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Determination of urea with special emphasis on biosensors: A Review

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Abstract

Urea is the major end product of nitrogen metabolism in humans, which is eliminated from the body mainly by the kidneys through urine but is also secreted in body fluids such as blood and saliva. Its level in urine ranges from 7-20 mg/dL, which drastically rises under pathophysiological conditions thus providing key information of renal function and diagnosis of various kidney and liver disorders. Increase in urea levels in blood, also referred to as azotemia or uremia. The chronic kidney disease (CKD) or end stage renal disease (ESRD) is generally caused due to the progressive loss of kidney function. Hence, there is an urgent need of determination of urea in biological fluids to diagnose these diseases at their early stage. Among the various methods available for detection of urea, most are complicated and require timeconsuming sample pre-treatment, expensive instrumental set-up and trained persons to operate, specifically for chromatographic methods. The biosensing methods overcome these drawbacks, as these are simple, fast, specific and highly sensitive and can also be applied for detection of urea in vivo. This review presents the principles of various analytical methods for determination of urea with special emphasis on biosensors. The use of various nanostructures and electrochemical microfluidic paper based analytical device (EµPAD) are suggested for further development of urea biosensors.

Keywords: Urea; Urea biosensors; Nano-materials; Immobilization; Serum; Urine

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