



## Review Article

**Solid lipid nanoparticles: Potential applications**JS MULLA\*<sup>1</sup>, IM KHAZI <sup>2</sup>, VG JAMAKANDI<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Pharmaceutics, K.L.E.University's College of Pharmacy, Hubli, INDIA<sup>2</sup>Department of PG Studies in Chemistry, Karnatak University, Dharwad, INDIA**ARTICLE DETAILS***Article history:*

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**ABSTRACT**

In the middle of the 1990s, the attention of different research groups has focused on alternative nanoparticles made from solid lipids by name solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN or lipospheres or nanospheres). The SLN combine the advantages (e.g. physical stability, protection of incorporated labile drugs from degradation, controlled release, excellent tolerability) of other traditional colloidal systems, such as emulsions, liposomes and polymeric microparticles and nanoparticles; while at the same time minimizing the associated problems. SLN formulations for various application routes (parenteral, oral, dermal, ocular, pulmonar, rectal) have been developed and thoroughly characterized *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Recently, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) have been widely studied as a next-generation delivery system in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. This paper reviews the applications of lipid based carrier systems, SLN.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In recent years it has become more and more evident that the development of new drugs alone is not sufficient to ensure progress in drug therapy. Exciting experimental data obtained *in vitro* are very often followed by disappointing results *in vivo*. Most important reasons for the therapy failure include insufficient drug concentration, poor drug solubility and high fluctuation of plasma levels due to unpredictable bioavailability after peroral administration. Looking for drug carrier formulations increasing the bioavailability and consisting of well tolerated excipients, the Solid Lipid Nanoparticles (SLNs) are alternative drug carrier systems. Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN, also referred to as lipospheres or solid lipid nanospheres) are a relatively new class of drug carrier. They are particles of submicron size (50 to 1000 nm) made from lipids that remain in a solid state at room temperature and body temperature [1-15].

Over the last decades, colloidal drug delivery systems and especially nanoparticles have received great attention. Nanoparticles can be administered via different routes of administration such as parenteral, oral, intraocular, transdermal or pulmonary inhalation. Aerosol therapy using particulate drug carrier systems is becoming a popular method to deliver therapeutic or diagnostic compounds either locally or systemically as shown by the development of inhalable insulin.

Studies have shown that solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) can increase the local drug concentration gradients, facilitate drug transport into the brain via endocytotic pathways and inhibit the ATP-binding cassette (ABC) transporters expressed at the barrier sites. Several nanosized delivery systems have already proved their effectiveness in animal models for the treatment and prophylaxis of malaria. Topical application of drugs to the eye is the most popular and well-accepted route of administration for the treatment of various eye disorders. The bioavailability of ophthalmic drugs is, however, very poor due to efficient protective mechanisms of the eye. Blinking, baseline and reflex lachrymation, and drainage remove rapidly foreign substances, including drugs, from the surface of the eye. Moreover, the anatomy, physiology and barrier function of the cornea compromise the rapid absorption of drugs. Numerous strategies were developed to increase the bioavailability of ophthalmic drugs by prolonging the contact time between the preparation, and therefore the drug, and the corneal/conjunctival epithelium.

Tuberculosis (TB) is the second most deadly infectious disease. Despite potentially curative pharmacotherapies being available for over 50 years, the length of the treatment and the pill burden can hamper patient lifestyle. Thus, low compliance and adherence to administration schedules remain the main reasons for therapeutic failure and contribute to the development of multi-drug-resistant (MDR) strains. Nanotechnologies appear as one of the most promising approaches for the development of more effective and compliant medicines. The great interest in mucosal vaccine delivery arises from the fact that mucosal surfaces represent the major site of entry for many pathogens. Among other mucosal

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sites, nasal delivery is especially attractive for immunization, as the nasal epithelium is characterized by relatively high permeability, low enzymatic activity and by the presence of an important number of immunocompetent cells. Use of nanocarriers provides a suitable way for the nasal delivery of antigenic molecules. Parenteral formulations, particularly intravascular ones, offer a unique opportunity for direct access to the bloodstream and rapid onset of drug action as well as targeting to specific organ and tissue sites. Nanoemulsions, nanosuspensions and polymeric phospholipid micelles constitute novel parenteral formulations of approved drugs or new chemical entities [16-30].

Recently, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) have been widely studied as a next-generation delivery system in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics [31, 32]. This paper intends to describe the wide applications of lipid based carrier systems, SLN.

#### **Administration routes and in vivo fate**

SLN are administered by several routes. The *in vivo* fate of the SLN particles will depend mainly on the following parameters:

(a) Administration route  
 (b) Interactions of the SLN with the biological surroundings including:

(b1) distribution processes (adsorption of biological material on the particle surface and desorption of SLN components into the biological surrounding)

(b2) enzymatic processes (e.g. lipid degradation by lipases and esterases)

SLN are composed of physiological or physiologically related lipids or waxes. Therefore, pathways for transportation and metabolism are present in the body which may contribute to a large extent to the *in vivo* fate of the carrier. Probably the most important enzymes of SLN degradation are lipases, which are present in various organs and tissues. Lipases split the ester linkage and form partial glycerides or glycerol and free fatty acids. Most lipases require activation by an oil /water interface, which opens the catalytic center (lid opening) [33-35]. *In vitro* experiments indicate that solid lipid nanoparticles show different degradation velocities by the lipolytic enzyme pancreatic lipase as a function of their composition (lipid matrix, stabilizing surfactant) [36-38].

#### **Peroral administration**

Peroral administration forms of SLN may include aqueous dispersions or SLN loaded traditional dosage forms, e.g. tablets, pellets or capsules. The microclimate of the stomach favors particle aggregation due to the acidity and high ionic strength [39]. Oral administration of SLN is possible as aqueous dispersion or alternatively after transform into a traditional dosage form, i.e. tablets, pellets, capsules or powders in sachets. For the production of tablets the aqueous SLN dispersion can be used instead of a granulation liquid in the granulation process. Alternatively SLN can be transferred to a powder (e.g. by spray-drying) and added to the tableting powder mixture. For the production of pellets

the SLN dispersion can be used as wetting agent in the extrusion process [17].

#### **Parenteral administration**

SLN have been administered intravenously to animals. Pharmacokinetic studies of doxorubicin incorporated into SLN showed higher blood levels in comparison to a commercial drug solution after i.v. injection in rats. Concerning the body distribution, SLN were found to cause higher drug concentrations in lung, spleen and brain, while the solution led to a distribution more into liver and kidneys [40].

#### **SLN in cosmetic and dermatological preparations**

An area of big potential for SLN and with a short time-to-market are topical products based on the SLN technology, that means pharmaceutical but also cosmetic formulations. SLN are considered as being the next generation of delivery system after liposomes [41].

Due to the lower risk of systemic side effects topical treatment of skin disease appears favourable, yet the stratum corneum counteracts the penetration of xenobiotics into viable skin. Particulate carrier systems may mean an option to improve dermal penetration. Since epidermal lipids are found in high amounts within the penetration barrier, lipid carriers attaching themselves to the skin surface and allowing lipid exchange between the outermost layers of the stratum corneum and the carrier appear promising. Besides liposomes, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) and nanostructured lipid carriers (NLC) have been studied intensively [42].

Following the evaporation of water from the lipid nanodispersion applied to the skin surface, lipid particles form an adhesive layer occluding the skin surface. Then hydration of the stratum corneum may increase which by reducing corneocyte packing and widening of the inter-corneocytes gaps can facilitate drug penetration into deeper skin strata. Occlusive effects appear strongly related to particle size. Nanoparticles have turned out 15-fold more occlusive than microparticles, and particles smaller than 400 nm in a dispersion containing at least 35% lipid of high crystallinity has been most potent [43-45].

#### **SLN as potential new adjuvant for vaccines**

Adjuvants are used in vaccination to enhance the immune response. The safer new subunit vaccines are less effective in immunization and therefore effective adjuvants are required [41].

#### **Solid lipid nanoparticles in cancer chemotherapy:**

The prospect of improved cancer chemotherapy using solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) as a drug delivery system is promising. Several obstacles frequently encountered with anticancer compounds, such as normal tissue toxicity, poor specificity and stability and a high incidence of drugresistant tumor cells, are at least partially overcome by delivering them using SLN. The emergence of the newer forms of SLN such as polymer lipid hybrid nanoparticles, nanostructured lipid carriers and long-circulating SLN may further expand the role of this versatile drug carrier in cancer treatment. This review focuses on the current use of SLN for the

encapsulation and delivery of cytotoxic anticancer compounds. It also discusses more recent trends in the use of SLN as vehicles for delivery of chemosensitizers and cytotoxic therapeutic molecules. It is anticipated that, in the near future, SLN will be further improved to deliver anticancer compounds in a more efficient, specific and safer manner [46].

#### **Solid lipid nanoparticles for delivering peptides and proteins**

Solid lipid particulate systems such as solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN), lipid microparticles (LM) and lipospheres have been sought as alternative carriers for therapeutic peptides, proteins and antigens. The research work developed in the area confirms that under optimized conditions they can be produced to incorporate hydrophobic or hydrophilic proteins and seem to fulfil the requirements for an optimum particulate carrier system. Proteins and antigens intended for therapeutic purposes may be incorporated or adsorbed onto SLN, and further administered by parenteral routes or by alternative routes such as oral, nasal and pulmonary. Formulation in SLN confers improved protein stability, avoids proteolytic degradation, as well as sustained release of the incorporated molecules. Important peptides such as cyclosporine A, insulin, calcitonin and somatostatin have been incorporated into solid lipid particles and are currently under investigation. Several local or systemic therapeutic applications may be foreseen, such as immunisation with protein antigens, infectious disease treatment, chronic diseases and cancer therapy [47].

#### **Solid lipid nanoparticles for targeted brain drug delivery**

The state of the art on surfactant coated poly (alkyl cyanoacrylate) nanoparticles specifically designed for brain targeting is given by emphasizing the transfer of this technology to solid lipid matrices. The available literature on solid lipid nanoparticles and related carriers for brain drug targeting is revised as well. The potential advantages of the use of solid lipid nanoparticles over polymeric nanoparticles are accounted on the bases of a lower cytotoxicity, higher drug loading capacity, and best production scalability. Solid lipid nanoparticles physicochemical characteristics are also particularly regarded in order to address the critical issues related to the development of suitable brain targeting formulations. A critical consideration on the potential application of such technology as related to the current status of brain drug development is also given [48].

#### **Solid lipid nanoparticles for parasitic diseases**

Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs) and nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs) represent a second generation of colloidal carriers and have emerged as an effective alternative to liposomes mainly due to their better stability profile, ease of scalability and commercialization and relative cost efficacy. Moreover, SLN and NLC due to their particulate nature and inherent structure exhibit good potential in the treatment of parasitic infections. Recent reports including our investigation have validated their utility at least to some extent. However, the need of hour is to undertake

extensive investigations on SLN and NLC matrices in order to extend their versatility with respect to encapsulation ability and targetability and to arrive at a versatile, effective and economical approach for the delivery of anti-parasitic drugs [49].

#### **Solid lipid nanoparticles for ultrasonic drug and gene delivery**

Drug delivery research employing micelles and nanoparticles has expanded in recent years. Of particular interest is the use of these nanovehicles that deliver high concentrations of cytotoxic drugs to diseased tissues selectively, thus reducing the agent's side effects on the rest of the body. Ultrasound, traditionally used in diagnostic medicine, is finding a place in drug delivery in connection with these nanoparticles. In addition to their non-invasive nature and the fact that they can be focused on targeted tissues, acoustic waves have been credited with releasing pharmacological agents from nanocarriers, as well as rendering cell membranes more permeable. Ultrasonic drug delivery from micelles usually employs polyether block copolymers and has been found effective *in vivo* for treating tumors. Ultrasound releases drug from micelles, most probably via shear stress and shock waves from the collapse of cavitation bubbles. Liquid emulsions and solid nanoparticles are used with ultrasound to deliver genes *in vitro* and *in vivo*. The small packaging allows nanoparticles to extravasate into tumor tissues. Ultrasonic drug and gene delivery from nanocarriers has tremendous potential because of the wide variety of drugs and genes that could be delivered to targeted tissues by fairly non-invasive means [50].

#### **SLN applications for improved delivery of antiretroviral drugs to the brain**

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can gain access to the central nervous system during the early course of primary infection. Once in the brain compartment the virus actively replicates to form an independent viral reservoir, resulting in debilitating neurological complications, latent infection and drug resistance. Current antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) often fail to effectively reduce the HIV viral load in the brain. This, in part, is due to the poor transport of many ARVs, in particular protease inhibitors, across the blood-brain barrier (BBB) and blood-cerebrospinal fluid barrier (BCSFB). Studies have shown that nanocarriers including polymeric nanoparticles, liposomes, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) and micelles can increase the local drug concentration gradients, facilitate drug transport into the brain via endocytotic pathways and inhibit the ATP-binding cassette (ABC) transporters expressed at the barrier sites. By delivering ARVs with nanocarriers, significant increase in the drug bioavailability to the brain is expected to be achieved. Recent studies show that the specificity and efficiency of ARVs delivery can be further enhanced by using nanocarriers with specific brain targeting, cell penetrating ligands or ABC-transporters inhibitors. Future research should focus on achieving brain delivery of ARVs in a safe, efficient, and yet cost-effective manner [51].

### SLN applied to the treatment of malaria

Despite the fact that we live in an era of advanced technology and innovation, infectious diseases, like malaria, continue to be one of the greatest health challenges worldwide. The main drawbacks of conventional malaria chemotherapy are the development of multiple drug resistance and the non-specific targeting to intracellular parasites, resulting in high dose requirements and subsequent intolerable toxicity. Nanosized carriers have been receiving special attention with the aim of minimizing the side effects of drug therapy, such as poor bioavailability and the selectivity of drugs. Several nanosized delivery systems have already proved their effectiveness in animal models for the treatment and prophylaxis of malaria. A number of strategies to deliver antimalarials using nanocarriers and the mechanisms that facilitate their targeting to Plasmodium spp-infected cells are discussed in this review. Taking into account the peculiarities of malaria parasites, the focus is placed particularly on lipid-based (e.g., liposomes, solid lipid nanoparticles and nano and microemulsions) and polymer-based nanocarriers (nanocapsules and nanospheres) [52].

### Targeted delivery of solid lipid nanoparticles for the treatment of lung diseases

Targeted delivery of drug molecules to organs or special sites is one of the most challenging research areas in pharmaceutical sciences. By developing colloidal delivery systems such as liposomes, micelles and nanoparticles a new frontier was opened for improving drug delivery. Nanoparticles with their special characteristics such as small particle size, large surface area and the capability of changing their surface properties have numerous advantages compared with other delivery systems. Targeted nanoparticle delivery to the lungs is an emerging area of interest [53].

### Solid lipid nanoparticles in tuberculosis disease

SLN have longer stability and better encapsulation efficiency than liposomes and, as opposed to polymeric nanoparticles, the production process involves minimal amounts of organic solvents. RIF, INH and PYZ were incorporated into oral SLN produced by an emulsion/solvent diffusion method. Encapsulation efficiency was 51, 45 and 41%, respectively. A single dose administered orally in mice resulted in drug concentrations detectable after 3 h and for up to 8 days [54-56].

### Solid lipid nanoparticles for lymphatic targeting

The solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) were developed and evaluated for the lymphatic uptake after intraduodenal administration to rats [11, 57, 58].

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, solid lipid nanoparticles play an important role as novel carrier with potential applications. To guarantee a broad application of a carrier system it is highly desirable that companies specialized in drug delivery systems engage themselves in the new technology. Drug delivery companies develop pharmaceutical solutions adapted to the needs of many different pharmaceutical companies, that means the technology will spread to many companies and not only

be localized inside one company using this new technology just limited to their own drugs

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