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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Synthesis, characterization and radiolabeling of folic acid modified nanostructured lipid

carriers as a contrast agent and drug delivery system

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ABSTRACT

Nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs) are the new generation of solid lipid drug delivery systems. Their suitability as contrast agents for gamma scintigraphy is an attracting major attention. The aim of current study was to prepare surface modified nanostructured lipid carrier system for paclitaxel (PTX) with active targeting and imaging functions. In accordance with the purpose of study, PTX loaded nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs) prepared, modified with a folate derivative and radiolabeled with technetium-99m tricarbonyl complex ($^{99m}Tc(CO)_3^+$). Cellular incorporation ratios of radiolabeled nanoparticles ($^{99m}Tc(CO)_3^-PTX^-$ NLC) were investigated *in vitro* on three cancer cell lines. Additionally *in vivo* animal studies conducted to evaluate biological behavior of $^{99m}Tc(CO)_3^-PTX^-NLC$ on female Wistar Albino rats. Biodistribution results showed that the folate derivative modified $^{99m}Tc(CO)_3^-PTX^-NLC$ had considerably higher uptake in folate receptor positive organs. The data obtained from present study could be useful in the design of biodegradable drug carriers of PTX and folate receptor based tumor imaging agents.

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