

## Innovative Silica-Based RPLC Preparative Columns: Enhanced Loadability and Peak Shapes

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Fang Xia, Jie Y. Cavanaugh, Diane M. Diehl, Claude R. Mallet, Jeffrey R. Mazzeo

Waters Corporation

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### Abstract

In the following experiments, we demonstrate superior peak shapes (under both low and high mass loading), enhanced efficiency, direct scale-up, and the benefit of these attributes in an impurity isolation and identification application utilizing Waters SunFire analytical- and prep-scale reversed-phase HPLC columns.

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### Introduction

Maximizing column load is one of the goals of preparative chromatography. However, tailing peaks limit the resolution and hence the mass loading of a column. Waters SunFire family of HPLC columns was designed to provide symmetric peak shapes and high mass loading. Innovative bonding and end-capping processes were used to synthesize these silica-based reversed-phase packing materials with higher surface coverage and reduced silanol activity.

SunFire column chemistry provides higher efficiencies, more symmetric peak shapes, and extremely high mass loading for acids, bases and neutral analytes. Two chemistries (C<sub>18</sub> and C<sub>8</sub>) were developed to meet the requirements of the chemist. Additionally, years of research led to the discovery that the packed bed density of a column is the key to manufacturing stable and efficient preparative columns. Manufactured with the unique patent-pending Optimum Bed Density (OBD) design, SunFire Prep OBD Columns have the same packed bed density as analytical columns.

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## Experimental Conditions and Results

### 1. Peak Shape - Low Mass Load

Three beta-blocker drugs were separated on both a SunFire C<sub>18</sub> column and a Luna C<sub>18</sub>(2) column (Phenomenex Inc., Torrance, CA). The tailing factors of all the analytes are listed on the chromatograms. Less peak tailing is observed on the SunFire column at 250 µg total mass load, as shown in Figure 1.

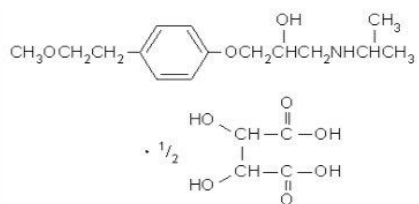
### LC Conditions

Columns:	SunFire C <sub>18</sub> and Luna C <sub>18</sub> (2), 4.6 × 50 mm, 5 µm
Mobile phase A:	0.1% TFA in H <sub>2</sub> O
Mobile phase B:	0.1% TFA in ACN
Flow rate:	1.4 mL/min
Gradient:	5 min gradient, 5% to 70% B
Sample:	(1) nadolol (10 mg/mL) (2) metoprolol (10 mg/mL) (3) propranolol (5 mg/mL), all in DMSO

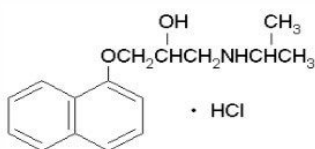
Injection volume:	10 $\mu$ L
Mass load:	250 $\mu$ g
Detection:	UV @ 260 nm
LC system:	Waters AutoPurification System



Nadolol



Metoprolol



Propranolol

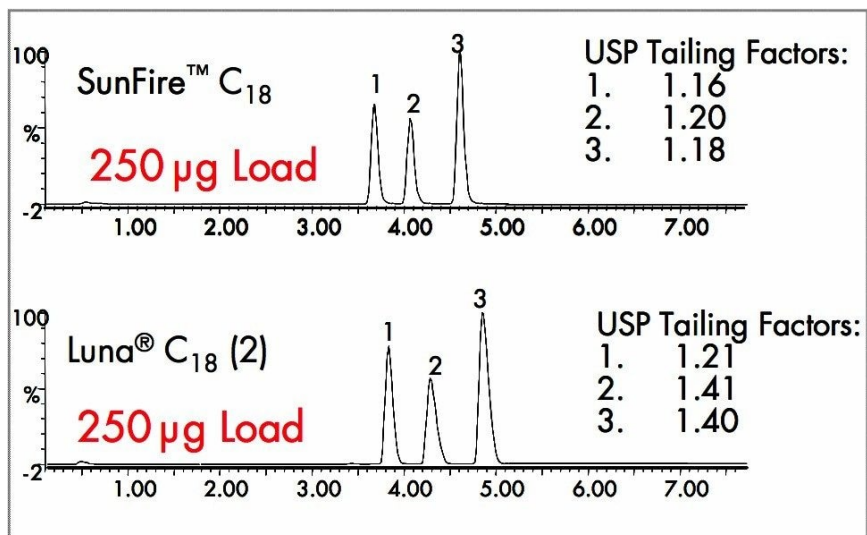


Figure 1. Peak shapes under low mass load conditions.

## 2. Peak Shape - High Mass Load

Three beta-blocker drugs were separated under high load on both a SunFire C<sub>18</sub> and Luna C<sub>18</sub>(2). The tailing factors of all the analytes are listed on the chromatograms. Superior peak shapes are observed on the SunFire column under 4.5 mg total mass load, as seen in Figure 2.

## LC Conditions

Columns:	SunFire C <sub>18</sub> and Luna C <sub>18</sub> (2), 4.6 × 50 mm, 5 µm
Mobile phase A:	0.1% TFA in H <sub>2</sub> O
Mobile phase B:	0.1% TFA in ACN
Flow rate:	1.4 mL/min
Gradient:	5 min gradient, 5% to 70% B
Sample:	(1) nadolol (100 mg/mL)

(2) metoprolol (100 mg/mL)  
(3) propranolol (50 mg/mL), all in DMSO

Injection volume: 18  $\mu$ L

Mass load: 4.5  $\mu$ g

Detection: UV @ 260 nm

LC system: Waters AutoPurification System

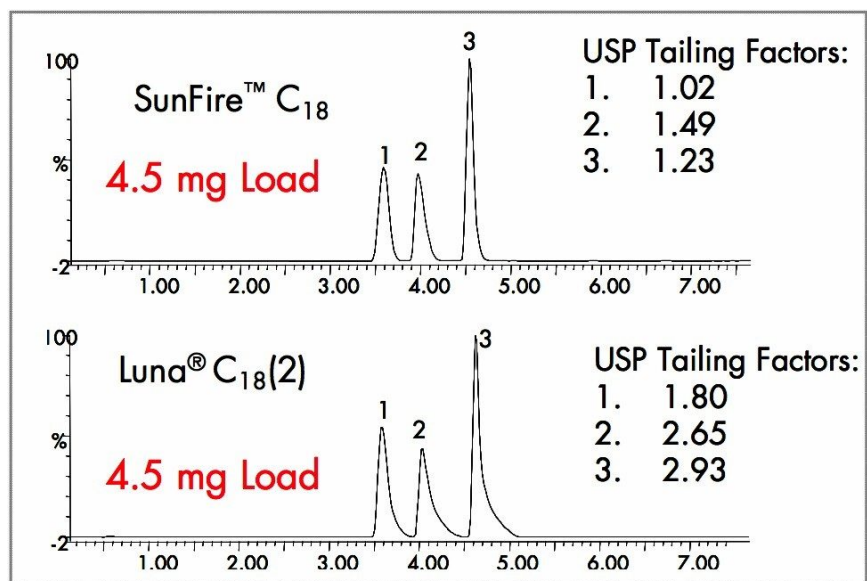


Figure 2. Peak shape under high mass load conditions.

### 3. Mass Loading Capacity

Three beta-blocker drugs were separated on a SunFire Prep OBD C<sub>18</sub> column. The total mass load on this column is 100 mg. As shown in Figure 3, even under such high mass load, the peak shapes for all three analytes are excellent.

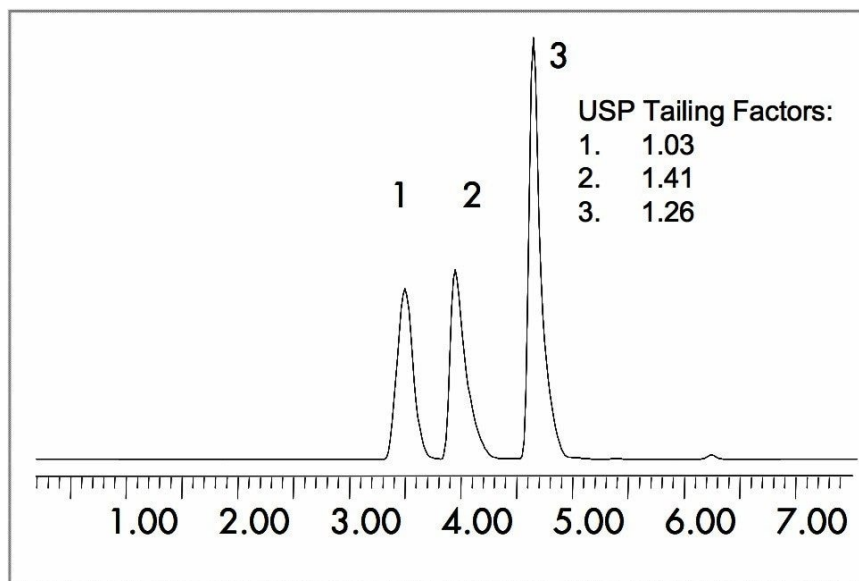


Figure 3. Mass loading capacity on a 19 x 50 mm SunFire Prep OBD C<sub>18</sub> column.

## 4. Efficiency

Separations of three antifungal drugs at 1250 µg loading on six popular commercial RPLC C<sub>18</sub> columns are shown in Figure 4. The same mass loading and gradient conditions were applied on all the columns. Econazole (peak 2) and miconazole (peak 3) have very similar structures with only a chlorine atom difference, which challenges column efficiency.

Resolution values of the last two peaks are listed on each chromatogram. Baseline resolutions are achieved on both SunFire C<sub>18</sub> and Waters Symmetry C<sub>18</sub> columns. None of the other C<sub>18</sub> columns achieve resolution higher than 1.50.

## LC Conditions

Columns: SunFire Prep OBD C<sub>18</sub>, 19 × 50 mm, 5 µm

Mobile phase A: 0.1% TFA in H<sub>2</sub>O

Mobile phase B:	0.1% TFA in ACN
Flow rate:	23.9 mL/min
Gradient:	5 min gradient, 5% to 70% B
Sample:	(1) nadolol (100 mg/mL) (2) metoprolol (100 mg/mL) (3) propranolol (50 mg/mL), all in DMSO
Injection volume:	400 $\mu$ L
Mass load:	100 $\mu$ g
Detection:	UV @ 260 nm
LC system:	Waters AutoPurification System

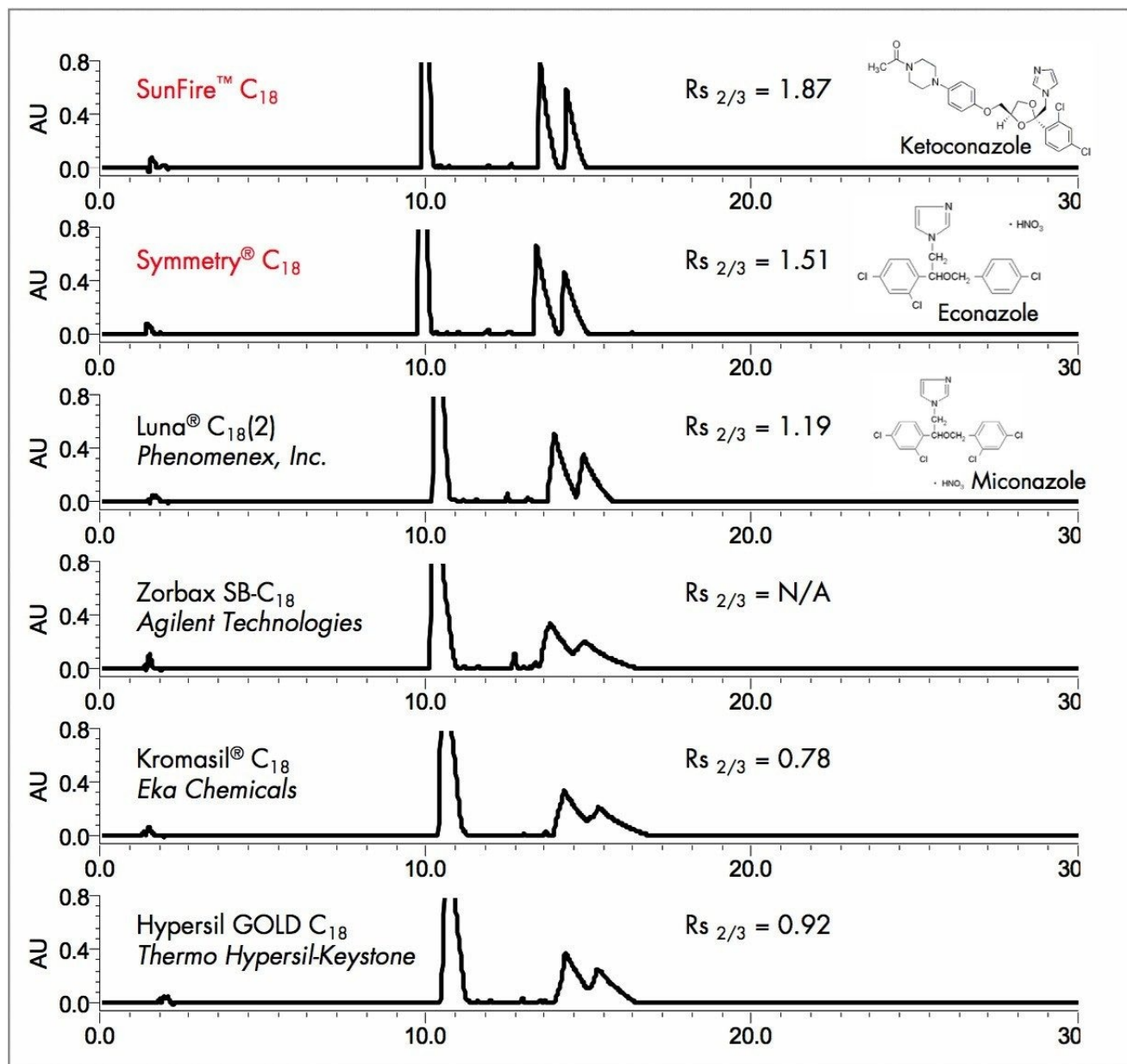


Figure 4. Comparison of column efficiencies among leading commercially available C<sub>18</sub> columns.

## 5. Direct Scale-up

The separation of three acidic analytes was successfully scaled-up from an analytical-scale to a preparative-scale SunFire C<sub>18</sub> column without the need for additional method development – a significant time saver.

## LC Conditions

Columns:	Six brands listed in Figure 4, 4.6 × 150 mm, 5 µm
Mobile phase A:	0.1% TFA in H <sub>2</sub> O
Mobile phase B:	0.1% TFA in ACN
Flow rate:	1.0 mL/min
Gradient:	15 min gradient, 20% to 85% B
Sample:	(1) ketoconazole (25 mg/mL) (2) econazole (50 mg/mL) (3) miconazole (50 mg/mL), all in DMSO
Injection volume:	10 µL
Temperature:	30 °C
Detection:	UV @ 254 nm
LC system:	Waters Alliance HT System with a Waters 2996 PDA Detector

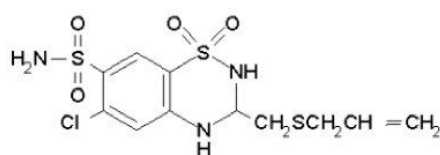
## Analytical-Scale Gradient

Time (min)	%A	%B
0.00	80	20
1.00	80	20

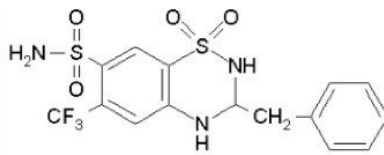
Time (min)	%A	%B
6.00	5	95
7.00	5	95
7.01	80	20
11.00	80	20

### Prep-Scale Gradient

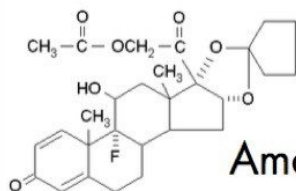
Time (min)	%A	%B
0.00	80	20
1.91	80	20
6.91	5	95
7.91	5	95
8.01	80	20
12.00	80	20



**Althiazide**



**Bendroflumethiazide**



**Amcinonide**

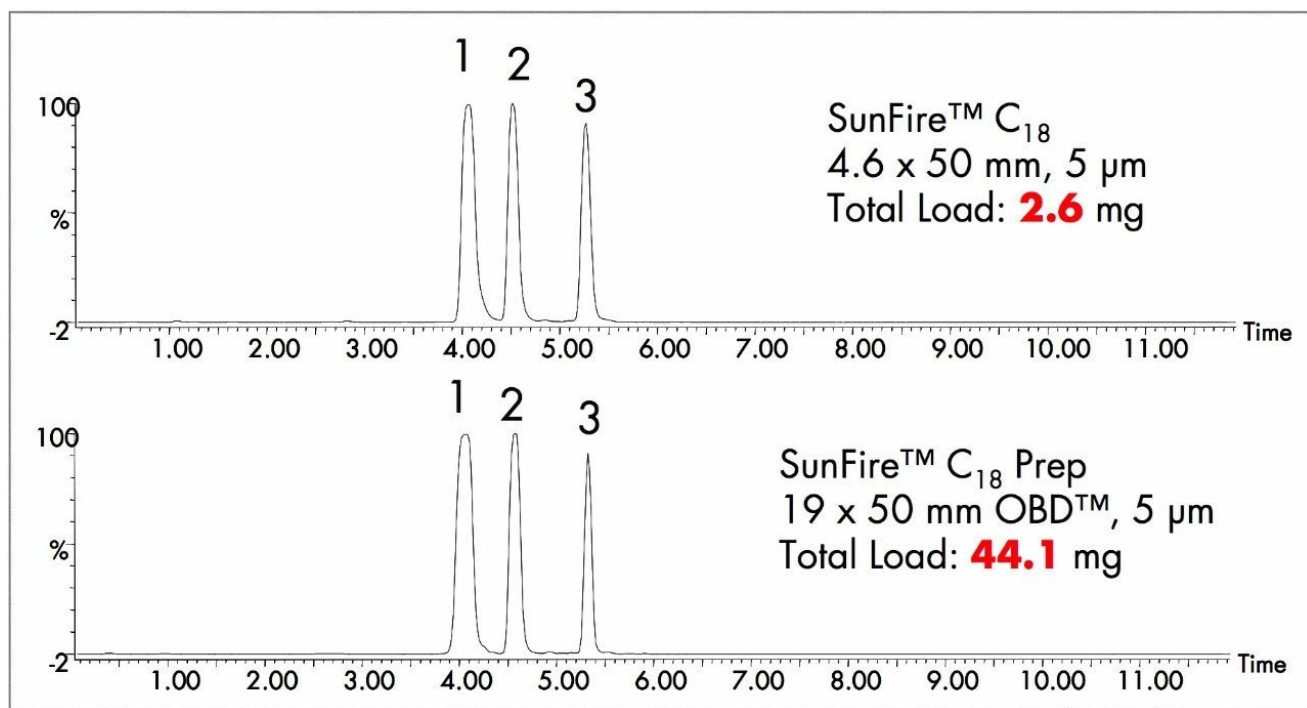


Figure 5. Direct scale-up from an analytical-scale to a prep-scale SunFire C<sub>18</sub> column.

## 6. Impurity Isolation and Identification

Nimodipine is a calcium channel blocker, which acts on blood and heart vessels to increase blood flow to injured tissue. Several impurities may be formed during synthesis. The existence of impurities even in small amounts may influence the efficacy and safety of the active pharmaceutical ingredient. Therefore, it is important to identify

impurities.

Highly efficient isolation and direct scale-up was observed on SunFire analytical and preparative C<sub>18</sub> columns, as shown in Figure 6. Each impurity was separated and collected on the preparative column and then analyzed by MS/MS. Daughter ion scans of nimodipine and its impurities resulted in structural identification of the impurities.

## LC Conditions

Columns:	SunFire C <sub>18</sub> (analytical-scale), 4.6 × 100 mm, 5 μm; SunFire Prep OBD C <sub>18</sub> (prep-scale), 19 x 100 mm, 5 μm
Mobile phase A:	0.1% Formic acid in H <sub>2</sub> O
Mobile phase B:	0.1% Formic acid in ACN
Flow rate:	1.4 mL/min (analytical-scale); 23.9 mL/min (prep-scale)
Gradient:	10min gradient, 30% to 90% B
Sample:	Crude nimodipine in DMSO (30 mg/mL)
Detection:	UV @ 290 nm
LC system:	Waters AutoPurification System

## MS Conditions

Interface:	ESI+
Capillary:	3.0 kV

Source temp.:	150 °C
Cone:	30 V
Desolvation temp.:	350 °C
Extractor:	3.0 V
Cone gas:	50 L/hr
RF lens:	0.3 V
Desolvation gas:	550 L/hr
MS system:	Waters Micromass Quattro micro Mass Spectrometer

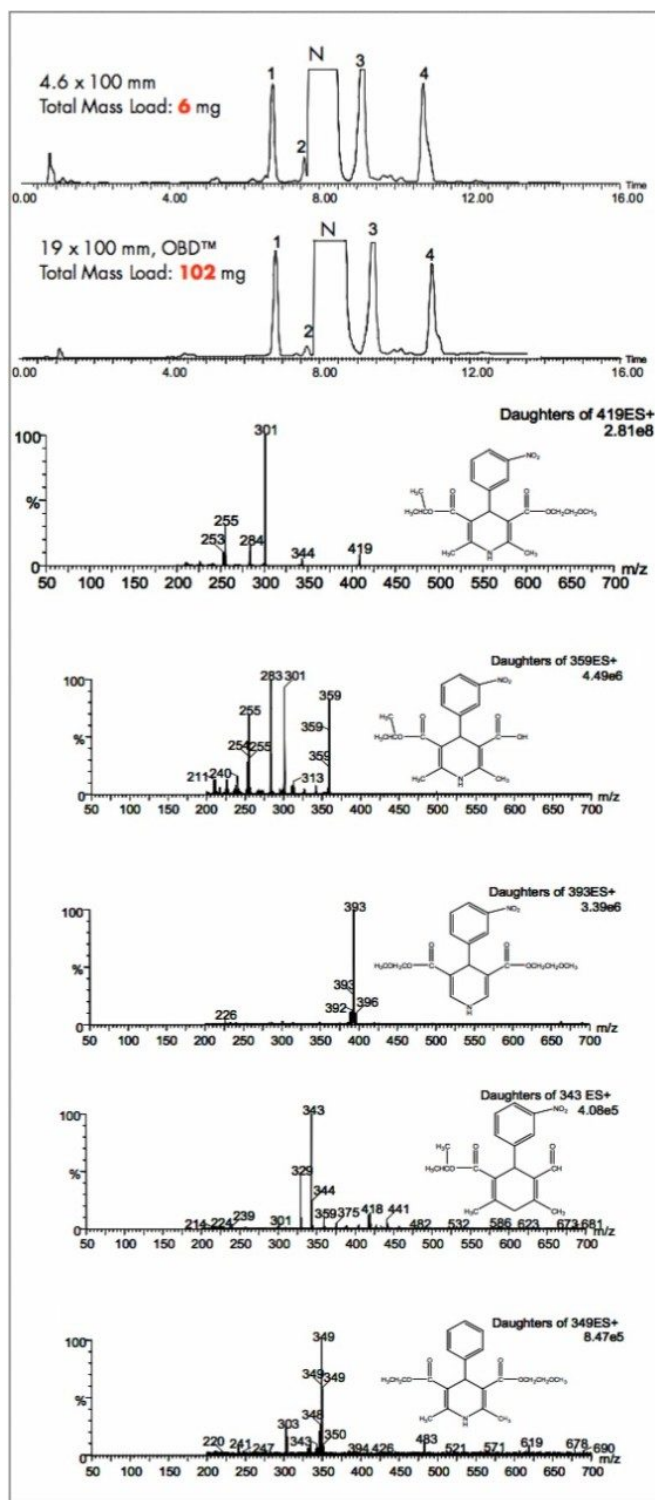


Figure 6. Isolation and structural identification of nimodipine and its

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*impurities on SunFire C<sub>18</sub> columns.*

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## Conclusion

Waters SunFire HPLC columns are synthesized with innovative bonding technology to achieve significantly higher surface coverage, as well as a more efficient end-capping technology to successfully reduce surface silanol activity. Therefore, for bases, acids, and neutrals, more symmetric and less tailing peak shapes can be achieved using SunFire columns, which leads to higher mass loading on preparative columns. Additionally, SunFire Prep OBD columns are created with the unique Optimum Bed Density design process, which produces more stable columns and ensures linear and streamlined scale-up from analytical to preparative applications. SunFire columns are also compatible with mass spectrometry detection, providing sharp peaks, good sensitivity, large peak capacities, and very low bleed – ideal for impurity isolation and identification.

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## Featured Products

AutoPurification System <<https://www.waters.com/10007147>>

Alliance HPLC <<https://www.waters.com/514248>>

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