

## A Review on Herbal Nanoparticles

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Date of Submission: 20-06-2021

Date of Acceptance: 03-07-2021

### ABSTRACT

Now a days, the use of herbal medicines has increased because of their ability to treat different diseases with fewer side effects. Herbal medicines are used from historic time for remedy of diseases. Herbal drugs show their pharmacological action either due to specific constituent or due to blend of phytoconstituents. Pharmacological effect of the drug can be obtained only when its concentration ranges with in the therapeutic range. So, Novel Drug Delivery System (NDDS) play important role to enhance the efficacy of the herbal drug. Nano-sized drug delivery systems of herbal drugs have a potential future for enhancing the activity and overcoming problems associated with plant medicines. Nanoparticle can be used to target the herbal medicine to individual organ which improves the selectivity, drug delivery, effectiveness and safety and thereby reduces dose and increases patient compliance. This review discussed about the advantages, types of nanoparticles, various methods of preparation and their characterization along with some marketed formulations of nanoparticles.

**Keywords:** Herbal medicines, Pharmacological effect, Novel drug delivery system, Nanoparticle.

### I. INTRODUCTION

For beyond few decades, there has been significant development of Nanotechnology using nanoparticles. Nanotechnology plays important role in herbal medicines, especially in drug delivery system. Active phytoconstituents or standardized extracts are used for the preparation of Nanophytomedicines. Nanotechnology have a potential future for enhancing the activity and conquer the problems related to herbal plants.<sup>[1]</sup>

The herbal drugs can be utilized in a better form with enhanced potency by incorporating them into modern dosage forms. This may be carried out via way of means of designing novel drug delivery systems which provide a therapeutic amount of drug to relevant site in the body to accomplish promptly and maintain the desirable drug concentration.<sup>[2]</sup>

Nanoparticles have been suggested to possess significant biological effects, indicating its potential as an alternative treatment for diseases. Their nanosized particles have high surface area to volume ratio which permit them to penetrate the cells more efficaciously, as compared to micro-sized particles.<sup>[3,4]</sup>

Nanoparticles are defined as particulate dispersions or solid particles with a size in the range of 10-1000nm. The drug is dissolved, entrapped, encapsulated or attached to a nanoparticle matrix. Nanoparticles had been used as a physical approach to adjust and enhance the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamics effects of several types of drug molecules. The main aim in preparing nanoparticles as a delivery system are to control particle size, surface properties and release of pharmacologically active agents as a way to obtain the site-specific action of the drug at the therapeutically optimal rate and dose regimen.<sup>[5,6]</sup>

Nanotechnology is approaching new paradigm for drug delivery system for their exclusive minute size and controlled release of the drug. This technology has been used to enhance the bioavailability by overcoming the drawbacks of the conventional dosage forms. This is feasible due the potential of the nanocarriers to protect the encapsulated drug molecule and transport it to various areas of the skin.<sup>[7,8,9]</sup>

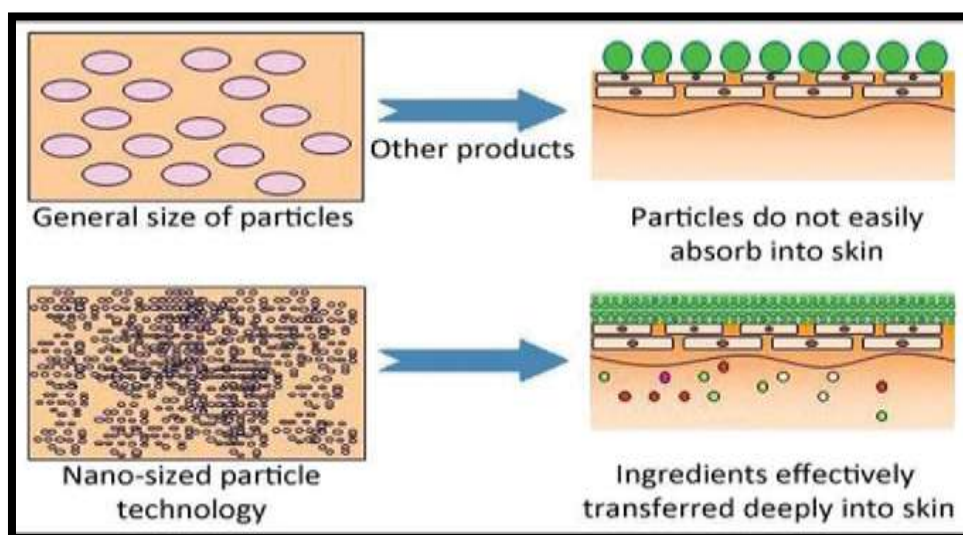


Figure 1. Transport of drug molecules through skin <sup>[10]</sup>

#### ADVANTAGES <sup>[11-15]</sup>

Advantages of using nanoparticles as a drug delivery system are as follows:

1. Particle size and surface characteristics of nanoparticles can be easily manipulated to achieve both passive and active drug targeting after parenteral administration.
2. Controlled release and particle degradation characteristics can be readily modulated by the choice of matrix constituents.
3. Enhanced shelf life of product.
4. Site-specific targeting can be achieved by attaching targeting ligands to surface of particles or use of magnetic guidance.
5. They control and sustain release of the drug during the transportation and at the site of localization, altering organ distribution of the drug and subsequent clearance of the drug so as to achieve increase in drug therapeutic efficacy and reduction in side effects.
6. The system can be used for various routes of administration including oral, nasal, parenteral, intra-ocular etc.
7. Small sized nanoparticles can penetrate through smaller capillaries, which could allow efficient drug accumulation at the target sites.
8. Protection from physical and chemical degradation.

9. Hydrophilic as well as lipophilic both type of drugs can be incorporated.
10. Nanoparticles increases stability of drug/proteins against enzymatic degradation.

#### II. LIMITATIONS

In spite of these advantages, nanoparticles also have following limitations:

1. Their small size and large surface area can lead to particle-particle aggregation, making physical handling of nanoparticles difficult in liquid and dry forms.
2. Small particles size and large surface area readily result in limited drug loading and burst release.
3. Smaller the particle size greater the surface area, this property makes nanoparticles very reactive in the cellular environment. <sup>[11-16]</sup>

#### CLASSIFICATION OF NANOPARTICLES

Nanoparticles are classified based on many forms, such as based on materials, based on size, based on surface, and based on shapes. <sup>[17]</sup> Example primarily based totally on coating material and based on the use for the study purpose the classification of nanoparticles given in the below figure 2.

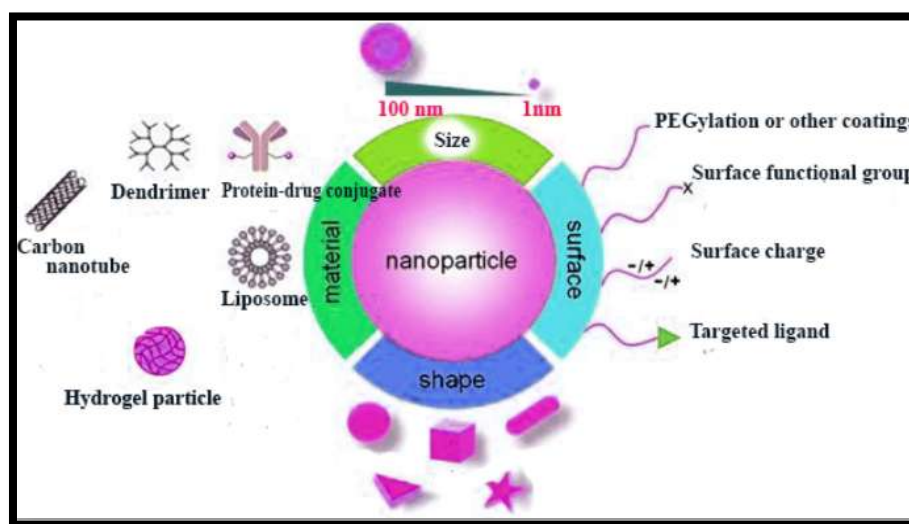


Figure 2. Schematic representation of nanoparticles <sup>[18]</sup>

There are two types of nanoparticles which are given below:-

- a) Inorganic nanoparticles
- b) Organic nanoparticles
- c) Carbon based nanoparticles

1. **Inorganic nanoparticles-** These are particles that are not made up of carbon. Metal and metal oxide based nanoparticles are generally categorised as inorganic nanoparticles.

a) **Metal based:** Nanoparticles that are synthesised from metals to nanometric sizes either by destructive or constructive methods are metal based nanoparticles.<sup>[19]</sup> The commonly used metals for nanoparticle synthesis are aluminium (Al), cadmium (Cd), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), gold (Au), iron (Fe), lead (Pb), silver (Ag) and zinc (Zn). The nanoparticles have distinctive properties such sizes as low as 10 to 100nm, surface characteristics like high surface area to volume ratio, pore size, surface charge and surface charge density, crystalline and amorphous structures, shapes like spherical and cylindrical and colour, reactivity and sensitivity to environmental factors such as air, moisture, heat and sunlight etc.

b) **Metal oxides based:** The metal oxide based nanoparticles are synthesised to modify the properties of their respective metal based

nanoparticles. Metal oxide nanoparticles are synthesised mainly due to their increased reactivity and efficiency. The commonly synthesised are Aluminium oxide (Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>), Cerium oxide (CeO<sub>2</sub>), Iron oxide (Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>), Magnetite (Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>), Silicon dioxide (SiO<sub>2</sub>), Titanium oxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>), Zinc oxide (ZnO).<sup>[20]</sup>

2. **Organic nanoparticles-** Dendrimers, micelles, liposomes and ferritin, etc. are commonly known as the organic nanoparticles or polymers. These nanoparticles are biodegradable, non-toxic, and some particles such as micelles and liposomes have a hollow core, also known as nanocapsules and are sensitive to thermal and electromagnetic radiation such as heat and light. These unique characteristics make them an ideal choice for drug delivery.

The drug carrying capacity, its stability and delivery systems, either entrapped drug or adsorbed drug system determines their field of applications and their efficiency apart from their normal characteristics such as the size, composition, surface morphology, etc. they are efficient and also can be injected on specific parts of the body that is also known as targeted drug delivery.<sup>[21]</sup>

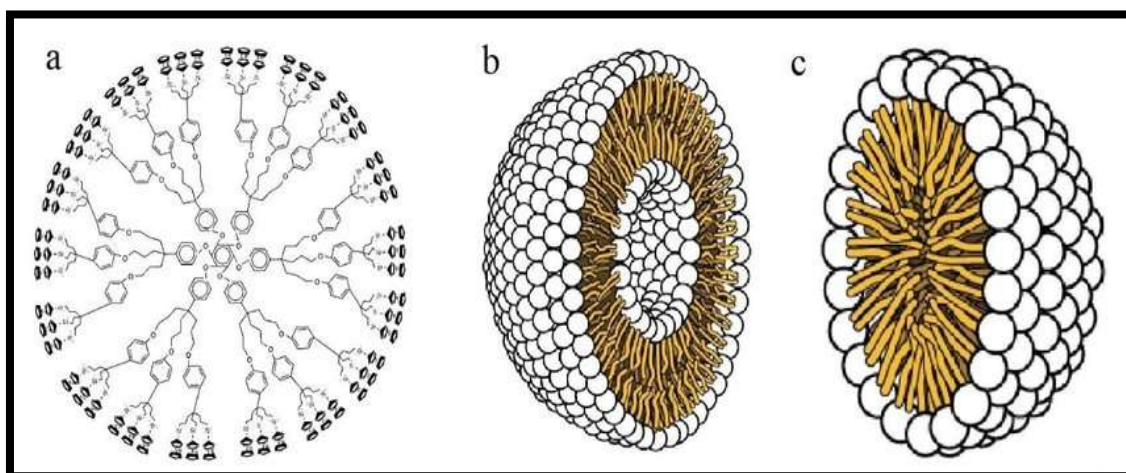


Figure 3. Organic nanoparticles: a – Dendrimers, b – Liposomes and c – micelles <sup>[22]</sup>

3. **Carbon based-** The nanoparticles made completely of carbon are known as carbon based. They can be classified into fullerenes, graphene, carbon nano tubes (CNT), carbon nanofibers and carbon black and sometimes activated carbon in nano size. <sup>[23]</sup>

a) **Carbon Nano Tubes (CNT):** Carbon Nano Tubes (CNT), a graphene nanofoil with a honeycomb lattice of carbon atoms is wound into hollow cylinders to form nanotubes of diameters as low as 0.7 nm for a single layered and 100 nm for multi-layered CNT and length varying from a few micrometres to several

millimetres. The ends can either be hollow or closed by a half fullerene molecule.

b) **Carbon Nanofiber:** The same graphene nanofoil is used to produce carbon nanofiber as CNT but wound into a cone or cup shape instead of a regular cylindrical tube.

c) **Fullerenes:** Fullerenes (C<sub>60</sub>) is a carbon molecule that is spherical in shape and made up of carbon atoms held together by sp<sup>2</sup> hybridization. About 28 to 1500 carbon atoms forms the spherical structure with diameters up to 8.2 nm for a single layer and 4 to 36 nm for multi-layered fullerenes. <sup>[24]</sup>

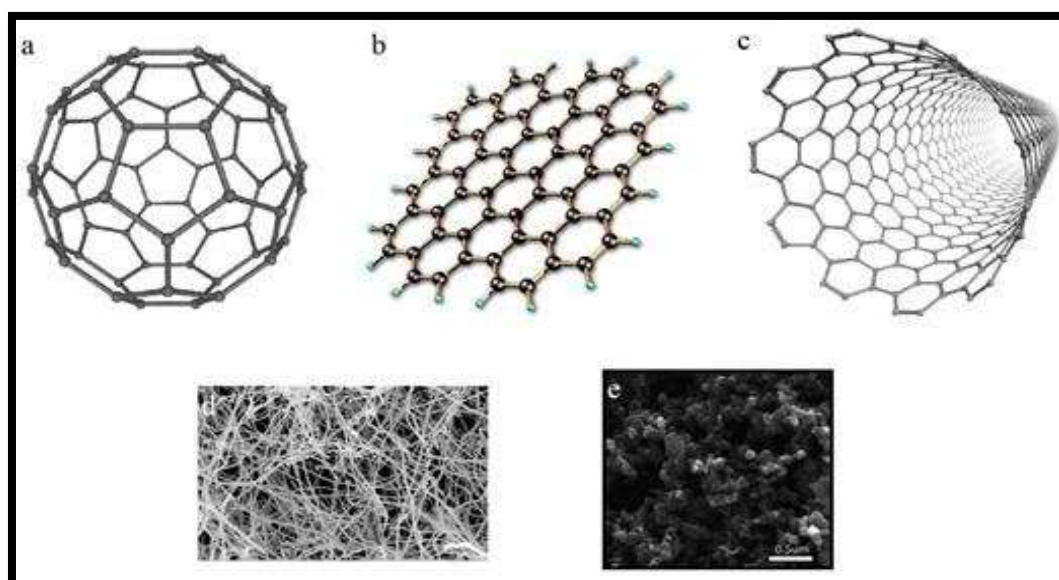


Figure 4. Carbon based nanoparticles: a- fullerenes, b- graphene, c- carbon nanotubes, d- carbon nanofibers and e- carbon black <sup>[22]</sup>

## PREPARATION OF NANOPARTICLES

1) **High Pressure Homogenizations-** A liquid with a high pressure (100-2000 bar) push through a narrow gap (in the range of few microns) by a homogenizers. The fluid moves at very short distance with high velocity (over 1000 km/h), very high shear stress, cavitations forces disrupt the particles down to the submicron range. High pressure homogenization can be done by two methods.<sup>[25]</sup>

a) **Hot homogenization technique:** This process will take place in the presence of a higher temperature than the melting point of the lipid. The pre-emulsion will form when the drug is loaded with melted lipids in the presence of a hot aqueous solution of surfactants. Finally, the nanoparticles will be formed.

b) **Cold homogenization technique:** The drug is melted in the lipid melt, and quickly cooled using cryogenic systems like liquid nitrogen or ice nitrogen. Then make it into dispersing powder form using powder mill. Then homogenize at room temperature or below to get a nanoparticle.<sup>[26]</sup>

2) **Dispersion of preformed polymers-** For the preparation of biodegradable nanoparticles from polymers such as poly (lactic acid) (PLA); poly (D, L-glycolide), PLG; poly (D, L-lactide-co-glycolide) (PLGA) and Poly (cyanoacrylate) (PCA), dispersion of preformed polymer method is used.<sup>[27]</sup> This technique can be used in various ways as follow:

a) **Solvent evaporation method:** In this method, there is formation of o/w emulsion prepared by emulsification of drug and polymer mixture in aqueous solution which contain emulsifying agent, which result in formation of stable emulsion. After that by using pressure reduction method or continuous stirring, organic solvent is evaporated. The homogenizer speed, nature and stabilizer concentration along with the property of polymer effect size of nanoparticle.<sup>[28]</sup>

b) **Spontaneous emulsification or solvent diffusion method:** In this method, two phase solvent is used, one is water miscible and other is water immiscible. In this method interfacial turbulence is created, by immediate diffusion between two solvents (which are differing in phase) which lead to the formation of small particles. A reduction in particle size can be

gained by increasing the concentration of water miscible solvent both the above described method can be used for preparation of hydrophilic and hydrophobic drugs.

c) **Salting out:** This method involves the mixing of saturated aqueous solution of polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) into an acetone solution of the polymer under magnetic stirring resulting in the formation of o/w emulsion. The precipitation of the polymer occurs when sufficient amount of water is added to external phase to allow complete diffusion of the acetone from internal phase into aqueous phase.

3) **Polymerization method-** Polymerization of monomers in an aqueous solution form the basis of this method. Two different techniques are used for the preparation in aqueous solution.

a) **Emulsion polymerization:** This method involves emulsification of monomer in non-solvent phase.

b) **Dispersion polymerization:** This method involves dispersion of monomer in non-solvent phase.<sup>[29]</sup>

4) **Coacervation or ionic gelation method-** This method involves a preparation of two aqueous phases, of which one is the polymer chitosan, adi-block co-polymer ethylene oxide or propylene oxide (PEO-PPO) and the other is a polyanion sodium tripolyphosphate which are mixed, due to mixing positively charged amino group of chitosan interacts with negative charged tripolyphosphate to form coacervates with a size in the range of nanometer. when electrostatic interaction take place between two aqueous phases coacervates are formed, and when two molecules interact due to ionic force, resulting in transition from liquid phase to gel phase at room temperature this is known as ionic gelation method.

5) **Supercritical fluid technology (SCF)-** Supercritical fluid technology has been a alternative to prepare biodegradable micro and Nanoparticles. Solvent which remain fluid in a single phase regardless of pressure above critical temperature are known as supercritical fluid. Super critical CO<sub>2</sub> is the most widely used supercritical fluid.<sup>[30]</sup> Two principles have been developed for the production of nanoparticles using supercritical fluids:

- a) **Rapid expansion of supercritical solution (RESS):** In traditional RESS, the solute is dissolved in a supercritical fluid to form a solution, followed by the rapid expansion of the solution across an orifice or a capillary nozzle into ambient air. The high degree of super saturation, accompanied by the rapid pressure reduction in the expansion, results in homogenous nucleation and thereby, the formation of well-dispersed particles.<sup>[31]</sup>
- b) **Rapid expansion of supercritical solution into liquid solvent (RESOLV):** A simple, but significant modification to RESS involves expansion of the supercritical solution into a liquid solvent instead of ambient air, termed as RESOLV. In RESOLV the liquid solvent apparently suppresses the particle growth in the expansion jet, thus making it possible to obtain primarily nanosized particles.<sup>[32-34]</sup>

#### CHARACTERIZATION OF NANOPARTICLES

Nanoparticles are generally characterized by their size, morphology and surface charge, using such advanced microscopic techniques as scanning electron microscopy (SEM), transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and atomic force microscopy (AFM). The average particle diameter, their size distribution, and charge affect the physical stability and the in vivo distribution of the nanoparticles.<sup>[35]</sup>

- 1) Size:** The particle size and distribution is most commonly measured using electron microscopy. The images of Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) and Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM) are used for the measurement of particles.<sup>[36]</sup>
- 2) Surface area:** The surface area to volume ratio of a nanoparticle has a huge influence on its

properties. The surface area is most commonly measured using BET analysis.

- 3) Composition:** The chemical or elemental composition determines the purity and performance of the nanoparticles. The composition measurement is usually carried out by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS). Some techniques involve chemical digestion of the particles followed by wet chemical analysis such as mass spectrometry, atomic emission spectroscopy and ion chromatography.<sup>[37]</sup>
- 4) Surface morphology:** The nanoparticles have various shapes and surface structures that plays important role in exploiting its properties. Some of the shapes include spherical, flat, cylindrical, tubular, conical and irregular shapes with surface like crystalline or amorphous with uniform or irregularities on the surface. The surface is generally determined by electron microscopy imaging techniques like SEM and TEM.<sup>[38]</sup>
- 5) Surface charge:** The surface charge of a nanoparticle determines its interactions with the target. Zeta potentiometer is used for the measurement of surface charges and its dispersion stability in a solution.<sup>[36]</sup>
- 6) Crystallography:** Crystallography is the study of atoms and molecules arrangement in crystal solids. The crystallography of nanoparticles are carried out by a powder X-ray, electron or neutron diffraction to determine the structural arrangement.<sup>[39]</sup>

#### MARKETED FORMULATION OF HERBAL NANOPARTICLES

S.No.	Nanoparticle	Indication	Method of preparation	References
1.	Curcumin	Potent Anticancer and Antitumor	Wet-milling technique.	40, 41, 42
2.	Paclitaxel	Acts against several tumours, ovarian and breast cancers.	Nanoprecipitation	43, 44, 45

3.	Berberin	Inflammation and several cancers	Emulsion, Ionic gelation	46, 47, 48
4.	Camptothecin	Potent anticancer	Encapsulated with hydrophobically modified glycol	49
5.	Ginkgo biloba	Alzheimer's dementia	Combination of Dry and wet process.	50
6.	Triptolide	Anti- arthritis	Nano encapsulation	51, 52, 53
7.	Salvia miltiorrhiza	Anti-hyperlipidaemia	Phospholipid complex loaded	54, 55, 56, 57
8.	Quercetin	Potent anticancer	Gelatin and chitosan loaded.	58, 59, 60
9.	Breviscapine	Anti-cardiovascular	Lipid encapsulation	61, 62, 63
10.	Naringenin	Antioxidant, Antiinflammatory.	Nano precipitation	64, 65
11.	Dodder	Acts against carcinogenesis and Antioxidant	Nano precipitation	66, 67, 68
12.	Silymarins	Hepatoprotective	Cold homogenization	69, 70, 71
13.	Genistein	Used in cardiovascular diseases, breast and uterine cancer also in osteoporosis	Nano emulsion and chitosan microsphere	72, 73
14.	Centellaasiatica	Acts as anti-anxiety, also used in leprosy, cancer, syphilis and allergy.	Ionic gelation.	74, 75, 76

15.	Annual mugwort	Antimalarial Also used for Asthma	Hydrophilic encapsulation	77, 78
16.	Artemisinin	Anticancer	Self assembly procedure	77
17.	Cuscutachinensis	Hepatoprotective and antioxidant effects	Nanosuspension method	68
18.	Glycyrrhizic acid loaded nanoparticles	Anti- inflammatory antihypertensive	Rotary-evaporated film ultrasonication method	79
19.	Taxel-loaded nanoparticles	Anticancer	Emulsion solvent evaporation method	80, 81
20.	Bacoside	Memory enhancing	Microemulsion probe sonicator method	82

### III. CONCLUSION

Predominantly, this review shows that nanotechnology has great prospects for delivering herbal drugs and nutraceuticals, and in mild of the overall health problems, its usage for effective disease prevention and health merchandising is important and to be anticipated. The combination of nanotechnology with traditional herbal medicine may offer a beneficial tool in designing future herbal medicine with better bioavailability profile and less toxicity. The main aim of this review was to describe the advantages, types of nanoparticles and different techniques involved in preparation of nanoparticles.

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