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Review Article

Drug Delivery Based on Nanoparticulate Systems

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ABSTRACT

The administration route of an active ingredient and the materials used to deliver it are as important as the synthesis of that active ingredient. For the treatment to be effective, the active ingredient must be present in the right amount and in the right place at the right time. Therefore, researchers have been studying a wide variety of drug delivery systems, taking into account the route of administration of the drug, its half-life, and its effective and toxic amounts. Because of its numerous benefits, nanotechnology has attracted attention in pharmaceutical research as well as many other fields. Nanoparticles have the potential to disperse hydrophobic drugs in an aqueous solution, deliver drugs to the targeted site, and thus selectively direct therapeutic agents such as antineoplastic drugs. This study provides a detailed discussion of the many inorganic, polymeric, and lipid-based nanoparticulate systems designed for drug delivery.

Keywords: Drug delivery systems, Nanomedicine, Nanoparticles, Nanotechnology

Nanopartikül Sistemlere Dayalı İlaç Taşıma

ÖZET

Bir etkin maddenin veriliş yolu ve vermek için kullanılan malzemeler, o etkin maddenin sentezi kadar önemlidir. Tedavinin etkili olabilmesi için etken maddenin doğru miktarda ve doğru zamanda doğru yerde bulunması gerekir. Bu nedenle araştırmacılar, ilacın veriliş yolunu, yarı ömrünü, etkili ve toksik miktarlarını dikkate alarak çok çeşitli ilaç taşıyıcı sistemler üzerinde çalışmaktadır. Nanoteknoloji, sayısız faydaları nedeniyle pek çok alanda olduğu gibi farmasötik araştırmalarda da ilgi çekmektedir. Nanopartiküller, hidrofobik ilaçları sulu bir çözelti içinde dağıtma, ilaçları hedeflenen bölgeye iletme ve dolayısıyla antineoplastik ilaçlar gibi terapötik ajanları seçici olarak yönlendirme potansiyeline sahiptir. Bu çalışma, ilaç dağıtımını için tasarlanmış birçok inorganik, polimerik ve lipit bazlı nanopartikül sistemin ayrıntılı bir tartışmasını sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlaç taşıyıcı sistemler, Nanotıp, Nanopartiküller, Nanoteknoloji

I. INTRODUCTION

Drug delivery systems (DDSs) regulate both the location and speed of release of a drug throughout the body. DDSs are designed to measure drug levels and extend the effects of the therapeutic agents over time. As required, DDSs can also be triggered by outside stimuli such as pH, temperature, magnetic field etc., to release the therapeutic agents to the media as needed. Studies in the field of DDSs can be classified into three main classes: delivery routes, e.g., oral, pulmonary, and transdermal; types of delivery systems, e.g., inorganic, lipid-based, and polymeric; and targeting strategies, e.g., surface modifications [1].

Nanotechnology covers scientific studies, engineering applications, and technology, particularly at sizes of 1 to 100 nm. By altering the characteristics of matter, nanoscience and nanotechnology enable the development of novel and inventive materials in various areas including biomedical engineering, chemistry, physics, electronic engineering, environmental engineering, and so on [2], [3], [4]. Nanoparticulate-DDSs (nano-DDSs) carry out significant advantages such as targeting drugs with low bioavailability directly to the desired area, more efficient imaging for diagnosis, and higher accuracy detection of tumoral tissues [5]. Nano-DDSs enable drugs to reach the target site, i.e., organ, tissue, or cells in high concentrations safely, controlled, and effectively [6].

II. NANOPARTICLES AS DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Nanoparticulate DDSs (nano-DDSs) can be classified as organic nanoparticles e.g., dendrimers, liposomes and niosomes, inorganic nanoparticles e.g., metal nanoparticles, and carbon-based nanoparticles e.g., graphenes, carbon nanotubes (Figure 1).

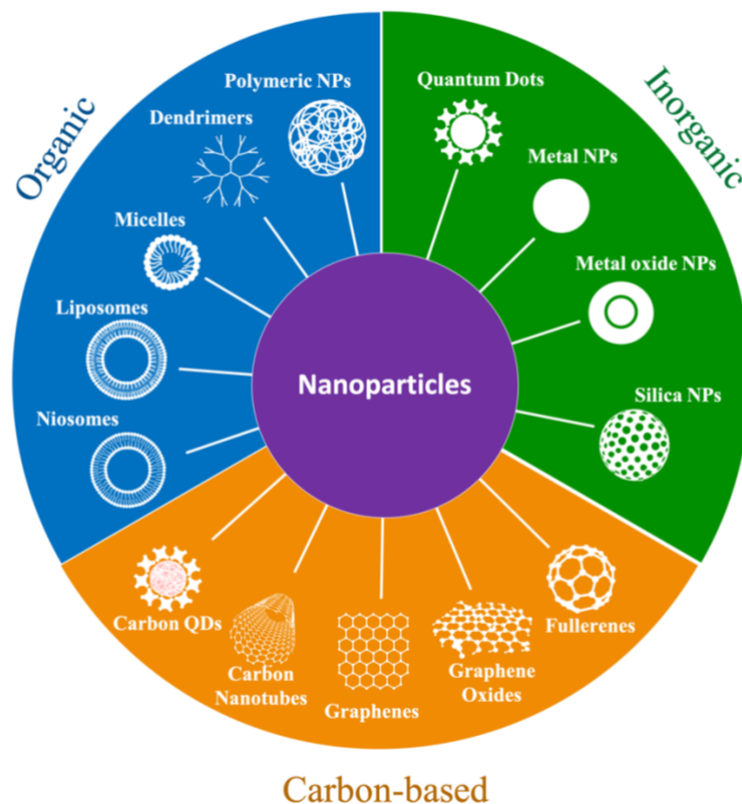


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of different types of nanoparticles (NPs).

A. POLYMERIC NANOPARTICLES

In the intelligent drug delivery discipline, polymeric nanoparticles are part of a wide range of uses as they can efficiently deliver therapeutics to the intended location in the human body [7]. Compared to other compositions, polymeric materials offer the great combination of properties, including stability and high agent loading, control over drug release kinetics, ease of modification to display a variety of surface-attached ligands, and a long history of safe human use for many polymers [8]. A formulation that can deliver the medication in a controlled manner and at a specified location is of primary importance to the researchers [9].

An ideal polymeric nanoparticulate system should have minimum dimensions and high drug-loading capacity [10]. In line with this goal, polymers offer a variety of uses by being divided into two different classes: natural and synthetic. Natural polymers have proven exceptional because of their intrinsic qualities, which include surface modification ease and biocompatibility so that most natural polymers are already found in living things [9]. Oligosaccharides [11], polysaccharaides [12], proteins [13], [14], peptides [15], and genes [16], [17] can be used in DDSs as molecules belonging to the natural polymer class. Polymers such as polylactic acid [18] polycaprolactone [19], polylactic-co-glycolic acid [20], polyethylene glycol [21], 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate [22], [23], [24] and N-isopropylacrylamide [25] can be frequently used in DDSs as synthetic polymers. Various physicochemical characteristics of polymeric nanoparticles used as DDSs are given in Figure 2.

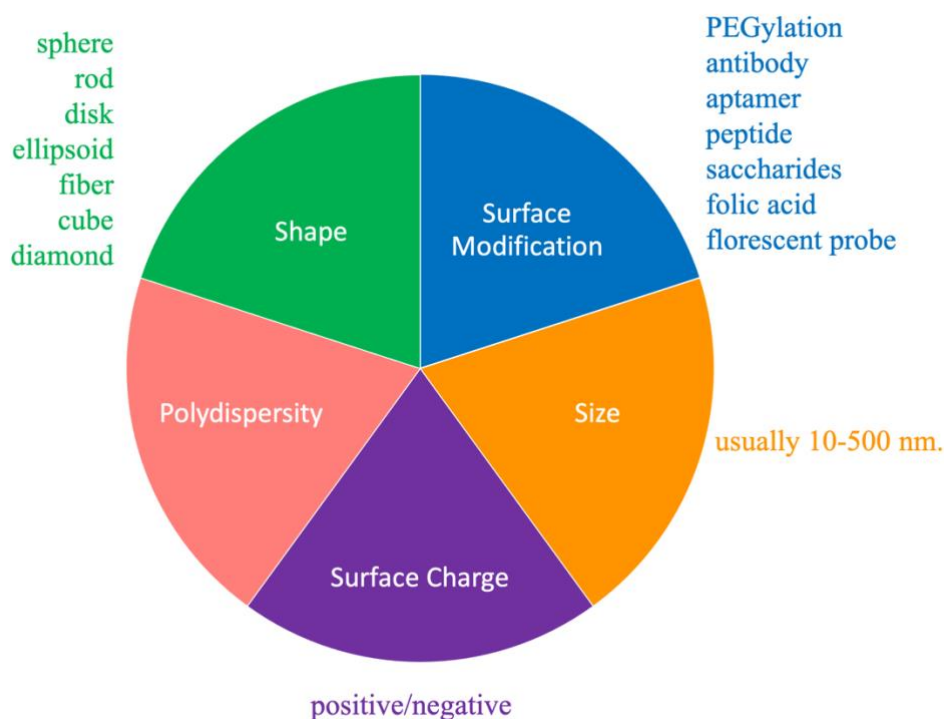


Figure 2. Different parameters for polymeric nanoparticles utilized as DDSs.

B. LIPOSOMES

Liposomes are a colloidal spherical structure formed by the self-assembly of amphiphilic lipid molecules such as phospholipids in solution [26]. They are artificial vesicles of various sizes composed of artificial or natural phospholipids [27]. Phospholipids have an amphiphilic nature and form polar shells in aqueous solution due to the hydrophobic effect of hydrophobic acyl chains when exposed to an aqueous environment. This technique has thermodynamic advantages because of hydrogen bonds, van der Waals forces, and other electrostatic interactions [28]. It has a structure similar to the cell membrane, consisting of a lipid bilayer and an aqueous core. Depending on the formulation of liposomes, they can differ in size, lipid composition, and charge [29].

Liposomes have the unique capacity to load and transport molecules with varying solubilities because to their well-organized structure. A liposomal membrane is usually built up by one or more lipid bilayers arranged around an inner aqueous core, with polar head groups facing both the outer and inner aqueous media [27]. Therefore, both lipophilic and hydrophilic drug molecules can be loaded to the liposomes [30]. Hydrophobic molecules can be loaded into the lipid bilayer, while hydrophilic molecules and amphiphilic molecules can be loaded into the inner aqueous core and water/lipid bilayer interface, respectively [31]. Liposomes can be counted as DDSs with many advantages such as biocompatibility, structural versatility, biodegradability, non-toxic, non-immunogenic nature and can change the pharmacokinetic profile of the drugs [32].

The effectiveness of encapsulation of a therapeutic molecule in the liposome depends on the polarity of the drug and its partition coefficient, which determines its location in the liposomal membrane [33]. If the drug is hydrophobic, drug is in the acyl hydrocarbon chain in the liposome. Otherwise, if it is polar/hydrophilic, it tends to be adjacent to the water-lipid interface, in the aqueous core, or near the polar head groups of the liposome [34].

Investigation of drug release from liposomes is usually carried out *in vitro* using a dialysis method [35]. According to this method, the drug molecules are allowed to pass through the membrane of pre-wetted dialysis bags with a predetermined molecular weight limit while the liposomes are trapped within dialysis bags. The release rate from liposomes is determined by monitoring the amount of released drug molecules at various time intervals. [36], [37].

Numerous liposome-based formulations that are either commercially available or conducting clinical trials attest to the efficacy of liposomes as drug carriers [38], [39], [40], [41], [42]. Among drug delivery applications, pH-sensitive liposome design is advantageous for specific cancer cell targeting, increased cellular internalization (inclusion), and rapid intracellular drug release, especially in the face of pH values that can change in various sites including tumor and extracellular environments [43], [44], [45], [46], [47], [48].

C. NIOSOMES

Analogous to liposomes, niosomes (non-ionic surfactant-based vesicles) are closed bilayer structures created by non-ionic amphiphiles (surfactants) in the aqueous medium [49]. As liposomes are built up from neutral or charged double-chain phospholipids, niosomes are created using uncharged single-chain surfactants and solutes [49]. Surfactants in the niosome structure are positioned so that their hydrophilic head parts face inward and their hydrophobic tail parts face each other on the inside. This structure creates two regions in niosomes: hydrophilic and hydrophobic [50]. Niosomes allow the encapsulation of hydrophilic and hydrophobic drugs thanks to their structure's hydrophilic and hydrophobic parts [51].

Niosomes surround the molecule to be encapsulated similarly to liposomes and offer a wide solubility range for the encapsulation process. Niosomes behave *in vivo* similarly to liposomes [52]. In contrast, when mechanical stress is applied, niosomes change shape but are more stable than liposomes. It is not necessary for them to operate in an inert environment [53]. Niosomes can overcome disadvantages of liposomes, including variable phospholipid purity and high cost [54]. However, they can be sterilized using approaches such as Gamma radiation, autoclaving and membrane filtration [55].

Adjusting vesicle composition and temperature can generate niosome structures with spherical, helical, tubular, and polyhedral shapes. While they have an osmotically active and stable structure, they are also flexible [56]. Being stable and flexible, it effectively prevents problems such as leakage during molecule transportation to the target area. It is biocompatible, non-immunogenic, and non-toxic [57]. It is known that niosomes not only protect the drug they encapsulate from mechanical and chemical degradation but also increase the effectiveness of the drug [58].

Niosomes have many advantages using as nanocarrier drug systems. It increases the oral bioavailability of poorly absorbed drugs and increases skin penetration [59]. It is suitable for oral [60], parenteral [61], pulmonary [62], ocular [63] transdermal [64], [65] and topical applications [66], [67].

D. SOLID LIPID NANOPARTICLES

With the benefits of biodegradation and nontoxicity, nanolipid dispersions, which include liposomes, ethosomes, virosomes, and solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs), are appropriate colloidal carriers for distribution. Compared to liposomes and polymeric nanoparticles, SLNs predominate because of their advantages. For instance, because they degrade naturally, SLNs and nanostructured lipid carriers are not biotoxic and they are also relatively stable [68].

Triglycerides and fatty acids are examples of non-polar lipids that are colloiddally dispersed and solid at body and room temperatures. These lipids are known as solid lipids and the use of solid lipids, which significantly lowers the mobility of integrated therapeutic agents into the lipid matrix, is the main benefit of SLNs. Moreover, this keeps particles from coalescing, enhancing stability, limiting drug protuberance into the emulsifier film, and promoting prolonged drug release [69]. Another essential characteristic of SLNs is their absorption by the reticuloendothelial system, which increases the medicines' bioavailability by avoiding first-pass metabolism when taken orally [70]. Additionally, they make surface modification of the carrier easier, which lengthens the duration of blood circulation and improves the pharmacokinetic profile of the medications [71].

Since SLNs are made of solid lipids, they are significant carriers for lipophilic drugs. However, developing SLNs as a vehicle for water-soluble compounds is challenging [72]. As indicated, owing to their low affinity for the lipid matrix, water-soluble chemicals strongly tend to partition into the outer aqueous phase throughout the synthesis process [73]. It has been demonstrated that SLNs systems that target macrophages effectively treat rheumatoid arthritis [74], diabetes [75], psoriasis [76] and autoimmune blood diseases [77]. A schematic illustration of liposome, niosome and SLNs were given in Figure 3.

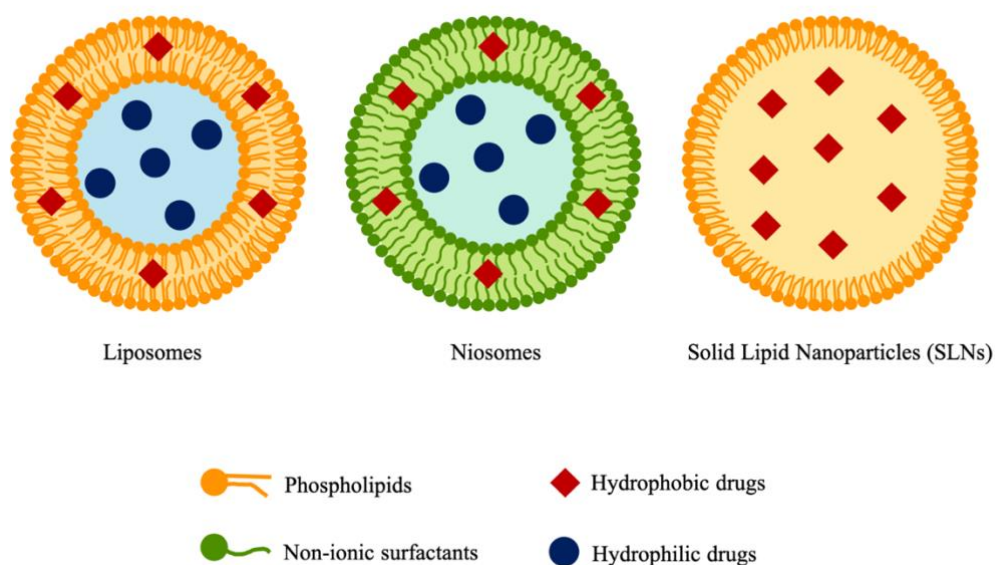


Figure 3. A schematic illustration of liposome, niosome and solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs).

E. METALLIC NANOPARTICLES

Metal-based nanoparticles include many metals and metal oxides such as copper, copper oxide, iron, iron oxide, silver, cobalt and titanium dioxide [78]. Metal oxides have been employed in different areas including, sensor technologies, catalysis, solar cells etc. [79], [80]. It has produced notable advancements, particularly in the medical field, that metallic nanoparticles increase drug therapeutic index through site specificity, avoid multidrug resistance, and efficiently distribute therapeutic agents [81]. Metallic nanoparticles are DDSs for a wide range of therapeutic agents such as peptides, nucleic acids, antibodies, and chemotherapeutic medications [82]. Conjugating targeted agents and active biomolecules via H-bonding, covalent bonding, and electrostatic interactions is a simple way to functionalize their surface. It is also simple to load numerous medications to increase therapeutic efficacy [83]. The ability of metallic nanoparticles to prolong the duration that drugs circulating in the blood, suppress or completely eradicate rapid renal drug excretion, and increase the water solubility of hydrophobic drug compounds is how they are obtained [84].

It is challenging issue to target the delivery of antineoplastic agents to cancer cells, so these drugs disseminate throughout the body, causing widespread toxicity, low patient acceptability, and sometimes even treatment termination [85]. Metallic nanoparticles are emerging as new carriers and contrast agents in cancer treatment [86]. Since metallic nanoparticles may be precisely regulated in form, size, charge, and surface modification, they are especially beneficial in cancer treatment [87]. Additionally, they are more readily absorbed by cells than non-metallic nanoparticles of the same size, which makes them advantageous for cancer treatment. For this aim, metallic nanoparticles have been used for imaging tumor cells using active and passive targeting so that metals have anticancer properties that are either surface-induced or natural [88].

Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) are unique among metallic nanomaterials because of their wide variety of uses [89]. Several research groups have recently revealed that AgNPs can generate antitumoral effects in *in vitro* and *in vivo* tumor models, which could benefit various oncotherapy modalities and diagnostic tools [90], [91], [92], [93], [94]. This has led to an increased interest in AgNPs in nanomedicine [95]. AgNPs' toxicity is known to be dependent on the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which can occur directly (by electron donation to molecular oxygen, producing O_2^-) or indirectly (by interfering with mitochondrial structure and functions, leading to O_2^- leakage from the electron transport chain) [96]. The precise mechanisms by which AgNPs act against cancer cells are still not fully understood [97]. ROS, which includes superoxide anion (O_2^-), hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), and hydroxyl radical ($HO\cdot$), are byproducts of cellular oxygen metabolism. Since these compounds are crucial to signaling pathways, the cell's antioxidant pool keeps them at low levels under physiological settings. On the other hand, oxidative stress is linked to excessive ROS production [98]. AgNP exposure raises ROS levels, which causes cytotoxicity, lowers cell proliferation rates, damages macromolecules and organelles, and finally results in cell death [99].

Because of superior features of magnetic iron oxide nanoparticles (IONs) such as intrinsic magnetic qualities, or superparamagnetism, they are useful in various scientific domains, including electronics and the environment [100]. Moreover, IONs have much promise for use in therapeutic settings. When exposed to a different magnetic field, they can be used to create localized heat enhancement—a phenomenon known as magnetic hyperthermia application [101]. Because cancer cells cannot live in the 42–49°C temperature range, while healthy cells can, this feature is very effective in killing cancer cells [102]. Also, IONs are important nanocarriers as they can achieve high drug loading and targeting abilities [103], [104], [105]. It is well known that IONs can release drugs in a regulated way and can quickly transport drugs to a specific target spot when exposed to an external magnetic field [106], [107].

Gold nanoparticles (AuNPs), offer a versatile platform, especially for clinical and biomedical fields, due to their unique combination of physical, chemical, optical, and electrical capabilities [108]. Because AuNPs are potential nanocarriers for drug delivery because of their advantages including decreased side effects on healthy tissues, imaging or site targeting, and improved tissue permeability [109]. In addition, AuNPs are smaller than their biological targets; they can specifically interact and connect with biomolecules found inside cell organelles, in the cytoplasm, and on the surface of cells [110]. These

efficient nano-DDSs can transport various therapeutic agents, including peptides [111], proteins [112], genes [113], [114], [115], vaccines [116] and chemotherapy medicines [117].

F. GRAPHENES AND GRAPHENE OXIDES

Graphene, an allotrope of carbon making sp^2 bonds, is the thinnest material that forms a single-atom-thick planar surface within the honeycomb crystal lattice structure [118]. The graphite structure is formed by arranging carbon atoms in a hexagonal shape called a honeycomb in layers [119]. The graphite structure consisting of a single layer called "Graphene" [120]. Graphene is a two-dimensional material with unique structural, electronic, and optical properties [121]. Also, one of the most important properties of graphene is that it is the thinnest of all existing materials, being only one atom thick. It is a highly transparent material that absorbs very little light [122]. Graphene is in demand in many potential areas thanks to its features such as high specific surface area, electrical and thermal conductivity, high elastic modulus, and complex structure. Graphene-based materials, including graphene, graphene oxide (GO) and reduced graphene oxide (rGO) are classed based on their size, shape, and functional groups [123]. GO is utilized in various areas including biosensor technology insulation and environmental remediation [124], [125], [126].

The unique characteristics of graphene and graphene oxide, such as two-dimensional planar structure, large surface area, chemical and mechanical stability, exceptional conductivity, and favorable biocompatibility, have led to substantial research into these materials as some of the most promising biomaterials for biomedical applications [127]. Graphene's 2D structure and delocalized surface electrons can be used for efficient drug loading via hydrophobic interactions between hydrophobic drugs and aromatic groups of graphene without chemical modification of the drugs [128]. The large surface area of graphene enables covalent and non-covalent surface modification to achieve high-density biofunctionalization [129]. Graphene is a promising material that can be used as drug delivery systems for comparing against conventional agents. These characteristics lead to graphene-based nanocomposites considering as DDSs and to use for variety of treatments including delivery systems for antineoplastic agents such as cisplatin, doxorubicin, paclitaxel and so on [130].

G. CARBON NANOTUBES

One of the most prominent nanotechnology inventions in recent years is carbon nanotubes (CNTs). CNTs are rolls of graphene that have been sp^2 hybridized and have diameters as small as one nanometer. The noteworthy features of CNTs are their high aspect ratio, low weight, superior conductivity qualities, and exceptional tensile strength, which qualify them for use as additions in a variety of products, such as metal substrates, ceramics, and polymers [131].

These structures are exceptional materials with many potential uses because of their strength, compact size, and extraordinary physical characteristics. These unique nanoscale-based features have remarkable mechanical and electrical features, unveiled by extensive global work in recent years [132]. Carbon nanotubes are now widely recognized as excellent model systems for researching the physics of one-dimensional solids and have great potential for building blocks in a wide range of useful nanoscale technologies [133]. Miniaturized electrical, mechanical, electromechanical, chemical, and scanning probe devices, as well as materials for macroscopic composites, have demonstrated the utility of nanotubes [134].

In addition to their electronic applications, CNTs have the potential to be applied in the pharmaceutical field as DDSs due to their specific surface area, biocompatibility, durability, and potential to carry large amounts of drugs and biomolecules [135]. These carbon nanoparticles can be engineered to help target or deliver drugs more effectively and develop novel therapeutic approaches, particularly for cancer treatment [130]. They can also be used to develop new diagnostic agents for malignancies and are anticipated to aid in combining therapies and molecular imaging for diagnosis [136].

Researchers have also recently discovered that CNT-based nanomaterials could be employed as carriers to control drug distribution, particularly with chemotherapeutic medications [137], [138], [139], [140], [141], [142], [143], [144], [145]. Multi-wall carbon nanotubes (MWCNT), utilized to target malignant cells, made up most of these carriers [146]. SWNT pharmacokinetics depends on several variables, including functional groups, pH, polymer molecular weight, drug loading techniques, and protonation [147]. They are also promising therapeutic bioimaging nanocarriers due to several other characteristics, such as photoacoustic, Raman scattering, and NIR fluorescence absorption [148]. The outcomes of studies conducted on animals and in laboratories for diagnosis and therapy have grown increasingly promising [149], [150]. The compilation of studies has brought to light the necessity of a thorough evaluation that covers CNT dosage, duration, induction technique, and other factors to create the most controlled environments possible for research involving humans and animals [151], [152], [153].

H. QUANTUM DOTS

Nanoparticles with zero dimensions are called quantum dots (QDs). Because all their dimensions are smaller than 100 nanometers, this short definition makes them known. Their sizes typically range from 2 to 15 nanometers [154]. The first characteristic of nanocrystal materials that can be distinguished is zero-dimensional (0D) materials. These materials are sometimes referred to as "QDs" because their electrons are primarily located in restricted areas and are confined in three dimensions, which makes them 0D structures [154]. They are also referred to as "artificial atoms" because of their distinct energy states [155].

The effectiveness of employing QDs in biological sensing, imaging, and detection has prompted researchers to advance this technology in translational and clinical medicine [156]. Since traceable drug delivery offers the potential to clarify the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of therapeutic candidates and provide the design guidelines for drug carrier engineering, it is one of the most significant new uses of QDs [157].

In biological domains, QDs-based nano-carriers for pharmaceuticals, can enhance the bioavailability of pharmaceuticals and enable therapeutic targeting [158], [159], [160], [161]. Furthermore, the implementation of a QD nano-carrier system for pharmaceuticals could lead to the achievement of early illness site detection, tracking, and targeted localized treatments such as cancer therapy, Alzheimer disease and cardiovascular diseases [162], [163], [164], [165], [166], [167], [168], [169]. Moreover, QD nano-carrier drug delivery systems can increase a medication's stability, prolong its half-life in vivo, improve targeted absorption, and optimize drug distribution and metabolism inside an organization [170], [171], [172], [173]. Thus, one of the main areas of interest in nanodrug research is the development of QD nano-carriers for pharmaceuticals [174], [175].

QDs are easily interchangeable with other inorganic (like gold) or organic (like condensed DNA) nanoparticle cores of interest because to their lower size, which makes them ideal for examining nanocarrier behavior and refining nanocarrier characteristics. In addition, QDs can be discreetly added to bigger DDSs as tracers to keep an eye on intracellular trafficking and biodistribution. Lastly, individual QDs released from bigger carriers can simulate the eventual removal of other nanoparticle components or the redistribution of free drug [176]. Furthermore, because QDs can function as the primary nanocarrier or fluorescent labels in a more intricate design, they make efficient candidates for theragnostic platforms [156].

III. CONCLUSION

Nanoparticulate systems have been utilized in various fields, including medical treatment, cosmetics, sunscreens, electronics, catalysis, and so on. Recently, nanopharmaceuticals, which are nanoparticles that deliver therapeutic substances to organs, tissues, or cells, have emerged as a highly exciting field of study because they can change the pharmacokinetics, bioavailability, and biodistribution of therapeutic

agents. They can improve therapeutic efficacy and reduce the toxic effects of the drug molecules. Due to their size and surface modification ability, they can play significant roles in targeted drug delivery. Nanoparticulate systems for drug delivery have been investigated using a wide range of materials including natural and/or synthetic polymers, magnetic nanoparticles, dendrimers, lipid-based nanomaterials and so on. In addition, in near future, it is envisaged that they are not only spherical, but also produced in different shapes such as rods, discs, ellipses and stars, and that this shape difference may contribute to the delivery of the therapeutic substance to the desired organs and tissues. Moreover, nanoparticulate systems can be used in not only drug delivery but also diagnostics, tissue engineering, hyperthermia, biosensors, gene therapy, wound healing, dentistry, regenerative medicine, antimicrobial and antioxidant therapy, and bioimaging.

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