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Advancements in the Synthesis and Application of Metal-Organic Frameworks in Drug Delivery

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Short Communication

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DESCRIPTION

Metal-Organic Frameworks (MOFs) have emerged as a versatile class of porous materials with unique properties that make them highly suitable for various applications, including drug delivery [1]. MOFs are composed of metal ions or clusters coordinated to organic ligands, forming crystalline structures with high surface areas, tunable pore sizes, and exceptional chemical stability [2]. These characteristics allow MOFs to encapsulate and deliver therapeutic agents with controlled release profiles, targeting specific sites within the body. The field of MOF-based drug delivery has witnessed significant advancements in recent years, driven by innovations in MOF synthesis techniques, functionalization strategies, and biomedical applications. This review explores the evolution of MOFs in drug delivery, highlighting key advancements, challenges, and future prospects in utilizing these materials for enhanced therapeutic outcomes. The synthesis of MOFs for drug delivery applications involves the systematic development and assembly of metal nodes and organic linkers to achieve desired physicochemical properties and biocompatibility [3]. Traditional methods such as solvothermal and hydrothermal synthesis enable the controlled growth of MOF crystals with specific pore structures and surface functionalities. Recent advancements in synthetic chemistry have expanded the scope of MOF materials by incorporating diverse metal ions (e.g., Zn, Cu, Fe) and organic ligands (e.g., carboxylates, imidazolates) to modulate MOF properties such as stability, porosity, and drug-loading capacity. Functionalization of MOF surfaces with bioactive molecules, polymers, or targeting ligands further enhances their biocompatibility, cellular uptake, and specific targeting capabilities. In drug delivery applications, MOFs serve as versatile nanocarriers for a wide range of therapeutics, including small molecules, proteins, nucleic acids, and imaging agents. The high surface area and tunable pore sizes of MOFs facilitate efficient encapsulation and sustained

release of drugs, protecting them from enzymatic degradation and premature release [4].

Controlled release kinetics can be achieved by adjusting MOF pore sizes and surface modifications, enabling precise modulation of drug release rates in response to external stimuli (e.g., pH, temperature, light). This spatiotemporal control over drug delivery is particularly advantageous for targeting diseased tissues or achieving sustained therapeutic concentrations while minimizing systemic toxicity [5].

The biocompatibility and biodegradability of MOFs are critical considerations for their translation into clinical applications. Biocompatible MOFs, such as those based on biodegradable organic ligands or non-toxic metal ions, exhibit minimal cytotoxicity and immune response, making them suitable for *in vivo* drug delivery. Strategies to enhance MOF stability in biological environments, such as surface modification with hydrophilic polymers or lipid coatings, improve their circulation half-life and reduce clearance by the Reticuloendothelial System (RES). Moreover, the development of stimuli-responsive MOFs capable of triggering drug release in response to physiological signals (e.g., acidic tumor microenvironment) enhances their therapeutic efficacy and specificity in targeted drug delivery [6]. MOFs have demonstrated versatility in dealing with specific challenges in drug delivery across various therapeutic areas. In oncology, MOFs have been utilized to deliver chemotherapy drugs with enhanced bioavailability and reduced systemic toxicity [7]. Functionalized MOFs enable targeted delivery to tumor sites through passive accumulation (enhanced permeability and retention effect) or active targeting using ligands that recognize tumor-specific biomarkers. Similarly, MOFs loaded with therapeutic gases (e.g., carbon monoxide, nitric oxide) exhibit anti-inflammatory and cytoprotective effects, providing potential treatments for inflammatory diseases, ischemic injuries, and organ transplantation [8].

In infectious diseases, MOFs serve as foundational element or structure for antimicrobial drug delivery, encapsulating antibiotics or antimicrobial peptides to enhance efficacy against multidrug-resistant pathogens. The controlled release of antimicrobial agents from MOFs can overcome bacterial biofilm barriers and improve therapeutic outcomes in chronic infections. Moreover, MOFs functionalized with immune-modulating agents or vaccines facilitate targeted delivery to immune cells, enhancing antigen presentation and immune response activation for infectious disease prevention and treatment [9].

In neuroscience and regenerative medicine, MOFs hold promise for delivering neuroprotective agents, growth factors, or gene therapies to treat neurodegenerative disorders, spinal cord injuries, and neurological trauma. Functionalized MOFs with neuroactive molecules or peptide mimetics facilitate controlled release across the blood-brain barrier, promoting neuronal survival, axonal regeneration, and tissue repair in Central Nervous System (CNS) disorders. Additionally, MOF-based structures provide three-dimensional matrices for tissue engineering and regenerative therapies, supporting cell adhesion, proliferation, and differentiation in complex tissue environments [10].

CONCLUSION

Advancements in the synthesis and application of Metal-Organic Frameworks (MOFs) in drug delivery represent a transformative approach to enhancing therapeutic efficacy and targeting specificity across diverse biomedical

applications. The unique properties of MOFs, including high surface area, tunable pore sizes, and chemical versatility, enable precise control over drug encapsulation, release kinetics, and therapeutic targeting. Innovations in MOF synthesis techniques, functionalization strategies, and biomedical engineering have expanded the scope of MOF-based drug delivery systems, managing critical challenges in disease treatment, drug resistance, and tissue regeneration. Despite significant progress, challenges such as scalability, biocompatibility, and long-term stability in physiological environments remain key considerations for clinical translation. Future research directions include optimizing MOF design for specific therapeutic applications, elucidating mechanisms of drug release and interaction with biological systems, and advancing preclinical and clinical studies to validate safety, efficacy, and therapeutic benefits in human patients. By utilizing the multifaceted capabilities of MOFs, researchers are poised to innovate next-generation drug delivery platforms that provide personalized treatment strategies, improved patient outcomes, and transformative advancements in precision medicine.

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