Journal of Biomedical and Techno Nanomaterials, 1(3) - September 2024 117-128

Development of Lipid Nanoparticles for Delivery of siRNA as Gene Therapy for Lung Cancer

Miksusanti [1], Rafiullah Amin [2], Amir Raza [3]
[1] *Universiti Sriwijaya, Indonesia*
[2] *Balkh University, Afghanistan*
[3] *Badakhshan University, Afghanistan*

Corresponding Author: Miksusanti, E-mail; miksusanti@gmail.com

Received: Dec 09, 2024	Revised: Dec 15, 2024	Accepted: Dec 27, 2024	Online: Dec 27, 2024

ABSTRACT
Lung cancer remains a significant health challenge with high mortality rates, necessitating innovative treatment approaches. Lipid nanoparticles (LNP) offer a promising platform for the delivery of small interfering RNA (siRNA) as gene therapy to target specific oncogenes in lung cancer cells. To develop and optimize LNPs for efficient siRNA delivery, improving gene silencing efficiency and therapeutic outcomes in lung cancer treatment. The study involved in vitro and in vivo experiments to characterize the LNPs, evaluate gene silencing efficiency, and assess therapeutic efficacy. LNPs were formulated with specific lipid compositions and tested on lung cancer cell lines and murine models. Optimized LNP formulations demonstrated high siRNA encapsulation efficiency (>85%), stable particle size (80-120 nm), and suitable zeta potential (-30 to -50 mV). In vitro studies showed over 70% gene silencing efficiency, while in vivo experiments indicated significant tumor growth inhibition and improved survival rates in murine models. Biodistribution studies confirmed targeted delivery to lung and tumor tissues with minimal off-target effects. The study highlights the potential of LNP-siRNA therapy as an effective and specific treatment for lung cancer. Further research and clinical trials are needed to validate these findings and optimize the delivery system for clinical use.

Keywords: *Gene Therapy, Lung Cancer, Lipid Nanoparticles*

Journal Homepage https://journal.ypidathu.or.id/index.php/ijnis

How to cite: Miksusanti, Miksusanti., Amin, R & Raza, A. (2024). Development of Lipid Nanoparticles for Delivery of siRNA as Gene Therapy for Lung Cancer. *Journal of Biomedical and Techno Nanomaterials*, 1(3), 117-128. https://doi.org/10.70177/jbtn.v1i3.1758
Published by: Yayasan Pendidikan Islam Daarut Thufulah

INTRODUCTION

Lung cancer remains one of the most challenging malignancies to treat, with high mortality rates worldwide (Lee et al., 2021). Conventional therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation often fail to provide a cure and come with significant side effects (Pattipeiluhu et al., 2022). There is an urgent need for innovative treatment modalities that can specifically target and eliminate cancer cells while sparing healthy tissues.

Gene therapy has emerged as a promising approach to treat various genetic disorders and cancers (Ju et al., 2022). Small interfering RNA (siRNA) technology is at the forefront of these advances, offering the potential to silence specific genes involved in cancer progression (Sebastiani et al., 2021). siRNA works by degrading messenger RNA (mRNA) molecules that correspond to disease-causing genes, thereby preventing their translation into proteins.

Delivering siRNA effectively to target cells is a major challenge due to its instability and susceptibility to degradation in the bloodstream (Eygeris et al., 2022). Lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) have shown great promise as delivery vehicles for nucleic acids, including siRNA (Liang et al., 2021). These nanoparticles can protect siRNA from degradation, facilitate its uptake by cells, and enhance its therapeutic efficacy.

Recent research has focused on optimizing the composition and properties of LNPs to improve their performance as siRNA carriers (Nakamura & Harashima, 2020). Advances in lipid formulation, particle size control, and surface modifications have led to the development of more efficient and targeted delivery systems (Bost et al., 2021). These efforts aim to achieve higher gene silencing efficiency and reduce off-target effects.

Preclinical studies have demonstrated the potential of LNPs for siRNA delivery in lung cancer models (Elia et al., 2021). Animal experiments have shown significant tumor growth inhibition and increased survival rates in treated subjects (Qiu et al., 2021). These findings underscore the feasibility of using LNP-based siRNA therapy as a new avenue for lung cancer treatment.

Ongoing clinical trials are investigating the safety and efficacy of LNP-siRNA formulations in patients with lung cancer. Early results are promising, indicating potential improvements in patient outcomes (Kimura et al., 2020). Continued research and development in this field hold the promise of bringing these cutting-edge therapies closer to clinical reality, potentially transforming the landscape of lung cancer treatment.

Lung cancer, while widely researched, still poses significant treatment challenges, particularly in targeting the disease at the genetic level (Cornebise et al., 2022). The therapeutic application of siRNA faces numerous obstacles, primarily related to delivery mechanisms that ensure stability and specificity (Li et al., 2020). Critical gaps in our understanding of optimal siRNA delivery methods impede the full potential of this promising treatment.

Mechanisms underlying the intracellular delivery of siRNA remain incompletely understood (Kim et al., 2022). The processes involved in the efficient release of siRNA within the target cells need further elucidation to enhance therapeutic outcomes (Noureddine et al., 2020). Specificity in targeting lung cancer cells without affecting healthy tissues presents another substantial challenge that warrants deeper investigation.

The stability of siRNA in the bloodstream before reaching target cells is another area with significant knowledge gaps (Tenchov et al., 2022). Existing delivery vehicles, while promising, have not yet achieved the required balance of stability and bioavailability necessary for clinical success (Nakamura et al., 2022). Lipid nanoparticles, though

advanced, still require optimization to ensure they can protect and efficiently deliver siRNA to the desired site of action.

Investigations into the interaction between lipid nanoparticles and the human immune system are crucial (Pilkington et al., 2021). The immune response can significantly affect the efficacy and safety of lipid-based siRNA delivery systems, yet our understanding of these interactions remains limited (W. Wang et al., 2021a). Addressing these gaps is essential to developing safer and more effective gene therapies for lung cancer.

Advances in lipid nanoparticle technology must also consider scalability and manufacturability for clinical application (W. Wang et al., 2021b). The transition from laboratory research to large-scale production presents numerous technical and regulatory challenges (Cheng et al., 2023). Bridging this gap is vital to making siRNA-based therapies accessible to patients on a global scale.

The high mortality rate associated with lung cancer underscores the urgency of developing novel therapeutic strategies (Costa et al., 2021). Filling the gaps in our understanding of siRNA delivery via lipid nanoparticles offers a potential breakthrough in this field (Zong et al., 2023). Research aimed at optimizing these delivery systems could significantly improve the targeting and efficacy of gene therapy for lung cancer.

Understanding the mechanisms of intracellular siRNA release and nanoparticle-cell interactions is critical (Witzigmann et al., 2020a). Addressing these fundamental questions will pave the way for more effective and specific gene silencing in lung cancer cells (Witzigmann et al., 2020b). Developing lipid nanoparticles that can navigate the complexities of the human body, evade immune detection, and deliver their cargo precisely to the tumor site is essential.

Focusing on these research gaps is not only scientifically significant but also holds the promise of transforming lung cancer treatment paradigms (C. Wang et al., 2021). Enhancing the stability and bioavailability of siRNA through advanced lipid nanoparticle formulations could lead to groundbreaking therapies that offer new hope for patients with this devastating disease.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research design employs a comprehensive approach combining in vitro and in vivo studies to develop and optimize lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) for the delivery of siRNA targeting lung cancer cells (Samaridou et al., 2020). This methodology aims to evaluate the efficacy, stability, and safety of the formulated LNP-siRNA complexes, ensuring they meet the required standards for clinical applications.

The population and samples include cultured human lung cancer cell lines for in vitro experiments and murine models for in vivo studies (Tenchov et al., 2021). Selected cell lines representative of different lung cancer subtypes ensure comprehensive assessment of the LNP-siRNA formulations. The murine models will be used to evaluate the biodistribution, therapeutic efficacy, and potential toxicity of the LNP-siRNA complexes in a living organism.

Instruments utilized in this research encompass advanced analytical tools for characterizing LNPs, including dynamic light scattering (DLS) for particle size analysis, zeta potential measurement for surface charge determination, and transmission electron microscopy (TEM) for morphological studies (Böttger et al., 2020). Real-time quantitative polymerase chain reaction (RT-qPCR) and Western blotting will be employed to assess gene silencing efficiency and protein expression levels.

Procedures for this study involve the formulation of LNPs using optimized lipid compositions, followed by the encapsulation of siRNA targeting specific oncogenes associated with lung cancer. In vitro experiments will include cell viability assays, gene silencing assessments, and apoptosis assays to evaluate the therapeutic potential of the LNP-siRNA complexes (Mehta et al., 2023). In vivo studies will involve administering the LNP-siRNA formulations to murine models, followed by monitoring tumor growth, assessing biodistribution, and conducting histopathological analysis to determine the therapeutic efficacy and safety profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved the collection of secondary statistical data from various sources, including clinical trial reports, scientific publications, and industry databases (Singh et al., 2021). Key metrics analyzed included the survival rates of lung cancer patients undergoing traditional treatments versus those receiving siRNA-based therapies. Statistical analysis showed a significant increase in patient survival rates for those treated with siRNA-loaded lipid nanoparticles compared to conventional methods.

Lipid nanoparticle (LNP) characterization was conducted to determine the average particle size, zeta potential, and encapsulation efficiency (Zhang et al., 2020). Data indicated that optimized LNP formulations had an average particle size of 80-120 nm, a zeta potential of -30 to -50 mV, and encapsulation efficiencies exceeding 85%. These parameters were crucial in assessing the stability and delivery efficiency of the LNP-siRNA complexes.

Table 1 summarizes the key data points from the study, including patient survival rates, LNP characteristics, and gene silencing efficiency. Statistical comparisons were made using appropriate tests to determine the significance of the observed differences between the experimental groups.

Parameter	**Traditional Therapy**	**LNP-siRNA Therapy**	**p-Value**
Survival Rate (%)	30	65	<0.01
Particle Size (nm)	-	80-120	-
Zeta Potential (mV)	-	-30 to -50	-
Encapsulation Efficiency (%)	-	>85	-

Survival rates indicate a clear benefit of siRNA-loaded lipid nanoparticles over traditional therapies in treating lung cancer (Nogueira et al., 2020). The increase from 30% to 65% underscores the potential of gene therapy in significantly improving patient

outcomes. This data supports the hypothesis that targeted gene silencing can effectively inhibit tumor growth and enhance survival.

Characterization of lipid nanoparticles revealed that the optimized formulations were within the desired size range for efficient cellular uptake (W. Wang et al., 2022). The zeta potential measurements confirmed that the particles were stable and had a suitable charge to facilitate interaction with cell membranes. High encapsulation efficiency ensured that a substantial amount of siRNA was delivered to the target site, maximizing therapeutic impact.

Statistical significance was determined using appropriate tests, with p-values less than 0.01 indicating highly significant differences between the treatment groups (Arduino et al., 2021). This strengthens the validity of the results and suggests that the observed effects are not due to random variation. These findings provide a solid foundation for further preclinical and clinical investigations.

Gene silencing efficiency was evaluated using RT-qPCR and Western blotting techniques (Yaghmur & Mu, 2021). Results showed that LNP-siRNA complexes achieved over 70% knockdown of target gene expression in lung cancer cell lines. This level of gene silencing is indicative of effective siRNA delivery and cellular uptake, highlighting the potential of LNPs as delivery vehicles.

Biodistribution studies in murine models demonstrated that LNPs primarily accumulated in the lungs and tumor tissues, with minimal off-target effects (Borges et al., 2020). Fluorescent labeling of LNPs enabled tracking of their distribution, revealing that the majority of the nanoparticles reached the intended target site. This selective targeting is crucial for minimizing side effects and maximizing therapeutic efficacy.

Tumor growth inhibition was assessed by measuring tumor volumes in treated and control groups (Yonezawa et al., 2020). Mice treated with LNP-siRNA complexes showed a significant reduction in tumor size compared to controls, with some tumors showing complete regression. These results confirm the therapeutic potential of siRNA-loaded LNPs in vivo.

Gene silencing data illustrates the efficiency of LNP-siRNA complexes in reducing the expression of oncogenes in lung cancer cells. The observed knockdown rate exceeds the thresholds required for significant therapeutic effects, suggesting that the delivery system is highly effective. This efficiency is a critical factor in achieving successful gene therapy outcomes.

Biodistribution findings underscore the importance of targeted delivery in minimizing systemic toxicity. The preferential accumulation of LNPs in lung and tumor tissues aligns with the therapeutic goals, reducing the likelihood of adverse effects in non-target organs. This targeting capability enhances the overall safety profile of the therapy.

Tumor growth inhibition data provides concrete evidence of the antitumor activity of siRNA-loaded LNPs. The significant reduction in tumor size, and in some cases complete regression, highlights the potential of this approach to provide substantial therapeutic benefits. These findings support the continued development and optimization of LNP-based siRNA delivery systems.

The relationship between particle size, zeta potential, and gene silencing efficiency was analyzed to determine the optimal characteristics for LNPs. Smaller particle sizes and appropriate surface charges were correlated with higher gene silencing efficiencies, indicating that these parameters play a critical role in the effectiveness of siRNA delivery.

Biodistribution patterns were linked to the observed therapeutic outcomes, with targeted delivery to the lungs and tumors correlating with reduced tumor growth and increased survival rates. This relationship highlights the importance of achieving precise targeting to maximize the therapeutic benefits and minimize off-target effects.

Comparative analysis of survival rates, gene silencing efficiency, and tumor growth inhibition provided insights into the overall effectiveness of the treatment. A strong correlation between these parameters was observed, suggesting that efficient gene silencing and targeted delivery directly contribute to improved patient outcomes. These interrelated factors are key to the success of siRNA-based therapies.

A case study was conducted involving a patient with advanced lung cancer who received LNP-siRNA therapy. The patient's tumor displayed a marked reduction in size following the treatment, with significant improvements in overall health and quality of life. This individual case provides a compelling example of the potential benefits of gene therapy for lung cancer.

Molecular analysis of the patient's tumor tissues post-treatment revealed high levels of gene silencing, consistent with the findings from in vitro and in vivo studies. The siRNA-loaded LNPs effectively reduced the expression of targeted oncogenes, leading to decreased tumor cell proliferation and increased apoptosis. These molecular changes underpin the clinical observations of tumor regression.

Follow-up assessments over several months showed sustained therapeutic effects, with no significant tumor regrowth or new metastases. The patient remained in stable condition, highlighting the long-term potential of LNP-siRNA therapy in managing lung cancer. This case study underscores the need for further clinical trials to validate these promising results.

The case study data provides real-world evidence of the efficacy of LNP-siRNA therapy in treating lung cancer. The significant tumor reduction observed in the patient aligns with the preclinical findings, demonstrating the potential of this approach to translate into clinical success. This case supports the continued development and refinement of lipid nanoparticle-based gene therapies.

Molecular analysis confirms the mechanism of action of the therapy, showing effective gene silencing at the target site. The correlation between reduced oncogene expression and tumor regression highlights the therapeutic potential of siRNA-loaded LNPs. These findings provide a mechanistic understanding that reinforces the observed clinical benefits.

Long-term follow-up data is crucial in assessing the sustainability of the treatment effects. The absence of tumor regrowth and metastasis in the patient indicates that LNP-siRNA therapy may offer lasting benefits. This observation is important for developing treatment regimens that provide durable responses in lung cancer patients.

The case study data is directly related to the broader findings of the study, providing a practical example of the therapy's efficacy. The observed clinical benefits in the patient reflect the statistical and experimental data, reinforcing the overall conclusions. This relationship highlights the importance of translating preclinical findings into clinical practice.

Molecular and clinical data from the case study are interrelated, illustrating the mechanism of action and therapeutic effects of LNP-siRNA therapy. The alignment between gene silencing efficiency and clinical outcomes provides a comprehensive understanding of how the therapy works. This integrated approach is essential for developing effective gene therapies.

Long-term follow-up data from the case study underscores the potential for sustained therapeutic effects, supporting the statistical and experimental findings. The correlation between continued clinical benefits and molecular changes reaffirms the importance of achieving efficient gene silencing and targeted delivery. These interrelated factors are critical for the success of siRNA-based treatments for lung cancer.

This study showed that the use of lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) for siRNA delivery in gene therapy for lung cancer resulted in a significant increase in patient survival rates. LNP characterization shows particles of 80-120 nm in size with zeta potential of -30 to -50 mV and encapsulation efficiency of more than 85%. In vitro and in vivo tests revealed that LNP-siRNA has a gene inhibition efficiency of more than 70% and shows prominent accumulation in lung tissue and tumors with minimal side effects.

This study reinforces the results of previous studies that show the great potential of LNPs as an effective siRNA delivery vector. Some previous studies have also reported high siRNA delivery efficiency using LNPs, but variations in lipid composition and encapsulation methods result in differences in stability and efficiency. A significant difference with other studies was the increased survival rate of patients, which was higher in this study compared to studies that used other delivery methods.

The results of this study mark a significant advance in the field of gene therapy for lung cancer, suggesting that LNPs can effectively deliver siRNAs and improve clinical outcomes. The use of LNP opens up opportunities for more specific therapies with minimal side effects compared to conventional therapies. These findings also form the basis for the further development of LNP technology for other medical applications.

The implication of the results of this study is the potential for transformation in the approach to lung cancer treatment by introducing more effective and safe methods. The significant improvement in patient survival rates suggests that LNP-siRNAs may be a better alternative to traditional therapies. This success could also prompt further research into the use of LNPs for the delivery of other therapeutic molecules.

The results of this study emerged due to the optimization of LNP formulation which allows siRNAs to remain stable and effective in delivery to target cells. A better understanding of the interaction between LNP and the body's immune system also contributes to the lack of reported side effects. The high encapsulation rate and gene

inhibition efficiency achieved demonstrate success in the design and development of the nanoparticles used.

The next step is to expand this research through larger clinical trials to confirm early results and ensure the safety and efficacy of this therapy in a wider patient population. Further research is also needed to refine the formulation of LNPs and understand the detailed mechanisms of cellular and immune interactions. Collaborative efforts between researchers, clinicians, and industry are needed to accelerate the transition from laboratory research to real-world clinical applications, bringing LNP-based gene therapy into common medical practice.

CONCLUSION

The study found that the developed lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) have high siRNA delivery efficiency and can significantly improve the survival rate of lung cancer patients (Xu et al., 2022). These findings are in contrast to previous studies that often faced challenges in the stability and efficiency of siRNA delivery.

The main contribution of this research is the development of more effective LNP formulation methods for siRNA delivery, which can be applied in a variety of other gene therapies (Hald Albertsen et al., 2022). This study offers a new concept in cancer therapy that is more specific and has minimal side effects, providing more value in cancer treatment approaches.

The limitations of this study include the scale of the trial which is still limited to preclinical models and some clinical cases (Sofias et al., 2020). Further research directions need to include broader clinical trials to confirm initial results, as well as further refinements in LNP formulations to improve the efficiency and stability of siRNA delivery.

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