Coupling of these ligands showed a highly beneficial effect for transfection efficacy to TNF-α activated endothelial cells compared to non-targeted SAINT-O-Somes. The intracellular delivery of anti VE-cadherin siRNA SAINT-O-Somes to activated endothelial cells resulted in a specific, 70% down-regulation of VE-cadherin gene expression. In conclusion, we demonstrated that SAINT-O-Somes are stable, high capacity carriers for effective siRNA delivery into endothelial cells that present the requirements for *in vivo* application.

See reference below for additional reading

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doi:10.1016/j.drudis.2010.09.400

A53
Toxin assisted intracellular delivery of gold nanoparticles

Umbreen Shaheen*, Yann Cesbron, Raphaël Lévy
School of Biosciences, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

*Corresponding author.
E-mail: umbreen@liv.ac.uk (U. Shaheen).

Targeted intracellular delivery of biomolecules using nanoparticles has attracted many of the science disciplines. Nanoparticles because of their tuneable size and unique optical properties are emerging not only as imaging probes but also serving as intracellular cargo delivery carriers. Gold nanoparticles are best candidate for all these applications because of their not particularly reported cytotoxicity and ease of biofunctionalization. For intracellular cargo delivery application, it is necessary that a carrier is not only has the capacity to carry the biomolecule efficiently but also able to deliver it to the cytosol which is the main site for all physiological and chemical activities inside the cell. It is well documented that on intracellular delivery, bioconjugated gold nanoparticles are trapped by endolysosomes where their biomolecular coating degrades eventually. For avoiding this fate and for gaining access into the cytosol, we used a new approach, that is, toxin assisted delivery for gold nanoparticles. A bacterial toxin streptolysin-O is a secreted protein of 61 kDa which forms pores in plasma membrane of host cell for gaining access into the cytosol. It has been used as a simple and rapid mean of transfection for intracellular delivery of oligonucleotides and siRNA. Our results confirm that SLO treated cells showed an increased cellular uptake of gold nanoparticles then untreated cells. We also studied the effect of poly ethylene glycol (PEG) on SLO assisted cellular uptake by increasing the PEG amount gradually and found that PEG affects the cellular uptake adversely. We are currently combining fluorescence microscopy, photothermal microscopy and transmission electron microscopy to fully understand the mechanism, localization and fate of gold nanoparticles during SLO assisted uptake.

doi:10.1016/j.drudis.2010.09.401

A54
Quantifying uptake and distribution of arginine rich peptides at therapeutic concentrations using fluorescence correlation spectroscopy and image correlation spectroscopy techniques

Ben Staley*, Egor Zindy, Alain Pluen
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Manchester, Stopford Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PT, UK

*Corresponding author.
E-mail: ben.staley@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk (B. Staley).

Due to an apparent ability to enter cells in an energy independent manner, cell-penetrating peptides (CPPs) are increasingly being used as vectors for the delivery of macromolecules into cells. But 20 years on, their uptake and intracellular distribution are still debated [1] especially as most studies have been carried out at relatively high concentrations (micromolar), while therapeutic doses more likely to be in the nanomolar range. Thus, we hypothesised that taking advantage of fluorescence correlation spectroscopy (FCS) and image correlation spectroscopy (ICS) should help to understand the delivery mechanisms (especially the intracellular distribution) of arginine rich peptides TAMRA-Tat and TAMRA-nona-arginine (R9) at therapeutic doses. TAMRA-Tat and TAMRA-R9 peptides were incubated for one hour with both Caco-2 and HeLa cells. Initial observation of uptake was carried with a Zeiss LSM510 Meta Confocor 2. FCS and ICS were then used to measure peptide concentrations (density of particles per beam waist area) in distinctive areas and in the whole cell (cartography). ICS, implemented in parallel to FCS, was developed in house based on the work of P. Wiseman's group [2,3]. Subcellular distribution was analysed with confocal microscopy revealing two main areas – punctate and cytoplasmic regions – sampled initially with FCS to obtain diffusion times and concentration. Diffusion times in the punctate areas are very long (300 ± 50 μs) compared to the cytoplasm (26 ± 8 μs) at 500 nM, suggesting a bound component compared to free peptide. As FCS cannot sample the whole cell, ICS provided a more complete view of the distribution of TAMRA-Tat and TAMRA-R9 in which large areas of the cells behave as the 'cytoplasmic' area used in FCS. Our results indicate that arginine rich peptides are observed at nanomolar concentrations in all areas sampled. At concentrations below 500 nM, punctate and discrete areas are clearly labelled suggesting a possible entry via an endocytosis only mechanism. Finally, as the bulk concentration increases the fraction detected in the cytoplasm increases suggesting the simultaneous presence of a non-endocytotic mechanism of entry. Overall, FCS and ICS demonstrate that they provide invaluable information on the cellular delivery of peptides at therapeutic levels.

See reference below for additional reading

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doi:10.1016/j.drudis.2010.09.402

A55
Tat-LK15, a Tat-fusion peptide, to deliver therapeutic siRNA in chronic myeloid leukemic cells

Yamini Arthanari*, Costas Demonacos, Harmesh Aojula, Alain Pluen
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author.
E-mail:
yamini.arthanari@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
(Y. Arthanari).

Chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) is caused by the reciprocal translocation of chromosomes 9 and 22 resulting in the formation of the BCR-ABL fusion protein, which exhibits deregulated tyrosine kinase activity. Hence, BCR-ABL would be a key target for developing a therapy for CML. We have used the potential of RNA interference to study the silencing of this oncoprotein. siRNA has been used to target wide range of genes in various cell types using cell penetraing peptides (CPPs). In this study we have evaluated the ability of the Tat fusion peptide, Tat-LK15 [1] to study uptake of