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**Bioceramic microneedles with flexible and self-swelling substrate**

Bing Cai <sup>a</sup>, Wei Xia <sup>a,\*</sup>, Susanne Bredenberg <sup>a</sup>, Hao Li <sup>b</sup>, Håkan Engqvist <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Division for Applied Materials Science, Department of Engineering Sciences, The Ångström Laboratory, Uppsala University, Box 534, SE-751 21 Uppsala, Sweden*

<sup>b</sup> *Otolaryngology and Head & Neck Surgery, Department of Surgical Sciences, Uppsala University, Akademiska sjukhuset 78-79, 75185 Uppsala*

\* Corresponding author at: Division for Applied Materials Science, Department of Engineering Sciences, The Ångström Laboratory, Uppsala University, Box 534, SE-751 21 Uppsala, Sweden. Tel.: +46-18-471 30 65; fax: +46-18-471 35 72.

*E-mail address:* Wei.Xia@angstrom.uu.se (W. Xia).

**Abstract**

To reduce the effort required to penetrate the skin and optimize drug release profiles, bioceramic microneedle arrays with higher-aspect-ratio needles and a flexible and self-swelling substrate have been developed. Swelling of the substrate can assist in separating it from the needles and leave them in the skin as a drug depot. The preparation procedures for this bioceramic microneedle are described in the paper. Clonidine hydrochloride, the model drug, was released in a controlled manner by the microneedle device *in vitro*. Results showed that the microneedle array with a flexible and self-swelling substrate released the drug content faster than the array with a rigid substrate. Disintegration of the needle material and diffusion of the drug molecules are believed as the main control mechanisms of the drug release from these microneedle arrays. *Ex vivo* skin penetration showed that they can effectively penetrate the stratum

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