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Clinical Trials and Regulatory Approvals: Navigating the Drug Development Process

Grant Nylor*

Department of Pharmacy, University of Perth, Australia

DESCRIPTION

In the realm of pharmaceuticals, achieving optimal bioavailability is a cornerstone of effective drug delivery. Bioavailability refers to the fraction of an administered dose of a drug that reaches systemic circulation in an active form, thereby exerting its therapeutic effects. However, many drugs face challenges related to poor solubility, instability, and low permeability, which can hinder their absorption and limit their therapeutic efficacy. Polymers have emerged as powerful tools in overcoming these hurdles, revolutionizing drug formulation and delivery to enhance bioavailability and improve patient outcomes. This article explores the profound impact of polymers on the bioavailability of drugs, elucidating their mechanisms, applications, and future directions in pharmaceutical innovation. Polymers are large molecules composed of repeating subunits, known as monomers, linked together through chemical bonds. In the context of drug delivery, polymers serve diverse functions, ranging from solubilization and stabilization to controlled release and targeting. Their unique physicochemical properties make them versatile candidates for formulating drug delivery systems tailored to specific therapeutic needs. One of the primary challenges in achieving optimal bioavailability is overcoming the poor solubility of certain drugs, particularly those with hydrophobic or poorly water-soluble properties. Polymers play a pivotal role in enhancing drug solubility by forming complexes or molecular dispersions that improve drug dissolution rates. By encapsulating hydrophobic drugs within polymer matrices or incorporating them into polymeric micelles or nanoparticles, solubility is increased, leading to improved absorption and bioavailability. Another critical aspect of polymer-based drug delivery is the stabilization and protection of drugs from degradation in physiological environments. Certain drugs may be susceptible to degradation by enzymes or acidic conditions in the gastrointestinal tract, compromising their bioavailability. Polymers act as protective barriers, shielding drugs from enzymatic degradation and maintaining their stability until they reach the site of absorption. Enteric coatings, for example, composed of polymers that resist dissolution in acidic gastric fluid but dissolve rapidly in the alkaline environment of the intestines, ensure targeted drug release and enhance bioavailability. Polymers offer precise control over drug release kinetics, enabling sustained or targeted delivery to achieve desired therapeutic outcomes. Controlled-release formulations, such as hydrogels and matrix systems, utilize polymers with tunable properties to regulate the rate of drug release over time. By controlling factors such as polymer composition, molecular weight, and crosslinking density, drug delivery systems can be engineered to provide sustained release profiles, minimizing fluctuations in plasma drug levels and improving patient compliance. Moreover, polymers facilitate targeted drug delivery to specific tissues or cells, thereby maximizing therapeutic efficacy while minimizing systemic side effects. Functionalization of polymers with ligands or antibodies enables selective binding to cell surface receptors or biomarkers, facilitating site-specific drug delivery and enhancing bioavailability at the target site. Polymers have found widespread application across various therapeutic areas, revolutionizing drug delivery and improving patient outcomes. In oncology, polymer-drug conjugates such as pegylated liposomal doxorubicin enhance the circulation time and tumor accumulation of chemotherapeutic agents, improving their efficacy while reducing systemic toxicity.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Corresponding author Grant Nylor, Department of Pharmacy, University of Perth, Australia, E-mail: grant@yahoo.com

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