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## Honokiol nanoparticles based on epigallocatechin gallate functionalized chitin to enhance therapeutic effects against liver cancer

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**Abstract:** This study aims to design a novel nano-sized anticancer drug delivery system that can enhance the therapeutic effects of the loaded drug. With this idea in mind, this work reported the design and characterization of epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG) functionalized chitin (CH) derivative, and its application in nano-drug delivery system. The EGCG-functionalized CH (CE) polymer was firstly prepared and characterized. The nanoparticles (NPs) of CE-loaded honokiol (HK), which was prepared by ionic crosslinking, exhibited a size of 80 nm, zeta potential of +33.8 mV, and spherical morphology. The antitumor activity of the CE-HK NPs *in vitro* and *in vivo* was investigated and compared to free HK. As a result, the CE-HK NPs can effectively inhibited cell proliferation of HepG2 cell by inhibiting more cells in the G2/M phase and decreasing mitochondrial membrane potential. The CE-HK NPs (40 mg/kg) inhibited tumor growth by 83.55% ( $p < 0.05$ ), which was far higher than the 30.15% inhibition of free HK (40 mg/kg). The proposed delivery system exhibits better tumor selectivity and growth reduction both *in vitro* and *in vivo*, and does not induce any side effects. Therefore, the CE-HK NPs may act as an effective delivery system of liver cancer agent HK.

**Keywords:** EGCG, honokiol, nanoparticles, liver cancer, synergistic effects

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