

# Building and Evaluation of a PBPK Model for Efavirenz in Adults

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Author	Thomas Wendl (TWendl)

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## 1 Introduction

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Efavirenz is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI) and is an antiretroviral drugs to treat HIV.

Its major metabolizing enzyme is CYP2B6, but also CYP3A4, CYP3A5, CYP1A2 and CYP2A6 play a role ([Ward 2003](#), [Ogburn 2010](#)). CYP2B6 polymorphism is a major determinant of clinical efavirenz disposition and dose adjustment. Efavirenz activates the pregnane X receptor (PXR) and induces its target gene expression. As a consequence, some cytochrome P450 genes are upregulated, and, e.g. higher CYP3A4 ([Shou 2008](#)) and CYP2B6 ([Ke 2016](#)) activity levels can be measured.

It has a long half-life, ranging from 52 to 76 hours following single oral doses, and 40 to 55 hours following long term administration as a result of auto-induction of efavirenz metabolism. The long plasma half-life allows for once daily administration with long term administration of a single 600mg daily dose ([Smith 2001](#)).

The presented efavirenz model was established using clinical PK data of 7 publications covering a dosing range from 200 to 600 mg after single and multiple oral administration.

The herein presented model building and evaluation report evaluates the performance of the PBPK model for efavirenz in (healthy) adults. The established efavirenz PBPK model as well as the respective evaluation plan and evaluation report are provided open-source (<https://github.com/.../Compound-model>).

## 2 Methods

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### 2.1 Modeling Strategy

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The general concept of building a PBPK model has previously been described by e.g. Kuepfer et al. ([Kuepfer 2016](#)). The relevant anthropometric (height, weight) and physiological information (e.g. blood flows, organ volumes, binding protein concentrations, hematocrit, cardiac output) in adults was gathered from the literature and has been previously published ([PK-Sim Ontogeny Database Version 7.3](#)). This information was incorporated into PK-Sim® and was used as default values for the simulations in adults.

Variability of plasma proteins and CYP enzymes are integrated into PK-Sim® and described in the publicly available PK-Sim® Ontogeny Database Version 7.3 ([Schlender 2016](#)) or otherwise referenced for the specific process.

First, a base mean model was built and adjusted to clinical data including single and multiple dose studies with oral applications of efavirenz (Sustiva) to find an appropriate structure to describe the pharmacokinetics in plasma. The mean PBPK model was developed using a typical European individual adjusted to the demography of the respective study population. The relative tissue specific expressions of enzymes predominantly being involved in the metabolism of efavirenz were derived from RT-PCR data from [Nishimura 2003](#).

Unknown parameters (see below) were identified using the Parameter Identification module provided in PK-Sim®. Structural model selection was mainly guided by visual inspection of the resulting description of data and biological plausibility.

Details about input data (physicochemical, *in vitro* and clinical) can be found in [Section 2.2](#).

Details about the structural model and its parameters can be found in [Section 2.3](#).

## 2.2 Data

### 2.2.1 In vitro / physico-chemical Data

A literature search was performed to collect available information on physiochemical properties of efavirenz. The obtained information from literature is summarized in the table below.

Parameter	Unit	Value	Source	Description
MW	g/mol	315.675	<a href="https://www.drugbank.ca/">https://www.drugbank.ca/</a>	Molecular weight
pK <sub>a</sub>	10.1	(base)	<a href="#">Rabel 1996</a>	Acid dissociation constant
Solubility (pH)	mg/L	11.5 (6.4)	<a href="#">Cristofolletti 2013</a>	Water solubility
logP		2.07, 4.6	<a href="#">Almond 2005</a> , <a href="https://www.drugbank.ca/">https://www.drugbank.ca/</a>	Partition coefficient between octanol and water
logD		5.1	<a href="#">Janneh 2009</a>	Partition coefficient between octanol and buffer solution
fu		0.006 [0.004 - 0.015]	<a href="#">Almond 2005</a>	Fraction unbound in plasma
E <sub>max</sub> (CYP3A4)		7.27, 3.15 (average 5.21)	<a href="#">Shou 2008</a>	Maximum induction effect
EC <sub>50</sub> (CYP3A4)	μmol/l	12.5, 2.18 (average 7.34)	<a href="#">Shou 2008</a>	Concentration at half maximum induction
E <sub>max</sub> (CYP2B6)		5.1	<a href="#">Ke 2016</a>	Maximum induction effect
EC <sub>50</sub> (CYP2B6)	μmol/l	5.1	<a href="#">Ke 2016</a>	Concentration at half maximum induction

### 2.2.2 Clinical Data

A literature search was performed to collect available clinical data on efavirenz in healthy adults.

#### 2.2.2.1 Model Building

The following studies were used for model building:

Publication	Arm / Treatment / Information used for model building
<a href="#">Mouly 2002</a>	Healthy subjects receiving a single oral dose of 200 and 400 mg
<a href="#">Ogburn 2013</a>	Healthy subjects receiving a single oral dose of 600 mg
<a href="#">Xu 2013</a>	Healthy subjects with different CYP2B6 genotypes receiving a single oral dose of 600 mg
<a href="#">Dooley 2012</a>	Healthy subjects with different CYP2B6 genotypes receiving multiple doses of 600 mg
<a href="#">Garg 2013</a>	Healthy subjects receiving multiple doses of 600 mg
<a href="#">Huang 2012</a>	Healthy subjects receiving multiple doses of 600 mg

### 2.2.2.2 Midazolam interaction studies used to parameterize CYP3A4 interaction

The following studies were used for parameterization of CYP3A4 interaction:

Publication	Arm / Treatment / Information used for model building
<a href="#">Mikus 2017</a>	Healthy subjects receiving a single oral dose of 400 mg Efavirenz at t=0h, 4 mg midazolam at t=12h and a single intravenous dose of 2 mg midazolam at t=18h.
<a href="#">Katzenmaier 2010</a>	Healthy subjects receiving multiple oral doses of 400 mg efavirenz QD. On day 14, subjects receive a single oral midazolam dose of 3 mg.

### 2.2.2.3 Verification of interaction using Alfentanil interaction studies

The following study was used to verify CYP3A4 interaction:

Publication	Arm / Treatment / Information used for model building
<a href="#">Kharasch 2012</a>	Healthy subjects receiving a single iv dose of 0.015 mg/kg alfentanil following multiple doses of 600 mg efavirenz

## 2.3 Model Parameters and Assumptions

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### 2.3.1 Absorption

Absorption observed in clinical studies can be fully explained by passive absorption.

### 2.3.2 Distribution

After testing the available organ-plasma partition coefficient and cell permeability calculation methods built in PK-Sim, observed clinical data was best described by choosing the partition coefficient calculation by `Schmitt` and cellular permeability calculation by `PK-Sim Standard`.

### 2.3.3 Metabolism, Elimination and Induction

Efavirenz is metabolized by CYP2B6, CYP3A4, CYP3A5, CYP1A2 and CYP2A6.

Induction of CYP3A4 ([Shou 2008](#)) and CYP2B6 ([Ke 2016](#)) was taken into account.

### 2.3.4 Automated Parameter Identification

The parameter identification tool in PK-Sim has been used to estimate selected model parameters by adjusting to PK data of the clinical studies that were used in the model building process. For some of the parameters, factors were optimized to maintain their ratio, e.g. a factor for the *k<sub>cat</sub>* clearances values for CYP2B6, CYP3A4, CYP3A5, CYP1A2 and CYP2A6 was optimized to keep the ratio constant.

The result of the final parameter identification is shown in the table below:

Model Parameter	Optimized Value	Unit
Lipophilicity	3.437	
Specific intestinal permeability	2.972E-5	cm/min
Solubility at reference pH	39.922	mg/l
fraction unbound	5.955E-3	
kcat CYP2B6	1.601 (factor: 0.31833 of literature reference)	1/min
kcat CYP3A4	0.051 (factor: 0.31833 of literature reference)	1/min
kcat CYP3A5	0.191 (factor: 0.31833 of literature reference)	1/min
kcat CYP1A2	0.191 (factor: 0.31833 of literature reference)	1/min
kcat CYP2A6	0.318 (factor: 0.31833 of literature reference)	1/min
EC50 CYP3A4	0.071 (factor: 0.009711 of literature reference)	μmol/l
EC50 CYP2B6	0.012 (factor: 0.009711 of literature reference)	μmol/l
Dissolution time (50% dissolved)	60	min
Dissolution shape	0.272	

## 3 Results and Discussion

The PBPK model for efavirenz was developed and evaluated using publically available, clinical pharmacokinetic data from studies listed in [Section 2.2.2](#).

The next sections show:

1. the final model parameters for the building blocks: [Section 3.1](#).
2. the overall goodness of fit: [Section 3.2](#).
3. simulated vs. observed concentration-time profiles for the clinical studies used for model building and for model verification: [Section 3.3](#).

## 3.1 Final input parameters

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The compound parameter values of the final PBPK model are illustrated below.

### Compound: Efavirenz

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# Parameters

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Name	Value	Value Origin	Alternative	Default	
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Name	Value	Value Origin	Alternative	Default	
Solubility at reference pH	39.9217804729 mg/l	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	Measurement	True	
Reference pH	0		Measurement	True	
Lipophilicity	3.4369753585 Log Units	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	Optimized	True	
Fraction unbound (plasma, reference value)	0.0059553692487	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	Measurement	True	
Specific intestinal permeability (transcellular)	2.9720579005E-05 cm/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	Optimized	True	
Cl	1				

Name	Value	Value Origin	Alternative	Default	
F	3				
Is small molecule	Yes				
Molecular weight	315.675 g/mol				
Plasma protein binding partner	Albumin				

# Calculation methods

Name	Value	
Partition coefficients	Schmitt	
Cellular permeabilities	PK-Sim Standard	

## Processes

### Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP2B6-Ward2003

Molecule: CYP2B6

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

#### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	3.5 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	6.4 $\mu$ mol/l		
kcat	1.601451904 1/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019- 10-11 09:02	

### Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP1A2-Ward2003

Molecule: CYP1A2

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

#### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	0.6 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	8.3 $\mu$ mol/l		
kcat	0.1910198104 1/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019- 10-11 09:02	

### Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP3A4-Ward2003

Molecule: CYP3A4

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

#### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	0.16 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	23.5 µmol/l		
kcat	0.0509386161 1/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019- 10-11 09:02	

## Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP3A5-Ward2003

Molecule: CYP3A5

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	0.6 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	19.1 µmol/l		
kcat	0.1910198104 1/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019- 10-11 09:02	

## Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP2A6-Ogburn2010

Molecule: CYP2A6

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	1 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	7.7 µmol/l		
kcat	0.3183663507 1/min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	

## Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP2B6-CYP2B61/6

Molecule: CYP2B6

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	2.268966 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	6.4 µmol/l		

## Metabolizing Enzyme: CYP2B6-CYP2B66/6

Molecule: CYP2B6

Metabolite: 8-OH efavirenz

### Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
In vitro Vmax/recombinant enzyme	1.448276 pmol/min/pmol rec. enzyme		
Km	6.4 µmol/l		

## Induction: CYP3A4-Shou2008

Molecule: CYP3A4

## Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
EC50	0.071279975 μmol/l	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	
E <sub>max</sub>	5.21	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	

## Induction: CYP2B6-Ke2016

Molecule: CYP2B6

## Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
EC50	0.0116534019 μmol/l	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	
E <sub>max</sub>	5.2	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	

## Systemic Process: Glomerular Filtration-GFR

Species: Human

## Parameters

Name	Value	Value Origin	
GFR fraction	1		

## Formulation: Sustiva

Type: Weibull

## Parameters

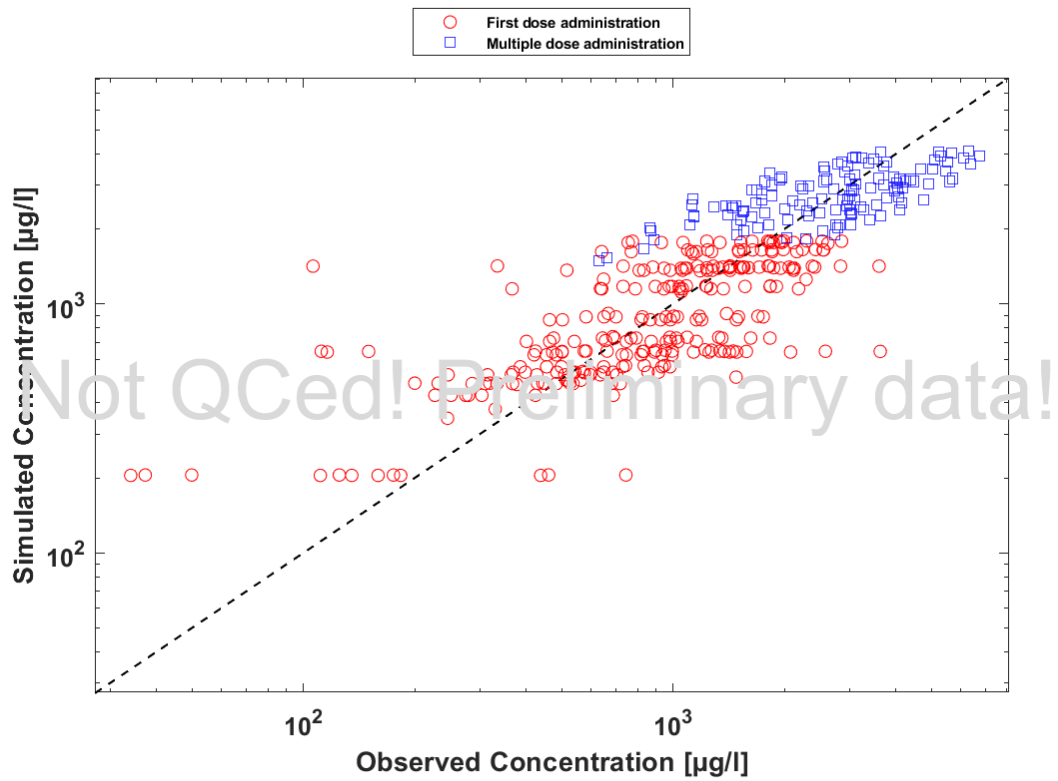
Name	Value	Value Origin	
Dissolution time (50% dissolved)	60 min	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	
Lag time	0 min		
Dissolution shape	0.2720936819	Parameter Identification-Parameter Identification-Value updated from 'Parameter Identification 7 (Mida)' on 2019-10-11 09:02	
Use as suspension	Yes		



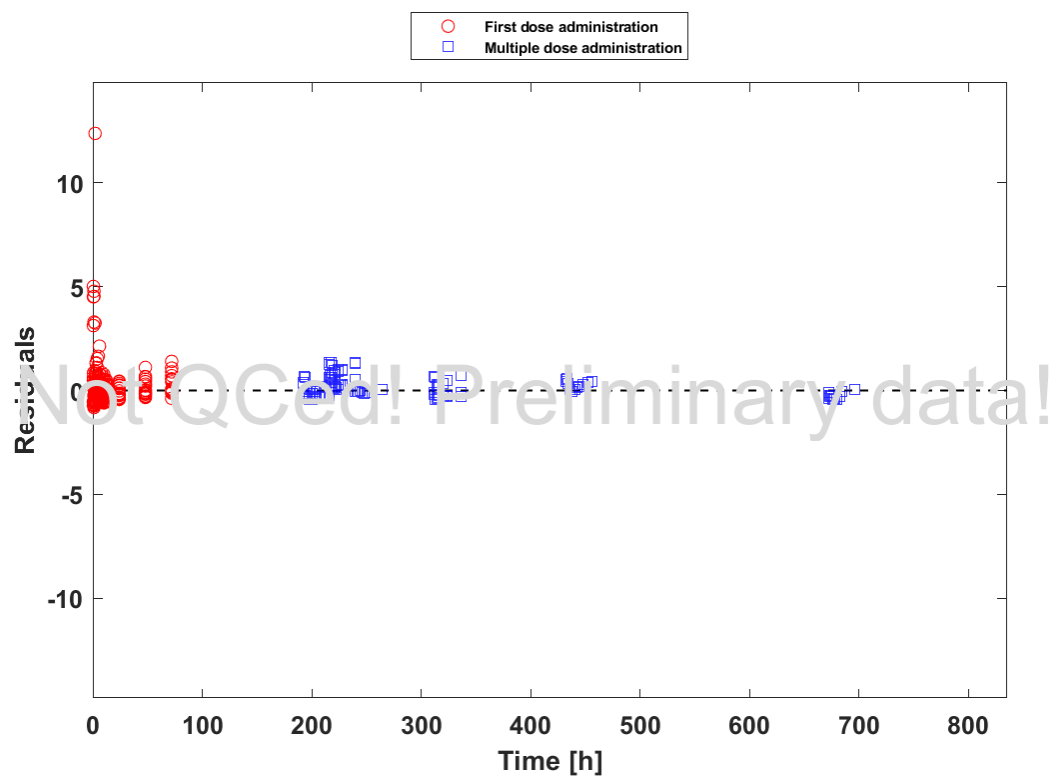
## 3.2 Diagnostics Plots

Below you find the goodness-of-fit visual diagnostic plots for the PBPK model performance of all data used presented in [Section 2.2.2](#).

The first plot shows observed versus simulated plasma concentration, the second weighted residuals versus time.



Goodness of fit plot for concentration in plasma



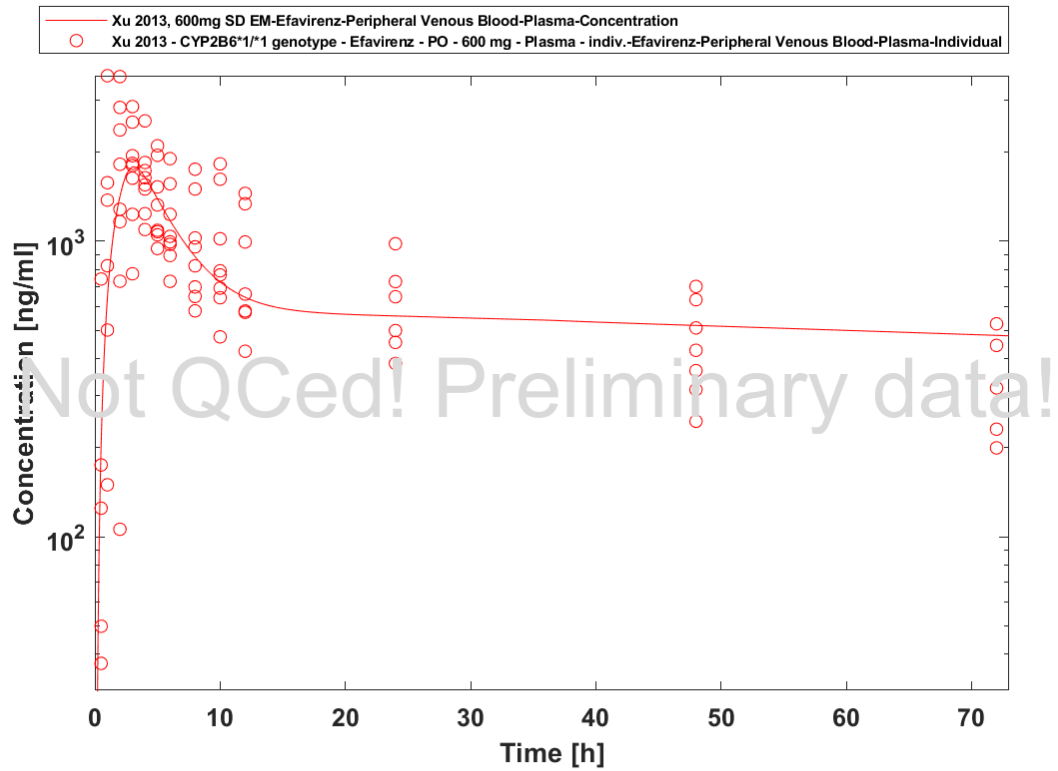
Goodness of fit plot for concentration in plasma

GMFE = 1.445153

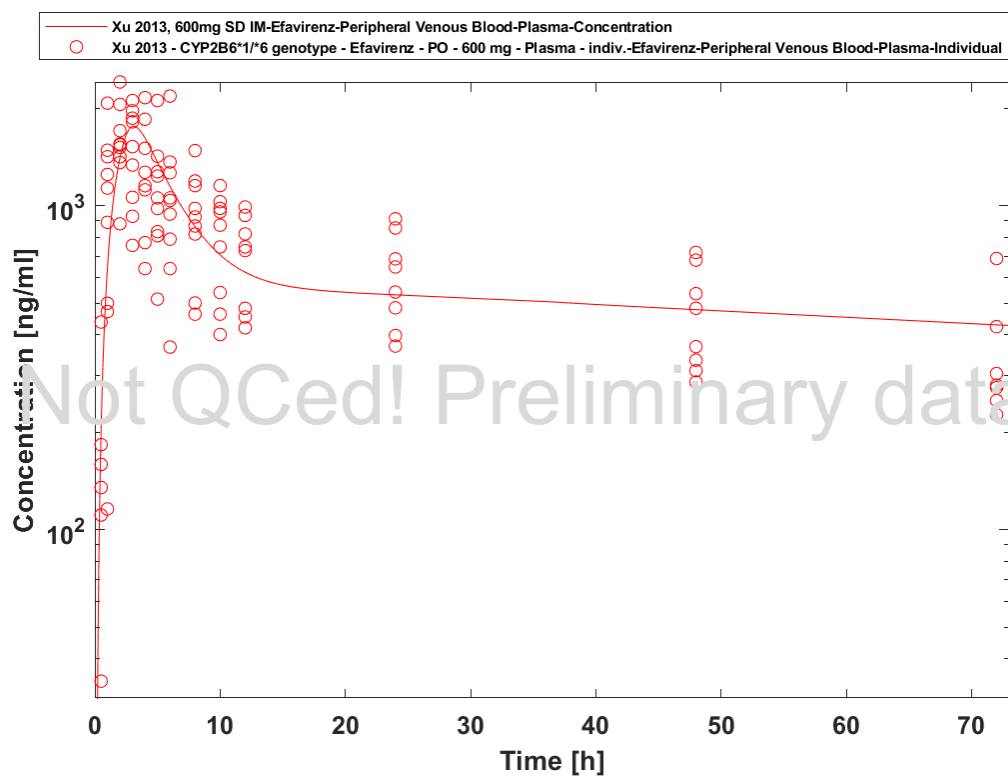
### 3.3: Concentration-Time Profiles

Simulated versus observed concentration-time profiles of all data listed in [Section 2.2.2](#) are presented below.

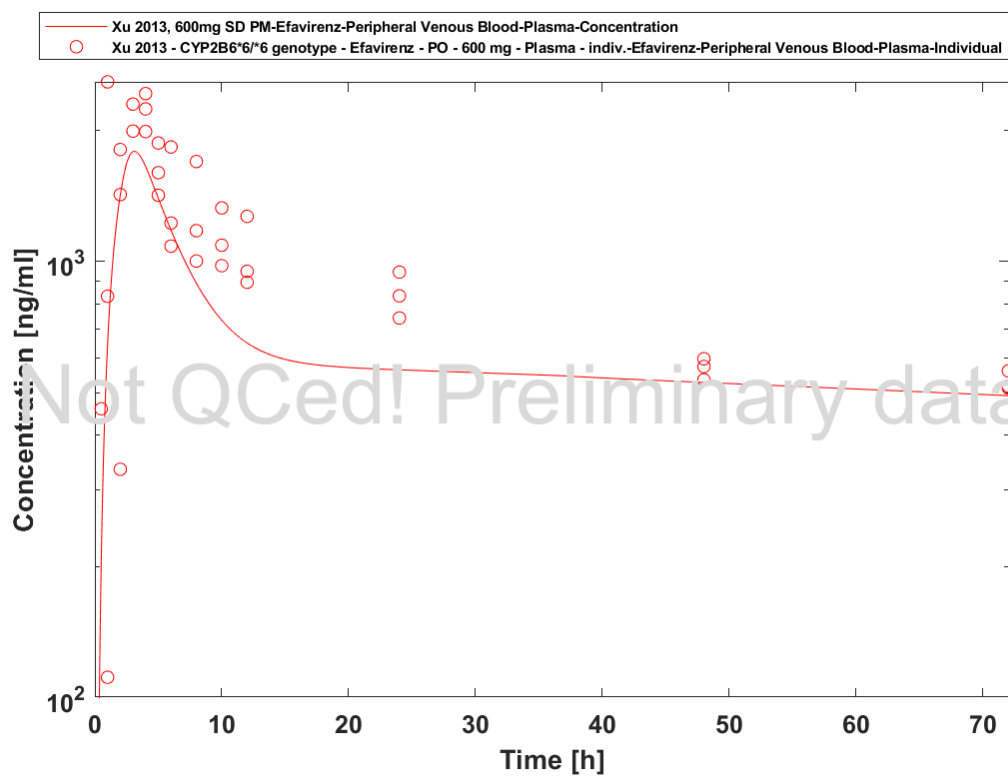
#### 3.3.1 Model Building



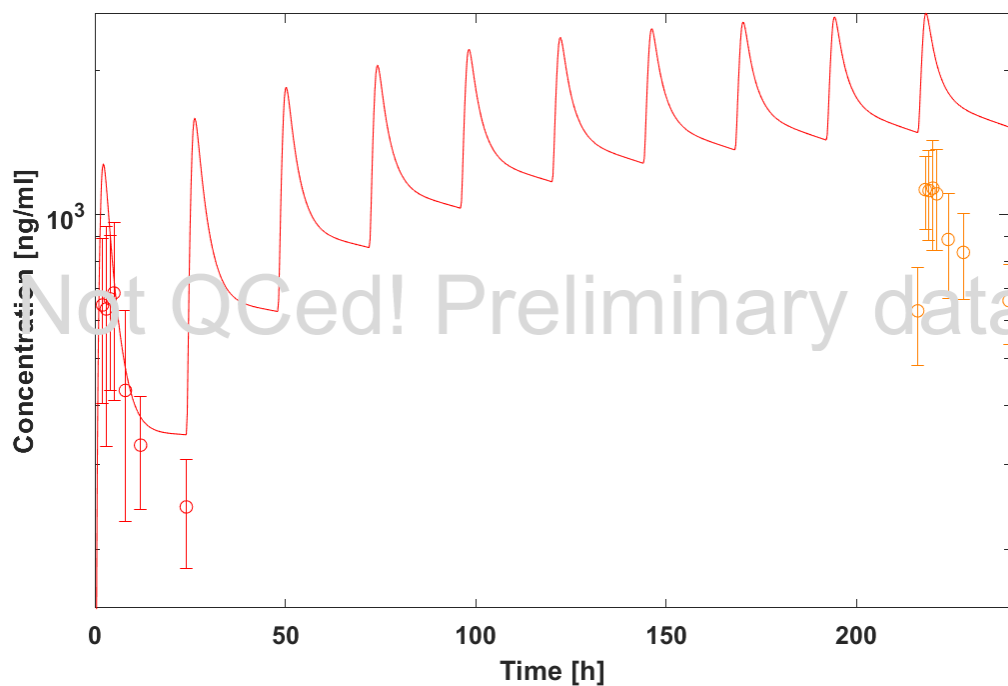
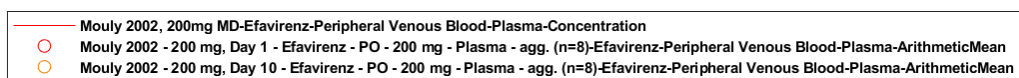
Time Profile Analysis



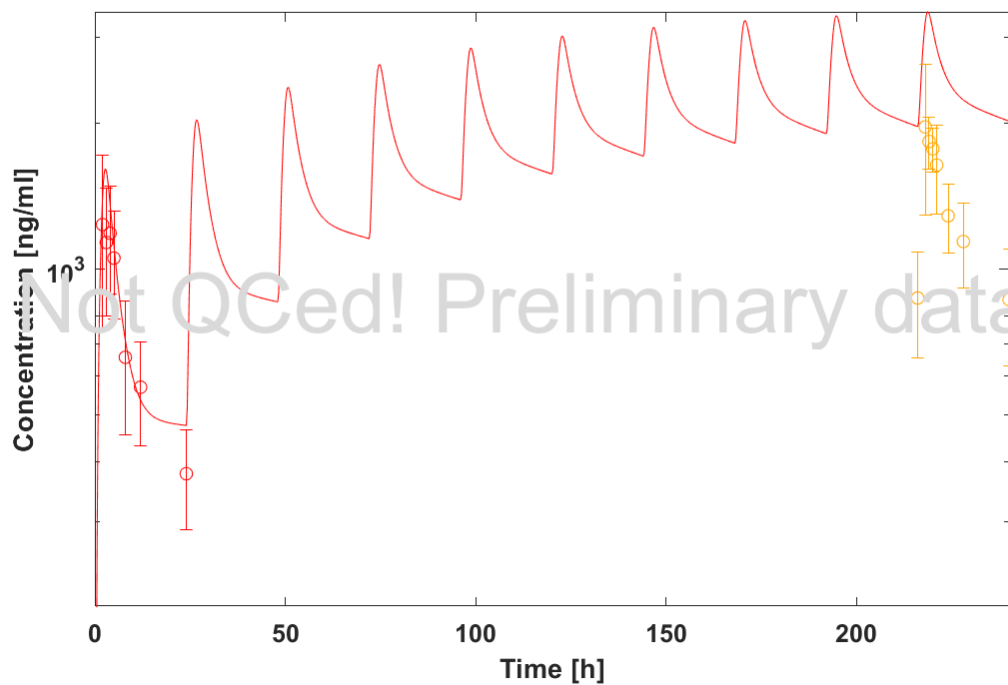
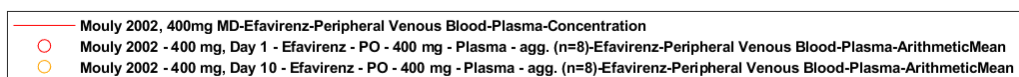
Time Profile Analysis



Time Profile Analysis

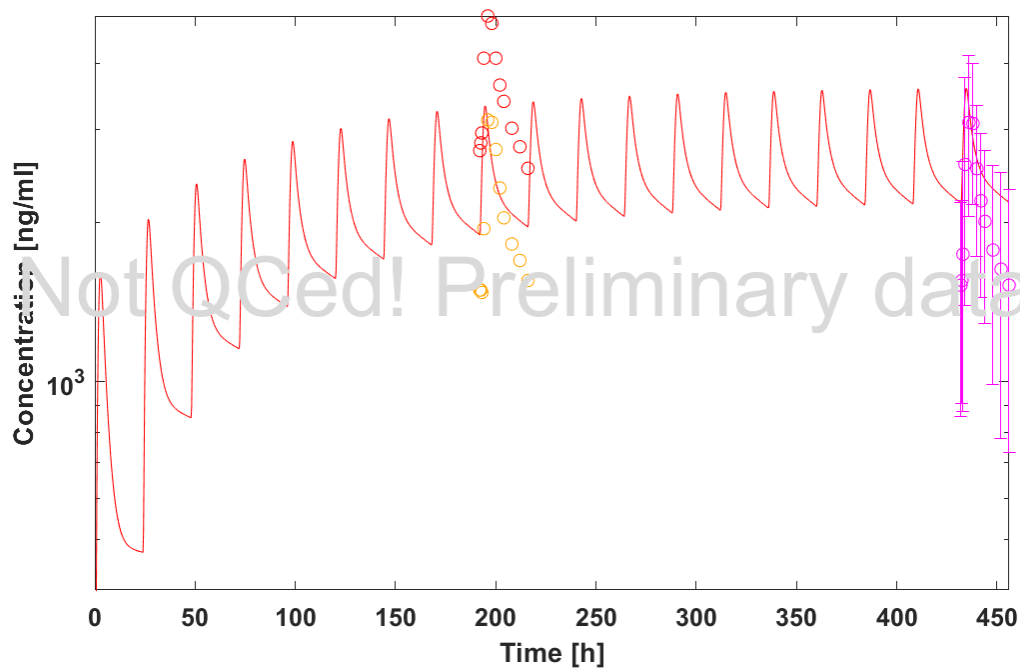


Time Profile Analysis



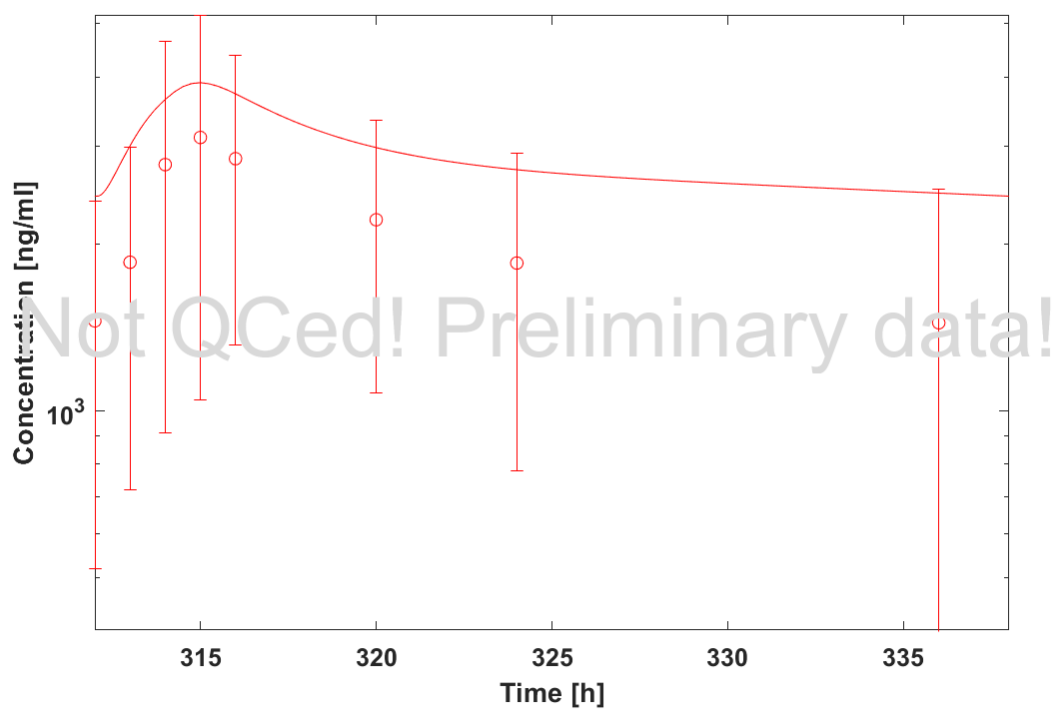
Time Profile Analysis

— Liu 2008, 400 mg PO OD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 ○ Liu 2008 - Group 1, efavirenz alone - Efavirenz - PO - 400 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=16)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 ○ Liu 2008 - Group 2, efavirenz alone - Efavirenz - PO - 400 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=11)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 ○ Liu 2008 - Group 2, efavirenz + placebo - Efavirenz - PO - 400 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=11)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



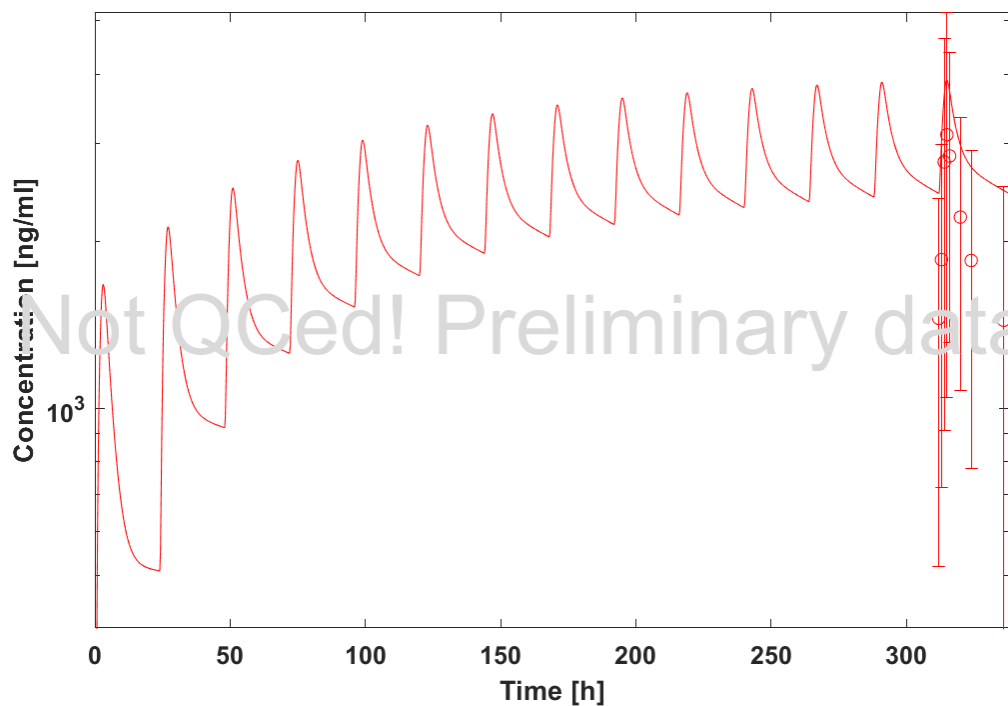
Time Profile Analysis

— Dooley 2012, 600mg MD EM-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 ○ Dooley 2012 - Extensive metabolizer - Efavirenz - PO - 600 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=34)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



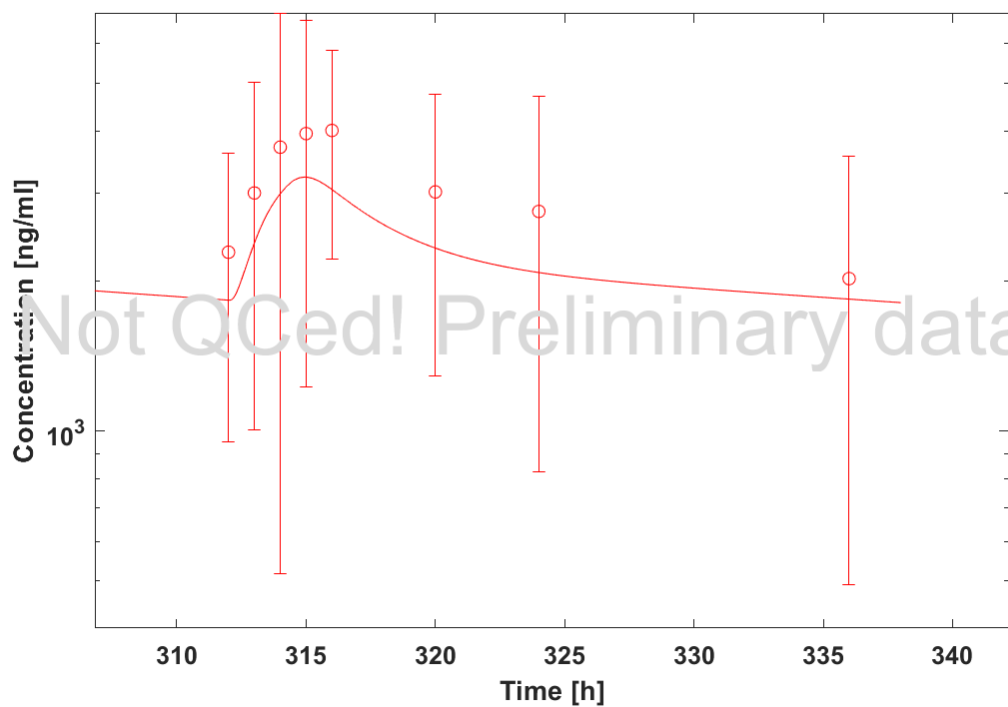
Time Profile Analysis

Dooley 2012, 600mg MD EM-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
Dooley 2012 - Extensive metabolizer - Efavirenz - PO - 600 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=34)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean

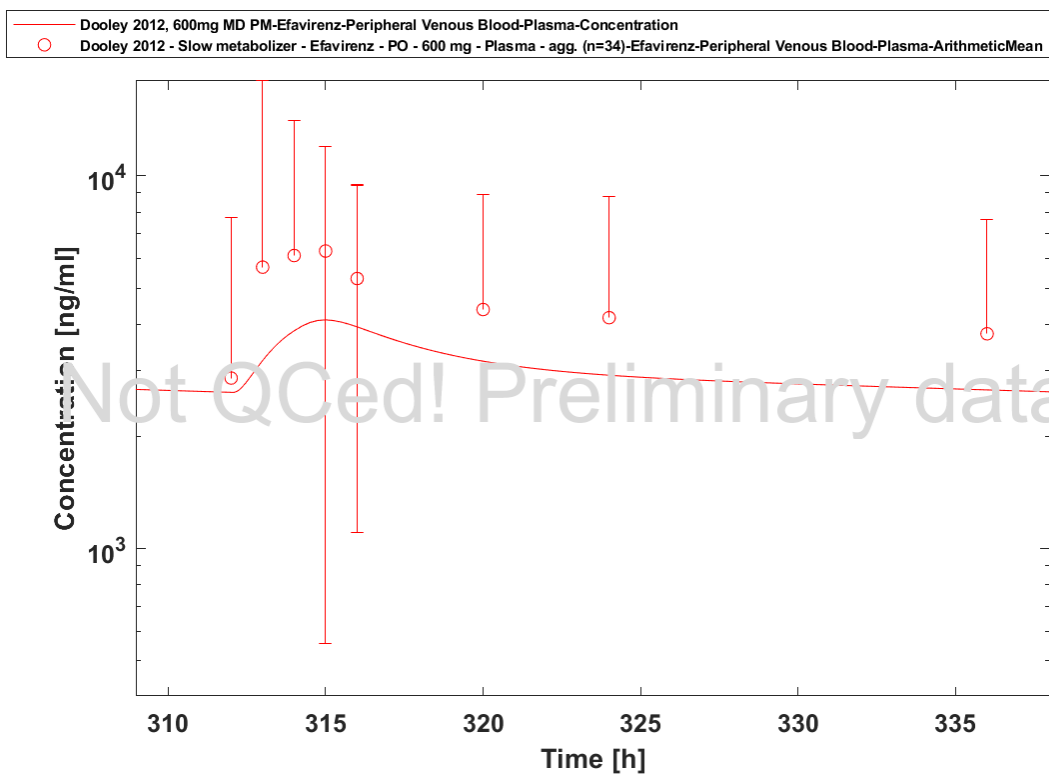


Time Profile Analysis 1

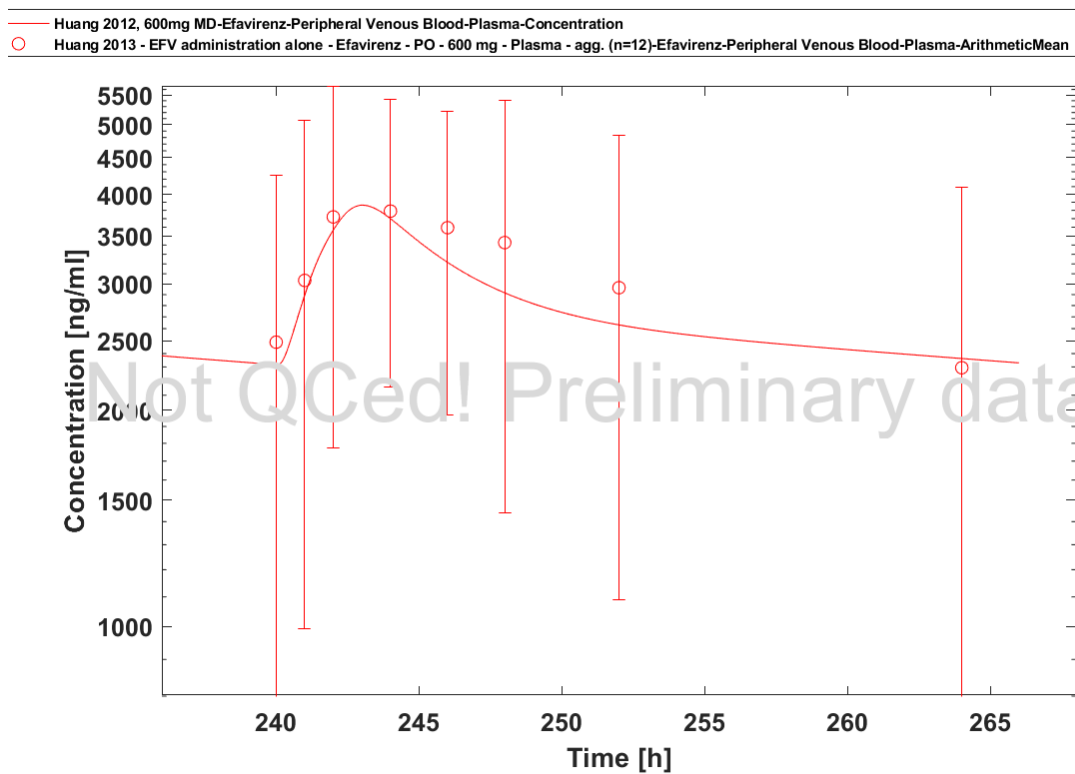
Dooley 2012, 600mg MD IM-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
Dooley 2012 - Intermediate metabolizer - Efavirenz - PO - 600 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=34)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



Time Profile Analysis



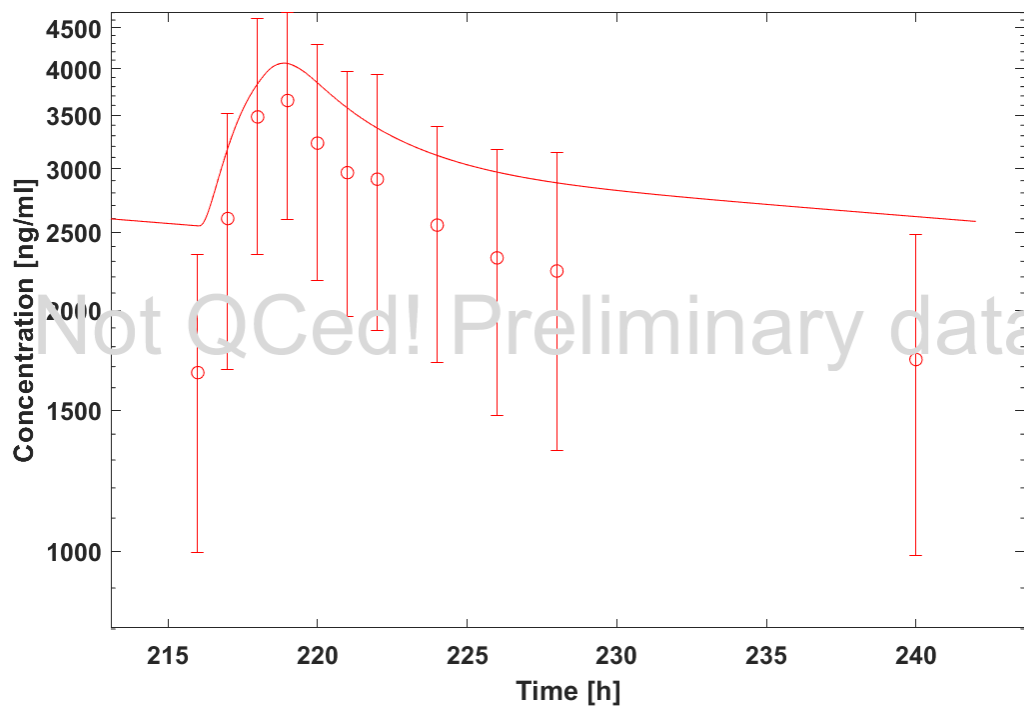
Time Profile Analysis



Time Profile Analysis

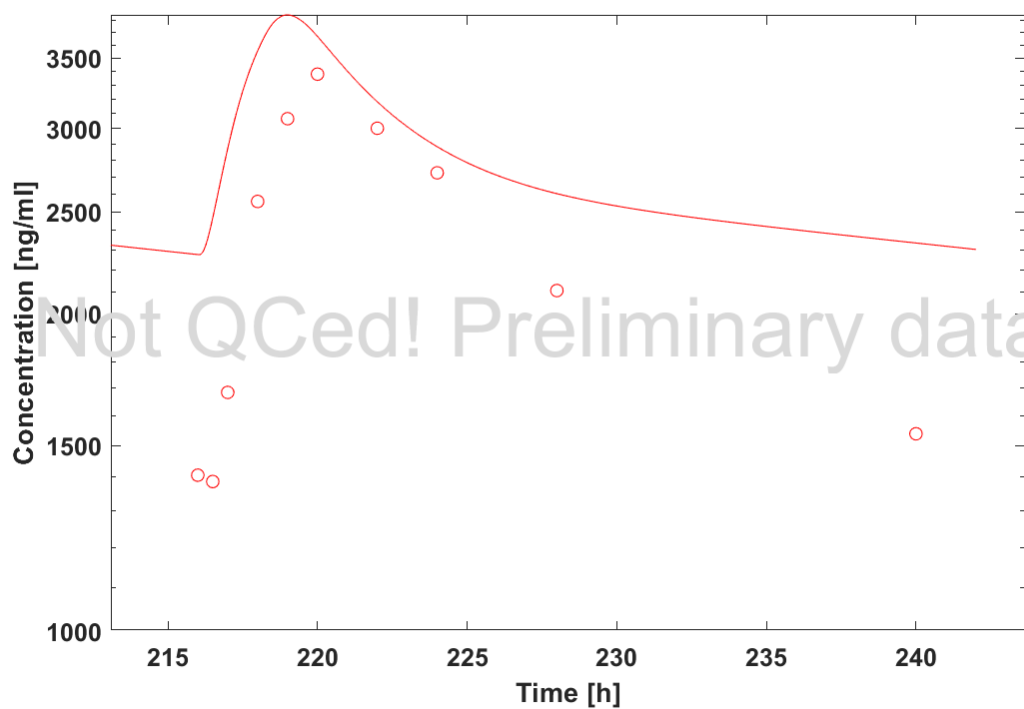


— Garg 2013, 600mg MD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
○ Garg 2013 - Efavirenz without telaprevir - Efavirenz - PO - 600 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=28)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean

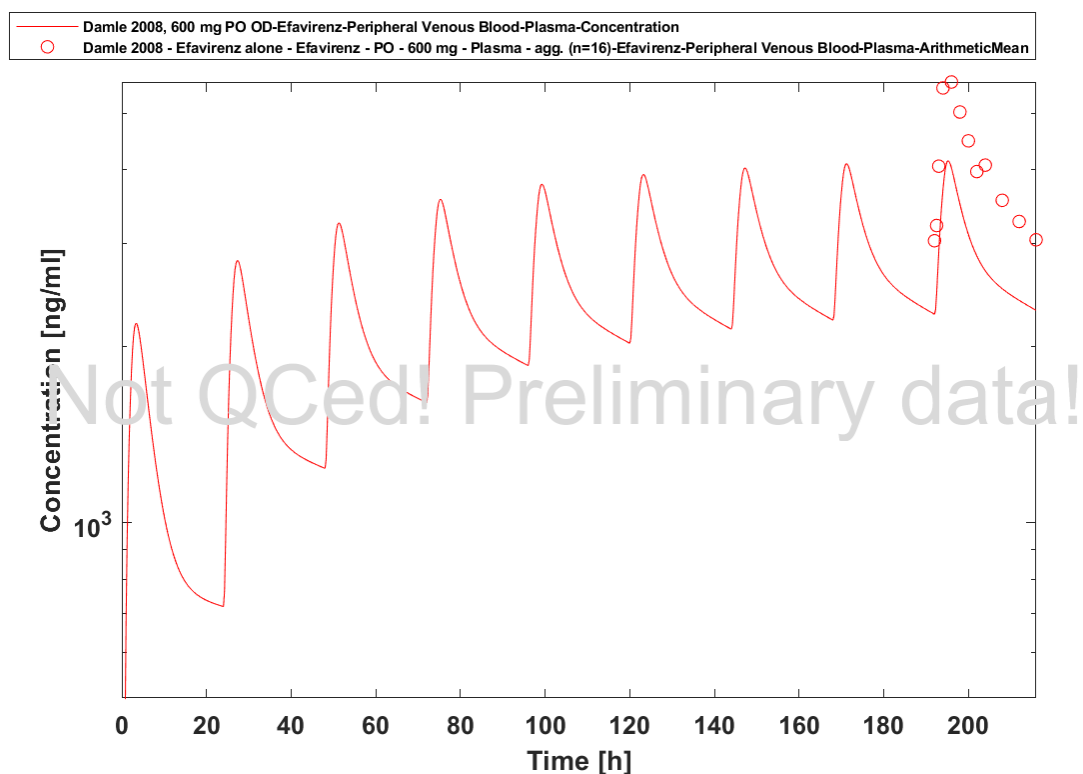


Time Profile Analysis

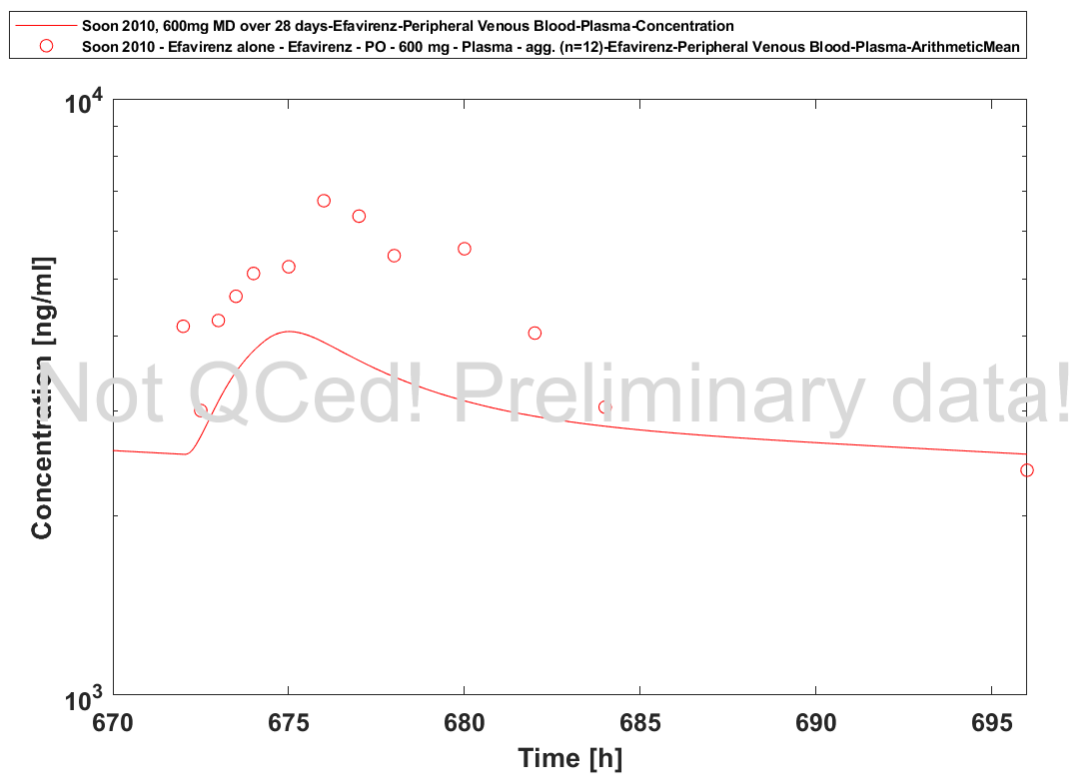
— Malvestutto 2014, 600mg PO OD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
○ Malvestutto 2014 - Efavirenz alone - Efavirenz - PO - 600 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=14)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



Time Profile Analysis



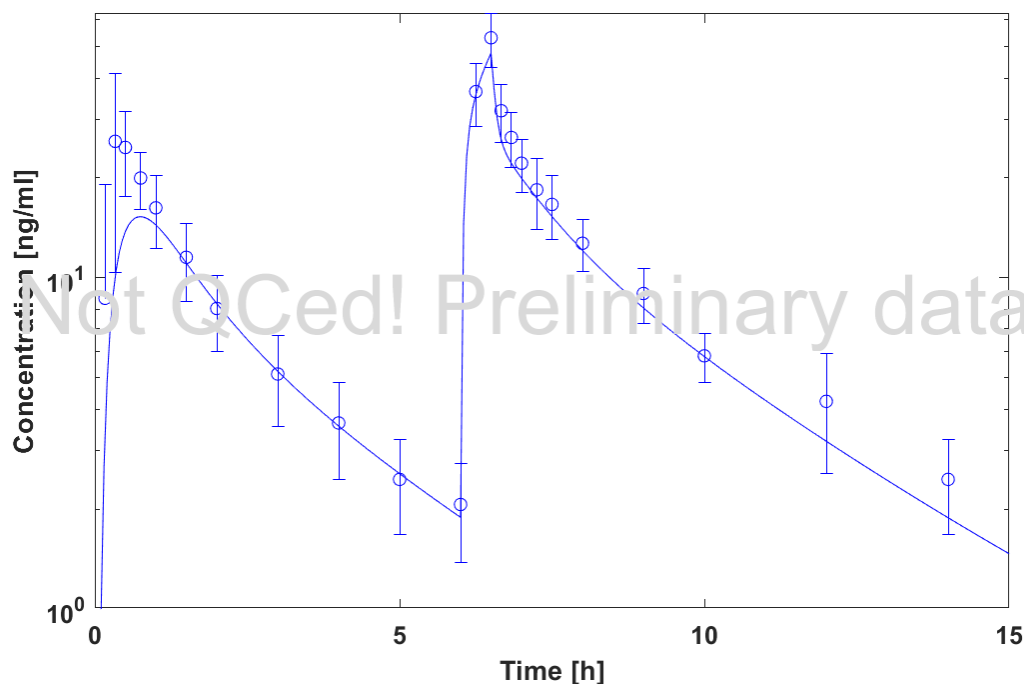
Time Profile Analysis



Time Profile Analysis

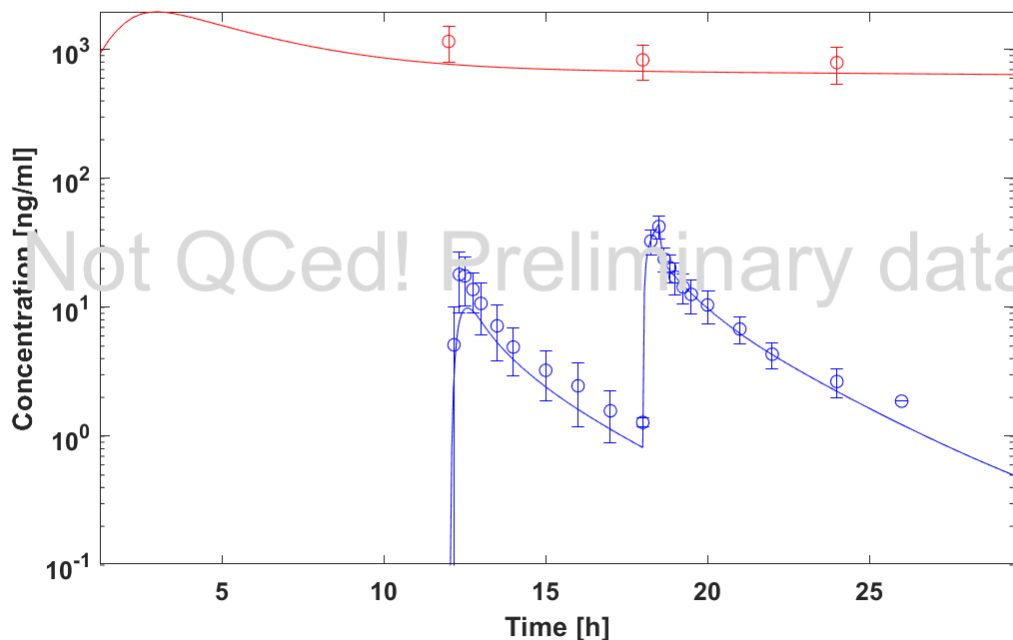
### 3.3.2 Fitted interaction with Midazolam

Mikus 2017, Midazolam alone-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 ○ Mikus 2017 - Midazolam control PO - Midazolam - PO - 4 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 ○ Mikus 2017 - Midazolam control IV - Midazolam - IV - 2 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean

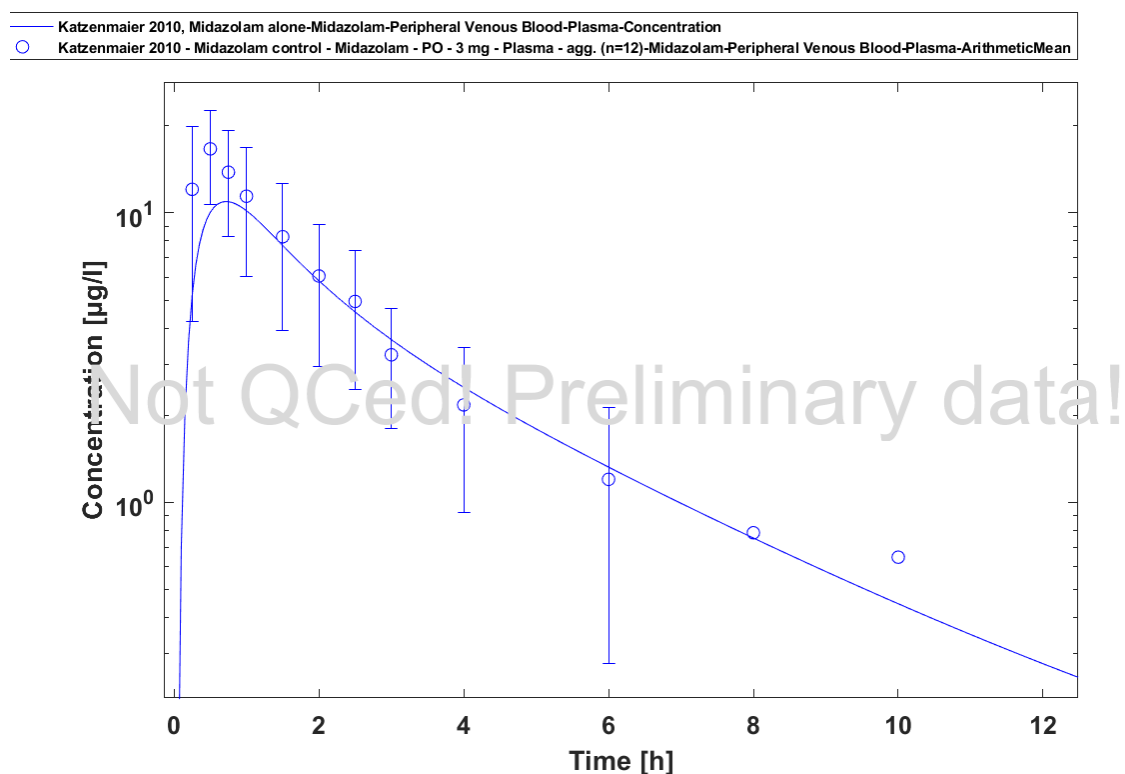


Time Profile Analysis

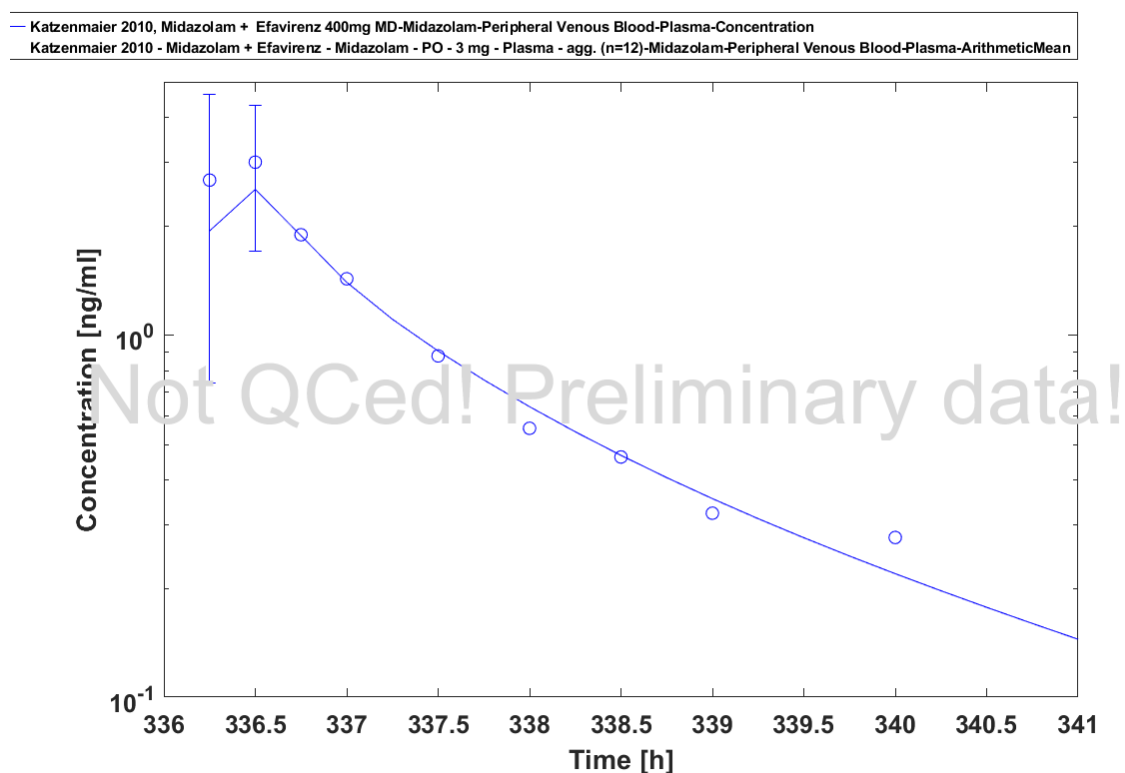
Mikus 2017, Midazolam + Efavirenz 400mg SD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 Mikus 2017, Midazolam + Efavirenz 400mg SD-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 Mikus 2017 - Efavirenz + Midazolam IV day 1 - Midazolam - IV - 2 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 Mikus 2017 - Efavirenz + Midazolam PO day 1 - Midazolam - PO - 4 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Midazolam-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 Mikus 2017 - Midazolam + Efavirenz - Efavirenz - PO - 400 mg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



Time Profile Analysis

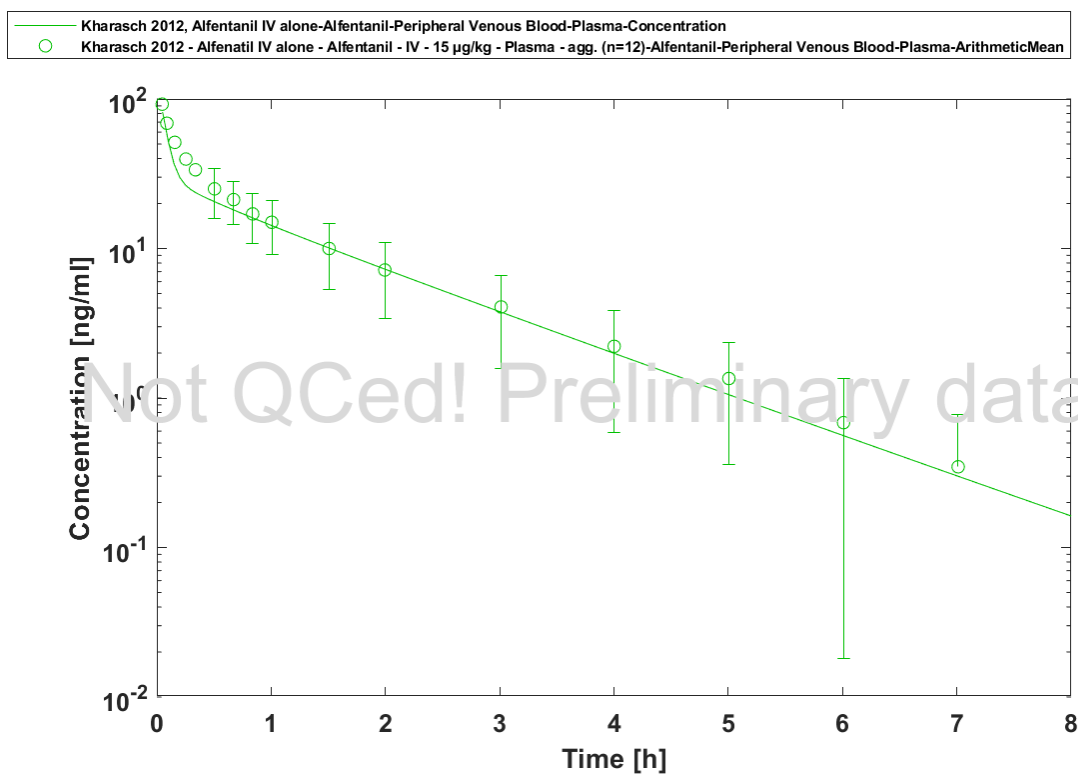


Time Profile Analysis

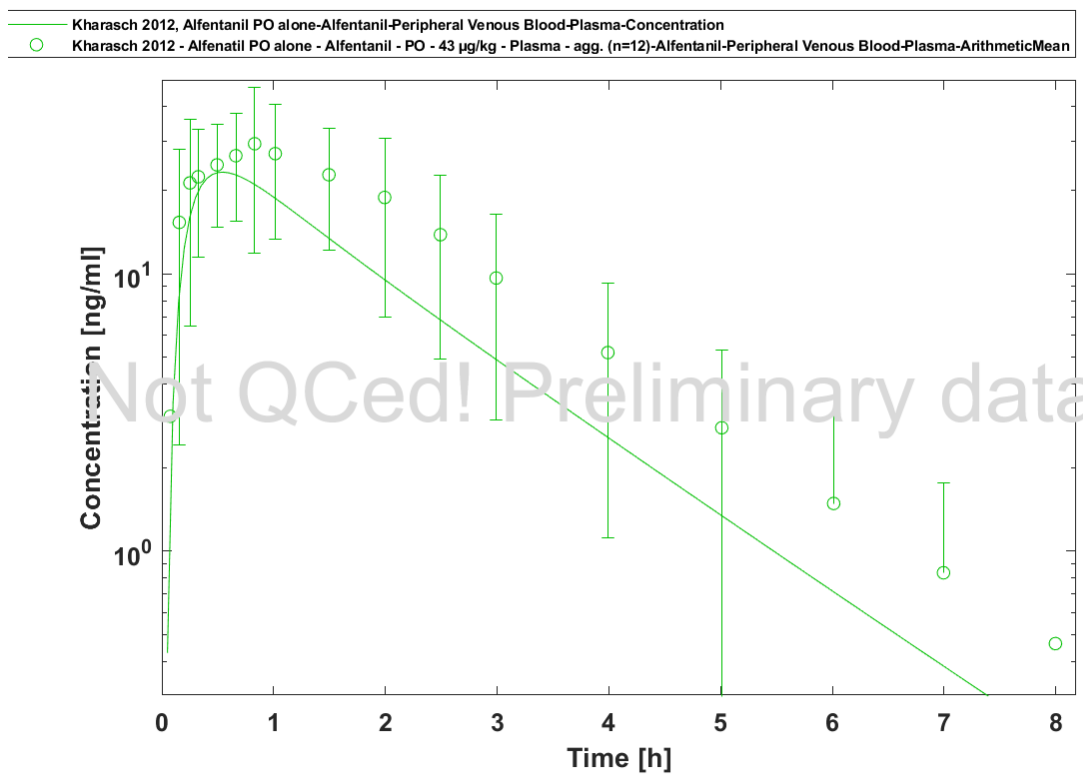


Time Profile Analysis

### 3.3.3 Model Verification: Interaction with Alfentanil

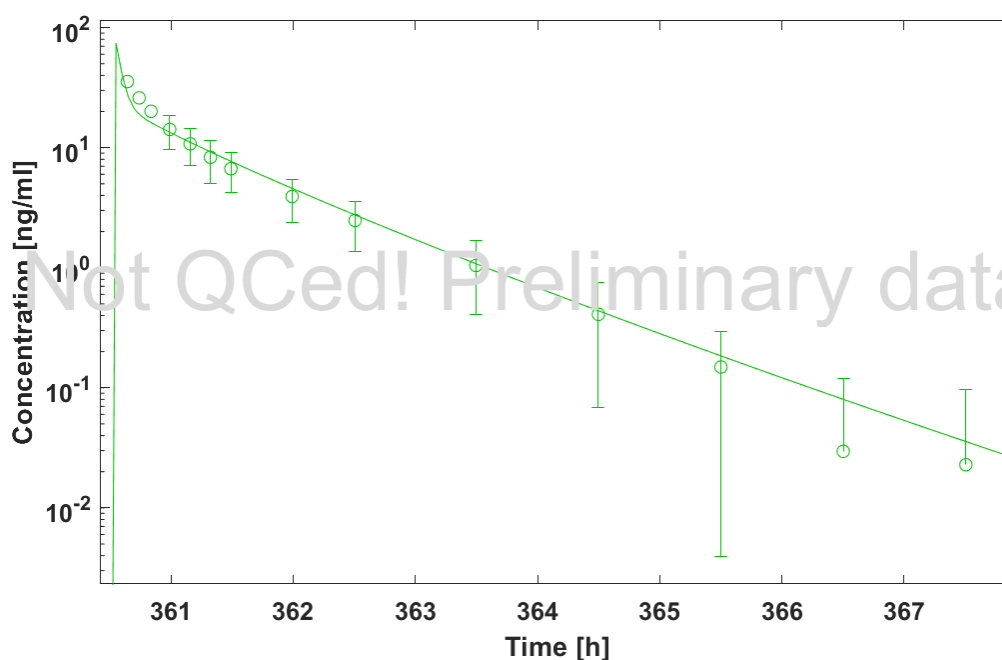


Time Profile Analysis

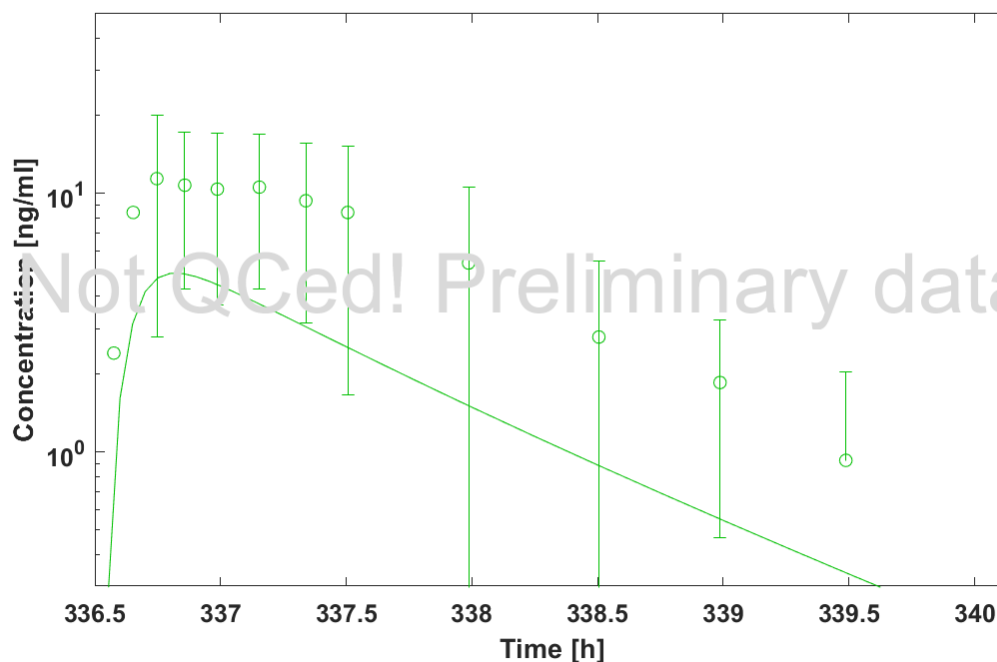


Time Profile Analysis

— Kharasch 2012, Alfentanil + Efavirenz 600 mg OD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 — Kharasch 2012, Alfentanil + Efavirenz 600 mg OD-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 Kharasch 2012 - Alfentanil IV + efavirenz - Alfentanil - IV - 15 µg/kg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 Kharasch 2012 - Alfentanil PO + efavirenz - Alfentanil - PO - 43 µg/kg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



— Kharasch 2012, Alfentanil + Efavirenz 600 mg OD-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 — Kharasch 2012, Alfentanil + Efavirenz 600 mg OD-Efavirenz-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-Concentration  
 Kharasch 2012 - Alfentanil IV + efavirenz - Alfentanil - IV - 15 µg/kg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean  
 Kharasch 2012 - Alfentanil PO + efavirenz - Alfentanil - PO - 43 µg/kg - Plasma - agg. (n=12)-Alfentanil-Peripheral Venous Blood-Plasma-ArithmeticMean



## 4 Conclusion

The herein presented PBPK model adequately describes the pharmacokinetics of efavirenz after single and multiple administration of a variety of doses to healthy adults. Furthermore, CYP3A4 induction on alfentanil can be described well with the optimized parameterization.

Apart from interaction parameters, all optimized parameters are in a close range to the measured or calculated values. EC50 values for CYP3A4 and CYP2B6 were reduced approximately 100 fold in order to reach a relevant induction.

In conclusion, the presented efavirenz PBPK model is well-suited to be applied in drug-drug-interaction scenarios.

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