

Pharmaceutical Summit and Expo

October 08-10, 2015 New Delhi, India

Fungal endophytes: A novel source of antibiotics

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Endophytes are the endosymbionts which colonize the plant tissue and live inside the host plant without causing any apparent damage. It is believed that most of the plants harbor fungal endophytes which produce a wide range of secondary metabolites. The secondary metabolites produced by these endophytes have prospective applications in the pharmaceutical industry. Some of the endophyte-derived bioactive compounds like antibiotics (xiamycins, munumbicins, pseudomycins, ecomycins or cephalosporins) have emerged as the most efficacious drugs. Apart from these antibiotics, the diverse biosimilars produced by these fungal endophytes have anti-viral compounds, anti-cancer agents, anti-neoplastic agents, insecticidal products, anti-diabetic agents, anti-malarial agents, anti-fungal agents, cytotoxic agents, immuno-suppressive compounds as well as antioxidant activities. The world's first billion-dollar anticancer drug, paclitaxel (taxol) is an outstanding example of a natural product from Yew tree, *Taxus wallachiana* and later the same drug was reported to be produced by an endophytic fungus *Pestalotiopsis microspora*. *Tolypocladium inflatum*, an endophytic fungus from the herb *Asparagus racemosus*, produces classical immuno-suppressive cyclosporine, which had a positive effect on immunomodulation reactions. These endophytes, apart from providing secret machinery for the synthesis of pharmaceutical agents, have produced novel compounds mimicking repellents and toxicants like heptelidic acid, rugulosine, formilonine and paxiline analogues that could help in the biocontrol of insects and pests. Due to the huge diversity of fungal endophytes, they seem to be an alternate source of bioactive natural products with possible applications in the pharmaceutical industry. Hence, fungal endophytes should be exploited as a source of new antibiotics against susceptible and resistant forms of micro-organisms; this is the most important and promising.

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Hollow calcium carbonate nanoparticles as pH-sensitive targeted delivery carriers in cancer therapy

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pH-sensitive drug delivery systems can achieve targeted drug delivery and systemic control release. The studies in this area have been increased in recent years and more attention has been devoted to develop new methods for the preparation of new drug delivery systems especially in cancer therapy. Among the metal-based anti-cancer drugs, copper complexes have shown remarkable potential in cancer therapy. Therefore, the aim of this study is to synthesize a pH-sensitive calcium carbonate-encapsulated copper bis-(8-hydroxyquinoline) anti-cancer drug delivery system starting from naturally occurring dolomite. In this novel research, first, copper bis-(8-hydroxyquinoline) is synthesized using copper (II) chloride dihydrate and 8-hydroxyquinoline as the reactants. The drug was loaded to the preformed hollow structures of Precipitated Calcium Carbonate (PCC) by physisorption method. Hollow structures of PCC were suspended in a prepared solution of Copper bis-(8-hydroxyquinoline) dissolved in Dimethylformamide (DMF). It was moderately stirred for five days. PCC products were collected by centrifugation followed by washing with acetone to remove the DMF. The obtained product was characterized using XRD, XRF and FTIR studies. XRD and FTIR studies revealed that copper bis-(8-hydroxyquinoline) is incorporated inside the CaCO₃ hollow PCC product. The release of drug is monitored *in vitro* in the pH values of 2.0, 4.0, 6.0 and 8.0. According to results, within the first four hours, the cumulative release shows 100% in pH 2 and pH 4. However, no release is observed in pH 8 for 120 hours. Therefore, it is a good indication that the encapsulated drug releases at the pH trigger point. pH differences can be found at the subcellular level, late endosomes and lysosomes have much lower pH, in the range 4.5–5.5. Due to the high rate of glycolysis, tumors exhibit a pH value of 5.7 while the pH value of normal tissue is 7.4. This pH gradient is very important in the internalization of drugs. Therefore, this has potential applications in effective cancer therapy.

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