STOMACH-SPECIFIC MUCOADHESIVE NANOPARTICLES AS A CONTROLLED RELEASE DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEM

KHARIA ANKIT ANAND 1, 2, SINGHAI AKHLESH KUMAR 2, 3

1. *Oriental College of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy, Thakral Nagar Raisen Road Bhopal Madhya Pradesh, 462021 India, Uttarakhanda Technical University, Department of Pharmacy, Chandanwadi Prem Nagar Sudhowala Dehradun Uttarakhand, 248007, India. 2. Lakshmi Narayan College of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutics, Raisen Road, Bhopal Madhya Pradesh, 462021, India, Email - ankitandkharia@yahoo.co.in

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ABSTRACT

In recent years scientific and technological advancement have been made in the rate controlled oral drug delivery system by overcoming physiological adversities, such as short gastric residence time (GRT) and unpredictable gastric emptying time (GET). So an interest increased towards novel dosage forms, that can retarded in the stomach for a prolonged and predictable period of time. The concept of such novel dosage forms is to decrease the GI transit rate of the drug delivery system by attachment to the mucosal layer, thereby increasing the overall time for drug absorption. A further advantage of such delivery systems is that the drug no longer must diffuse through the luminal contents in order to reach the mucosal epithelium. Various polymers have been used in the formulation of stomach specific mucoadhesive nanoparticles for drug delivery to increase therapeutic benefit, while minimizing side effects. Here we have discussed about concept of gastric emptying, absorption window, potential drug candidates, technological development evaluation and applications for stomach-specific mucoadhesive nanoparticles. Marketed products for oral nanoparticulate drug delivery systems are also discussed in this review.

Keywords: Mucoadhesive, Nanoparticulate drug delivery systems, Controlled release, Sustained release, Gastric residence time.

INTRODUCTION

The targeting of drugs to the mucus/mucosal lining of the gastrointestinal tract (GIT) may be achieved through the use of bioadhesives. A bioadhesive has been defined as a synthetic or biological material which is capable of adhering to a biological substrate or tissue. When the biological substrate is mucus, the term “mucoadhesive” has been employed and when the biological tissue involved is the stomach, the term “gastroadhesive” has been employed. Other definitions suggest that bioadhesives should remain attached to the biological substrate “for an extended period of time”, although this period of time is never quantified. The period of time a bioadhesive is required to remain attached to a biological substrate will vary according to the target site and the condition being treated. For the purposes of drug targeting within the GIT, the phrase “for an extended period of time” should be replaced with the phrase “for a period of time which allows a reduction in dosage frequency compared to conventional, non-adhesive dosage forms” [1].

The GIT is the most preferred and most commonly used route for the delivery of drugs [2]. Physiological properties of the GIT which favor absorption are the relatively large volume of fluid available, the peristaltic movements of the stomach and intestines, the large mucosal area over which absorption can occur, and the extensive blood flow through the mesenteric circulation [3]. Because of this preference for the oral route, research has been directed towards the development of effective oral dosage forms. Bioadhesives may be able to delay the gastric emptying and intestinal transit of pharmaceutical dosage forms via their interaction with either the mucus lining or mucosa of the GIT [4]. This novel approach to improving the oral bioavailability of drugs is desirable since localization for the purposes of permeability modification and protease inhibition may also be achieved [5], which has important implications for the oral delivery of proteins and polypeptide drug molecules. It has been claimed that a substantial improvement in the concept of bioadhesive drug delivery may be possible if bioadhesion could be achieved by means of specific, receptor mediated interactions between the mucosal cell surface and bioadhesive. Although, as will be discussed later, such interactions can be observed in vitro, this novel concept appears to neglect the fact that the adhesive still has first of all to penetrate the layer of mucus prior to attachment to the mucosal cell surface. The success of such systems, therefore, depends on how rapidly and successfully the adhesive can diffuse across the mucus layer. Once beneath the mucus layer, removal of the BDDS by the movements of the luminal contents may be delayed by the presence of the mucus layer itself. The bonds formed upon contact with the mucosal surface, however, must be strong enough to withstand the forces of mucus turnover and transit along the GIT, otherwise such systems can offer no advantages over non-specific bioadhesive [1].

Nanoparticulate dosage forms that can be retained in the stomach by adhering to the mucosal layer of the stomach can be called as stomach specific mucoadhesive nanoparticles (SSMN) as shown in figure 1. SSMN can improve controlled delivery of drugs, by continuously releasing the drug for a prolonged period before to its absorption site, thus ensuring optimal bioavailability. Drugs with a narrow absorption window are mostly associated with improved absorption at the jejunum and ileum due to the enhanced absorption properties of these sites (e.g. large surface area), or because of enhanced solubility in the stomach as opposed to the more distal parts of GIT.

Figure 1: Drug absorption in (a) Conventional dosage forms (b) Stomach specific mucoadhesive nanoparticles (SSMN).
The types of drugs that benefit from using stomach specific mucoadhesive nanoparticles includes drugs that act locally in the stomach (e.g. tetracycline and antacids), drugs with low solubility at high pH values (e.g. verapamil, diazepam, propranolol, metoprolol and chloridiazepoxide), drugs that are primarily absorbed in the stomach (e.g. salbutamol, albuterol, sotalol and levodopa), drugs with a narrow window of absorption, i.e. drugs that are absorbed mainly from the proximal part of the small intestine (e.g. riboflavin, acyclovir, nitrofurantoin and allopurinol), drugs that absorb rapidly from the gastrointestinal tract (e.g. amoxicillin), drugs that degrade in the colon (e.g. ranitidine and metoprolol), and drugs that are unstable in intestinal fluids (e.g. captopril and famotidine). Longer residence time in the stomach could be advantageous for local action especially in the upper part of the small intestine, namely for the treatment of peptic ulcer disease [6, 7]. The lists of potential drug candidates for stomach specific mucoadhesive drug delivery systems are given in table 1.

**Table 1: Potential Drug Candidates for SSMN [7]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acyclovir</th>
<th>Riboflavin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alendronate</td>
<td>Riserdonate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atenolol</td>
<td>Fluoroura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captopril</td>
<td>Diazepam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The patent was granted to David AE et al., for mucoadhesive nanocomposite system. The invention relates to a drug delivery system that will adhere to stomach mucosurface as shown in figure 2. The invention also relates to a composite drug delivery system wherein a chitosan polymer is encapsulated with surface modified colloidal nanoparticles for the treatment of peptic ulcers caused by Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) by delivering a nanopore composite of chitosan biopolymer and a drug which is effective for treating H. pylori in proximity to sites infected by H. pylori [8].

**ADVANTAGES OF SSMN**

1. SSMN greatly improve stomach pharmacotherapy through local drug release, which leads to high drug concentrations at the gastric mucosa (eradicating Helicobacter pylori from sub mucosal tissue of the stomach), making it possible to treat duodenal ulcers, gastritis and oesophagitis, and reduce the risk of gastric carcinoma.
2. SSMN can be used as carriers for drugs with so-called absorption windows. These substances are antiviral, antifungal and antibacterial agents (e.g. sulfonamides, quinolones, penicillins, cephalosporins and tetracycline) are taken up only from very specific site of gastrointestinal tract (GIT).
3. SSMN have been recommended to achieve sustained drug delivery. Improved patient compliance and convenience have been reported due to less frequent drug administration and the nature of the drug's release kinetics. Reduction of fluctuation in drug blood concentration and maximum utilization of the drug with a decrease in total adverse effects have been reported, with improved absolute bioavailability of the drug in SSMN (e.g. famotidine). SSMN provide maintenance of systemic drug concentration within the therapeutic window, and provide site specific drug delivery. Drugs with absorption sites in the upper small intestine, such as furosemide and riboflavin can be typically formulated using this system [7].

**LIMITATIONS OF SSMN**

1. To prevent adsorption to any ingested food, SSMN would need to be administered on an empty stomach [9].
2. SSMN are not suitable for the drugs that have solubility or stability problems in the gastric fluid and may cause irritation to gastric mucosa [10].
GASTRO-INTESTINAL MUCUS

The composition of gastro-intestinal mucus:

Mucus is composed predominately of water (95%), the remainder being glycoprotein, sloughed epithelial cells, proteins, electrolytes, bacteria and in certain disease states, DNA. However, even though the glycoprotein molecules only constitute 2-3 % of native mucus, are responsible for the bulk of mucus gel properties. The gastro-intestinal tract (GIT) is lined with a layer of mucus which performs a number of physiological functions. One such function is that of providing a barrier to acid in the stomach by presenting an unstirred layer into which bicarbonate ions are secreted by the surface epithelium. The bicarbonate ions, secreted actively, neutralize hydrogen ions (secreted by parietal or oxyntic cells) as the latter diffuse towards the epithelium from the lumen. A pH gradient across the mucus gel layer, from low pH on the luminal side to high pH on the epithelial side, has been demonstrated in rabbit, in rat and in human gastric mucosa as shown in figure 3. The gel also resists auto digestion of the GIT by presenting a diffusional barrier to the progress of enzymatic molecules, such as pepsin. There is continual secretion of mucus in order to maintain the mucus layer intact, since constant loss occurs as a result of enzymatic degradation and physical erosion. It is this delicate balance of mucus secretion and loss and its buffering capacity, which endows the mucus layer with its ability to protect the underlying epithelium. A further role of mucus is to facilitate the passage of food along the GIT. As mucus is a visco-elastic gel, it allows the food to "slip over" the underlying epithelium without causing damage. The thickness of the mucus layer varies with the region, the species and the methodology employed to measure it. The mucus layer in the human stomach was reported to be 576 ± 81 µm whereas another researcher reported mean thickness of 192 µm. The blanket of mucus covering the entire length of the GIT is essential to the physiological function of the alimentary tract. However, with respect to drug absorption, the mucus layer, once regarded simply as an unstirred water layer, is now regarded as an important potential barrier affecting drug diffusion. Mucus is a visco-elastic material, since it exhibits both the flow properties of liquids and the elastic properties of a solid, although under certain conditions only one of these properties will be obvious. When subjected to low stresses or when a stress is applied for a short period of time, the gel may appear completely elastic and recover from any deformation. However, at higher stresses for longer periods of time, the mucus gel will flow. Both these features are essential for mucus to exert its protective effect since the solid or elastic behavior enables it to provide support to the underlying epithelium from abrasion by food, and the ability to flow facilitates the passage of solid contents [11].

Figure 3: The relationship between the lumen of the gut, mucosal layer and the mechanism of gastric mucosal protection [11].

THEORIES OF MUCOADHESION

The four main theories that describe the possible mechanisms of mucoadhesion are following:

1. The electronic theory assumes that transfer of electrons occurs between the mucus and the mucoadhesive due to differences in their electronic structures. The electron transfer between the mucus and the mucoadhesive leads to the formation of a double layer of electrical charges at the interface of the mucus and the mucoadhesive. This results in attraction forces inside the double layer.

2. The adsorption theory concerns the attraction between the mucus and the mucoadhesive achieved via molecular bonding caused by secondary forces such as hydrogen and van der Waals bonds. The resulting attractive forces are considerably larger than the forces described by the electronic theory.

3. The wetting theory correlates the surface tension of the mucus and the mucoadhesive with the ability of the mucoadhesive to swell and spread on the mucus layer and indicates that interfacial energy plays an important role in mucoadhesion. By calculating the interfacial energy from the individual spreading coefficients of the mucus and the mucoadhesive, a combined spreading coefficient, predictions about the mucoadhesive performance can be obtained. The wetting theory is significant, since spreading of the mucoadhesive over the mucus is a prerequisite for the validity of all the other theories.

4. The diffusion theory concerns the interpenetration to a sufficient depth and physical entanglement of the protein and polymer chains of the mucus and the mucoadhesive, depending on their molecular weight, degree of cross-linking, chain length, flexibility and spatial conformation. None of these theories gives a complete description of the mechanism of mucoadhesion. The total phenomenon of mucoadhesion is a combined result of all these theories. First, the polymer gets wet and swells (wetting theory). Then, non covalent (physical) bonds are created within the mucus– polymer interface (electronic and adsorption theory). Then, the polymer and protein chains interpenetrate (diffusion theory) and entangle together, to form further non-covalent (physical) and covalent (chemical) bonds (electronic and adsorption theory) [12].

Polymers Used for Mucoadhesive Nanoparticles

The concept that biodhesion enhances the efficiency of drug delivery through an intimate and prolonged contact between the delivery device and the absorption site, has resulted in considerable efforts to develop and evaluate biodhesive polymers. The use of biodhesive polymers in controlled release drug delivery systems provides potential advantages, including

1. Prolonged residence time at the site of absorption
2. Increased time of contact with the absorbing mucosa
3. Localization in specific regions to enhance drug bioavailability

Diverse classes of polymers have been investigated for their potential use as biodhesive. These include synthetic polymers such as polyacylamides, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose and polyethylene derivatives as well as naturally occurring polymers such as hyaluronic acid and chitosan. The mechanisms involved in biodhesion are not completely understood. However, based on research focused on hydrogel interactions with soft tissue, the process of biodesion and the formation of an adhesive bond are believed to occur in three stages. The first is the so-called wetting stage, where the polymer must spread over the biological substrate and create an intimate contact with the surface of the substrate. The surface characteristics of the biological material and those of the biological substrate play an important role in achieving this intimate contact. The wetting stage is followed by the interpenetration or inter-diffusion and mechanical entanglement stages. Physical or mechanical bonds result from entanglement of adhesive material and the extended mucus
TARGETING OF NANOPARTICLES USING LIGANDS

Targeting ligand to epithelial cells in the GI tract

Targeting strategies to improve the interaction of nanoparticles with adsorptive enterocytes and M-cells of Peyer's patches in the GI tract can be classified into those utilizing specific binding to ligands or receptors and those based on nonspecific adsorptive mechanism. The surface of enterocytes and M cells display cell-specific carbohydrates, which may serve as binding sites to colloidal drug carriers containing appropriate ligands. Certain glycoprotein's and lectins bind selectively to this type of surface structure by specific receptor-mediated mechanism. Different lectins, such as bean lectin and tomato lectin, have been studied to enhance oral peptide adsorption. Vitamin B-12 absorption from the gut under physiological conditions occurs via receptor-mediated endocytosis. The ability to increase oral bioavailability of various peptides (e.g., granulocyte colony stimulating factor, erythropoietin) and particles by covalent coupling to vitamin B-12 has been studied. For this intrinsic process, mucoprotein is required, which is prepared by the mucus membrane in the stomach and binds specifically to cobalamin. The mucoprotein completely reaches the ileum where resorption is mediated by specific receptors [15].

Targeting ligands to mucus

A variety of ligands have been attached to the surface of nanoparticles which are specific to lymphoid tissue in order to improve bioavailability. These are diverse and have included invasins, lectins and vitamin B12. Invasin-C192 coated 500 nm polystyrene nanoparticles have achieved modest uptake following single gavage in rat. In the same study significantly lower mucin coated control systemic uptake. The difficulty of resolution of results such as these reflects the highly complex experimental environment involved. In this case the result has been questioned, as to why the porcine mucin coating interfered with systemic uptake while initial particles would have gained a mucin coating. As an explanation it has been suggested that the relatively high density of mucin coupled with low mucin secretion in rat model may have been contributing factors to these results. Lectin conjugated nanoparticles are reported to have improved uptake through interaction with mucus and epithelial cells. A study utilizing tomato-lectin functionalized polystyrene nanoparticles administered to rat by oral gavage with water as the liquid phase over a 5 day period remarkably resulted in a quarter of the administered to rat by oral gavage with water as the liquid phase. In the same study significantly lower mucin coated control systemic uptake. The difficulty of resolution of results such as these reflects the highly complex experimental environment involved. In this case the result has been questioned, as to why the porcine mucin coating interfered with systemic uptake while initial particles would have gained a mucin coating. As an explanation it has been suggested that the relatively high density of mucin coupled with low mucin secretion in rat model may have been contributing factors to these results. Lectin conjugated nanoparticles are reported to have improved uptake through interaction with mucus and epithelial cells. A study utilizing tomato-lectin functionalized polystyrene nanoparticles administered to rat by oral gavage with water as the liquid phase over a 5 day period remarkably resulted in a quarter of the administered to rat by oral gavage with water as the liquid phase.
TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN GASTRORETENTIVE MUCOADHESIVE DOSAGE FORMS

Mathiowitz et al. encapsulated insulin in the form of mucoadhesive particles by using poly (fumaric anhydride) and poly (lactide-co-glycolide) 50:50 (PA: PLGA). Particles were administered to groups of fasted rats that were injected with an initial glucose load. It was found that upon administration of insulin containing particles by rats, blood glucose was controlled successfully at the fasting levels [18].

Umamaheshwari et al. formulated mucoadhesive gliadin nanoparticles (GNP) containing amoxicillin by desolvation method and evaluated their effectiveness in eradicating H. pylori. To evaluate in vivo gastric mucoadhesive property in albino rats Rhodamine isothiocyanate-entrapped GNP formulations were prepared. It was reported that on increasing gliadin concentration, the mucoadhesive property of GNP increased. In vitro antimicrobial activity of GNP containing amoxicillin on an isolated H. pylori strain showed that the time required for complete eradication was higher in GNP containing amoxicillin than in amoxicillin because of the controlled drug delivery of amoxicillin from GNP containing amoxicillin. They concluded that GNP containing amoxicillin eradicated H. pylori from the gastrointestinal tract more effectively than amoxicillin because of the prolonged gastrointestinal residence time attributed to mucoadhesion [19].

Katayama et al. prepared a sustained release liquid preparation using sodium alginite. To evaluate the gastric retention time of the preparation, the remaining percent of ampicillin when an aqueous ampicillin solution vs. the sodium alginate preparation were administrated in isolated perfused rat stomachs was compared. With calcium pretreatment, the total remaining percent of ampicillin at 120 min was 0.3% and 8% for the aqueous ampicillin solution and the sodium alginate preparation, respectively. Moreover, it was observed that the sodium alginate preparation remained mainly on the gastric mucus [20].

Liu et al. prepared mucoadhesive microspheres of amoxicillin by an emulsification/evaporation method, using ethyl cellulose as matrix and crosslinked 9:3:4 PAAm as a mucoadhesive polymer. They found that free amoxicillin was rapidly degraded in acidic medium; however, amoxicillin entrapped in the microspheres kept stable. The in vitro release test showed that about 90% of the amoxicillin was released in the pH 1.0 HCl solution within 4 h. Finally, studies on the in vivo clearance of H. pylori revealed that, in a single-dosage administration (4 mg/kg), the mucoadhesive microspheres had a better effectiveness (expressed by the ratio of colony counts between amoxicillin powder and microspheres) compared to amoxicillin powder (3.2 to 9.7, respectively). In parallel, a multi dose administration regimen (3.5 mg/kg, twice a day for 3 consecutive days) showed a complete eradication of H. pylori with microspheres in five of six rat stomachs, whereas amoxicillin powder showed four times less effectiveness [21].

Jaccob et al. developed a composite formulation for selective, high efficacy delivery to specific regions of the GIT. The formulation is typically in the form of a tablet or capsule which may include microparticles or beads. The formulation uses bioadhesive and controlled release elements to direct release to specific regions where bioadhesive elements are exposed at the time the formulation reaches the region of desired release. This can result in enhanced amounts relative to the formulation in the absence of the bioadhesive and/or controlled release elements. This is demonstrated by several examples showing delivery of different drugs. A greater area under the curve (AUC) relative to the reference immediate release dosage form i.e., the AUC of the composite bioadhesive formulation is greater than 100% of the AUC of the immediate release drug and/or the drug in a formulation of only the controlled release or bioadhesive elements [22].

Shishov et al. developed multiple-unit-type oral floating dosage form (FDF) of 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) to prolong gastric residence time, target stomach cancer, and increase drug bioavailability. The floating area formulations were prepared by ionotropic gelation using calcium carbonate and a mixture of sodium alginate and hydroxypropyl methylcellulose solution. The multiple-bead FDF was found to reduce the tumor incidence in mice by 74%, while the conventional tablet dosage form reduced this incidence by only 25%. Results indicate that FDF performed significantly better than the simple tablet dosage form [23].

Mitragotri et al. invented a novel intestinal mucoadhesive patch system for oral drug delivery. The patch system comprises an impermeable backing layer, a drug reservoir and a mucoadhesive layer. The drug reservoir and the mucoadhesive layer may be combined into a single layer. When the patches are introduced into the gastrointestinal tract, the mucoadhesive layer sticks to the luminal wall due to its mucoadhesive properties, then the drug releases from the reservoir in a unidirectional way through the mucoadhesive layer into the intestine mucosa. This improved method is advantageous in enhancing bioavailability of poorly absorbed drugs such as polar molecules or bioactive peptides and proteins [24].

Makhlof et al. developed mucoadhesive particulate system for the oral delivery of peptide drugs by combining safe permeation enhancers by ionic interaction of spermine (SPM) with polyacrylic acid (PAA) polymer. Cytotoxicity studies in Caco-2 monolayers revealed the safe nature of SPM. The mucoadhesive potential of SPM was further evaluated in vivo in rats, and it was found that SPM 0.5% was used effectively for permeation enhancement. The cellular transport of fluorescein isothiocyanate dextran (FD4) showed higher permeation enhancing profiles of SPM–PAA NPs, as compared to SPM solution or PAA NPs prepared by ionic gelation with MgCl2 (Mg-PAA NPs). The permeation enhancing properties of SPM–PAA NPs were further evaluated in vivo in rats. Moreover, a mucoadhesive formulation for selective, prolonged gastric residence and controlled release to specific regions of the GIT was prepared. The patch system comprises an impermeable backing layer, a drug reservoir and a mucoadhesive layer. The drug reservoir and the mucoadhesive layer may be combined into a single layer. When the patches are introduced into the gastrointestinal tract, the mucoadhesive layer sticks to the luminal wall due to its mucoadhesive properties, then the drug releases from the reservoir in a unidirectional way through the mucoadhesive layer into the intestine mucosa. This improved method is advantageous in enhancing bioavailability of poorly absorbed drugs such as polar molecules or bioactive peptides and proteins [24].
mucosa continuously over 6 hours, which clinically can help in eradication of *H. pylori* [28].

Park et al. stated that highly charged carboxylated polyanions are good potential bioadhesives for drug delivery. They described a new, simple experimental technique that can quantitatively measure bioadhesive properties of various polymers. The technique consists of labeling the lipid bilayer of cultured human conjunctival epithelial cells with the fluorescent probe pyrene. Addition of polymers to this substrate surface compresses the lipid bilayer causing a change in fluorescence as compared to control cells. The fluorescent probe, pyrene, provides information on membrane viscosity, which is proportional to polymer binding. In addition to the use of pyrene, membrane proteins were labeled with fluorescence isothiocyanate, and depolarization of probe labeled proteins was measured before and after polymer treatment. By using these fluorescent probes, it was possible to compare charge sign. Charge type and density, and backbone structure as to their influence on polymer adhesion [29].

Bhat et al. evaluated the extent of drug binding to mucin; a purified model mucus system containing primarily the large glycoprotein fraction (400 kDa) of gastric mucus was developed for use in drug binding studies. The extent of binding of six selected compounds (albuterol, rifampicin, p-amino-salicylic acid, isoniazid, pyrazinamide, and pentamidine) to mucus glycoproteins was studied. The binding of each drug to a model plasma protein, bovine serum albumin (BSA), was also investigated. Binding studies were performed by diafiltration, which combines characteristics of equilibrium dialysis and ultra filtration in a continuous system. All the compounds selected showed affinities of the same order of magnitude to mucin despite being chemically dissimilar and exhibiting differing ionization states. This suggests that binding to gastric mucus glycoproteins is non-specific in nature with similar types of binding forces involved in the binding of all the compounds tested. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the binding behavior of drugs to gastric mucin is non-specific in nature with binding constants of a low magnitude [30].

Ponchel et al. stated that orally administered nano- and microparticles can follow at least three different pathways: (i) capture by gut-associated lymphoid tissue; (ii) mucoadhesion; and (iii) direct fecal elimination. The relative importance of these different mechanisms is discussed. The mucoadhesions has been assessed in vitro and in vivo by using polystyrene and poly (lactic acid) nanoparticles as models. On the one hand, in vitro adsorption and desorption studies have shown that particles could be captured to a considerable extent by the mucous gel layer lining the gastrointestinal tract through a mucoadhesion mechanism. On the other hand, the in vivo behavior of the particles in the intestinal lumen has been accurately investigated by means of radiolabelled particles. Direct particle translocation through the intestinal mucosa was not predominant. On the contrary a significant fraction of the particles was captured by the mucous gel layer while the remainder of the particles underwent unmodified transit. It can be concluded that the therapeutic potential of colloidal drug carriers after oral administration is probably not to deliver the drug directly into the blood flow but to increase bioavailability by protecting the drug from denaturation in the gastro-intestinal lumen, or by increasing the drug concentration for a prolonged period of time directly at the surface of the mucous membrane [31].

When considering the different phenomena occurring after oral administration of a suspension of colloidal particles via the oral route, the following general dynamic description, illustrated in Fig. 5, can be given. First, a suspension of particles is administered and immediately enters into contact with a portion of the oral mucosa (step 1). From this moment, the concentrated suspension acts as a reservoir of particles and, very rapidly, an adsorption process takes place, leading to the adsorption of a fraction of the available particles (step 2). Adsorption occurs with the mucous layer and is an irreversible process. However, the luminal particle suspension transits through the intestine, sweeping progressively the whole mucosa. The simultaneous adsorption process results in a progressive covering of the intestinal mucosa by adhering particles (step 3). Finally, detachment of the particles from the mucosa begins to occur in the proximal region and is progressively extended to the distal region (step 4). Non-adhering particles from the lumen pool and detached particles from the mucoadherent pool are finally eliminated in the feces [31].

**Figure 5: Mucoadhesive behavior of colloidal particulate systems following oral administration [31].**

Tur et al. carried out study to demonstrate that the addition of a bioadhesive polymer can greatly increase the bioavailability of griseofulvin with normal particle size form. Four formulations: A, 30 mg drug (mean particle size of 14/1μm); B, 30 mg drug and 300 mg poly(acrylic acid) cross linked with 2,5-dimethyl-1,5-hexadiene (PADH); C, 30 mg per 10 ml aqueous suspension; and D, 30 mg per 10 ml oil-in-water emulsion were employed in this experiment. New Zealand white rabbits were orally administered with the above dosage forms and the blood samples were collected from the marginal vein at different time intervals for 24 h. The plasma concentrations were determined with a high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC). The result indicates that the addition of PADH to griseofulvin can increase the total absorption by 2.9-4, and 2.9-folds when compared with drug powder, aqueous suspension and emulsion, respectively. The mechanism of improvement is probably due to the increase in gastro-intestinal transit time and the intimacy of the drug with the absorbing membrane brought about by the bioadhesive polymer [32].
In order to circumvent the problem of poor bioavailability with some drugs, Ponchel et al. proposed, association of drug to polymeric nanoparticulate systems (or small particles in the range of the micrometer in size) because of their tendency to interact with the mucosal surface. Bioadhesion can be obtained by the building of either non-specific interactions with the mucosal surface, which are driven by the physicochemical properties of the particles and the surfaces, or specific interactions when a ligand attached to the particle is used for the recognition and attachment to a specific site at the mucosal surface. The relative merits of these systems are discussed. The preparations in the gastrointestinal tract, including at least three different pathways: (i) bioadhesion, (ii) translocation through the mucosa and (iii) transit and direct fecal elimination [33].

Hillery concluded that microparticulate carriers offer considerable potential for drug and vaccine delivery via mucosal routes. Perhaps greater therapeutic success can be achieved by using microparticles as carriers for vaccines, rather than for therapeutic drugs, because of the lower relative amount of drug that is required to induce an immune response in comparison with the amount of drug required to produce a pharmacological response. Also, mucosal vaccines offer the potential to be highly efficient because of their ability to induce local protection at mucosal surfaces [34].

Sakuma et al. investigated the mucoadhesiveness of polystyrene nanoparticles having surface hydrophilic polymeric chains in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract in rats. Radio labeled nanoparticles were synthesized by adding hydrophobic 3-(trifluoromethyl) - 3-(m- [125I]iodophenyl)diazirine in the final process of nanoparticle preparation. The radioiodinated diazirine seemed to be incorporated in the hydrophobic polystyrene core of nanoparticles. The change in blood ionized calcium concentration after oral administration of salmon calcitonin (sCT) with nanoparticles showed that the in vivo enhancement of sCT absorption by radio labeled nanoparticles was the same as that by non-labeled nanoparticles. The GI transit rates of nanoparticles having surface poly (N-vinylacetamide), which does not enhance sCT absorption at all. These slow transit rates were probably the result of mucoadhesion of nanoparticles. The strength of mucoadhesion depended on the structure of the hydrophilic polymeric chains on the nanoparticle surface. The mucoadhesion of poly (N-isopropylacrylamide) nanoparticles, which most strongly enhanced sCT absorption, was stronger than that of ionic nanoparticles, and poly (N-vinylacetamide) nanoparticles probably did not adhere to the GI mucosa. These findings demonstrated that there is a good correlation between mucoadhesion and enhancement of sCT absorption [35].

Lehr reviewed recent developments in the area of bioadhesive drug delivery systems. The area of bioadhesion in drug delivery had started some 20 years ago by using so-called mucoadhesive polymers. Many of these polymers were already used as excipients in pharmaceutical formulations. This has facilitated the development of the first bioadhesive drug products, which are now commercially available. A major disadvantage of the hitherto known mucoadhesives, however, is their non-specifcity with respect to the substrate. In particular for gastro-intestinal applications, this may cause some premature inactivation and moreover limits the duration of mucoadhesive bonds to the relatively fast mucus turnover. In contrast to the mucoadhesive polymers, lectins and some other adhesion molecules specifically recognize receptor-like structures of the cell membrane and therefore indirectly to the epithelial cells themselves (cytoadhesion) rather than to the mucus gel layer. Furthermore, when bioadhesion is receptor-mediated, it is not only restricted to mere binding, but may subsequently trigger the active transport of large molecules or noscalic drug carrier systems by vesicular transport processes (endo-/transcytosis). Rather than only acting as a platform for controlled release systems, the concept of receptor-mediated bioadhesion therefore bears the potential for the controlled delivery of macromolecular biopharmaceuticals at relevant biological barriers, such as the epithelia of the intestinal or respiratory tract [36].

Pan et al. prepared Insulin-loaded CS-NPs by ionotropic gelation of CS with tripolyphosphate anions. The ability of CS-NPs to enhance intestinal absorption of insulin and increase the relative pharmacological bioavailability of insulin was investigated by monitoring the plasma glucose level of aloxan-induced diabetic rats after oral administration of various doses of insulin-loaded CS-NPs. Insulin association was found up to 80% and its in vitro release showed a great initial burst with a pH-sensitivity property. CS-NPs enhanced the intestinal absorption of insulin to a greater extent than the aqueous solution of CS in vivo. Above all, after administration of 21 IU/kg insulin in the CS-NPs, the hypoglycemia was prolonged over 15 h and the average pharmacological bioavailability relative to SC injection of insulin solution was up to 14.9% [37].

Muller et al. prepared nanosuspension of buparvaquone for use in experimental clinics against the gastrointestinal persisting parasite Cryptosporidium parvum by high pressure homogenization. Main advantages of nanosuspensions (amongst others) are their increased content of saturated drugs, their slower release profile and their improved protection of the drug against degradation. Furthermore, nanosuspensions can be designed to have a wide variety of physical properties, such as low viscosity or high viscosity, as well as a high drug loading, which is essential for the bioavailability of drugs. The buparvaquone nanosuspension had a bulk population of about 600 nm (analyzed by photon correlation spectroscopy (PCS)). The additional analysis performed with laser diffraction showed that only a very small content of microparticles occurred, which is, for the special features of nanosuspensions, a considerable achievement. When bioadhesive nanoparticles were administered to laboratory animals and the FURD and the drug concentrations in plasma, tissues and urine were quantified at different times. From this, a high dose of buparvaquone nanosuspension into the hydrogels. The nanosuspension/hydrogel system was physically long-term stable over a period of 6 months as indicated by the unchanged particle sizes [38].

Vasir et al. reviewed the spectrum of potential applications of bioadhesive microspheres in controlled drug delivery ranging from the small molecules, to peptides, and to the macromolecular drugs such as proteins, oligonucleotides and even DNA. They studied the development of mucus or cell-specific bioadhesive polymers and the concepts of cytoadhesion and bioinvasion provide unprecedented opportunities for targeting drugs to specific cells or intracellular compartments. They also discussed developments in the techniques for in vitro and in vivo evaluation of bioadhesive microspheres [39].

Arbo et al. evaluated the potential of specific bioadhesive nanoparticles to increase the oral bioavailability of presystemic degraded drugs, using 5-fluorouridine (FURD) as model. For this purpose, poly (methylvinylether-co-maleic anhydride) nanoparticles (NP), NP coated with albumin (BSA-NP) and NP treated with albumin and 3-diaminopropane (BD-NP) were used. All the formulations displayed a similar size and drug loading. However, BSA-NP showed a tropism for the stomach, NP developed adhesive interactions with both the stomach and midproximal regions of the small intestine and BD-NP with the distal regions of the small intestine. These formulations were orally administered to laboratory animals and the FURD levels in plasma, tissues and urine were quantified at different times. From the urine data, the FURD bioavailability when loaded in either BSA-NP or NP was about 79% and 21%, respectively. For the control oral solution and BD-NP this parameter was 11% and 2%, respectively. In summary, the use of bioadhesive nanoparticles with tropism for the stomach mucosa may be considered as an adequate alternative to increase the bioavailability of some pre-systemic metabolized drugs [40].

Salman et al. evaluated the bioadhesive potential of a polymeric vector obtained by the association between Gantrez AN nanoparticles and flagella-enriched Salmonella enteritidis extract. Fluorescently labeled nanoparticles (SE-NP) were prepared, after...
incubation between the polymer and the extract, by a solvent displacement method and cross-linkage with 1, 3-diaminopropanone. SE-NP displayed a size close to 280 nm and the amount of associated bacterial extract was 18 Ag/mg nanoparticles. Flagge et al. represented more than 80% of the total proteins associated with SE-NP, which was identified by SDS-PAGE and confirmed by Western blotting. Concerning the bioadhesive properties, SE-NP shows an important tropism for the ileum. In fact, about 50% of the given dose of SE-NP was found in this gut region for at least 3 h. Interestingly, the bioadhesive ability of SE-NP correlated well with the described colonization profile for Salmonella enteritidis. This fact was corroborated by competitive tissue distribution studies. Thus, when SE-NP and Salmonella cells were administered together by the oral route, both the bacteria and the nanoparticles displayed a similar distribution within the intestinal mucosa. However, the ability of SENP to be taken up by Peyer’s patches appeared to be negatively affected by the presence of the bacteria. Similarly, when SE-NP was administered 30 min before cells, SE-NP were found broadly distributed in Peyer’s patches, whereas the bacteria were neither able to adhere to nor penetrate this lymphoid tissue. In summary, SE-NP demonstrated their Salmonella-like gut colonization, which can be a useful vector for oral targeting strategies [41].

Yao et al developed a novel gastro-mucoadhesive delivery system for Riboflavin-5′- phosphate sodium salt (RF5P), which is site-specifically absorbed from the upper gastrointestinal tract, based on ion-exchange fiber. Gastrointestinal transit studies of the RF5P fiber complexes in rats and gamma imaging study in volunteer was carried out to evaluate the gastro-retentive behavior of the fiber. The pharmacokinetic profile and parameters of riboflavin via analysis of urinary excretion of riboflavin on man were measured. Study on rat and man provide evidence for the validity of the hypothesis that the drug fiber provided good mucoadhesive properties in vivo and should therefore be of considerable interest for the development of future mucoadhesive oral drug delivery dosage forms [42].

Madhav et al. overviewed a wide range of oro-transmucosal routes being potentially useful for transmucosal drug delivery. Oral mucosal drug delivery is an alternative method of systemic drug delivery that offers several advantages over both injectable and enteral methods and also enhances drug bioavailability because the mucosal surfaces are usually rich in blood supply, providing the means for rapid drug transport to the systemic circulation and avoiding, in most cases, degradation by first-pass hepatic metabolism. The systems contact with the absorption surface resulting in a better absorption, and also prolong residence time at the site of application to permit once or twice daily dosing. For some drugs, oral administration of action via a more comfortable and convenient delivery route than the intravenous route. Transmucosal drug delivery promises four times the absorption rate of skin. Drugs considered for oral transmucosal delivery are limited to existing products, and until there is a change in the赦ervation process for new drugs, candidates for oral transmucosal delivery will be limited [43].

Moghaddam et al. evaluated the in vitro mucoadhesion and permeation enhancement properties of thiolated chitosan (chitosan-glutathione) coated poly (hydroxyl ethyl methacrylate) nanoparticles. Core-shell nanoparticles were prepared by radical emulsion polymerization method initiated by cerium (IV) ammonium nitrate. Different molecular weights of chitosan were utilized for nanoparticles preparation. Incorporation of fluorescent isothiocyanate dextran (FD4, MW 4400 Da), which was used as the model macromolecule, was achieved by incubation method. The intestinal mucoadhesion and penetration enhancement properties of nanoparticles were investigated using excised rat jejunal monolayers. All mucoadhesive systems showed high improved apparent permeation coefficient (Papp) of FD4. Nanoparticles prepared by thiolated chitosan with medium molecular weight revealed the most mucoadhesion and penetration enhancement properties [44].

Tao et al. prepared acyclovir-loaded mucoadhesive microspheres (ACV-ad-ms) using ethyl cellulose as matrix and Carbopol 974P NF as mucoadhesive polymer for the purpose of improving the oral bioavailability of acyclovir. In vitro and in vivo mucoadhesion of the microspheres was evaluated. Eggshell membrane was found to have a potential use for in vitro mucoadhesion measurement in place of stomach mucosa. In vitro drug release profiles and oral bioavailability of acyclovir in rats were also investigated. The release of the drug was influenced markedly by the medium pH and the proportion of Carbopol incorporated in the microspheres. The result of mucoadhesion study showed prolonged residence time of ACV-ad-ms in rats’ gastrointestinal tract. In pharmacokinetics study, relatively steady plasma drug concentrations were observed within 8 h after oral administration of ACV-ad-ms to rats. The AUCC-f and mean residence time (MRT) of ACV-ad-ms (6055.9 ng h/mL and 7.2 h) were significantly higher than that of ACV suspension (2335.6 ng h/mL and 3.7 h) (P < 0.05), which indicated that the bioavailability of acyclovir was greatly improved due to the prolonged retention of ACV-ad-ms in gastrointestinal tract [45].

Dudhani et al formulated bioadhesive chitosan nanoparticles (CS NPs) for encapsulation of acyclovir and evaluation of their mucoadhesive potential that leads to enhanced oral bioavailability of cefotaxin. CS NPs and cefotaxin loaded CS NPs were obtained by ionic gelation between the CS and sodium tripolyphosphate (TPP). Particle size distribution analysis confirmed the size ranges, 110 ±5 nm for CS NPs and 207.97 nm, respectively. TEM indicated smooth and spherical nanoparticles. FTIR and DSC showed no significant interactions between cefotaxin and CS after encapsulation and cross-linking. Entrapment efficiency of 90% was achieved with a weight ratio of 5:5 for in vitro release of cefotaxin from CS NPs was 32% within 24 h and exhibited 40% and 32% mucoadhesivity for cefotaxin loaded CS NPs and CS NPs, respectively, demonstrating potential for controlled release of cefotaxin in GIT [46].

Plapied et al. developed a new nano carrier made of fungal Chitosan promising for oral gene delivery and oral DNA vaccination due to its mucoadhesive properties. Chitosan (CS) produced under GMP conditions from fungal source was used to encapsulate a plasmid DNA coding for a reporter gene. Nanoparticles made by complex coacervation of CS and DNA had a size around 200 nm, a positive zeta potential, a high association of DNA and protected the plasmid against nuclease degradation. Confocal microscopy studies showed that CS/DNA and PEI/DNA nanoparticles were found at the apical surface of cell monolayers and DNA was co-localized within the nucleus. Quantification showed that more DNA was associated with the cells when incubated with CS nanoparticles and that the presence of M cells slightly increased DNA uptake when complexed with CS [47].

Meng et al. engineered a lenalidomide loaded chitosan based nanoparticles (NPs) using Box–Behken design to assess the influence of formulation variables on the size of NPs and drug encapsulation efficiency. The effect of the NPs on vaginal epithelial cells and Lactobacillus crispatus viability and their mucoadhesion to porcine vaginal tissue were assessed by cytotoxicity assays and fluorometry, respectively. In the optimal aqueous conditions, the EE% and NPs size were 5.83% and 207.97 nm, respectively. With 50% (v/v) ethanol/water as alternative solvent, these two responses increased to 20% and 602 nm, respectively. Unlike small size (182 nm) exhibiting burst release, drug release from medium (281 nm) and large (602 nm)-sized NPs fitted the Higuchi (r^2 = 0.991) and first order release (r^2 = 0.999) models, respectively. These NPs were not cytotoxic to both the vaginal epithelial cell line and L. crispatus for 48 h. When the diameter of the NPs decreased from 900 to 188 nm, the mucoadhesion increased from 6% to 12%. However, the combinational effect of EE% and percent mucoadhesion for larger size NPs was the highest. Overall, large-size, microbiode loaded chitosan NPs appeared to be promising nanomedicines for the prevention of HIV transmission [48].

Yadav et al. prepared mucoadhesive microspheres by the emulsion solvent evaporation technique consisting of (i) chitosan mucoadhesive (ii) regapentinidine, an oral hypoglycemic agent; and (iii) Eudragit RS-100 as polymer to increase its residence time in
the stomach. The microspheres were evaluated for surface morphology, particle shape, microencapsulation efficiency, in vitro wash-off mucoadhesion test, in vitro drug release and in vivo study. The microspheres were found to be spherical and free flowing. The microencapsulation efficiency was in the range of 61.44±1.16 to 79.90±1.17 and microspheres exhibited good mucoadhesive property in the in vitro wash off test. The drug release was also found to be slow and extended for 24 h. The hypoglycemic effect obtained by mucoadhesive microspheres was for more than 16 h whereas repaglinide produced an anti-diabetic effect for only 10 h suggesting that mucoadhesive microspheres are a valuable system for the long term delivery of repaglinide [49].

Gaba et al. prepared mucoadhesive microspheres of glipizide as the site of absorption of glipizide is from stomach, to improve drug efficiency and decrease dose requirements. Microsphere carrier systems made by using polymer galactomannan having strong mucoadhesive properties and easily biodegradable could be an attractive strategy to formulate. Prepared formulation was evaluated for its in vitro characteristics and in vivo performance for sustained glucose lowering effect and improvement in diabetic condition as compared to immediate release of glipizide [50].

Table 2: Recent micro and nano carriers developments for mucosal delivery applications [51].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carrier</th>
<th>Size (µm)</th>
<th>Zeta potential (mV)</th>
<th>Loading method</th>
<th>Therapeutic biomolecule</th>
<th>Loading (%)</th>
<th>Encapsulation efficiency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>49.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Plasmid DNA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/HPMC</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>60.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/dextran sulfate</td>
<td>0.479-1.612</td>
<td>21.5 to 3.2</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>48.6-96.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/dextran sulfate</td>
<td>0.527-1.577</td>
<td>20.6, 11.5</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>39.3, 24.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/eudragit L100-55</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>29.51</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/lecitin</td>
<td>0.121-0.347</td>
<td>7.5-32.7</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Melatonin</td>
<td>Up to 7.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/alginate</td>
<td>0.779-1.858</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>47.9-9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitosan/alginate</td>
<td>0.748</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauryl succinyl chitosan</td>
<td>0.315-1.090</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMCO-60%b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Plasmid DNA</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-trimethyl chitosan-cysteine</td>
<td>0.102-0.168</td>
<td>12.3-18.8</td>
<td>Self assembly</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly(lactic acid)-chitosan</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Plasmid DNA</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MePEG-PLA-CSc</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Plasmid DNA</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAPA-PVA-g-PLLAd</td>
<td>0.200-0.400</td>
<td>15-35</td>
<td>Self assembly</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLGae</td>
<td>0.216-1.145</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>24.5-58.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLGae</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGA modified PLGA/</td>
<td>0.232-0.240</td>
<td>-4.2 to -2.6</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Thymopentin</td>
<td>31.03-31.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyactic acid/sperrine</td>
<td>0.191-0.228</td>
<td>-29.3 to -7.3</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Calcitonin</td>
<td>39.3-68.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyactic acid/MgCl2</td>
<td>0.278-23.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Calcitonin</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipid nanoparticles</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Salmon calcitonin</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipid nanoparticles/PEG</td>
<td>0.207-0.226</td>
<td>-36.6 to -34.8</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Salmon calcitonin</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipid nanoparticles/chitosan</td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid lipid nanoparticles</td>
<td>0.050-0.064</td>
<td>-46.3 to -38</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>26.81-67.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGA-N-glut-PEmodified SLNsp</td>
<td>0.058-0.075</td>
<td>57.7-75.3</td>
<td>Encapsulation</td>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>17.89-40.18</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

CHARACTERIZATION OF STOMACH SPECIFIC MUCOADHESIVE NANO PARTICLES

Particle Size

It has been shown that particle size and size distribution are the most important characteristics of nanoparticles systems. Many studies have demonstrated that nanoparticles of sub-micron size have a number of advantages over microparticles as a drug delivery system. Generally nanoparticles have relatively higher intracellular uptake compared to microparticles and available to a wider range of biological targets due to their small size and relative mobility. For example, body distribution studies have shown that nanoparticles larger than 230 nm accumulate in the spleen due to the capillary size in this organ. Different in vitro studies indicate that the particle size also influences the cellular uptake of nanoparticles. In some cell lines, only submicron nanoparticles can be taken up efficiently but not the larger size microparticles [38].

Drug release is affected by particle size. Smaller particles have larger surface area, therefore, most of the drug associated would be at or near the particle surface, leading to fast drug release. While, larger particles have large cores which allow more drug to be encapsulated and slowly diffuse out. Smaller particles also have greater risk of aggregation of particles during storage and transportation of nanoparticle dispersion. It is always a challenge to formulate nanoparticles with the smallest size possible but maximum stability. Currently, the fastest and most routine method of determining particle size is by photon-correlation spectroscopy (PCS) or dynamic light scattering (DLS). PCS is industrially preferred method of sub-micron particle size analysis. The sample analyzed in the PCS device should consist of well dispersed particles in liquid medium. In such conditions the particles are in constant random motion, referred to as Brownian motion and PCS measures the speed of this motion by passing a laser. PCS determines the average particle size and polydispersity index (PI) which is a range of measurement of the particle sizes within measured samples. The accurate measurement of particle size must be below 0.7 (7%). Dynamic light scattering (DLS) theory is a well established technique for measuring particle sizes over the size range from a few nanometers to a few microns. The concept uses the idea that small particles in a suspension move in a random pattern. Observation of larger particles compared to smaller particles will show that the larger particles move more slowly than the smaller ones if the temperature is the same [38, 52].

Particle Morphology

Manipulation of the physicochemical properties of materials at the nanoscale has the potential to revolutionize electronic, diagnostic, and therapeutic applications. Because of the potential large-scale use of nanomaterials, it is important to determine if there is any unique toxicity of the nanoscale materials as compared to the bulk. It is essential for the purposes of interpreting results from cell culture and animal models that the nanomaterials are thoroughly characterized and that correlations are made between observed toxicological responses and the physicochemical characteristics of the materials. The morphology of nanoparticles was examined by two techniques.

The atomic force microscope (AFM) or scanning force microscope (SFM) is a very high-resolution type of scanning probe...
microscope, with demonstrated resolution of fractions of a nanometer, more than 1000 times better than the optical diffraction limit. The scanning electron microscope (SEM) is a type of electron microscope that images the sample surface by scanning it with a high-energy beam of electrons in a raster scan pattern. SEM has the required nanometer resolution for sizing in the submicron range and is invaluable to determine the particle morphology. The electrons interact with the atoms that make up the sample producing signals that contain information about the sample's surface topography, composition and other properties such as electrical conductivity [1].

Surface Charge

Many techniques have been developed and used to study the surface modification of NPs. The efficiency of surface modification can be measured either by estimating the surface charge, density of the functional groups or an increase in surface hydrophilicity. One method used to measure the surface modification is to determine zeta potential of the aqueous suspension containing NPs. It reflects the electrical potential of particles and is influenced by the composition of the particle and the medium in which it is dispersed. The main reason to measure zeta potential is to predict colloidal stability. The interactions between particles play an important role in colloidal stability. The use of zeta potential measurements to predict stability is an attempt to quantify these interactions. The zeta potential is a measure of the repulsive forces between particles. And since most aqueous colloidal systems are stabilized by electrostatic repulsion, the larger the repulsive forces between particles, the less likely they will be to come close together and form an aggregate. Nanoparticles with a zeta potential above (+/-) 30 mV have been shown to be stable in suspension, as the surface charge prevents aggregation of the particles [38,52].

Loading and Release

Drug loading

Drug may be bound to nanoparticles either (i) by polymerization in the presence of the drug- in most cases in the form of a solution (incorporation method) or (ii) by adsorbing the drug after the formation of nanoparticles by incubating them in the drug solution. Depending on the affinity of the drug to the polymer, the drug will be surface adsorbed, dispersed in the particle polymer matrix in the form of a solid solution, or solid dispersion, or in some case, the drug may be covalently bound to the polymer. Therefore it is apparent that a large amount of drug can be entrapped by the incorporation method when compared to the adsorption. The macromolecule or protein shows greatest loading efficiency when it is loaded at or near its isoelectric point when it has minimum solubility and maximum adsorption. The drug loading of the nanoparticles is generally defined as the amount of drug bounded per mass of polymer (usually moles of drug per mg polymer or mg drug per mg polymer) it could also be given on a percentage basis based on the polymer [53].

Determination of drug entrapment

Binding of drug to the protein nanoparticles was measured by centrifuging part of the particle suspension. For determination of drug entrapment, the amount of drug present in the clear supernatant was determined (w) by spectrophotometry, fluorescence spectrophotometer or by a validated HPLC method. A standard calibration curve of concentration versus absorbance was plotted for this purpose. The amount of drug in supernatant (w) was then subtracted from the total amount of drug added during the formulation (W). Effectively, (W-w) will give the amount of drug entrapped in the pellet. Then percentage entrapment of a drug is obtained by using following equation

\[
\% \text{ Drug Entrapment} = \left( \frac{W-w}{W} \right) \times 100 / W
\]

Finally, the encapsulation efficiency refer to the ratio of the amount of drug encapsulated/absorbed to the total (theoretical) amount of drug used, with regard to the final drug delivery system of the dispersion of nanoparticles [54,55].

Drug release

Release profiles of the drugs from nanoparticles depend upon the nature of the delivery system. In the case of nanospheres, drug is uniformly distributed/ dissolved in the matrix and the release occurs by diffusion or erosion of the matrix. If the diffusion of the drug is faster than matrix degradation, then the mechanism of drug release occurs mainly by diffusion, otherwise it depends upon degradation. Many theoretically possible mechanisms may be considered for the release drug from protein nanoparticles: (a) Liberation due to polymer erosion or degradation, (b) self diffusion through pores, (c) release from the surface of the polymer, (d) pulsed delivery initiated by the application of an oscillating magnetic or sonic field. In many case, some of these processes may coexist, so that the distinction between the mechanisms is not always trivial. When drug release occurs by a self diffusional process, a minimum drug loading is necessary before drug release is observed. This is easy to understand since the process involves diffusion through aqueous channels created by the phase separation and dissolution of the drug itself. This mechanism rarely occurs with drug loaded nanoparticles since, as explained before, the encapsulation efficiency of most drugs is generally too low. In fact, release from the surface and erosion or bulk polymer degradation is usually the most important processes affecting the liberation of drug from nanoparticles. Method for quantifying drug release in vitro are: (i) side by side diffusion cells with artificial or biological membranes; (ii) equilibrium dialysis technique; (iii) reverse dialysis sac technique; (iv) ultracentrifugation; (v) ultra filtration; or (vi) centrifugal ultra filtration technique [56,57].

Test methods used to study bioadhesion

In vivo techniques represent the ultimate test for bioadhesives which appear promising from initial screening techniques in vitro. However, it is questionable whether current in vitro techniques are able to identify potential bioadhesives which would be of value clinically. Attempting to extrapolate results obtained in vitro to what may happen in vivo should be treated with extreme caution, since in vitro tests are performed in a controlled environment and may bear no relationship to the ultimate performance of the bioadhesive. Biological variables such as GI motility, mucus turnover, presence of endogenous materials (e.g. enzymes, electrolytes, bile) and exogenous materials (e.g. food, drink, drugs) are difficult, if not impossible, to mimic in an in vitro model. In addition, the presence of both drug and, more importantly, excipients, are likely to influence greatly the overall durability of the BDDS, which may not be accounted for in in vitro testing.

In vivo test methods: The three main techniques which have been used to monitor bioadhesion in vivo include gamma Scintigraphy, perfused intestinal loops, and transit studies with radiolabelled dosage forms.

Gamma Scintigraphy: The formulation to be investigated is labeled with a radionuclide, technetium-99m being the most commonly employed, and the dosage form is ingested by human volunteers. Accurate positioning of the volunteer in front of the gamma camera enables images or scintographs to be produced at selected time intervals and the course of the dosage form throughout the GIT (except in the small intestine) can be easily followed. The results from this technique are invaluable since they give a clear picture of the durability of the BDDS (i.e. how long it remains bioadhesive) as a whole [58].

Perfused intestinal loop: By isolating a section of intestine and anastomosis of the remaining intestine, one has the opportunity of investigating bioadhesion over a known area in a relatively controlled manner [1].

Radiolabelled transit studies: The radiolabelled BDDS under test was placed into a surgically incised stomach of the rat which was then resealed and the animal allowed regaining consciousness. After set time intervals, the animals were sacrificed and the
stomach and intestines removed. These were further cut into segments and the radioactivity remaining in each segment measured by scintillation counting [1,31].

In vitro test methods: In vitro test methods were initially designed to screen potential bioadhesive with a view to in vivo testing if successful.

Adhesion strength tests: The method is based on the measurement of shear stress required to break the adhesive bond between a mucosal membrane and the formulation. The formulation is sandwiched between two mucosal membranes fixed on flexible supports in the assemblies for a sufficient period of time. After the adhesive bond has formed, the force (weight) required to separate the bond was recorded as mucoadhesive strength [59].

Perfusion techniques: Assessment of the duration of adhesion is a more realistic measurement of adhesive performance and this parameter can be evaluated by perfusion techniques (in addition to adhesion strength tests), of which three types exist. The first one of these is the flow channel method which examines, with the aid of a video camera, the movement of a bioadhesive particle placed on a bed of mucus whilst humid air is passed over the surface. The second perfusion technique has been termed the “falling liquid film” method and involves dripping a suspension of the material under test onto a section of excised tissue, cut lengthwise and mounted in tubing positioned on an inclined platform. The eluted particles are sampled in a Coulter Counter so that an estimation of numbers of particles adhering as a function of time can be determined. The third type of perfusion technique is similar to the falling liquid film method except that an entire segment of intestine is used rather than one that has been cut lengthwise. The radiolabelled bioadhesive formulation, which must be syringeable, is allowed to interact with the tissue for a period of time, after which perfusion is commenced and the eluted fractions collected and sampled for radioactivity [1].

Rheological tests: Rheological evaluation of mucin/polymer mixtures gives some information on the extent and magnitude of interaction between the two, since the increase in viscosity which results from mixing the two has been claimed to correlate with mucoadhesive function [1].

APPLICATIONS OF SSMN

a) Sustained Drug Delivery SSMN can remain in the stomach for long periods and hence can release the drug over a prolonged period of time. The problem of short gastric residence time encountered with an oral controlled release formulation, hence, can be overcome with these systems.

b) Site Specific Drug Delivery These systems are particularly advantageous for drugs that are specifically absorbed from stomach or proximal part of the small intestine e.g., riboflavin, furosemide and misoprostol.

c) Absorption Enhancement Drugs that have poor bioavailability because of site specific absorption from the upper part of the GIT are potential candidate to be formulated as floating drug delivery systems, thereby maximizing their absorption.

d) Maintenance of Constant Blood Level These systems provide an easy way of maintaining constant blood level by once a day administration and constant release of drug.

e) Patient Compliance Once a day administration of dosage form provide better patient compliance.

f) Improved Therapeutic Efficacy Once a day administration and continuous release of drug at specified place for prolonged period, improve therapeutic efficiency of drug.

Table 3: List of nanotechnology based oral formulations in pharmaceutical market and in clinical trials [17].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Nanotechnology</th>
<th>Dosage form</th>
<th>Indication</th>
<th>Company/alliance</th>
<th>Commercial/therapeutic benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapamune</td>
<td>Sirolimus</td>
<td>Nanosuspensions</td>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>Immuno-suppressant</td>
<td>Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. Elan Drug Delivery</td>
<td>Enabled development of tablet dosage form over previous oral solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megace ES</td>
<td>Megestrol acetate</td>
<td>Nanosuspensions</td>
<td>Nano-suspension</td>
<td>Treatment of anorexia, cachexia, or an unexplained significant weight loss in AIDS patients</td>
<td>Par Pharmaceuticals-Elan Drug Delivery</td>
<td>1/4th Reduction in dose volume as compared to previous oral suspension (from 20 mL to 5 mL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emend</td>
<td>Aprepitant</td>
<td>Nanosuspensions</td>
<td>Capsule</td>
<td>Antiemetic</td>
<td>Merck-Elan Drug Delivery</td>
<td>Drug Higher oral bioavailability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricor</td>
<td>Fenofibrate</td>
<td>Nanosuspensions</td>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>Antihyperlipidemic agent</td>
<td>Abbott Labs</td>
<td>Dose reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panzem</td>
<td>2-Methoxy estradiol</td>
<td>Nanosuspensions</td>
<td>Nano-suspension</td>
<td>Estrogen metabolite with anti-proliferative and anti-angiogenic effect</td>
<td>EntreMed Inc.</td>
<td>Elimination of variability because of food effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoral</td>
<td>Cyclosporine</td>
<td>Spontaneously emulsifying systems</td>
<td>Soft gelatin Capsule (SGC)</td>
<td>Immunosuppressant</td>
<td>Novartis</td>
<td>Increased bioavailability of cyclosporine as compared to earlier oily formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gengraf</td>
<td>Cyclosporine</td>
<td>Spontaneously emulsifying systems (SES)</td>
<td>Hard gelatin capsule</td>
<td>Immunosuppressant</td>
<td>Abbott Labs</td>
<td>Improved Therapeutic Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norvir</td>
<td>Ritonavir</td>
<td>SES</td>
<td>SGC</td>
<td>Anti-retroviral (anti-HIV)</td>
<td>Abbott Labs</td>
<td>Commercial/therapeutic benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CONCLUSION
Among the currently available drugs in clinical use having narrow absorption window may be benefited by compounding into a MMSN. It can be concluded that the therapeutic potential of colloid drug carriers after oral administration is probably not delivering the drug directly in the blood flow, but to increase bioavailability by protecting the drug from denaturation in the gastro-intestinal lumen or by increasing the drug concentration for a prolonged period of time directly at the surface of the mucous membrane. Improvements in all aspects of this delivery system are required, so that efficient systems will emerge.

REFERENCES