
Editorial

On October 3–4, 1996, the 2nd Rencontre-Pharmaceutiques was held at the Centre Interuniversitaire de Recherche et d'Enseignement, Archamps, France. The topic of this focused meeting was Bioadhesion: State-of-the-Art and Perspectives. The goal of the symposium was to assemble the leading researchers in the field of bioadhesion and to discuss the problems and potential of using this phenomenon to improve drug delivery.

Clearly, bioadhesive dosage forms can address a number of the classical challenges associated with poor drug absorption: by localising delivery at the target site, for example, direct input to the locus of action can be achieved without significant systemic exposure to the drug; prolonging contact with the absorbing membrane surface can increase the bioavailability of poorly absorbed or slowly transported drugs and substantially augment drug usage; and, by judicious selection of the site of bioadhesion, optimisation of delivery (e.g. to avoid specific degradation pathways of the drug) can be achieved. These potential advantages, of course, must be balanced against the difficulties associated with reducing to practice the conceptually appealing idea of bioadhesion: How does one choose the right bioadhesive polymer and the best drug candidates for administration using this technology? How should the delivery system be formulated and tested? How is the adhesion

controlled? What drug input profiles can reasonably be expected? What is acceptable biocompatibility?

In this special issue of the Journal, articles based upon seven of the invited lectures at the 2nd Rencontre are presented. The papers address, in different ways, most of the objectives and challenges identified above. The spectrum of endeavour runs from the application of physical evaluation techniques through the practical development of formulations, and their interaction with the biological interface, to real in vivo testing of potential delivery systems. It will be immediately appreciated that all the problems faced in this field have not been solved, and that important tasks must yet be undertaken. Nevertheless, taken together, these manuscripts provide an excellent flavour of the creativity and insight that must be brought to bear on this unique and exciting approach to drug delivery. We are particularly grateful to the authors who addressed their subjects with realism and objectivity and have provided for the reader a truly current perspective on the state-of-the-field of bioadhesion and bioadhesive drug delivery systems. The next instalment of the story is eagerly awaited.

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