Drug Delivery from Cardiovascular Stents

In Pursuit of a Non-Polymeric Approach

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Coronary Heart Disease

- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is the result of buildup of plaque (cholesterol and fatty acids) on the walls of the coronary arteries.

- Plaque buildup can lead to restrictions in blood flow to the heart muscles.

- It can cause angina, irreversible heart damage or a heart attack.

- Lifestyle, diet and genetics all play a role in the occurrence of CHD.

- It is the leading cause of death worldwide.

- Stenosis is the term used to describe narrowing of a blood vessel.
History of Surgical Treatments of CHD

1960 – Coronary Bypass Surgery

Highly invasive. Emergent procedures reduced by 90% from 1990 to 2007.

1977 – Balloon Angioplasty

Catheter is used to feed a balloon to the problem vessel. The balloon is expanded to break up the plaque. Rarely the only procedure performed now.

1989 – Angioplasty with stenting

Same procedure as balloon angioplasty except that a small wire mesh tube is left in place to keep the vessel propped open.

CHD Facts (US):

- 425,000 deaths annually
- 17,600,000 people live with CHD
Angioplasty with Stenting

Nhlbi.nih.gov
Coronary Stents

- length from 8 to 38 mm
- diameter from 2.5 to 4mm
- struts from .003 to .006 in
- 316 SS or L605 CoCr
- laser cut from seamless tubing
- electropolished and then passivated

Driver Sprint RX, Medtronic

Taxus Express, Boston Scientific
Stenting Causes Injury

- During implantation, coronary stents are over expanded and then released to shrink to the original diameter of the vessel.

- The forces of the struts against the lumen causes damage (unavoidable).

- Upon injury, the body will attempt to repair itself by growing smooth muscle tissue.

- This “scar” tissue can result in restenosis.
Restenosis

Cross Sections

Bare Metal Stent

1 Day

6 Mo

struts

smooth muscle tissue

Wong, Clinical Cardiology Series
History of Stents

1989 – Bare metal stents (BMS)

- Growth in popularity because it provided pain relief without highly invasive surgery.
- Restenosis rate ~ 30%

2002 – Drug Eluting Stents (DES)

- Johnson and Johnson introduced the Cypher stent. Others followed.
- Drugs prevented smooth muscle tissue growth that would normally occur because of injury to the lumen.
- Reduction of restenosis to < 10%.
- Huge profits for device makers.

In 2006, the worldwide market for coronary stents was $5.1 billion
Original DES Design

Drugs:
• Sirolimus (MW 914), Paclitaxel (MW 853)
• Both are cytotoxic.

Polymer Coatings:
• Drug dissolved in polymer-solvent solution
• Solution used to form coating on stent by spraying or dipping
• 7 to 15 um thick
• Non-biodegradable polymers (PBMA, PEVA)

Polymer Played Many Roles:
• Dissolves drug during processing (up to 40% of the polymer wt)
• Elastic matrix for holding the drug onto the stent (must adhere to stent and not crack under strains of up to 20%)
• Controls release rate (diffusion)
• Must be biocompatible
Drug Release Profile

- Controlled by diffusion through polymer
- Goal was ~ 30 days of drug release

Tsujino, Expert Opinion, 2007
Studies Showed a Problem

• Starting in 2005 studies reported that the original drug eluting stents increased the risk of thrombosis (blood clots) after 30 days.

• Although the frequency was low (< 1%), thrombosis is often fatal.

• In 2007, DES sales dropped by 40%.

• The long term presence of polymers were widely blamed.

• The search was on for alternatives to permanent polymers for controlling drug release from stents.
Current Drug Eluting Stent Research

1. Switch to biodegradable polymers
2. Bioabsorbable stents
3. Micro holes and grooves w/ BDPs
4. Pure drug coatings w/ and w/o textured surfaces
5. Non-polymeric excipients
6. Nanoporous Coatings

Biodegradable polymer approaches

Non-polymeric approaches
Biodegradable Polymers

- Idea is to have a BMS sometime after the drug is gone
- Poly (dl-lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA) is common
- Release profile determined by a combination of diffusion and degradation of the matrix
- There are concerns about biocompatibility and the effect of debris
Bioabsorbable Stents

• Made entirely of a biodegradable polymer

• Idea is to have the stent disappear completely in about 2 years

• It is hoped that plaque dissolves with increased blood flow to the site

• Polymer loaded with drug to prevent restenosis

• The major concerns have to do with structural integrity and biocompatibility.

Abbott
Holes and Grooves

- Idea is to have keep the drug and biodegradable polymers away from direct contact with the tissue.
- Holes and grooves cut into the stent struts (diameter or width ~ 50 um)
- Drugs and polymers loaded into holes using inkjet technology
- Initial clinical studies have been disappointing
Non-Polymeric Approaches – Pure Drug Coatings

- Drug deposited directly onto stent struts
- Strut surfaces are sometimes etched or bead blasted to improve adhesion
- Dissolution is complete in < 6 hours
- Clinical trials are underway
Non-Polymeric Approaches – Non-Polymeric Excipients

• Excipient is used as a binder for the drug

• Excipient is often chosen to be a biomimetic material

• Biosensors Axxion uses a synthetic form of glycocalyx – a slime found on the surfaces of endothelial cells (commercial success unknown)

• Ziscoat uses triglycerides (pre-clinical)
Non-Polymeric Approaches – Nanoporous Coatings I

Can nanoscale pores be used to control drug release?

Anodic oxide films

- Pore diameter can range from 15 to 200 nm
- Porosity ~ 50%
- Drug released in < 2 days
- Film thickness on flexible substrates limited to 1 – 2 um to avoid cracking and delamination

Kang, Controlled drug release using nanoporous anodic aluminum oxide on stent, 2006.
Non-Polymeric Approaches – Nanoporous Coatings II

Dealloyed Coatings

- Sputtered coating containing at least one sacrificial material and at least one structural material is deposited.
- The coating is exposed to caustic agents to remove the sacrificial material.
- The resulting structure has a “Swiss Cheese” like appearance, ~ 40% porosity, 5 to 25 nm pores.
- Release rates uncertain.
- Film thickness is limited to ~ 2 um to avoid cracking.
- Not commercialized.

US Patent Application
US20080086198
Non-Polymeric Approaches – Nanoporous Coatings III

Sputtered Porous Columnar Coatings

- Low homologous temperature
- Low energy (< 1 eV) or oblique angle deposition
- Cylindrical magnetron cathode

Thornton, High Rate Thick Film Growth, Ann. Rev. Mater. Sci, 1977

➢ Zone 1 Porous Columnar Structure
Porous Columnar Features

- Coating structure determined by materials and process conditions
- Columns are ~ uniform top to bottom
- Pore sizes range from 5 to 30 nm in width
- ~ 20% porosity for Ta and Cr coatings

- Surprising result of excellent adhesion of columns to stent
- Discrete columns do not transmit stress laterally when coating is flexed (film thickness not limited by risk of fracture)
- Pore space can be used to deliver drugs
First Look at Non-polymeric PC Drug Release

- High drug load but short elution time
- Nanopores did not offer enough diffusional resistance
- Not all of the drug is released

Stent placed in PBS at 37°C
Drug concentration measured by UV Spec

Dexamethasone Release, Cr PC Coating

Lost signal, Release appeared to stop
1 day burst

PBS at 37°C

Cumulative (ng/mm²)

Days

0 10 20 30
Porous Columnar Coating Relationships

\[ n_c = \frac{(1-p)}{a_c} \]

Not all independent

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Estimated} & \text{p} & \text{b (nm)} & \text{n_c (\mu m^{-2})} \\
\text{Values} & & & \\
\hline
\text{Cr} & .18 & 150 & 84.2 \\
\text{Ta} & .21 & 200 & 45.6 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Increase in Surface Area

\[
\frac{\hat{A}}{A} = 1 + n_c a_s
\]

Estimated Values

\[ n_c = \text{column number density} \]
\[ a_s = \text{column sidewall area} \]
\[ a_c = \text{column top area} \]
\[ b = \text{column side length} \]
\[ d = \text{column height} \]
\[ p = \text{porosity} \]
Medically significant amounts of drug in one monolayer

10 μm Cr: 1 monolayer ~ 3.5 μg/mm of stent length

Typical range:
• 1 – 10 μg/mm

A monolayer of drug spread out over the high surface area of the PC coating is the same as the amount of drug remaining after the elution step.
Non-Polymeric PC Drug Release Model

Drug

Fast Release

~ 1 day

Controlled by dissolution

Slow Release

> 1 day

Controlled by drug-surface interactions

Desorption Model

\[
\frac{d[X]}{dt} = -r(T)[X]
\]

\[
r = A \exp\left(-\frac{E_a}{kT}\right)
\]
Observations From Others

1. Kang (2006) noted that Drug Release $\sim$ (Film Thickness)$^{-1}$ for anodic aluminum oxide nanoporous films

2. Brohede (2009) saw that different drugs had different release rates from nanoporous hydroxyapatite coatings

   - was the first to cite the high surface area of nanoporous coatings as an advantage in drug delivery
   - showed slow long term post-burst drug release from anodic oxide films
2nd Isoflux Study of Post-Burst Elution Rates

- 13x increase in resolution
- 20 μm nanoporous Cr on SS
- Shows drug is indeed released after the burst period is over

**Percent Rapamycin Released**

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<th>Days</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>15</th>
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**Daily Release of Rapamycin**

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<th>Days</th>
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What If The Post Burst Release Rates Are Not What We Want?

The post-burst release of drug from nanoporous columnar coatings loaded with pure drug depends on the drug-coating combination.
Modification of the Method

1. Modification of the Porous Coating Surface
   Can primer coatings or surface modification (e.g. plasma discharge) be used to control drug release?

2. Non-Polymeric Excipients
   Excipients on the porous material would alter the effect of drug-drug interactions and could provide control of the release rate.

3. Chemical Linkers
   Peptide linkers that can be cleaved by enzymes to release drugs or other compounds.
Conclusions

High Surface Area Is Still the Key

Only nanoporous structures offer this advantage

Sputtered Porous Columnar Coatings Offer:

- Excellent adhesion to device
- Film thickness not limited by cracking
- Greater than 200x the surface area of the original surface
- Medically significant drug loads in one monolayer
- Long term release of drug as a result of drug-surface forces
Loading by Dipping Produces a Surface Coating and Two Phase Release Kinetics
Loading by Spraying Fills the Pores
Drug is released by dissolution but only from the top
PC Coating Drug Load Capacity: Pores Filled, No Excess

Typical DES Range for Sirolimus