

Therapeutic efficacy of ^{225}Ac -containing polymersomes

Cancer, still presenting one of the major challenges in modern healthcare, leads to more than 8.8 million deaths annually. While the main treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy, increasing attention is given to brachytherapy in e.g. the treatment of prostate cancer. Advantages of brachytherapy, as compared to radical prostatectomy and external beam radiation therapy, lie in the much higher radiation doses which can be given to the tumour tissue whilst sparing healthy tissue. Whereas in classic brachytherapy careful placement of the seeds is still essential for optimal irradiation of the tumour, recently a movement towards the use of micro and nano particles for intratumoural administration has begun. These particles are able to distribute themselves to and within the tumour tissue, and can be labelled with either beta or alpha emitters. We have shown in the past that polymersomes are ideal candidates to be used in alpha therapy, as they are able to retain the recoiling daughter nuclides of ^{225}Ac to a large extent, thus limiting the renal toxicity caused by recoiling daughters¹.

We have evaluated the suitability of ^{225}Ac -containing polymersomes composed of polybutadiene-polyethylene oxide as intratumoural therapeutic agents. Polymersomes containing 10 kBq and 50 kBq ^{225}Ac have been injected intratumourally in MDA-MB-231 tumour-bearing BALB/c nude mice. At 1 and 7 days p.i. the biodistribution and tumour retention has been assessed. Polymersomes were retained very well in the tumour tissue, whereas ^{225}Ac -DOTA was rapidly cleared. This observed retention in the tumour tissue together with an increase in double-strand DNA breaks, determined by $\gamma\text{-H2AX}$ staining, in the tumours treated with ^{225}Ac -polymersomes indicates that vesicles containing alpha-emitters like ^{225}Ac will be suitable agents for long-term irradiation of tumours. The overall survival of the treated and control animals as well as the tumour growth has been followed in time. We have found a definite tumour growth inhibition for the tumours injected with ^{225}Ac -polymersomes, showing that these vesicles can be used for intratumoural cancer therapy.

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(1) de Kruijff, R. M.; Drost, K.; Thijssen, L.; Morgenstern, A.; Bruchertseifer, F.; Lathouwers, D.; Wolterbeek, H. T.; Denkova, A. G. *Appl. Radiat. Isot.* 2017, 128.

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