

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>IX</i>
<i>Chapter 1. Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1 Electron microscopy of biological specimens; the need for ultrathin sections	1
1.2 The aim of the procedure	2
1.3 Criteria of good preservation	2
<i>Chapter 2. Fixatives</i>	<i>5</i>
2.1 The development of fixatives for electron microscopy	6
2.2 Vehicles for fixatives	7
2.2.1 Choice of vehicle	8
2.2.2 pH of buffers	8
2.2.3 Osmolarity	9
2.2.4 Ionic constitution	10
2.2.5 Phosphate buffers	12
2.2.6 Cacodylate buffers	16
2.2.7 Veronal-acetate buffers	18
2.2.8 Collidine buffers	21
2.3 Osmium tetroxide fixatives	23
2.3.1 Chemical and morphological effects of osmium tetroxide fixatives	24
2.3.2 Osmium tetroxide solutions	25
2.3.3 Phosphate buffered osmium tetroxide fixatives	26
2.3.4 Cacodylate buffered osmium tetroxide fixatives	27
2.3.5 Veronal-acetate buffered osmium tetroxide fixatives	28
2.3.6 Collidine buffered osmium tetroxide fixatives	30
2.4 Glutaraldehyde fixatives	30
2.4.1 Chemical and morphological effects of glutaraldehyde fixatives	31
2.4.2 Glutaraldehyde solutions	38
2.4.3 Preparation of glutaraldehyde fixatives	41

2.5	Formaldehyde fixatives	44
2.5.1	Chemical and morphological effects of formaldehyde fixatives	44
2.5.2	Formaldehyde solutions	45
2.5.3	Preparation of paraformaldehyde fixatives	45
2.5.4	Paraformaldehyde fixatives for very large tissue blocks	46
2.5.5	Paraformaldehyde-glutaraldehyde fixatives	47
2.6	Acrolein and other aldehyde fixatives	48
2.6.1	Acrolein fixatives	48
2.6.2	Acrolein-glutaraldehyde fixatives	49
2.6.3	Acrolein-glutaraldehyde-paraformaldehyde fixatives	50
2.6.4	Other aldehyde fixatives	50
2.7	Permanganate fixatives	50
2.7.1	Potassium permanganate fixatives	50
2.7.2	Sodium permanganate fixatives	53
2.7.3	Lanthanum permanganate fixatives	55
2.7.4	Other permanganate fixatives	57
2.8	Mixed fixatives	57
2.8.1	Osmium tetroxide-potassium dichromate fixatives	57
2.8.2	Glutaraldehyde-osmium tetroxide fixatives	58
2.8.3	Fixatives containing potassium ferricyanide	60
2.8.4	Aldehyde fixatives containing trinitro compounds	61
2.8.5	Fixatives containing digitonin	64
2.8.6	Other additives for fixatives	64
2.9	Uranyl acetate fixatives	65

Chapter 3. Fixation methods 73

3.1	Time and temperature of fixation	75
3.1.1	Primary fixation	75
3.1.2	Wash	76
3.1.3	Secondary fixation	77
3.2	Fixation schedules	77
3.3	Organs and tissues	78
3.3.1	Immersion fixation	78
3.3.2	<i>In vivo</i> fixation	79
3.3.3	Perfusion fixation	80
3.3.3a	Anaesthesia	80
3.3.3b	The route of injection of perfusion fluids	82
3.3.3c	Fluids and fixatives for perfusion	83
3.3.4	Fixation of very large specimens	85
3.3.5	Organ cultures and colonies growing on agar	86
3.4	Botanical specimens	86
3.5	Monolayers of cells	90
3.6	Isolated cells	91
3.6.1	Fixation in a pellet	91
3.6.2	Fixation in suspension in medium	93
3.6.3	Encapsulating methods for pellets	95
3.6.4	Encapsulating methods for isolated cells	98
3.6.5	Collecting cells on Millipore filters	99
3.7	Cell fractions	99
3.8	Methods for very small quantities of material	100

3.9	Special fixation schedules and methods	102
3.9.1	Lipids	102
3.9.2	Cells with thick walls	102
3.9.3	Bacteria	103
3.9.4	Marine organisms	104
3.9.5	Organisms living in extreme conditions	104
3.9.6	Special fixation schedules	104

Chapter 4. Dehydration 111

4.1	Chemical and morphological effects of dehydration	111
4.2	Dehydration schedules	112
4.2.1	Standard dehydration schedule	113
4.2.2	Rapid dehydration	113
4.2.3	Partial dehydration	116
4.3	Dehydrating agents	117
4.3.1	Ethylene glycol	118
4.3.2	Polyethylene glycol	119
4.3.3	Propylene oxide	119
4.3.4	Other dehydrating agents	120

Chapter 5. Embedding 123

5.1	Embedding media for electron microscopy	123
5.1.1	Chemical and morphological effects of embedding media	125
5.2	Standard embedding methods	125
5.3	Epoxy resins	130
5.3.1	Epoxy resin embedding media	130
5.3.2	Characteristics of epoxy resin embedding media	136
5.3.2a	Viscosity	136
5.3.2b	Hardness of the final block	137
5.3.2c	Sectioning properties	141
5.3.3	Preparation of epoxy resin embedding media	143
5.3.4	Embedding schedules for epoxy resins	144
5.3.4a	Standard embedding schedule	144
5.3.4b	Embedding at room temperature	147
5.3.4c	Rapid embedding	148
5.4	Polyester resins	148
5.4.1	Polyester resin embedding media	148
5.4.2	Preparation of polyester resin embedding media	150
5.4.3	Embedding schedules for polyester resins	151
5.4.3a	Embedding schedule for Vestopal W	151
5.4.3b	Rapid embedding with Vestopal W	152
5.4.3c	Embedding schedule for Rigolac	152
5.4.3d	Embedding schedule for styrene/Rigolac	153
5.5	Methacrylates	153
5.5.1	Methacrylate embedding media	153
5.5.2	Preparation of methacrylate embedding media	154
5.5.3	Embedding schedules for methacrylates	155

5.6	Water-soluble embedding media	156
5.6.1	Water-soluble epoxy resins	156
5.6.1a	Dehydration and embedding schedule for Durcupan	158
5.6.1b	Dehydration in Durcupan followed by conventional embedding	158
5.6.2	Water-soluble methacrylates	159
5.6.2a	Glycol methacrylate	159
5.6.2b	Hydroxypropyl methacrylate	160
5.6.2c	Embedding in the presence of water	161
5.7	Other embedding media	161
5.7.1	Gelatin	161
5.7.2	Urea-aldehyde	162
5.7.3	Protein-aldehyde	162
5.7.4	Polyampholytes	162
5.8	Special embedding methods	163
5.8.1	Flat embedding	163
5.8.2	Monolayers of cells	164
5.8.2a	Removal of cells from the substrate before embedding	165
5.8.2b	Separation of hardened blocks from the substrate; 'inverted capsule' technique	165
5.8.2c	Separation of hardened blocks from the substrate; flat embedding technique	167
5.8.2d	Cells not separated from the substrate	167
5.8.3	Embedding methods for very small quantities of material	170

Chapter 6. Low-temperature methods 177

6.1	Fixation, dehydration and embedding at low temperatures	177
6.2	Freeze-drying	178
6.3	Freeze-substitution	178
6.4	Cryo-ultramicrotomy	185

Appendix Commercial suppliers of equipment and materials for fixation, dehydration and embedding 187

Index for list of suppliers 199

Subject index 201