium ions, or sodium bicarbonate or other carbon dioxide-producing material but it still will float in the stomach for an extended period.

10 The pharmaceutical of a basic character will be present in the formulation of the invention in an amount of up to about 75% by weight and preferably up to about 60% by weight.

15 A wide variety of medicaments (of basic nature) which are orally administered in tablet form can be used in the form of a powder prepared according to this invention. These include, for example, adrenergic agents such as salts of ephedrine, desoxyephedrine, phenylephrine, epinephrine, albuterol, fenoterol, terbutaline and
20 the like, cholinergic agents such as salts of physostigmine, neostigmine and the like, antispasmodic agents such as salts of atropine, methantheline, papaverine and the like, tranquilizers and muscle relaxants such as salts of fluphenazine, thioridazine, trifluoperazine, chlorpromazine,
25 triflupromazine and the like, antidepressants like salts of amitriptyline, nortriptyline, and the like, other CNS acting drugs such as BMS 181101, BMY 14,802, buspirone, nefazadone, gepirone and
30 tiospirone, antihistamines such as salts of diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine, dimenhydrinate, tripeleennamine, perphenazine, chlorprophenazine,

chlorprophenpyridamine and the like, cardioactive agents such as salts of verapamil, diltiazem, gallapomil, cinnarizine, propranolol, metoprolol, sotalol, nadolol, and salts of any of the foregoing, 5 antimalarials such as chloroquine and the like, analgesics such as propoxyphene, meperidine and the like, etc., sympathomimetics such as salts of phenylpropanolamine and pseudoephedrine. Other therapeutic agents having the same or different 10 physiological activity can also be employed in pharmaceutical preparations within the scope of the present invention.

The invention is particularly adapted for controlled release powder-filled capsules containing 15 the calcium channel blocker verapamil (usually formulated in the form of its hydrochloride), and diltiazem or the beta-blocker metoprolol (usually formulated as the tartrate).

The water soluble salts of polyuronic acids 20 suitable for use herein includes water-soluble salts of alginic acids, for example, forms which are high in guluronic acid such as sourced from Laminaria Digitata, forms which are high in mannuronic acid such as sourced from Ascophyllum Nodosum, and mixed 25 forms from algal sources, as well as water-soluble salts of pectic acid, that is polygalacturonic acid.

The amount of a salt of a polyuronic acid that will be present will depend upon the pharmaceutical present and could range up to less than 30 about 50% by weight of the powder formulation. Usually, the salt of the polyuronic acid will be present in an amount within the range of from about 15 to about 45% by

weight and preferably from about 20 to about 40% by weight of the formulation. Such salt will preferably take the form of a salt of alginic acid, such as an alkali metal salt such as sodium alginate or
5 potassium alginate or ammonium alginate, and preferably sodium alginate. The salt of alginic acid will have a viscosity of up to about 500 or more centipoises in 1% solution at 25°C and preferably from about 5 to about 350 centipoises. It will be
10 appreciated that mixtures of the same or different alginic acid salts of the same or different viscosities may be employed herein.

The polyuronic acid salt will be employed in a weight ratio to the hydrocolloid gelling agent of
15 within the range of from about 0.1:1 to about 10:1 and preferably from about 0.4:1 to about 8:1.

The hydrocolloid gelling agent, may be of the compressible or non-compressible type, and is essential to the practice of the invention in that
20 it absorbs water, swells and forms a gelatinous layer. It will be of the type to provide a viscosity of 50 to 100,000 centipoises in a 2% aqueous solution at 20°C, will have a molecular weight ranging from about 80,000 to about 300,000. Thus, the hydro-
25 colloid is provided in an amount of up to about 35% by weight of the formulation and preferably from about 3 to about 15%.

The hydrocolloid for use in the powder formulation of the invention will have a viscosity
30 of more than 50 centipoises as indicated above, and will preferably comprise cellulose polymers which are cellulose ethers such as methyl cellulose,

cellulose alkyl hydroxylates such as hydroxypropyl-
methyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxy-
methyl cellulose or hydroxyethyl cellulose, cellulose
alkyl carboxylates such as carboxymethyl cellulose
5 and carboxyethyl cellulose, and alkali metal salts
of cellulose alkyl carboxylates, such as sodium
carboxymethyl cellulose and sodium carboxyethyl
cellulose, as well as carboxypolymethylene (molecular
weight 2.5 to 3.5 million). Preferred are sodium
10 carboxymethyl cellulose, methyl cellulose, hydroxy-
propylmethyl cellulose and carboxypolymethylene.
However, it is to be understood that any hydro-
colloid may be employed in the present invention,
such as, for example, gum acacia, guar gum, gum
15 tragacanth, gum xanthan, an alkali metal carageenate,
or mixtures thereof.

Other examples of suitable hydrocolloids are
set out in U. S. Patent No. 4,140,755 to Sheth
et al.

20 The sustained release powder will also
include additional edible non-toxic ingredients as
conventionally employed powder medicinal dosage
forms. Thus, the powder of the invention may
include one or more excipients in conventional
25 amounts, such as lactose, sugar, microcrystalline
cellulose, wood cellulose, mannitol, sorbitol, one
or more lubricants in an amount within the range of
from about 0.25 to about 8% by weight of the
powder, and preferably from about 0.5 to about 5%
30 by weight of the powder, such as magnesium stearate,
stearic acid, palmitic acid, talc, carnauba wax and
the like. Other conventional ingredients which may
optionally be present include preservatives,

stabilizers, anti-adherents or silica flow conditioners or glidants, such as Syloid brand silicon dioxide as well as FD&C colors.

5 The powder of the invention may be loaded into conventional capsules, such as hard gelatin capsules, to form the finished formulation of the invention.

10 Preferred controlled release powder formulations of the invention will include the following:

<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>% by Weight</u>
Medicament (basic) (e.g., verapamil)	20 to 60
Alginate acid basic salt	
15 (such as Na alginate - viscosities ranging from 5 to 350 at 20°C in 1% solution)	15 to 45
Hydrocolloid gelling agent	
(such as hydroxypropylmethyl	
20 cellulose, e.g., Methocel E4M, viscosity of 4000 cps at 2% solution at 20°C)	3 to 15
Excipients	qs to 100%
Average particle size - 50 to 400 μ	
25 Bulk density	0.15 to 0.55 g/cm ³

Brief Description of the Figures

30 FIGURE 1 is a graph showing verapamil dissolution profiles for tablet and powder floating capsule at 50 rpm basket speed (pH 1, 0-1 hr.; pH 7.5, 1-12 hr.);

FIGURE 2 is a graph showing rate of fluid penetration into tablet and floating capsule in 0.1 M HCl;

5 FIGURE 3 is a graph showing rate of fluid penetration into tablet and floating capsule in S.I.F. (pH 7.5);

10 FIGURE 4 is a graph showing verapamil dissolution profiles for tablet and powder floating capsule at 100 rpm basket speed (pH 1, 0-1 hr., pH 7.5, 1-12 hr.);

FIGURE 5 is a graph showing verapamil dissolution profile for tablet and powder floating capsule using disintegration apparatus;

15 FIGURE 6 is a graph showing verapamil dissolution profiles for tablets and powder floating capsules in 0.1 M HCl at basket speed of 50 rpm.

20 The following Examples represent preferred embodiments of the present invention.

Example 1

25 A buoyant sustained release powder formulation capable of slowly releasing the calcium channel blocker verapamil HCl in vitro regardless of the pH of the environment for a period of up to 10 to 12 hours or more and having the following composition was prepared as described below.

	<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Per Dosage</u>
	<u>Powder Composition</u>	<u>Unit (mg)</u>
5	Verapamil hydrochloride	240
	Sodium alginate (300 cps)	135
	Hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose (Methocel E4M viscosity of 4000 cps)	
10	(hydrophilic polymer)	25.2
	Avicel pH 101 (micro- crystalline cellulose)	40.8
	Lactose	8.3
	Hydroxypropylmethyl	
15	cellulose (binder - Methocel E5)	4.5
	Magnesium stearate (lubricant)	4.5
20	The verapamil raw material was first screened through a 40# sieve before the required amount for manufacture was weighed. All other excipients were screened through a 20# sieve prior to weighing. The accurately weighed powders were gradually tritu-	
25	rated into a suitable jar which was subsequently blended for 10 minutes in a turbula mixer. Approxi-	
30	mately 450 mg of the blended material (about 250 μ average particle size and bulk density of about 0.3 g/cm ³) was then filled into size 0 grey hard gelatin capsules and the fill weights accurately recorded.	

The following materials and methods were employed in testing the above capsules.

A. Materials1) USP XXI Simulated Intestinal Fluid
without Enzymes (SIF)

5 6.8 g of anhydrous potassium dihydrogen
orthophosphate (KH_2PH_4) was dissolved into
distilled water and added to a 1000 ml graduated
cylinder. To this solution 190 ml of 0.2 M sodium
hydroxide solution and a further 400 ml of
10 distilled water were added. The solution was
mixed thoroughly, the pH adjusted to 7.5 ± 0.1 using
0.2 M sodium hydroxide and then diluted to the
1000 ml mark with distilled water.

15 2) USP XXI Hydrochloric Acid

8.8 ml of concentrated hydrochloric acid
(S.G 1.18) was added to a 1000 ml graduated
cylinder containing 800 ml of distilled water.
The solution was then diluted to the 1000 ml mark
20 with distilled water and mixed thoroughly.

3) Verapamil HCl Standard Solution

In 0.1 M Hydrochloric Acid Into a 1000 ml
volumetric flask approximately 240 mg of verapamil
25 HCl was accurately weighed. This was dissolved in
5.00 ml of methanol, diluted to volume with 0.1 M
HCl and then mixed thoroughly.

In SIF The above was repeated but using SIF.

30 4) Verapamil Tablets

For comparison of release profiles, an
experimental verapamil HCl 240 mg SR tablet was used.
The tablet formulation is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1Formula of In-House Generic Verapamil SR Tablet

	<u>Raw Material</u>	<u>mg/450 mg Tablet</u>
	Verapamil HCl	240.00*
5	Methocel E4M	25.20
	Manucol DMF	135.00
	Avicel PH 101	40.80
	Methocel E5	4.50
	Magnesium Stearate	<u>4.50</u>
10	Total	450.00
	Sepifilm 003	7.35
	Sepisperse AP3149	6.15

15 * Quantities shown assume 100% potency of verapamil HCl

B. Equipment1) Dissolution Apparatus

20 The rotating basket apparatus. In this test, the caleva multiple spindle model 7ST (G.B. Caleva Ltd., Dorset) was used, equipped with a temperature controlled water bath ($37 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$) and 1000 ml round bottom pyrex glass dissolution vessels fitted with lids and sample tubes.

25 2) Disintegration Apparatus

30 The Erweka 4 basket rack assembly model ZT2 (F. Copley and Sons, Nottingham) was used. This machine consisted of 4 basket rack assemblies which lowered and raised at a rate of 29 to 32 cycles/minute into the immersion fluid which was contained within a low form beaker at a temperature of between 35 and 39°C .

3) Spectrophotometer

The Hewlett Packard 8452A Diode Array Spectrophotometer equipped with a 1 cm quartz cell was used to obtain all spectroscopic data. This is a single beam machine with one compartment for a reference/sample cell.

C. Experimental10 1) Preparation of Powder Filled Verapamil
HCl 240 mg SR Capsules

Capsules were prepared from the tablet formulation excluding the coating materials (Table 2).

15

TABLE 2Basic Formulation Used to Produce Capsules

<u>Raw Material</u>	<u>mg/450 mg Capsule</u>
Verapamil HCl	240.00
20 Methocel E4M	25.20
Manucol DMF	135.00
Avicel PH 101	40.80
Methocel E5	4.50
25 Magnesium Stearate	4.50

D. In-vitro Dissolution Test for Verapamil HCl
240 mg SR Tablets and Capsules

Each of the six glass dissolution vessels were filled with 1000 ml of 0.1 M HCl and brought to 37 ± 0.5°C using the temperature controlled water bath. The medium was then deaerated with helium and the temperature allowed to re-equilibrate. One sample of the dosage form under investigation was placed into each basket and the test initiated by lowering the baskets into the dissolution vessels and rotating them at the pre-determined speed (50 or 100 rpm).

At 30 and 60 minutes, 10 ml samples were filtered through the 0.45 micron disposable filters discarding the first 3 ml of filtrate; samples were then assayed for verapamil using the diode array spectrophotometer operating at an analytical wavelength of 260 nm and a reference wavelength of 320 nm.

Immediately after the 60 min. time point in 0.1 M HCl, the baskets were raised out of the dissolution vessels. Each vessel was emptied, rinsed, dried and then filled with exactly 1000 ml of SIF and brought to 37 ± 0.5°C using the temperature controlled water bath. The medium was then deaerated with helium and the temperature allowed to re-equilibrate. The baskets were then re-lowered and the dissolution continued with 10 ml samples being removed using plastic syringes 30, 60, 90, 120, 180, 240, 300, 360, 420 and 1380 minutes after re-starting the dissolution. The samples were filtered through the 0.45 micron disposable filters discarding the first 3 ml of

filtrate. Samples were then assayed for verapamil HCl using the Diode Array Spectrophotometer operating at an analytical wavelength of 260 nm and a reference wavelength of 320 nm. The spectroscopic data was calculated to determine the percent dissolution profile.

5
10 E. In-vitro Dissolution Test for Verapamil HCl 240 mg SR Dosage Forms Using a Single Medium (0.1 M HCl or SIF)

Using the conditions already described in section D, dissolution tests and sample assay were performed upon the various dosage forms except that instead of employing a switch of media after 15 1 hour, the same media was used throughout the investigation.

20 F. In-vitro Test for Verapamil Release from Verapamil HCl 240 mg SR Tablets and Capsules Utilizing Disintegration Apparatus

Each of the four glass, flat bottomed vessels were filled with 500 ml of 0.1 M HCl and brought to $36 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ using the temperature controlled water bath. One sample of the dosage form under investigation was placed into a single sample tube of each rack assembly. The experiment was initiated by switching on the machine and the rack assemblies were plunged repeatedly into and out of the medium at a rate of approximately 30cyc/min.

10 ml samples were withdrawn from each vessel in a plastic syringe after 5, 10, 15, 30, 60 and 120 minutes. The samples were filtered

through 0.45 micron disposable filters and analyzed and calculated as before .

Results and Discussion

5 Surprisingly, when the loose powder filled capsule formulation was exposed to the pH switching dissolution experiment (Section D) the release profile obtained was found to be similar to that of the tablet (FIGURE 1 - pH switched at 1 hour). It was also noticed that the capsules rose to the top of the baskets during the experiment, i.e., the capsules exhibited buoyant properties.

10 It would appear that the capsule shell serves to retain the powder plug initially, however, as fluid penetrates in through the gelatin shell into the device, the polymers present hydrate to form a viscous gel layer around the dry inner core.

15 The capsules buoyancy may be attributed to the powder blends low bulk density (0.35 gcm^3). Studies have shown that the capsules are capable of floating for up to 5 hours in 0.1M HCl. By this time, it is envisaged that sufficient fluid has penetrated into the device so as to remove enough air from the capsule core that the dosage form's density rises above that of the immersion fluid. Studies conducted into the penetration rate of fluid into the two devices are presented in FIGURES 2 and 3 (where dry inner core is expressed as a % of initial diameter). These diagrams show that the processes are essentially different between the two dosage forms and also between the two media. Overall, there appears to be a greater rate of fluid penetration into the

capsule which is perhaps predictable due to its greater porosity. It is also noteworthy that the capsule seemingly experiences an initial expansion in the diameter of its dry inner core.

5 Since the water penetration rates do in fact appear to be different, it would infer that this mechanism is of only minor importance to the rate of verapamil release since these have been shown to be very similar in nature.

10 Following oral administration, the device would inevitably be exposed to more violent stresses in the gastro intestinal tract than those experienced at 50 rpm in dissolution apparatus. It is therefore pertinent to investigate how the capsules release properties compare to those of
15 the tablet under more vigorous conditions.

 FIGURE 4 shows that at a basket rotation speed of 100 rpm (pH switched at 1 hour), the two devices once again exhibit similar release
20 profiles. The rate of drug release is increased by approximately the same amount in the two dosage forms. This greater rate of drug release may be attributed to factors such as more rapid diffusion of drug out of the matrix and increased erosion of
25 the device. The former effect would arise due to the smaller diffusion layer thickness and the latter effect due to increased frictional forces on the device. Under the conditions present within disintegration apparatus, there is a
30 greater initial burst in verapamil release from the capsule formulation, however, the release rates

then appear to become very similar in nature over the two hour test period (FIGURE 5; experiment performed in 0.1 M HCl).

5

Example 2

A buoyant propranolol powder capsule in accordance with the present invention is prepared following the procedure of Example 1 except substituting propranolol for the verapamil hydrochloride.

10

Example 3

A buoyant trifluoperazine HCl powder capsule in accordance with the present invention is prepared following the procedure of Example 1 except substituting trifluoperazine HCl for the verapamil hydrochloride.

15

Example 4

A buoyant diltiazem HCl powder capsule in accordance with the present invention is prepared following the procedure of Example 1 except substituting diltiazem HCl for the verapamil hydrochloride.

20

It will be understood that with respect to the formulations prepared in Examples 2, 3 and 4, the ratio of HPMC/alginate and viscosity grade of alginate may be modified to yield drug release more or less independent of environmental pH, consistent with the in vivo needs of the product.

25

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Example 5

A buoyant metoprolol tartrate salt powder capsule in accordance with the present invention is prepared following the procedure of Example 1 except substituting metoprolol tartrate for verapamil hydrochloride.

Example 6

A buoyant verapamil powder capsule containing sodium alginates of different viscosities having the following composition was prepared as described in Example 1.

<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Amount/Powder capsule mg</u>
Verapamil HCl	240
Sodium alginate 9 cps (measured at 20°C in 1% solution)	90
Sodium alginate 300 cps (measured at 20°C in 1% solution)	45
Hydroxypropylmethylcellulose 4000 cps (E4M)	45
Hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose 5 cps (E5)	9
Microcrystalline cellulose	33.2
Lactose BP	8.3
Magnesium stearate	<u>4.5</u>
	450.0 mg

The powder has a 250 μ average particle size and a bulk density of 0.35 g/cm³.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A buoyant controlled release pharmaceutical formulation in the form of a powder filled capsule from which a pharmaceutical of a basic character is released at a controlled rate irrespective of the pH of the environment, comprising a pharmaceutical of a basic character, a pH-dependent polymer which is a water soluble salt of a polyuronic acid, in an amount of up to about 45% by weight of the formulation; a pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent having a viscosity of from about 50 to about 100,000 centipoises in 2% solution at 20°C, in an amount within the range of up to about 35% by weight of the formulation, and binder, said formulation being free of calcium ion and carbon dioxide producing material and will float in gastric juices and which will have drug release properties similar to a tablet of similar composition.

2. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 having a bulk density of within the range of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 g/cm³.

3. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 having an average particle size of within the range of from about 25 to about 1000 μm.

4. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein the pH-dependent salt of a polyuronic acid is employed in a weight ratio to the pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent of within the range of from about 0.1:1 to about 10:1.

5. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said pH-dependent salt of a polyuronic acid is employed in an

amount within the range of from about 15 to about 45% by weight of the formulation and the pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent is employed in an amount within the range of from about 5 to about 20% by weight of said formulation.

6. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said pharmaceutical of a basic character is employed in an amount of up to about 75% by weight of said formulation.

7. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said pharmaceutical of a basic character is verapamil hydrochloride, said salt of a polyuronic acid is sodium alginate, said hydrocolloid gelling agent is hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose having a viscosity of from about 50 to about 100,000 centipoises, said binder is hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose having a viscosity of from about 5 to about 15 centipoises.

8. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said pharmaceutical of a basic character is a calcium antagonist.

9. The formulation as defined in Claim 8 wherein said calcium antagonist is a salt of verapamil, a salt of diltiazem, a salt of nicardipine, a salt of nifedipine, a salt of gallapomil or a salt of cinnarizine.

10. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said pharmaceutical of a basic character is a beta blocker, antihistamine, sympathomimetic, beta adrenergic agonist or bronchodilator, or central nervous system drug.

11. The formulation as defined in Claim 10 wherein said beta blocker is a salt of propranolol, a salt of

metoprolol, or a salt of nadolol, said antihistamine is a salt of chlorpheniramine, a salt of diphenhydramine, said sympathomimetic is a salt of phenylpropanolamine or a salt of pseudoephedrine, said beta adrenergic agonist is a salt of albuterol, fenoterol, or a salt of terbutaline, and said central nervous system drug is a salt of thioridazine, a salt of trifluoperazine, chlorpromazine, BMS 181101 BMY 14,802, buspirone, nefazadone, gepirone, tiospirone.

12. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said hydrocolloid gelling agent is hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose, methyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, or a mixture of two or more of such hydrocolloid gelling agents.

13. The formulation as defined in Claim 1 wherein said salt of a polyuronic acid is a salt of alginic acid.

14. The formulation as defined in Claim 13 wherein said salt of alginic acid is sodium alginate or potassium alginate.

15. The formulation as defined in Claim 13 wherein the salt of alginic acid has a viscosity of within the range of from about 4 to about 300 centipoises in 1% solution at 25°C.

16. The formulation as defined in Claim 13 containing alginic acid salts of two different viscosities.

17. In a controlled release pharmaceutical formulation from which a pharmaceutical of a basic character is released at a controlled rate irrespective of the pH of the environment, which includes a pharmaceutical of a basic character, a pH-dependent polymer which is a water soluble

salt of a polyuronic acid, in an amount of up to about 45% by weight of the formulation; a pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent having a viscosity within the range of from about 50 to about 100,000 centipoises in 2% solution at 20°C, in an amount of up to about 35% by weight of the formulation, and binder, said formulation being free of calcium ion and carbon dioxide producing material, the improvement which comprises the said formulation being in the form of a free-flowing powder filled capsule which is buoyant so that it will float in gastric juices and will have drug release properties similar to a tablet of similar composition.

18. The formulation as defined in Claim 17, wherein the salt of a polyuronic acid is a salt of alginic acid.

19. The formulation as defined in Claim 17 wherein the pH-dependent salt of a polyuronic acid is employed in a weight ratio to the pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent of within the range of from about 0.1:1 to about 10:1.

20. The formulation as defined in Claim 17 wherein said pH-dependent salt of a polyuronic acid is employed in an amount within the range of from about 15 to about 45% by weight of the formulation and the pH-independent hydrocolloid gelling agent is employed in an amount within the range of from about 5 to about 20% by weight of said formulation.

21. The formulation as defined in Claim 17 wherein said pharmaceutical of a basic character is employed in an amount of up to about 75% by weight of said formulation.

22. The formulation as defined in Claim 17 having a bulk density of within the range of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 g/cm³.

23. The formulation as defined in Claim 17 having an average particle size of within the range of from about 25 to about 1000 μm.

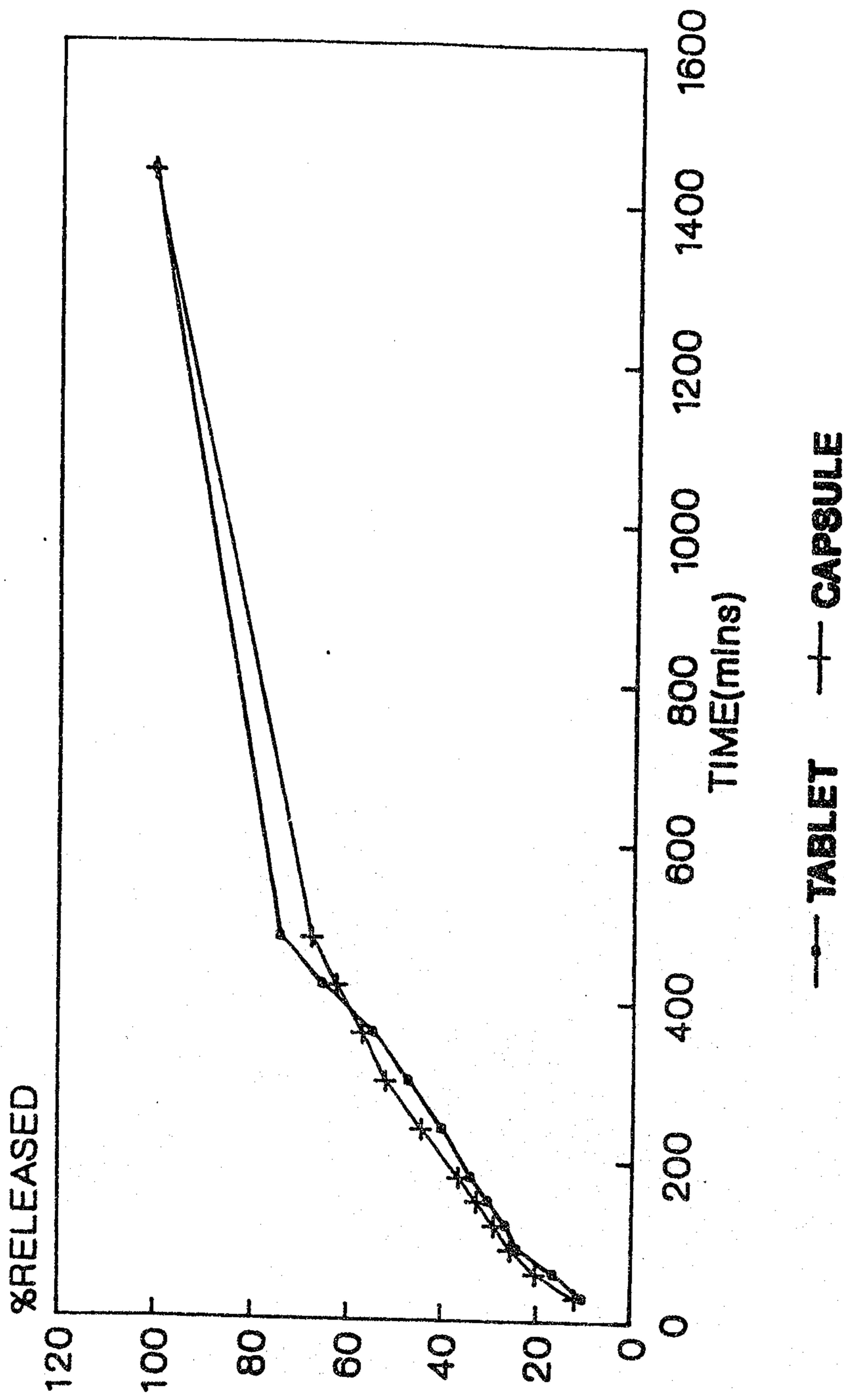


FIGURE 1



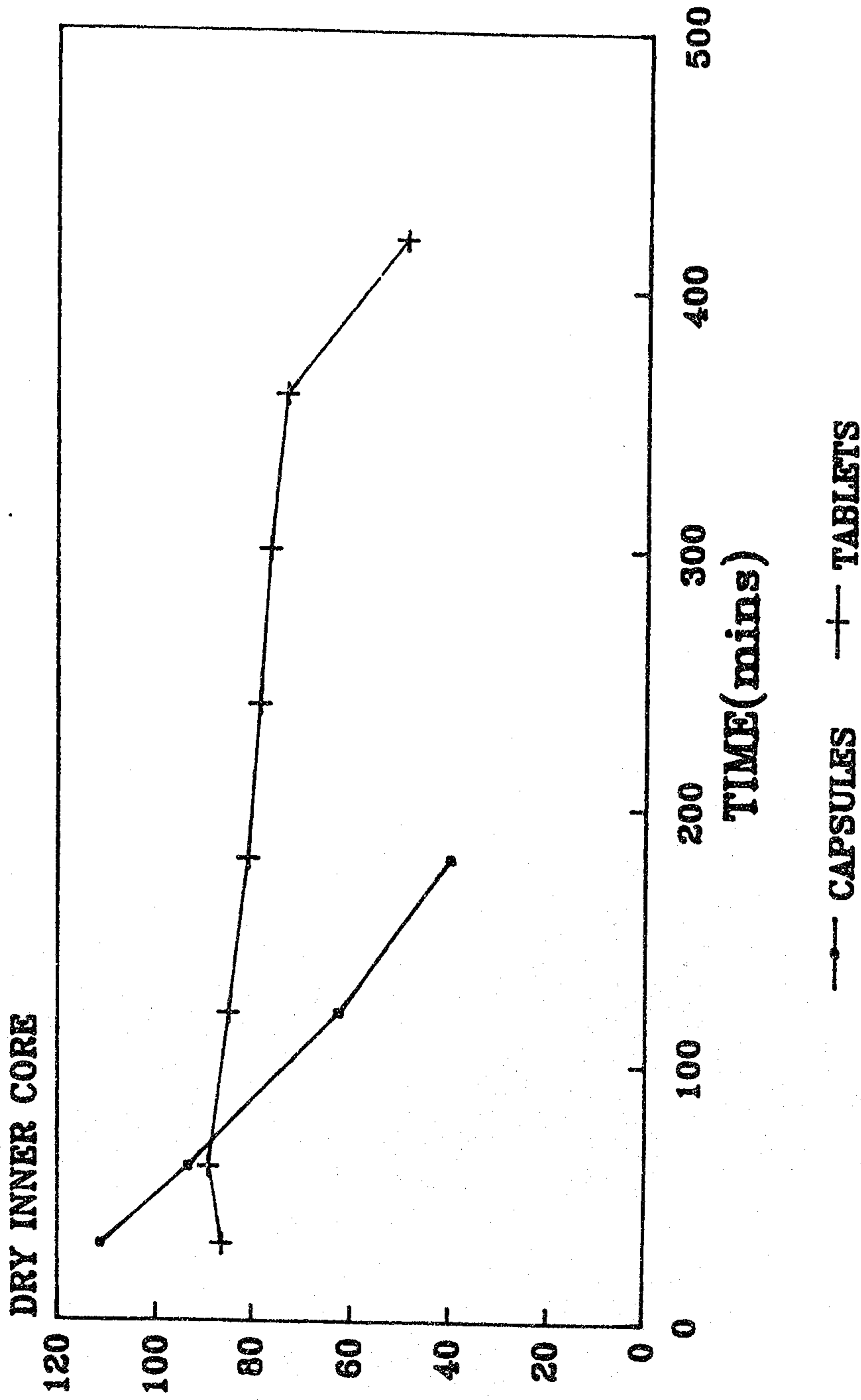


FIGURE 2

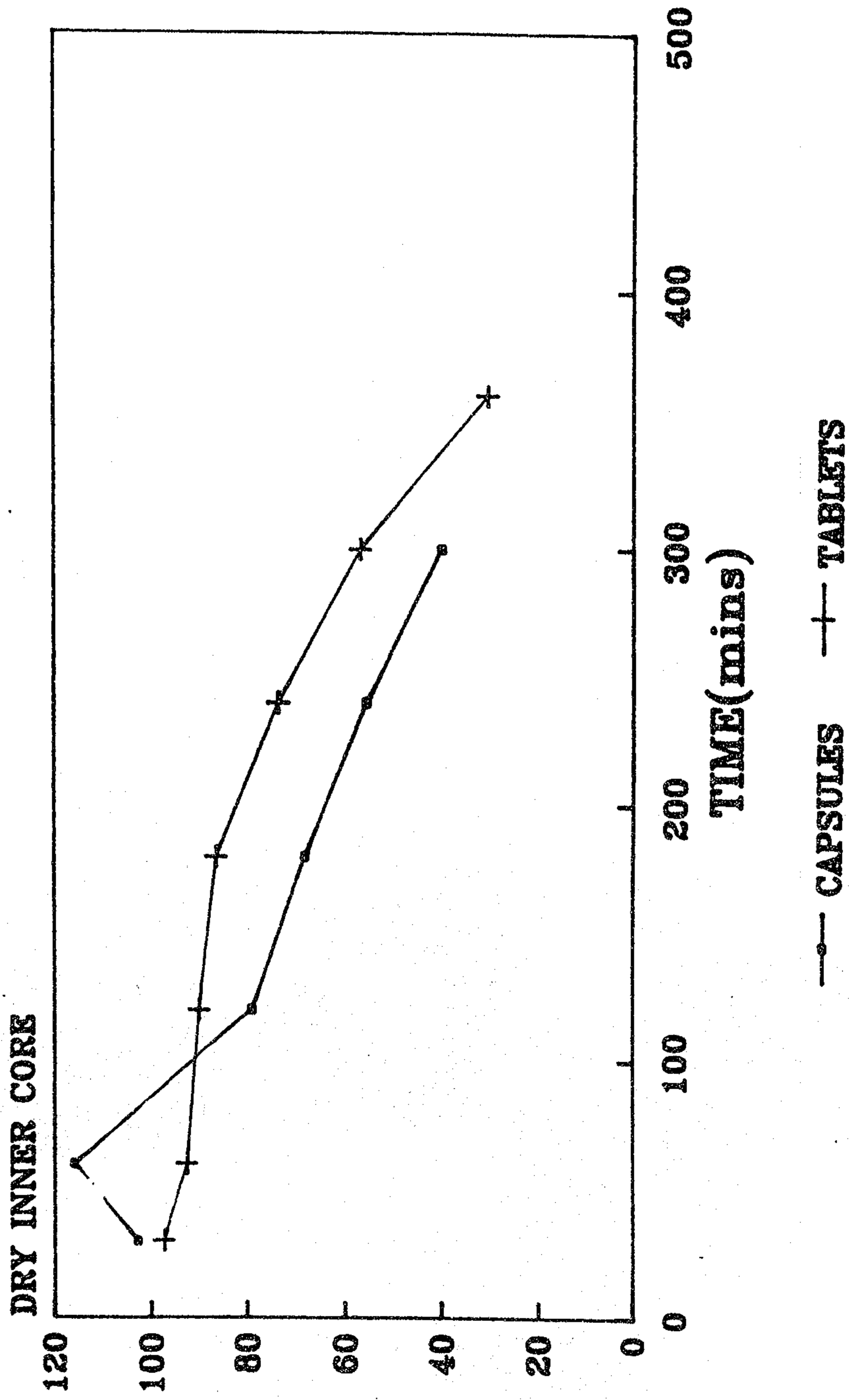


FIGURE 3

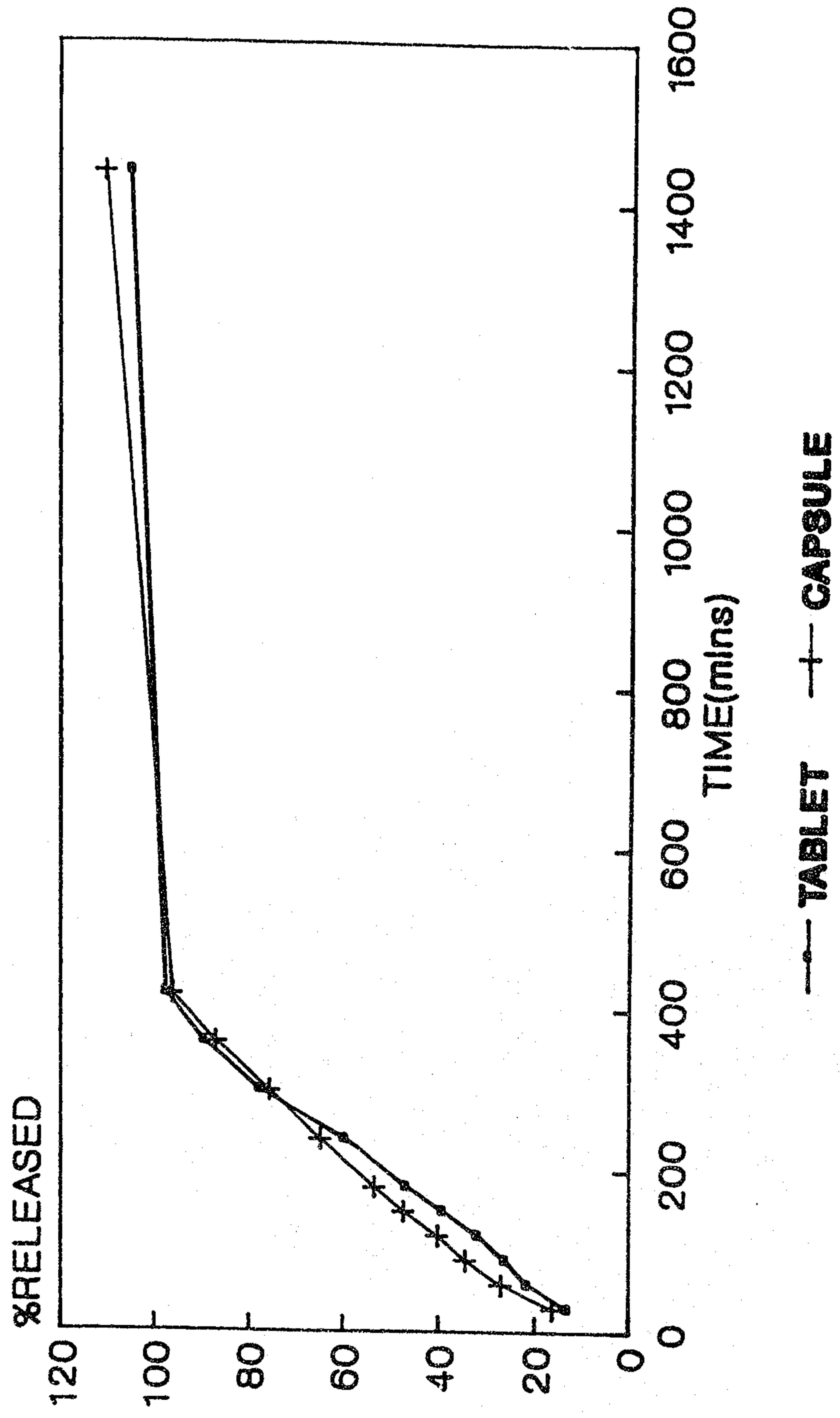


FIGURE 4

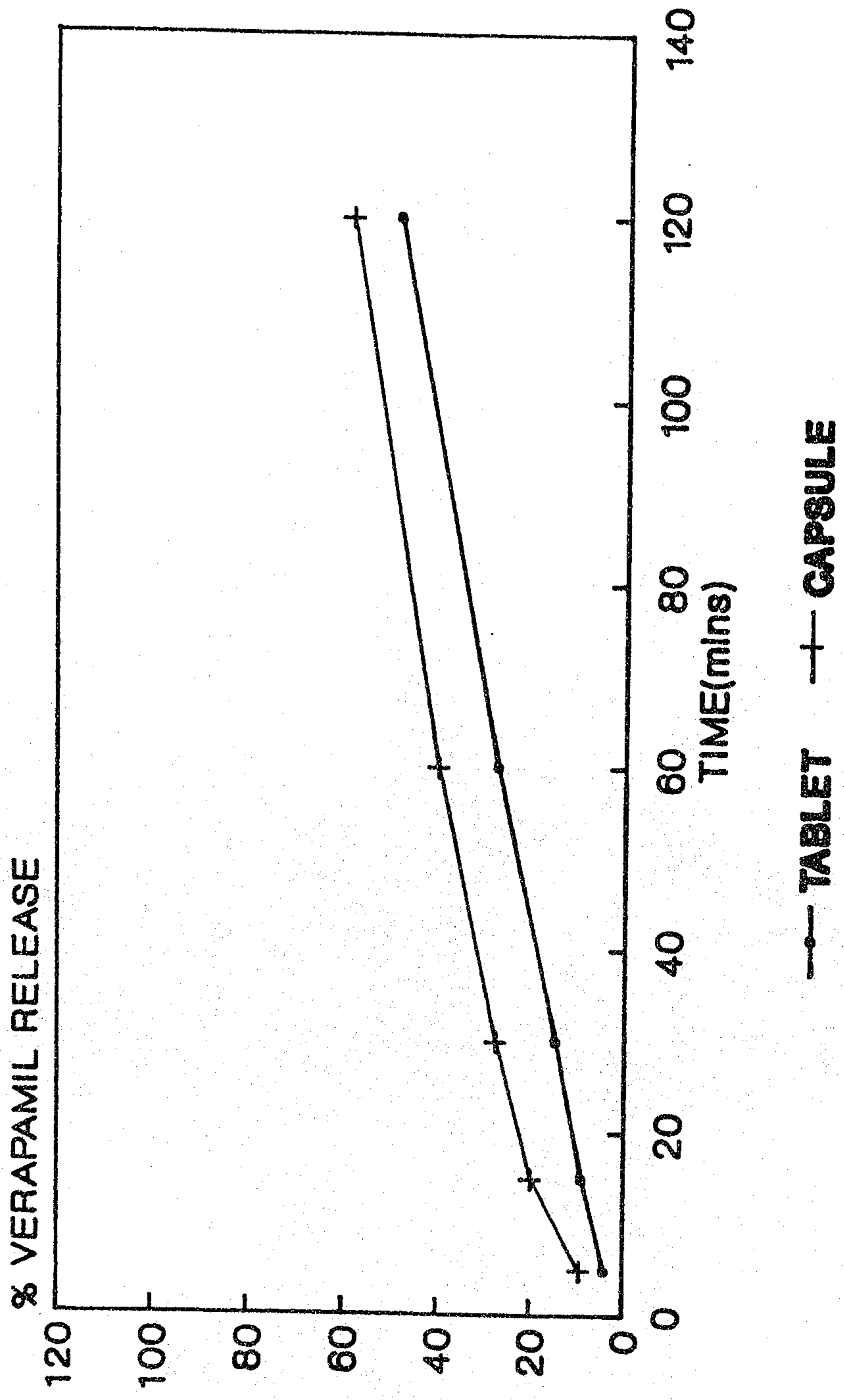


FIGURE 5

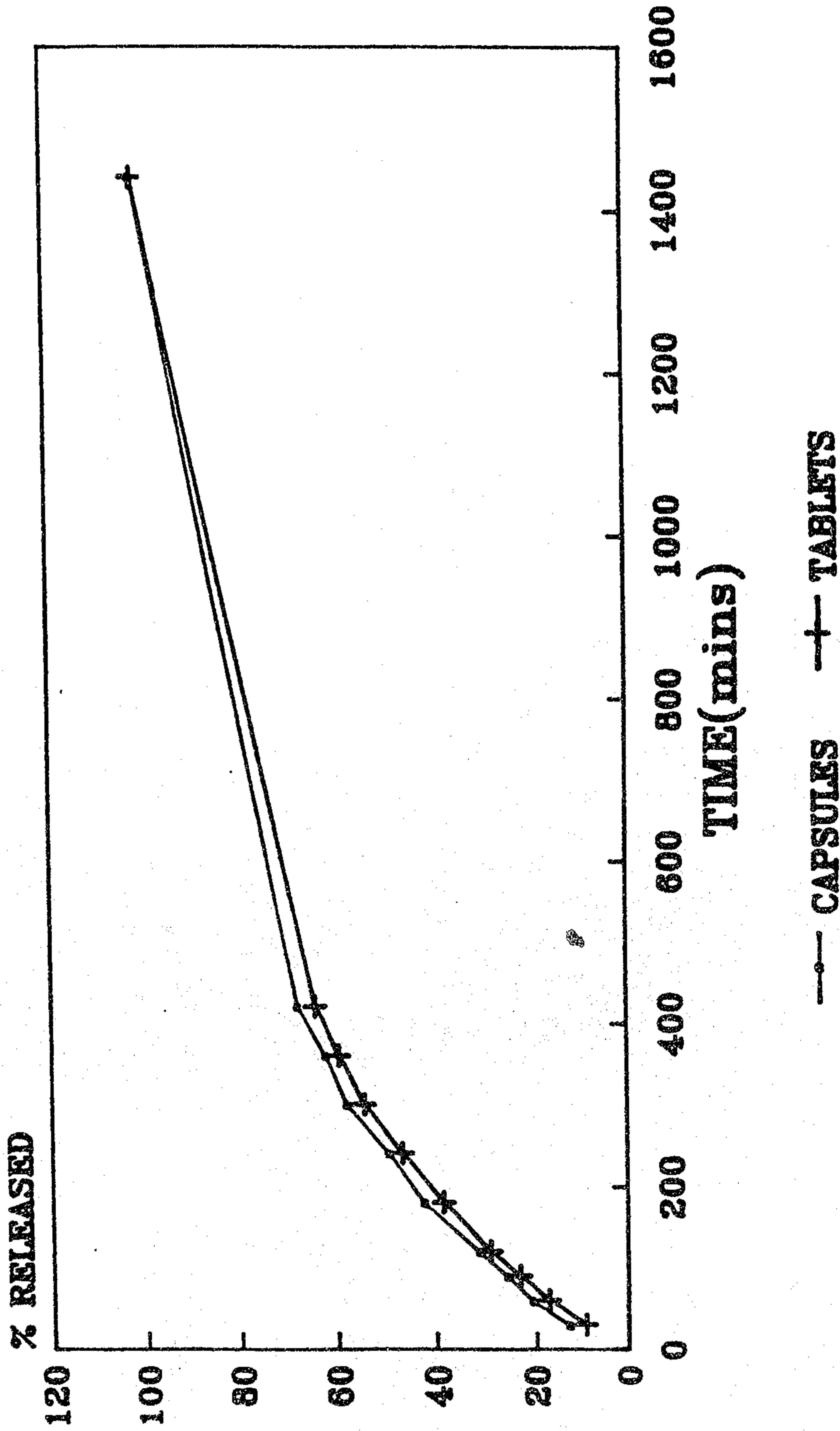


FIGURE 6