



MOLECULAR MECHANISM INTO THE ADVANTAGES OF NANO-SIZED MEDICINE: ENHANCING STABILITY, SAFETY, AND THERAPEUTIC EFFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nanotechnology has emerged as a transformative tool in drug delivery, offering significant improvements over traditional pharmaceutical systems. Nano-sized drug carriers, due to their unique physicochemical properties, enhance drug performance by improving stability, reducing toxicity, increasing bioavailability, and enabling targeted delivery. These innovations address critical challenges such as drug degradation, poor solubility, and limited membrane permeability. **Method:** This study investigates the molecular mechanisms behind the success of nano-sized drug delivery systems. The topic was selected for its importance in improving therapeutic outcomes, especially for critically ill patients, including those with cancer. Data were collected through various research methods, including systematic and non-systematic literature reviews, metadata and umbrella reviews, and reputable online databases such as Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and AI-based platforms. **Results:** The analysis revealed that nanocarriers provide superior drug stability, controlled and accelerated release, and better bioavailability. Targeted delivery reduces systemic toxicity and increases therapeutic efficiency. These systems overcome key limitations of conventional drug delivery, particularly those related to solubility and permeability. **Conclusion:** Nanotechnology in drug delivery offers promising solutions to persistent pharmaceutical challenges. By enhancing stability, bioavailability, and precision targeting, nano-based systems pave the way for safer, more effective, and patient-centered therapies. The ongoing advancement of nanotechnology holds significant potential for the future of precision medicine and personalized treatment strategies.

KEYWORDS: Nanotechnology, Drug delivery, Nanocarriers, Bioavailability, Targeted delivery, Therapeutic outcomes, Precision medicine, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The development of effective drug delivery systems remains a critical challenge in pharmaceutical science,

particularly for drugs with poor solubility, low stability, and high toxicity. In recent years, the use of nanotechnology for medical applications has shown

immense promise in overcoming these limitations.^[1] Nanoparticles, typically ranging from 1 to 200 nanometers in size, exhibit unique properties that make them ideal carriers for therapeutic agents.

At the molecular level, nano-sized drug delivery systems can enhance stability by protecting drug molecules from environmental degradation, enzymatic breakdown, and harsh physiological conditions.^[2] They also play a pivotal role in reducing toxicity by enabling targeted delivery, thus minimizing the exposure of healthy tissues to harmful agents.^[3] Furthermore, nanocarriers improve bioavailability by enhancing solubility, increasing cellular uptake, and facilitating transport across biological barriers.^[4] In addition, the rate of drug release can be fine-tuned using nanocarriers to ensure rapid or sustained therapeutic effects, depending on the clinical need.^[5]

Moreover, nanotechnology enables flexible and innovative drug formulation opportunities, including the co-delivery of multiple drugs, incorporation of poorly soluble compounds, and development of stimuli-responsive systems. This study aims to review and analyze the molecular level mechanisms by which nano-sized medicines offer these advantages, with a focus on how they contribute to safer, more efficient, and patient-centric drug delivery strategies.

METHODS

This study employed a comprehensive and multi-dimensional methodological framework aimed at investigating the molecular mechanisms responsible for the effectiveness of nano-sized drug delivery systems. In light of the increasing clinical relevance of nanomedicine—especially in treating critical diseases such as various types of cancer—this research methodology was designed to combine both depth and breadth, ensuring rigorous information's collection, interpretation, and synthesis across various types of literature and technological platforms.^[6]

Study Design and Rationale

The study was conceptualized as a hybrid research project, integrating elements from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The primary objective was not only to gather relevant scientific information but also to critically examine and synthesize current findings to identify the specific advantages nanomedicine offers over conventional drug delivery approaches.^[7] Special emphasis was placed on understanding the molecular level pharmacological and biochemical mechanisms that enable nano-drugs to achieve targeted delivery, reduced systemic toxicity, and enhanced bioavailability.^[8]

Given the complex and interdisciplinary nature of nanomedicine, the study was structured to incorporate multiple evidence-gathering techniques, thereby enhancing the robustness and reliability of the conclusions. The design rationale also included

triangulation—using different methods and sources to cross-verify results—ensuring both internal and external validity.^[9]

Data Collection Strategy

Data were collected from a wide array of sources to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research topic. The strategy consisted of the following key components:

1. **Systematic Literature Review (SLR):** A well-defined protocol was established to conduct the SLR. This included the development of research questions, inclusion and exclusion criteria, search strategy formulation, and quality assessment. Databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science were systematically searched using specific Boolean operators, medical subject headings (MeSH), and keyword combinations like "nanoparticles," "drug delivery," "targeted therapy," and "cancer treatment".^[10]
2. **Non-systematic Literature Review:** While the SLR ensured the inclusion of peer-reviewed and high-quality studies, non-systematic approaches were also used to capture emerging and grey literature. This included journal articles, clinical trial reports, white papers, and review articles published outside of indexed databases. This method allowed for the incorporation of new findings, expert perspectives, and less formalized knowledge that may not have passed through traditional peer-review processes but still hold academic value.^[11]
3. **Meta-Analysis and Metadata Evaluation:** Where available, data from multiple studies were pooled and statistically analyzed to identify common trends, contradictions, and knowledge gaps. Meta-analytical tools were used to assess effect sizes, heterogeneity, and publication bias, especially in clinical studies comparing nano-based and conventional treatments.^[12,13]
4. **Integrated Review and Umbrella Review:** To provide a macro-level synthesis of findings, integrated and umbrella reviews were conducted. This involved summarizing the outcomes of various systematic reviews and meta-analyses into a single, coherent narrative. It allowed for the comparison of multiple intervention types, molecular mechanisms, and drug formulations across different diseases and patient populations.^[14]
5. **Rapid and Methodological Reviews:** Rapid reviews were conducted in sub-topics that are rapidly evolving, such as mRNA-based nano-vaccines and lipid nanoparticle (LNP) technologies.^[15] Methodological reviews were also performed to analyze the techniques, study designs, and sampling strategies used in prior research, helping to assess the overall quality and reproducibility of existing findings.^[16]

Sources and Digital Tools

To support this extensive methodology, data were retrieved from both conventional academic repositories and cutting-edge digital tools:

- **Conventional Databases:** Core academic platforms including PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Web of Science were used for sourcing peer-reviewed journal articles, reviews, and clinical trial reports.^[17]
- **AI-based Search Platforms:** Emerging AI platforms such as Semantic Scholar, Elicit, and Research Rabbit were employed to assist with automatic keyword extraction, context-based relevance scoring, and citation network analysis. These tools enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of identifying high-impact and thematically relevant research articles.^[18]
- **Unsystematic Sources:** To ensure the inclusion of timely and cutting-edge insights, unsystematic information's were gathered from non-traditional platforms such as institutional repositories, conference abstracts, webinars, medical news outlets, and preprint servers (e.g., bioRxiv, medRxiv). These sources were critically evaluated for credibility and relevance before being incorporated into the study.^[19]

This study employed a comprehensive and multi-dimensional methodological framework aimed at investigating the molecular mechanisms responsible for the effectiveness of nano-sized drug delivery systems. In light of the increasing clinical relevance of nanomedicine—especially in treating critical diseases such as various types of cancer—this research methodology was designed to combine both depth and breadth, ensuring rigorous data collection, interpretation, and synthesis across various types of literature and technological platforms.

Stability Improvement

Nanomedicine significantly enhances the stability of therapeutic agents at the molecular level through several advanced mechanisms which are summarized below:

1. Encapsulation Protects Drug Molecules

- **Process:** Nanocarriers such as liposomes, polymeric nanoparticles, or micelles encapsulate drug molecules.
- **Effect:** This encapsulation shields the drug from enzymatic degradation, pH changes, or light exposure.
- **Example:** For instance, insulin can be protected from degradation in the stomach when encapsulated within polymeric nanoparticles.^[20]

2. Surface Modification Reduces Aggregation

- **Process:** Nanoparticles are coated with hydrophilic polymers like polyethylene glycol (PEG).

- **Effect:** This modification reduces aggregation, enhances colloidal stability, and prevents rapid clearance by the immune system.
- **Bonus:** PEGylation helps nanoparticles stay longer in circulation by avoiding immune recognition.^[21]

3. Controlled Release Maintains Stability Over Time

- **Process:** Certain nanomedicines are designed to release their payloads slowly over time.
- **Effect:** This controlled release minimizes sudden drug bursts, thus maintaining chemical and structural stability over extended durations.^[22] In this pattern doxorubicin is stabilized in liposomal formulations.

4. Targeted Delivery Minimizes Premature Exposure

- **Process:** Nanoparticles can be functionalized with ligands or antibodies that recognize specific receptors on target cells (e.g., cancer cells).
- **Effect:** This targeted delivery reduces premature degradation or reaction with off-target tissues.^[23]

5. Solid-State Formulation Enhances Thermal Stability

- **Process:** Drugs formulated as solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs) or nanocrystals show improved thermal stability.
- **Effect:** These formulations are generally more thermally and chemically stable than their liquid or amorphous counterparts.^[24]

6. pH-Responsive Nanocarriers Stabilize Drugs in Harsh Environments

- **Process:** Certain nanocarriers are engineered to respond to acidic or basic pH, such as those found in the stomach or tumor microenvironments.
- **Effect:** These systems protect the drug until it reaches the target site. For example, doxorubicin encapsulated in liposomes exhibits enhanced stability, prolonged half-life, and reduced toxicity.^[22]

which is caused with intercalating of DNA by inhibiting topoisomerase II enzyme.

Reduced Toxicity

Nanomedicine reduces systemic toxicity of therapeutic agents through multiple sophisticated strategies and mechanism as narrated below:

1. Targeted Delivery to Diseased Cells Only

- **Process:** Nanoparticles are functionalized with targeting ligands (e.g., antibodies or peptides) that bind exclusively to receptors over-expressed on diseased cells.
- **Effect:** Minimizes interaction with healthy tissues and off-target uptake.
- **Result:** Significantly lower toxicity in normal organs.^[25]

2. Controlled and Sustained Released drugs

- Process: Nanocarriers are engineered to release their payloads slowly or in response to specific triggers (pH, temperature, enzymes).
- Effect: Avoid sudden spikes in drug concentration that can cause acute toxicity.
- Result: Provides a safer pharmacokinetic profile, reducing peak-related adverse effects.^[26]

3. Improved Solubility of Hydrophobic Drugs

- Process: Hydrophobic drugs are encapsulated within micelles, nano emulsions, or polymeric carriers to enhance aqueous solubility.
- Effect: Eliminates the need for toxic solvents and surfactants.
- Result: Reduces chemical irritation and organ toxicity associated with high-dose formulations.^[27]

4. Protection from Premature Degradation

- Process: Nanoparticles shield drugs from enzymatic degradation or harsh pH before reaching the target site.
- Effect: Increases the fraction of intact drug delivered to diseased tissue.
- Result: Decreases systemic exposure to breakdown products that might be toxic.^[28]

5. Avoidance of Immune System Activation

- Process: Surface modification with “stealth” polymers such as polyethylene glycol (PEG) prevents protein opsonization.
- Effect: Minimizes recognition and clearance by the mononuclear phagocyte system.
- Result: Lowers risk of infusion-related reactions and inflammatory responses.^[28]

6. Accumulation via the EPR Effect (Tumor Targeting)

- Process: Nanoparticles exploit the Enhanced Permeability and Retention (EPR) effect in tumors, passively accumulating in leaky vasculature.
- Effect: Concentrates the drug in tumor tissue while sparing normal organs.
- Result: Enhanced antitumor efficacy with reduced systemic toxicity.^[29]
- Example: Albumin-bound paclitaxel (nab-paclitaxel) avoids Cremophor EL solvent, improves tumor delivery, and lessens neuro- and hypersensitivity toxicity.^[30]

Increases Bioavailability

Nanomedicines enhance the fraction of an administered dose that reaches systemic circulation through multiple complementary mechanisms as follows:

1. Improved Solubility and Dissolution Rate

- Process: Reducing drug particles to the nanoscale dramatically increases surface area, accelerating dissolution in bodily fluids.

- Effect: Faster dissolution leads to more rapid and complete absorption across the gut wall.
- Result: A greater proportion of the active compound enters the bloodstream. In this way, nanosuspensions markedly improve the oral bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs.^[31]

2. Enhanced Permeation Through Biological Barriers

- Process: Nanoparticles (<200 nm) more readily traverse cell membranes, mucus layers, or tight junctions in the intestinal epithelium.
- Effect: Improved transport across the gut barrier or even the blood–brain barrier.
- Result: Increased delivery of drug molecules to systemic circulation or target tissues.^[32]

3. Increased Absorption via Endocytosis

- Process: Cells internalize nanoparticles through endocytic pathways, “swallowing” the entire carrier along with its payload.
- Effect: Drugs bypass the requirement to fully dissolve before uptake.
- Result: Faster onset of action and more complete absorption.^[33]

4. Stability Against Degradation

- Process: Nanocarriers protect labile drugs from acidic gastric pH and enzymatic breakdown in the gastrointestinal tract.
- Effect: Prevents premature loss of active drug in the stomach or intestines.
- Result: A higher intact drug fraction becomes available for absorption.^[34]

5. Controlled Release at the Absorption Site

- Process: Stimuli-responsive or matrix-based nanocarriers release drugs slowly or upon the time.
- Effect: Maintains steady drug concentrations at the absorption interface, avoiding peaks and troughs.
- Result: Sustained drug levels in plasma and improved cumulative absorption.^[35]

6. Bypassing First-Pass Metabolism

- Process: Alternative delivery routes (e.g., transdermal, nasal) using nanocarriers circumvent hepatic first-pass degradation.
- Effect: Reduces metabolic loss in the liver before reach in systemic circulation.
- Result: A larger fraction of the administered dose remains active in the bloodstream.^[36]

Increases Rate of Release

Nano-formulated drugs can accelerate release into the body by modifying dissolution, dispersion, and interactions with biological environments:

1. Increased Surface Area

- Process: Nanoparticles possess a very high surface-area-to-volume ratio due to their extremely small size.
- Effect: Greater surface area accelerates drug dissolution in bodily fluids.
- Result: Faster release and absorption of the active compound.^[37]

2. Enhanced Wettability & Solubility

- Process: Nanocarriers improve the hydrophilicity of poorly water-soluble drugs.
- Effect: Better interaction with aqueous media leads to quicker dissolution.
- Result: Drug molecules become bioavailable more rapidly.^[38]

3. Amorphous or Disordered State of Drugs causes accelerated release

- Process: Drugs encapsulated in many nanoparticles exist in an amorphous (non-crystalline) form.
- Effect: Amorphous drugs dissolve substantially faster than their crystalline counterparts.
- Result: Accelerated release of the active ingredient.^[39]

4. Burst Release from Nanocarriers causes quick onset of action

- Process: Some nanoparticles have drug adsorbed on their surface or in a loosely bound matrix.
- Effect: A portion of the drug is released rapidly upon administration.
- Result: Quick onset of therapeutic action.^[40]

5. Responsive Controlled Release (pH, Enzyme, Temperature)

- Process: Stimuli-sensitive nanoparticles undergo structural changes in response to local triggers (e.g., acidic pH in tumors, digestive enzymes).
- Effect: Triggered conformational shifts prompt rapid drug release in target environments.
- Result: Controlled yet fast release where and when it's needed.^[41]

6. Direct Cell Entry Increases Release Efficiency

- Process: Nanoparticles enter cells via endocytosis, delivering payloads straight into the cytoplasm.
- Effect: Bypasses extracellular barriers and dissolution steps.
- Result: Drug is released inside cells more quickly.^[42]
- Example: Nano-ibuprofen formulations dissolve much faster than regular ibuprofen particles, resulting in quicker pain relief.

Better Drug Formulation Opportunities

Nanoparticle systems overcome many limitations of traditional formulations, offering these molecular-level advantages:

1. Improves Solubility of Poorly Soluble Drugs

- Process: Hydrophobic drugs are encapsulated within micelles or nano emulsions, sequestering them in a lipophilic core.
- Effect: Apparent solubility and dispersibility in aqueous media increase markedly.
- Opportunity: Enables formulation of drugs once unusable due to low water solubility.^[43]

2. High Surface Area Enables Versatile Formulation

- Process: The large surface-to-volume ratio of nanoparticles permits attachment of stabilizers, polymers, and ligands.
- Effect: Surface engineering tailors drug release profiles, targeting, and stability.
- Opportunity: Customizable fast-release, controlled-release, or targeting strategies on a single platform.^[44]

3. Targeted Drug Delivery via Ligand Attachment

- Process: Nanoparticles are functionalized with antibodies, peptides, or small molecules that bind specific cellular receptors.
- Effect: Directs drugs precisely to diseased cells—minimizing off-target delivery.
- Opportunity: Develop highly specific therapies with reduced side effects.^[45]

4. Compatibility with Various Drug Types

- Process: Nanocarriers can encapsulate hydrophilic agents in aqueous cores, hydrophobic drugs in lipid/polymer matrices, or large biologics (proteins, DNA, RNA).
- Effect: A single nanoparticle platform can deliver diverse therapeutic modalities.
- Opportunity: Streamlines formulation pipelines across small molecules, peptides, and nucleic acids.^[46]

5. Controlled and Stimuli-Responsive Release

- Process: Engineering nanoparticles to respond to pH, temperature, or enzyme triggers at the target site.
- Effect: Prevents premature drug release; releases payload on-demand.
- Opportunity: Smart formulations that activate only within diseased tissues.^[47]

6. Protection of Sensitive Drug Molecules

- Process: Nano-formulations shield labile therapeutics—such as peptides, proteins, or mRNA—from enzymatic degradation, oxidation, and pH extremes.
- Effect: Maintains structural integrity until delivery.
- Opportunity: Enables formulation of fragile biologics that fail in conventional systems.^[48]

7. Multi-Drug Co-Delivery

- Process: Nanoparticles can co-encapsulate two or more drugs, either within the same matrix or in separate compartments.
- Effect: Synchronizes delivery of synergistic therapies (e.g., chemotherapy plus gene silencing).
- Opportunity: Combines modalities to overcome resistance and improve efficacy.^[49]
- Example: Lipid nanoparticles carrying mRNA in COVID-19 vaccines protect the fragile mRNA and deliver it efficiently into cells—an approach only possible through nanotechnology.^[48]

CONCLUSION

Nanotechnology has revolutionized the field of drug delivery, offering transformative solutions to long-standing challenges in pharmaceutical science. As illustrated throughout this study, nano-sized drug delivery systems present a robust and highly versatile platform that enhances the therapeutic potential of drugs at the molecular level. These systems address core limitations of conventional formulations, including poor solubility, instability, toxicity, and inefficient bioavailability, by leveraging the unique properties that emerge at the nanoscale.^{[1],[42]} One of the most prominent advantages of nanomedicine lies in its ability to significantly improve the stability of drug molecules. Encapsulation within nanocarriers such as liposomes, micelles, or polymeric nanoparticles protects drugs from enzymatic degradation, pH fluctuations, and environmental conditions such as light and temperature.^{[20],[26]} Surface modifications like PEGylation enhance colloidal stability, reduce aggregation, and provide a stealth effect that prevents premature recognition by the immune system.^[21]

Additionally, nano formulations can offer controlled or stimuli-responsive release, allowing drugs to remain stable over extended periods and reach their target site intact.^[50] The reduction of systemic toxicity is another crucial benefit enabled by nano-sized drug carriers. By selectively targeting diseased tissues—particularly through ligand-mediated recognition or passive targeting mechanisms like the Enhanced Permeability and Retention (EPR) effect in tumors—nanoparticles minimize drug interaction with healthy cells.^{[29],[51]} This targeted approach not only reduces off-target effects but also allows for the use of potent therapeutic agents that would otherwise be too toxic in free form. Controlled release mechanisms further prevent toxic spikes in drug concentration, while increased solubility reduces the need for harmful solvents.^[25] Bioavailability enhancement is a cornerstone benefit of nanomedicine. Many therapeutic agents, especially hydrophobic drugs, suffer from poor absorption and limited reach to their site of action. Nano-sized carriers address this by increasing the surface area of drug particles, improving dissolution rates, and facilitating transport across biological membranes and barriers.^{[4],[52]} Additionally, nanoparticles

enable end cytotoxic uptake by cells, offering a more direct and efficient route for drug absorption.

Protection from enzymatic and acidic degradation, along with the possibility of bypassing first-pass liver metabolism, further ensures that a higher proportion of the administered drug becomes therapeutically active.^[53] Moreover, nano-sized drug delivery systems allow precise control over the rate of drug release, an essential factor in achieving optimal therapeutic effects. Whether a rapid onset is required or a sustained release is desired, nanocarriers can be engineered accordingly.^[54] Mechanisms such as burst release, triggered release via environmental stimuli, or internalization into cells enable a fine-tuned pharmacokinetic profile tailored to specific clinical scenarios. Faster release leads to a quicker onset of action, while sustained release ensures prolonged therapeutic levels and reduced dosing frequency. Importantly, the molecular design flexibility of nanomedicines offers innovative formulation opportunities. Nanocarriers accommodate a wide variety of drug molecules, including hydrophilic, hydrophobic, and biological agents like proteins, peptides, and nucleic acids.^[55] They enable the development of multi-drug formulations, facilitate co-delivery strategies, and offer the potential for combination therapies, particularly in complex diseases like cancer. Surface functionalization allows for targeted delivery, while stimuli-responsive designs ensure drug activation only under desired physiological conditions. Additionally, sensitive biomolecules such as mRNA or peptides can be successfully stabilized and delivered using lipid or polymer-based nanocarriers, as evidenced by the breakthrough success of mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccines.^[15]

Taken together, nano-sized drug delivery systems present a paradigm shift in medicine, offering patient-centric advantages that extend beyond pharmacological benefits. By improving safety profiles, reducing dosing frequency, enhancing therapeutic efficacy, and enabling new treatment modalities, nanomedicine contributes to better patient adherence, comfort, and outcomes. The convergence of material science, molecular biology, and pharmaceutical engineering in this field opens exciting frontiers in personalized and precision medicine, where therapies can be tailored to the individual's biological profile and disease state. In conclusion, the molecular mechanisms underlying nano-sized medicine provide a solid scientific foundation for their growing application in modern therapeutics. The ability to improve drug stability, reduce toxicity, enhance bioavailability, control release rates, and allow for advanced formulations marks nanotechnology as a cornerstone of next-generation drug development. Continued research and innovation in this field are expected to yield even more sophisticated and effective treatment strategies, ultimately reshaping the landscape of healthcare and improving the lives of patients worldwide.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally in conception, design, Intellectual continent, literature search, manuscript preparation, manuscript review, guarantor, conduct and writing and editing the manuscript.

Data availability statement

All extracted data supporting the findings of this specific systematic review and meta-analysis are available upon request after approval of a proposal from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [ChatGPT (OpenAI) –for Idea generation, summarizing etc.] in order to enrich and authentication of data. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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