

FABRICATION TECHNIQUES OF NATURAL POLYMER IN DRUG DELIVERY APPLICATIONS

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تقنيات تصنيع البوليمر الطبيعي في تطبيقات ارسال الادوية

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Abstract:

Natural polymer-based nanomaterials have been developed to overcome the bionanocomposites. Chitosan (CS) and mineral clays are renewable friendly compounds owing their properties of biocompatibility, biodegradability and low toxicity. These valuable properties, among others, fabricate the CS- based bionanocomposites in extremely interesting materials for a variety of applications, including drug delivery, medical and pharmaceuticals purposes. The significant of processing approaches and characterization methods, as well as aspect associated to their biopharmaceutics and drug release behaviors for controlled and targeted drug delivery systems.

المستخلص

تم تطوير المواد النانوية الطبيعية القائمة على البوليمر للتغلب على التراكيب البايونانوية . الكيتوسان والطين المعدنية هي مركبات ودية المتجددة بسبب خصائصها التوافقية الجيدة، ولها قابلية على التحلل البيولوجي وذات سمية منخفضة. هذه الخصائص القيمة، من بين أمور أخرى، تصنيع التراكيب البايونانوية مع الكيتوسان في مواد مثيرة للاهتمام للغاية لمجموعة متنوعة من التطبيقات، بما في ذلك ارسال الادوية والأغراض الطبية والصيدلانية. ان أهمية هذا النهج اعمى العملية وطريقة توصيفها ، وكذلك الجانب المرتبط بكيمياء الصيدلانية الحيوية وسلوكيات مرور الادوية جعل منها القدرة للسيطرة على ارسال الادوية الموجهة.

1. Introduction

Biopolymers based on minerals clay for medical applications have been concerned a great attention (1). Numerous of Materials established by two or more solid phases are often called composites and generally founded by a polymer and an inorganic solid. Nanocomposites are a new class of composites, for which at least one of the dimension of the dispersed particles, is in the nanometer range.

These mixture materials can, in fact, combine the properties of both inorganic and organic components, such as swelling, water uptake, mechanical properties, thermal performance, rheology and bioadhesion (2). Nanocomposites can be founded by abundant biopolymers (polylactic acid (PLA), polycaprolactone (PCL)) proteins and polysaccharides, like as chitosan (CS), and starch, among others) combined with clay minerals such as microfibrinous clays making materials with greater properties to those from their specific components. Natural polymer commences to partly replace to synthetic polymers in nanocomposites preparations, mostly in food package and biomedicine applications. Original nanocomposites are more reverential with environment and recyclable, so they are called bionanocomposites. It is particularly relevant, the case where the inorganic substrate is also organic, like silicates, including clay family (3).

Nanocomposites gained by the combination of natural polymers and clay minerals for pharmaceutical applications have concerned a great interest (4), where applications contains, antibacterial coatings for medical apparatuses and wound dressings, the usage of nanoencapsulation technology for enhanced drug delivery as well as take advantage of the optical properties of nanomaterials for improved medical imaging (5).

1.1Mineral Compound

The physical and chemical properties of a certain inorganic clay are in need of on their structures and ratios of components. These properties of the main manufacturing clays, i.e., kaolins (1:1 phyllosilicates), smectites (2:1 phyllosilicates) and sepiolite (2:1 upturned ribbons), are very different, even if each of these materials are composed of octahedral and tetrahedral sheets as their basic building blocks. Though, the prearrangement and conformation of these octahedral and tetrahedral sheets, explained for the most of the differences in their physical and chemical properties (6).

As earlier indicated, a layer is the elementary building block of clay minerals and it consists of sheets of SiO_4^{4-} tetrahedral and Al^{3+} or Mg^{2+} octahedral (Figure 1).

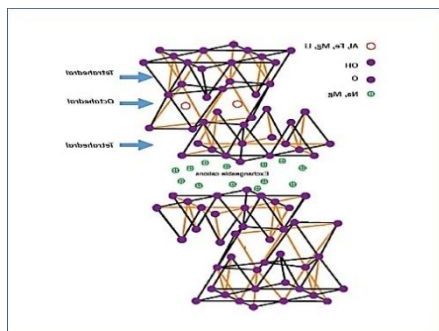


Figure 1: Schematic illustration of the montmorillonite (MMT) structure.

The smectites are in the group of 2:1 clay minerals, involving of an Al^{3+} , Mg^{2+} or $\text{Fe}^{2+/3+}$ octahedral sheet, sandwiched between two Si tetrahedral sheets. For the reason that an isomorphs substitution occurs in the octahedral or tetrahedral sheets, layers have a negative charge, which is compensated by exchangeable cations placed in the interlayer space. Instead, 1:1 clay minerals consist of layers of Si tetrahedral sheet and Al octahedral sheet (kaolin group) or Mg octahedral sheet (serpentin group). As these materials do not existing an isomorphic substitution, their layers are not charged, feature that sets them apart from 2:1 layers clay minerals (7).

Montmorillonite (MMT) is a associate of the smectite's minerals group, which is considered by having a layered structure and a excessive capacity of adsorption of polymer molecules owing to its unique crystal structure. MMT is a phyllosilicate clay, containing of a multilayered structure of Si/Al oxide arranged in multilayer stacks, characterized by a sandwich structure, including two tetrahedron sheets with an edge-bridged octahedral sheet

(general structure 2:1 type). MMT owns a net negative charge due to isomorphs ionic substitutions in its layered structure. The charge is compensated by interlayer cations (mostly Na^+ and Mg^{2+}), which can be replaced by a variety of organic molecules (1). Silicate minerals are considered by a layered structure and show properties such as good water absorption, swelling, adsorb and cation exchange capabilities that are measured valuable from the viewpoint of synthesis of pharmaceutical products, as both inactive and active materials (8). MMT and further mineral clays such as bentonite, combine with polymeric substances, have been developed the key of resources in the pharmaceutical and biomedical industries as a result of their better properties and excessive flexibility (9). In this respect, these materials may approve three different clay characters according to how they interact with polymers as following (Figure 2):

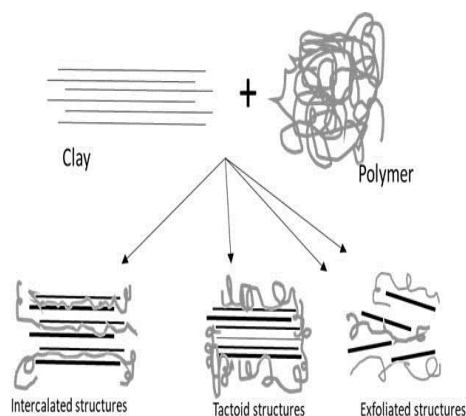


Figure 2: Schematic representation of different clay conformations in the nanocomposite structure.

(1) Tactoid structures remain in a polymer when the interlayer space of the clay gallery

does not expand, generally due to its poor affinity with the polymer. No true nanocomposites are designed with this way.

(2) Intercalated structures are gained at moderate expansion of the clay interlayer. In this case, interlayer spaces expand a little as polymer chains penetrate the basal spacing of the clay, but the form of the layered stack remains. This is the result of moderate affinity between polymer and clay.

(3) Exfoliated structures, clay clusters lose their layered character and are well separated into single sheets within the continuous polymer phase. This is owing to a high affinity between polymer and clay (6).

1.2 Natural Polymer and Organic Compound

The greatest of the described studies on bionanocomposites are related to materials as PLA, PCL, proteins and polysaccharides which incorporating layered silicates of the smectite group. Mainly, the polysaccharides display different charges in their structure: chitosan derived from chitin is provided with positively charged amino groups; alginate extracted from sea algae, is negatively charged bearing carboxylate groups in its structure; and starch obtained from maize, does not have ionic sites in the polymer backbone (neutral charge) (10). Chitosan (CS), a polysaccharide composed mainly of β -(1,4)-linked 2-deoxy-2-amino-D-glucopyranose units, is the deacetylated product of chitin, poly(N-acetyl-D-glucopyranose) (Figure 3). Following to

cellulose, is the second most abundant natural biopolymer (11). It is natural amino polysaccharide with a structure with multidimensional properties, highly sophisticated functions and widespread applications in biomedical and other industrial areas. CS is considered to be a material of great futuristic potential due to its great possibilities of structural modifications to impart desired properties and functions, research and development work on CS have reached a status of intense activities in many parts of the world. The positive attributes of excellent biocompatibility and admirable biodegradability with ecological safety and low toxicity with versatile biological activities and low immunogenicity, have provided large prospects for further development (12). Likewise, this polymer have extremely high attraction for many classes of clays (13).

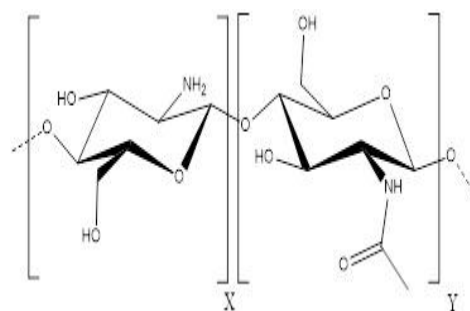


Figure 3: Schematic representation of the structure of chitosan (CS).

Additionally to the significant characteristics mentioned, CS has mucoadhesive properties, whereby it is used in pharmaceutical applications to expand the drug retention time in the mucosa membranes of the body, increasing

in this way, the bioavailability of compounds (14). On the other hand, polymers are generally filled with mineral particles to improve their stiffness, toughness and other mechanical properties or to basically reduce cost. As the particle size decreases from micro- to nanoscale, the properties of polymer composites also improve significantly. Among all the potential nanocomposites, the composites with clay minerals have concerned much consideration because of their availability (15).

2. Approaches of the technique of bionanocomposites synthesis

The polymers in the MMT dispersions interact with the clay particles, according to their ionic or non-ionic character. The ionic polymers encourage electrostatic interactions, but the non-ionic polymers are adsorbed on the surface of clay minerals by the steric interactions. The polymer ratio, as well as its molecular weight and the polymer's hydrolyzing function, with the size and shape of the clay particle, its surface charge and the clay concentration in suspension, the pH, and the temperature may all affect the clay/polymer interactions (2). Numerous approaches have been developed to synthesize nanocomposites and according to their preparation technique,

it is accumulated the main approaches for fabricating polymer-layered silicate nanocomposites: intercalation of polymer or pre-polymer from solution; in situ

intercalative polymerization; melt intercalation and template synthesis.

2.1 Intercalation of polymer or pre-polymer from solution

Here, the layered silicate is exfoliated into single layers using a solvent in which the polymer (or pre-polymer in case of insoluble polymers, such as polyimide) is soluble. It is well known that such layered silicates, owing to weak forces that stack the layers together can be easily dispersed in an adequate solvent. After the organo-clay has swollen in the solvent, the polymer is added to the solution, intercalating between the clay layers. The final step of the process consists of removing the solvent, either by vaporization, usually under vacuum, or by precipitation. Upon solvent removal the sheets reassemble and sandwiching the polymer to procedure a nanocomposite structure. The same development is also resulting to obtained nanocomposites through the emulsion polymerization method, where the layered silicate is dispersed in the aqueous phase. The main gain of this technique is that intercalated nanocomposites can be synthesized with little polar or non-polar polymers. However, the solvent approach is difficult to apply in industry due to problems accompanying with the use of large quantities of solvents.

2.2 In situ intercalative polymerization

In this technique, the layered silicate is swollen within the liquid polymer monomer

(or a monomer solution), thus the polymer is designed and intercalated between sheets of the clay mineral. The polymerization procedure can be started by heat or radiation, by the diffusion of a suitable initiator or by an organic initiator or catalyst fixed through cationic exchange inside the interlayer before the swelling step by the monomer.

2.3 Melt intercalation

The layered silicate is mixed with the polymer matrix in the molten state. Under these situations and if the layer surfaces are satisfactorily well-matched with the chosen polymer, the polymer can crawl into the interlayer space and form either an intercalated or an exfoliated nanocomposite. In this technique, no solvent is required.

2.4 Template synthesis

This technique, where the silicates are formed in situ in an aqueous solution containing the polymer and the silicate building blocks has been generally used for the synthesis of double-layer hydroxide-based nanocomposites but it is far less established for gaining layered silicates. In this technique, based on self-assembly forces, the polymer aids the nucleation and growth of the inorganic host crystals and gets trapped within the layers as it grows. Of these approaches, the most used technique to obtain nanocomposites based in organic and inorganic compounds are the sol-gel and the polymer intercalation in layer solid. In the latter case, the polymer

intercalation occurs due to interactions as electrostatics, hydrogen bond, ion-dipole coordination, etc. between both components (3).

3. Biopolymer-clay composites for drug delivery applications

For beneficial purposes, a drug essential reach specific targeted sites of the organism and maintaining adequate concentration levels in them for longer period of times, in order not to reach the toxic and sub-therapeutic concentrations of the drug. For the favorite belongings to be exerted, drug delivery systems are considered to maintain drug levels within a therapeutic window (high enough to be effective but not so high as to be toxic) over extended periods. To accomplish this goal, biopolymer/layered silicate material composites as controlled drug delivery vehicles and biomedical engineering have been attracting much attention owing to their unique structure and functional properties.

Specifically, biopolymer-clay composites have a great potential to develop serious formulations for biomedical applications, tissue engineering and controlled drug delivery matrixes. The nanohybrid materials are derived from organic and inorganic solids interacting at nanoscale level. These organic-inorganic hybrids show extraordinary and versatile properties, as they could be designed from a large variety of biopolymers and various nanoscale particles such as layered silicates. Hybrid particles whereby polymer is hosted

within a porous carrier matrix can be specifically tailored to modulate the drug release kinetics.

Layered silicate materials, have been used for preparing for this class of composites. Within this group of clay minerals, MMT is an ideal material for the formulation of drug delivery vehicle for the reason that it displays good adsorption and adhesive abilities, swelling capacity, cation exchange capacity, and drug-carrying potential. Also, MMT is a FDA appropriate biocompatible clay mineral and it is widely used as an inert excipient in pharmaceutical goods. However, the release of drugs from MMT has been confirmed to be initially very fast, owing to the weak interaction between the drug and the MMT particles (17,18). Natural polysaccharides are commonly being studied for drug delivery and tissue engineering applications. Within this group, it is found CS, which is considered by to be biocompatible, biodegradable, non-toxic, and a mucoadhesive polymer. However, its limited solubility in water and other organic solvents, furthermore to its poor colloidal stability, limits its full exploitation in drug delivery systems. Also, due to its poor mechanical strength and high swelling ratio, CS may lead to burst release of the drug by breaking down the 3D network of the polymer(19). To overcome these individual limitations, mineral-organic interactions can be used to sustain the release of active ingredients to improve their therapeutic utility, which may provide

drug delivery systems with improved properties (20).

4. Methods to determinate the in vitro drug release from bionanocomposites

Dialysis is a simple process in which small solutes diffuse from a high concentration solution to a low concentration solution across a semipermeable membrane until equilibrium is reached. Since the porous membrane selectively permits smaller solutes to pass while retaining larger species, dialysis can effectively be applied in in vitro drug release studies (Figure4). In these experiments, the nanocomposite system is dispersed in PBS buffer solutions and then sealed in a dialysis bag which is submerged in an appropriated solution. At selected time intervals, suitable aliquots from the outside the dialysis bag are removed for drug analysis and substituted with the same volume of the media solution, which is preheated to the corresponding temperature (generally 37 °C) in order to keep the volume of the system identical.

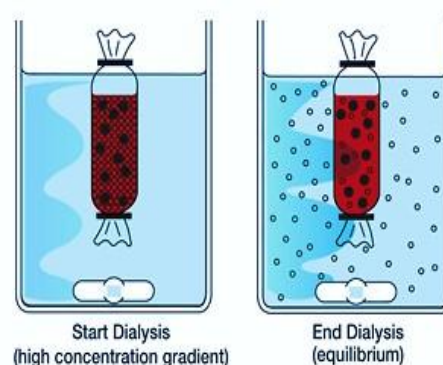


Figure 4: Schematic representation of the Dialysis method.

In vitro drug release studies of nanocomposites particles could be achieved in a Franz-Diffusion cell containing PBS and using a dialysis membrane with a molecular weight cutoff (MWCO) of 10 kDa(29). The membrane is placed over the mouth of the cell, to which the nanocomposite particles is loaded. A magnetic peddle is placed in the cell and maintained at 100 rpm in a magnetic stirrer for uniform mixing. At appropriate intervals, adequate aliquots are removed using a syringe, from the receiver compartment of the Franz-Diffusion cell and replaced with the same volume of fresh phosphate buffer (Figure 5).

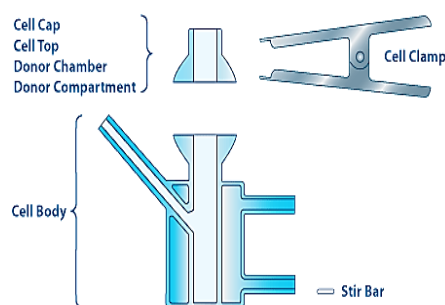


Figure 5: Schematic illustration of the Frank Diffusion Cell.

5. Mechanisms of controlling drug release from nanocomposite systems

In controlled-release nanocomposite systems sometimes when the drug delivery system first becomes in contact with the release medium, a quick and short release of the drug is observed, followed by a stable "plateau" profile. The former is generally mentioned to as the initial "burst release" (Figure 6).

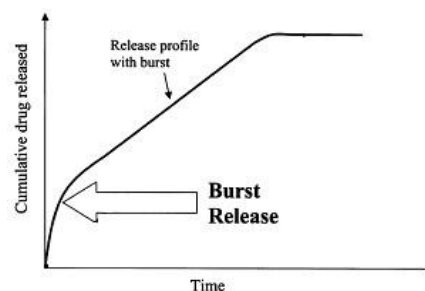


Figure 6: Schematic illustration of a drug release profile from a bionanocomposite system showing an initial short drug release followed by a stable "plateau" stage.

Although, under confident conditions, an initial sharp release of the therapeutic could be desirable, it is regularly unpredictable with uncontrollable duration and dose. However, for the most part, avoiding the burst release effect is desirable to minimize any initial toxicity accompanying with a high dose. The fast-initial release in nanocomposite systems is thought to occur mostly by the dissolution and diffusion of the drug entrapped close to or at the surface of the formulation. The second and slower release phase may involve the diffusion of the drug entrapped within the inner part of the polymer matrix by means of water channels of the network of the pores. An initial burst effect is observed especially when the drug solubility is high, and when the drug loading dose in the polymeric matrix is large.

Nanocomposites gained to be used as drug delivery systems are proposed to control the drug concentrations on the goal site with the aim of maintaining the constant level of the drug over an extended period of time. In order to recognize the release kinetics of the drug from polymer/mineral clay systems,

the release data of the drug are fitted to kinetics models including zero-order, first-order, Higuchi, Korsmeyer and Hixson-Crowell equations, among the most frequently used. Also, the Korsmeyer-Peppas model, which is often used to describe the drug release performance from polymeric systems, may be applied to allow the influence of swelling of the matrix (upon hydration) and gradual erosion of the matrix(21).

Mostly, the Korsmeyer-Peppas model is based on the Fick's Law. This model is used to describe the release of solutes when the prevailing release mechanism is the drug diffusion (Fickian transport), and also in the Case II transport (non-Fickian) controlled by the relaxation of polymer chains. When the release of the drug from the nanocomposite system can be well modeled by an exponential equation of the type of Korsmeyer-Peppas ($M_t/M_\infty = K \cdot t^n$), the values of n and K may be estimated. According to this model, the value of n identifies the release mechanism of the drug. Values of n between 0.5 and 1.0 indicate anomalous transport kinetics, a value of n approximately of 0.5 indicates a pure diffusion controlled mechanism (Fickian diffusion) and finally, smaller n values than 0.5 may be due to the partially drug diffusion through the swollen matrix and water filled pores in the formulations(22).

The addition of a mineral clay into the polymer matrix could retard the drug

release and the matrix erosion because the clay could interact with amino groups of CS, leading to the reduction of CS swelling and to a decrease of the matrix erosion. The amount of biopolymer's swelling has been planned as the dominant mechanism for the drug release in this class of systems. Also, the clay sheets of layered silicate clays such as MMT can create a tortuous path that retards the diffusion of drug molecules through the clay-polymer nanocomposites(23). By applying a Korsmeyer-Peppas model, Onnainty *et al.* 2016 obtained n values < 0.5 from the release data of chlorhexidine (CLX) loaded into CS and MMT nanocomposites. Here, the controlled release mechanism of CLX from the carriers was attributed to the diffusion of the drug through the swollen matrix with water filled pores. On the other hand, the drug release mechanism from polymer-mineral clay systems may be not solely controlled via diffusion and swelling processes, but also by matrix erosion. Mijowska *et al.*, 2015 found that the release kinetics of methotrexate (MTX) is well-defined by Higuchi and Korsmeyer-Peppas models, which suggests parallel processes of diffusion through water-filled mesopores and degradation of the $mSiO_2$ matrix (erosion), so called anomalous diffusion as drug release mechanisms. By fitting the first 60% of the drug release data of the MTX from mesoporous silica nanoflakes to the Korsmeyer-Peppas model, they obtained n values of 0.592 (37 °C) and 0.773 (42 °C), corresponding to so called anomalous

diffusion (non-Fickian), and thus MTX release from the mSiO₂ nanoparticles was controlled by more than one process.

6.Determination of in vitro mucoadhesion of the nanocomposites

Mucoadhesive designs are established for buccal, nasal, ocular, vaginal, pulmonary and oral applications. Bioadhesion or mucoadhesion is described as the binding ability of a substance, such as natural or modified natural hydrophilic polymers, to biological tissues. The mucosal surfaces of the body are covered with a layer of mucus gel, which is comprised of water and mucin. Mucus consists mainly of water, inorganic salts, carbohydrates, lipids and glycoproteins. Mucus glycoproteins, which are also called mucins, consist of a protein core with branched oligosaccharide chains attached over 63 % of its length. Mucins are also responsible for the gel-like properties of the mucus (24).

Mucus is an entangled fiber matrix with many weak non-covalent interactions such as hydrogen bonding and electrostatic interactions. Mucins form a fully hydrated viscoelastic gel layer. Almost all mucins are negatively charged due to the presence of anionic sialic, sulfate and carboxyl functional groups (25). Therefore, mucins are a negatively charged hydrogel with the matrix tangled in a randomly woven polyionic network. Humans secrete liters of mucus each day to protect mucosal surfaces, including those of the airways,

gastrointestinal tract, female reproductive tract, respiratory tract and surface of the eye. Thus, bioadhesive materials are promising substances for designing site-specific drug delivery systems to the mucosal surfaces of the body.

One approach to increase the mucoadhesion properties of drug delivery systems involves the use of polymer materials with mucoadhesive properties such as chitosan (CS). Positively charged CS can adhere to negatively charged sialic and sulfonic acids in the mucus layer via electrostatic interactions, but also CS possesses mucoadhesive properties due to the presence of many amino groups in the polymer chains that form hydrogen bonds with mucins in the mucus(26). This CS's last property is linked with optimal mucoadhesion characteristics of the polymer, since it has been confirmed that polymers with low swelling degrees show a higher mucoadhesion characteristics, which could be attributed to the dehydration of the mucus gel to form adhesive joints at low hydration. Thus, as the swelling degree of the polymer is decrease, the mucoadhesion increased (27). It has been described that the combination of montmorillonite (MMT) into the hydrogel matrix of starch-graft-poly(methacrylic acid) can significantly improve the mucoadhesion properties of the hydrogel (28).

One of the approaches employed to determinate mucoadhesion is by Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), were a 0.1

mg/ml mucin solution is brought into contact with the formulation in PBS buffer pH 7.4. After a appropriate equilibration time, a drop of the resulting mucin gel dries by vacuum and then it is sputtered with gold before obtaining the SEM images. Herein, the in vitro mucoadhesion is showed by the changes observed in the SEM image of mucin fibers after incubation with the formulation to be studied. Onnainty et al. 2016 presented by using this technique the mucoadhesive properties of the chlorhexidine (CLX) loaded into the CS/MMT nanocomposite. They observed that the SEM image of the pig gastric mucin (PGM) without contact with the formulation, which is hydrated, displays an elastic dominant gel structure, and looks as a swollen network due to mucin fibers are expanded and occupy the entire volume of the mucin gel layer (Figure 7a). However, The SEM image of PGM with added the CLX/CS: Na⁺MMT nanocomposite exhibits a noticeable change in the mucin network (Figure 7b).

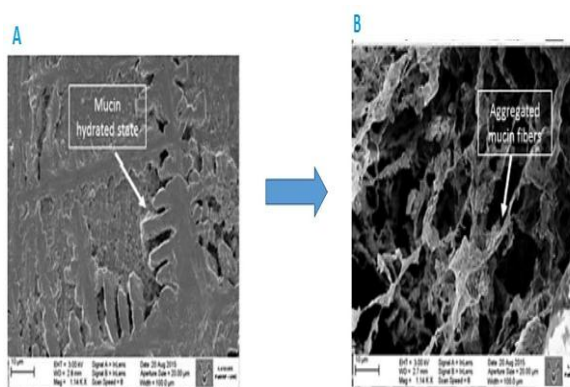


Figure 7: SEM images of, A: hydrated Pig Stomach Mucin (PSM) and B: PSM incubated

with the CLX/CS: Na⁺MMT nanocomposite formulation.

7. Potential applications of nanocomposite as bioadhesive-drug delivery systems

The novel hybrid materials based on the combination of a natural polymer, such as CS, with a clay mineral, like MMT, are interesting strategies in the field of the controlled delivery of therapeutics due to the characteristics of these materials, since they not only allow the release of drug molecules at the correct target place, but also they could decrease the toxicity of many therapeutics due to they are able to release the encapsulated or entrapped therapeutics slowly in a localized and controlled and in a sustained manner.

These hybrid technique could also enable routes of drug administration with limited systemic absorption and enhance the drug bioavailability by localizing the drug delivery system to mucosal surfaces. For example, the administration of drugs into the oral cavity presents many limitations such as the significant loss of drug due to the uncontrolled swallowing and salivary flow. Thus, a delivery system intended for the oral administration of a therapeutic agent for the local treatment of the oral cavity should maintain therapeutic levels of the drug over an extended period of time (29). To meet these requirements, the design should adhere to the oral mucosa and stay in the place for an extended period of time to permit the treatment be effective.

In this context, Onnainty et al. 2016 proposed a CLX nanocomposite system combining CS and MMT for the controlled oral mucosal delivery of this drug. Chlorhexidine is considered the gold standard antiseptic that is active against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, molds, yeasts and viruses(30). CLX hybrid nanosystems exhibited good mucoadhesive properties and they were able to release the drug in a sustained way, without a burst effect being observed.

Mucoadhesive controlled drug delivery systems have the following benefits in comparison to conventional formulations:

- 1)The ability to adhere to specific sites of the body, such as the oral, nasal, buccal, respiratory, vaginal cavities, to improve drug bioavailability.
- 2)The formation of an optimum contact with mucosa of the body, increasing drug absorption.
- 3)They are able to prolong the residence time of the dosage form in the place of absorption and therefore, to decrease the need for multiple dosing and increasing the drug absorption.

A sustained drug delivery to the mucosal surfaces of the body has also the potential for improving the treatment and prevention of many diseases, including sexually transmitted infections, inflammatory bowel disease, lung inflammation, and degenerative eye conditions, among others. To mention an example, within the

chemotherapeutic drugs used for the treatment of different types of cancer, such as the colorectal cancer, among others, one available option is 5-fluorouracil (5-FU). Nevertheless, this drug presents many limitations such as short biological half-life, incomplete oral absorption, toxic side effects on bone marrow and gastrointestinal tract (TGI) and non-selective action against healthy cells(43). To overcome all these constraints, (31) it was proposed to obtain 5-FU nanocomposite systems combining Na^+ montmorillonite (Na^+ MMT) and CS.

The 5-FU hybrid systems obtained allowed maintaining the plasma drug concentrations within the drug therapeutic window when these systems were administered in rats orally. Moreover, the maximum drug plasma concentration (C_{\max}) achieved by the pristine drug after a single oral dose administration was much higher than the highest tolerance level of the drug concentration in the plasma, which could be associated with serious side effects. Also, it was started that the 5-FU nanocomposites improved the residence time of the drug in the plasma in comparison with the pristine 5-FU, which may reduce the drug toxicity. Also, the drug was released in a controlled way from clay and clay/polymer nanocomposites and efficiently distributed to various tissues of the rat, showing a marked reduction of the drug hepatotoxicity. Joshi et al. 2012 proposed a controlled delivery system of quinine (QUI), an antiprotozoal agent, loaded in

CS/MMT nanocomposite systems for the colon specific drug delivery. These QUI nanocomposite systems were placed into gelatin capsules coated with Eudragit® L 100 to avoid the drug release in the gastric environment after the oral administration of the QUI formulation. It was found that the release rate of QUI could be controlled by varying the proportion of CS in these systems. The nanocomposite vehicles based on CS and MMT also established utility to recover the intestinal permeability of drugs, such as, for example, the broad-spectrum antimicrobial agent oxytetracycline (OXT). Salcedo et al. 2014 found that the OXT loaded nanocomposite system, although in a first stage slightly decrease the drug permeability, subsequently the drug permeation was kept linear during *in vitro* permeability tests across Caco-2 cell monolayers, unlike what happens with the drug alone, where the drug permeability was almost constant. These behaviors were attributed to the limited permeability of OXT across the intestinal epithelium due to this drug is subject to P-glycoprotein (P-gp) efflux, while the nanocomposite could elude the P-gp efflux, which may increase the drug permeability.

8.Conclusion

The hybrid materials especially that combining chitosan and a layered mineral clay like montmorillonite are promising materials candidates as drug delivery

systems of a wide variety of therapeutic agents.

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