

FABRICATION OF NOVEL ANTICANCER POLYOXOMETALATE $[\text{CoW}_{11}\text{O}_{39}(\text{CpTi})]^{7-}$ -CHITOSAN NANOCOMPOSITE, ITS TOXICITY REDUCTION, AND SUSTAINED RELEASE

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Polyoxometalates (POMs) are proved to be important for applications in medicine and in material science. Here, we represent nanocomposite formation of tungsten-containing potent anticancer polyanion, $\text{K}_6\text{H}[\text{CoW}_{11}\text{O}_{39}(\text{CpTi})] \cdot 13\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ($\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$) with biocompatible ChitosanYC-100 (CSYC100) with the goal to reduce its heavy metal toxicity.

Methods: Synthesis of "POM-CSYC100 nanocomposite" was attained without the aid of any cross-linker through electrostatic interaction technique. Nanocomposites were characterized using Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, dynamic light scattering, transmission electron microscopy, and thermogravimetric analysis. The release profile recorded was slow and sustained at physiological pH. *In vitro* cytotoxicity assays which show an attribute to reduce the toxicity of these POM were performed on C2C12 (mouse myoblast cell line) and A-549 (lung cancer cell line), which proved the reduced toxicity of nanocomposites as compared to the bare drugs.

Results: Sustained release studies showed there was a slow and steady release of $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ for 11 hrs, with the 98% of collective release at the end. From *in vitro* cytotoxic assay, it was deduced that $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ -CSYC100 nanocomposite at the concentrations of 1.25 mM, and lower did not exhibit toxic effect on C2C12 cells as 95% total C2C12 cell mass remained viable. While in the case of A549 cells highest 5 mM concentration of bare $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ is toxic to the cancer cells and after encapsulation cell viability increases from 10% to 55%.

Conclusion: Thus, this study has designated the probability of using POM-chitosan nanocomposite for less toxic and effective biomedical applications.

Keywords: Anticancer, Chitosan, Nanocomposite, *In vitro* cytotoxicity, Drug release.

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INTRODUCTION

Polyoxometalates (POMs) can be defined as "early transition metal oxygen clusters." POMs have gained tremendous attention because of their mutable uses in the areas of novel drug development, material sciences, and in industrial catalyst [1]. The use of POMs in latent applications for human medicine is growing exponentially and are recently published in the literatures [2,3]. The toxicity due to the presence of metal ions is the major drawback of these precious medicinal molecules. To lower down the toxicity, it needs to be conjugate/encapsulate in some biopolymeric delivery vehicle.

Chitosan and its derivatives linger to attract noteworthy attention as a potent drug transporter with remarkable biocompatibility along with appreciable cellular uptake rates [4-6]. Chitosan is a carbohydrate heteropolymer composed of glucosamine and N-acetyl glucosamine linked by β 1-4 glucosidic bonds as a repeating unit. Chitosan is developed from chitin by its N-deacetylation. Chitin a structural polysaccharide found in the exoskeleton of shrimps and shells of crabs and the second most abundant polysaccharide found in nature after cellulose [7]. This versatile feature has been used in this study to beat the significant biomedical potential of POMs by their encapsulation in chitosan YC-100 (CSYC100) matrix. The chosen title anion $\text{K}_6\text{H}[\text{CoW}_{11}\text{O}_{39}(\text{CpTi})] \cdot 13\text{H}_2\text{O}$, hereafter denoted as ($\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$) is reported to be the most potent anticancer POM among the family of CpTi substituted POMs studied so far. It is reported that polyoxotungstate $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ curiously decreased tumor weight of the rats bearing HLC (colon cancer cell), HL-60 (leukemia), and SSMC-7721 (liver cancer cell) where the experimental results were procured using the animal tumor implantation method. The *in vivo* anticancer efficacy of $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ is at par with the clinical anticancer drugs 5-fluorouracil

and CP (abbreviation of cyclophosphamide), but the cytotoxicity of $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ is reported to be less than them [8].

The research described in this report is focused to prepare the nanocomposite of low molecular weight carbohydrate polymer CSYC100 and an anticancer POM $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$. The primary agenda of this research is to portray reduction in the metallic toxicity of POMs by its involvement in the formation of nanocomposite with CSYC100. To support this hypothesis, $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ -CSYC100 nanocomposites were prepared and its toxicity was assessed *in vitro* on cell line C2C12 (normal myoblast cell line) and A-549 (adenocarcinomic human alveolar basal epithelial cells-lung cancer cell line). To the best of our knowledge, this the first report showing the toxicity reduction of $[\text{CoW}_{11}\text{O}_{39}(\text{CpTi})]^{7-}$ by forming their nanocomposite with CSYC100.

METHODS

Materials

CSYC100 is a low molecular weight chitosan (~10000 g/mol) and highly water soluble and purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, Steinheim, Germany. Other chemicals required for synthesis of POMs, and other studies were bought commercially from Sigma-Aldrich.

Preparation of POMs

Polyoxotungstate $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ was synthesized according to the procedure described by Wang *et al.* in 2003 [8].

Synthesis of CSYC100/ $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ complexes

To synthesize $\text{CoW}_{11}\text{CpTi}$ -CSYC100 nanocomposites, 50 mg CSYC100 was dissolved in 70 ml double distilled water. The mixture was stirred

until the CSYC100 completely dissolves, and the clear solution is observed. The solution was then filtered to remove any suspended particles. CSYC100 filtrate was further used to prepare nanocomposites of POMs. 170 mg (0.39 mM) CoW₁₁CpTi was dissolved in 2 mL double distilled water separately. CoW₁₁CpTi solution was then added dropwise with stirring into the CSYC100 solution under controlled sonication, resulting in the formation of a stable colloidal suspension of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite. This suspension was centrifuged for 20 minutes at 12,000 rpm (18,000 g) to collect the CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites obtained as a pellet. The supernatant was discarded, and the pellet of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 was recovered, dried, and used for further studies.

Physicochemical characterization of POM-CSYC100 nanocomposites

Morphology and particle size of the nanocomposites were analyzed by transmission electron microscopy (TEM) (Model-Philips Tecnai 20). The particle size distribution and hydrodynamic diameter size were determined by dynamic light scattering (DLS) method using particle size analyzer (Model: Malvern Zetasizer). Fourier transformed infrared (FT-IR) spectroscopy was used to recognize the signature absorption peaks, by recording the spectral scan ranging from 4000 to 400/cm using the instrument Thermo Scientific Nicolet-6700 class-1. Thermal strength of the nanocomposites was analyzed using the thermogravimetric technique (Mettler-Toledo TGA/DSC-1 Star[®] system) in nitrogen atmosphere from 25°C to 800°C temperature with a rate of 10°C/min.

In vitro release of CoW₁₁CpTi from CSYC100 matrix

The *in vitro* release of CoW₁₁CpTi from the nanocomposite was carried out at 37°C in phosphate buffered saline (PBS) of pH 7.4 containing lysozyme (1.6 g/mL). The nanocomposites were centrifuged for 15 minutes at 12000 rpm. The supernatant was transferred to the fresh tube for recording its ultraviolet (UV)-visible spectra using spectrophotometer and recovered pellet was redispersed in PBS. Similarly, the same procedure was repeated at the programmed time intervals, where the samples were centrifuged at 12000 rpm (18000 g) for 15 minutes, and the supernatant was analyzed using UV-visible spectrophotometer to determine the amount of POM released from the nanocomposite, after which the sample was swapped back into the solution. The absorbance obtained was compared with concentration dependent standard curve of CoW₁₁CpTi to determine its release at different time intervals.

Cell culture

Under this study, we used C2C12 (Normal myoblast cells) and A-549 (adenocarcinomic human alveolar basal epithelial cells-lung cancer cell line), acquired from national center for cell sciences (NCCS), Pune, India. The cells were cultured in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's medium (DMEM, GIBCO) complemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (GIBCO) and 1% antibiotic-antimycotic (anti-anti, GIBCO) at 37°C in humidified atmosphere with 5% CO₂ in an incubator. The media was refilled at the interval of 24 hrs, and the cells were sub-cultured when 90% confluency was attained.

In-vitro cytotoxicity analysis using [3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide] (MTT) assay

Cytotoxicity on C2C12 mouse myoblast cells of the bare CoW₁₁CpTi and CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites were analyzed using MTT assay. MTT assay is a colorimetric assay based on the selective ability of viable cells to reduce the tetrazolium component of MTT into purple colored formazan crystals [9-11]. Cells were seeded into a 96 well plate at a seeding density of 10000 cells/ml. MTT dye (5 mg/mL) was added into each well after mixing and incubating the cell with various concentrations of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites and bare POMs (5 mM-0.019 mM) at specific intervals, in triplicates for 24 hrs. The percentage cell viability was determined using microplate reader (Microtek Power Wave XS US) by recording the optical absorbance at 570 nm comparative to the untreated cells.

Analysis of variance was carried out using triplicate value to identify a significant difference in the cell viability between POM-CSYC100 nanocomposites and bare POM. Mean values of triplicates were compared at significance levels of 5%, 1%, and 0.1% least significant difference.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physicochemical characterization of POM-CSYC100 nanocomposites

CoW₁₁CpTi were prepared and further used to synthesize hybrid CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites with primary agenda to reduce their toxicity. *In-vitro* cytotoxicity of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite and bare CoW₁₁CpTi were examined on C2C12 (normal myoblast cells). The nanocomposites were prepared by an electrostatic interaction taking benefit of the negatively charged CoW₁₁CpTi and positively charged CSYC100. Subsequently, CoW₁₁CpTi possessing negative charge is capable of forming stable colloids with the biopolymer CSYC100 bearing a positive charge.

Bare CoW₁₁CpTi was characterized using FT-IR spectroscopy. Further, it was used to prepare nanocomposite with CSYC100. Once the CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites were prepared; FT-IR spectroscopy was done to confirm the successful nanocomposite development.

(Fig. 1) describes the FT-IR spectrum of bare CoW₁₁CpTi, native CSYC100 and CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposites. FT-IR spectrum of CSYC100 is represented in Fig. 1a, which signifies all the characteristic peaks of chitosan at 3420/cm appeared, and this can be credited to the -NH₂ and -OH groups stretching vibration and a peak at 1620/cm for the amide similar to as characterized earlier [12-14]. FT-IR spectrum of bare CoW₁₁CpTi denoted in Fig. 1c portrays characteristic peak sharp absorption at 1620/cm. This feature is typical of the C-C stretching for η⁵-C₅H₅ ligand attached to Ti¹¹ which exhibit the presence of cyclopentadienyl ligand.

The spectrum of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite (Fig. 1b) shows all the representative peaks existing in bare CoW₁₁CpTi representing successful complex development. Furthermore, the peak at 1060/cm corresponds to the bridge oxygen (C-O-C) stretching bands [12-14].

Fig. 2 represents the TEM images of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite. It is a clear evident from the images that approximately all composites obtained by this technique were (1) monodispersed (2) possessed spherical shape morphology and (3) had sizes ranging from 35 to 80 nm in the diameter.

DLS analysis portrayed hydrodynamic size of the nanocomposites (Fig. 3). DLS analysis unveiled that 98% or more particles possess

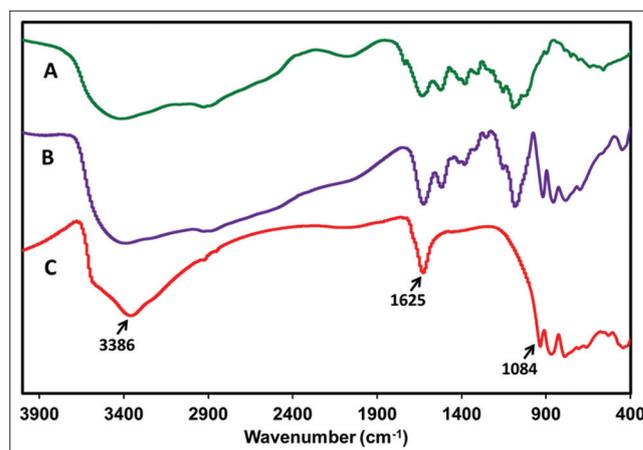


Fig. 1: Comparative Fourier transformed infrared spectrum of (a) ChitosanYC-100 (CSYC100), (b) CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite, (c) bare CoW₁₁CpTi

hydrodynamic diameter size <100 nm (Number % distribution). CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite, size distribution of particles ranges from 42.82 to 72.82 nm, and 35.9% (highest) particles are of 50.75 d nm size.

Thermograms of CSYC100, CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite and bare CoW₁₁CpTi, shown in Fig. 4 describes that the thermal strength of the nanocomposite is better when compared to the bare CSYC100. This may be credited due to the formation of a complex by CSYC100 with thermally stable CoW₁₁CpTi having lesser degradation as those are heavy metal salts. From the thermogram of CSYC100 in Fig. 4, the degradation observed up to 100°C can also be due to the loss in moisture and then polymer remains stable till 228°C as there is minimal change in the weight loss from 100 to 228°C. Afterward, an exponential degradation of was observed up to 380°C which may be due to degradation of CSYC100 polymeric structure.

In case of nanocomposite, thermogram showed the degradation starting at 180°C, further with a slow degradation till 320°C. The percentage weight residual at 900°C for the nanocomposite was more when related to CSYC100. Furthermore, the sharpness of the curve was reduced for nanocomposite, representing its debilitated degradation in comparison to that of bare CSYC100. CoW₁₁CpTi exhibited a small degradation due to the moisture loss at around 100°C. Further, there was no degradation observed up to 900°C which represents ~90% of the particles did not undergo any degradation and stayed stable. Basically, the thermal stability of CSYC100 is significantly improved when developing composites with the thermally stable CoW₁₁CpTi.

To study the release of CoW₁₁CpTi from nanocomposites, lysozyme was dissolved in PBS at pH 7.4, and this solution was used as release medium. Lysozyme was used as it enzymatically degradation of the glycosidic bonds in CSYC100 polymer. Lysozyme concentration was

adjusted to mimic the *in vivo* system. Here, lysozyme weakens the electrostatic interaction between CoW₁₁CpTi and CSYC100 which would cause its controlled release from composites. It was seen that there was a slow and steady release of CoW₁₁CpTi for 11 hrs, with the 98% of collective release at the end (Fig. 5).

Results of MTT assay were performed to study the toxicity of bare CoW₁₁CpTi and hybrid CoW₁₁CpTi -CSYC100 nanocomposites on C2C12 and A549 cell line is represented in (Fig. 6). Concentrations of bare CoW₁₁CpTi and CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 were varied from 0.019 mM to 5mM range. At very high concentration of 5 mM, CoW₁₁CpTi and hybrid CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite were toxic to the C2C12 and A549 cells. However, there was significant variation in the percent (%) viability of C2C12 cells and A549 cells at their lower concentrations. Calculated IC₅₀ values for bare CoW₁₁CpTi and hybrid CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite on C2C12 cells were 4.8 mM and 5.3 mM; similarly, IC₅₀ values for these compounds on A549 were 0.9 and 4.9 mM, respectively. This show Hybrid POM was less toxic at higher concentrations as compared to bare POM. Furthermore, cancerous cells A459 can easily be inhibited by CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite at very low concentrations where normal C2C12 cells remain viable and unaffected.

DISCUSSION

Initially, the research portrayed in this manuscript deals with the synthesis of CoW11CpTi. This desired POM was synthesized using the

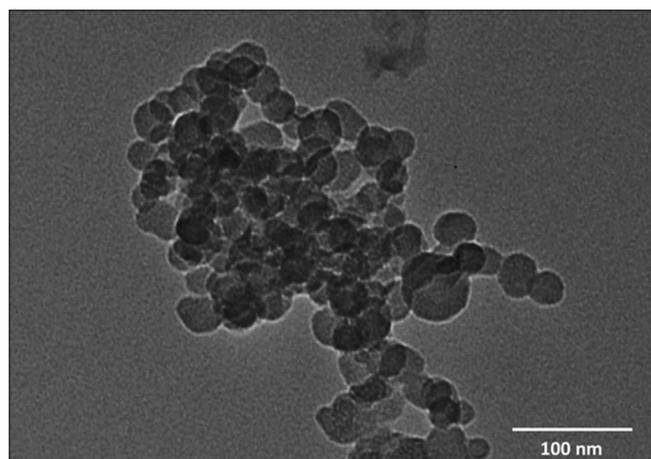


Fig. 2: Transmission electron microscopy images of CpTi-ChitosanYC-100 nanocomposite

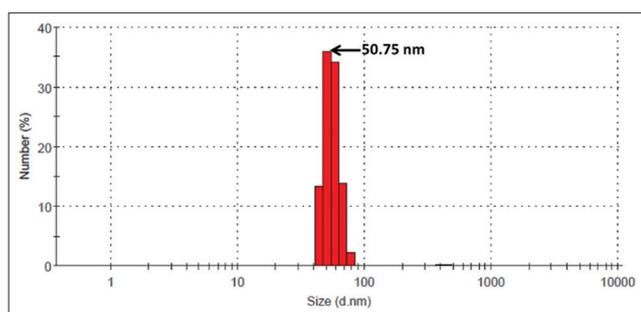


Fig. 3: Particle size distribution (number %) using dynamic light scattering analysis of CoW₁₁CpTi-ChitosanYC-100 nanocomposite

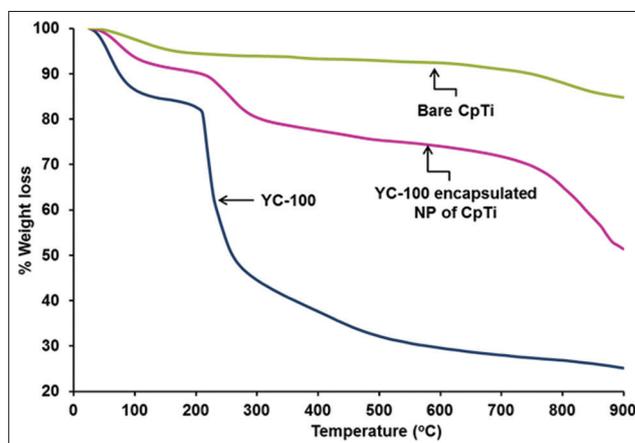


Fig. 4: Comparative thermo gravimetric analysis of ChitosanYC-100 (CSYC100), CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite, bare CoW₁₁CpTi

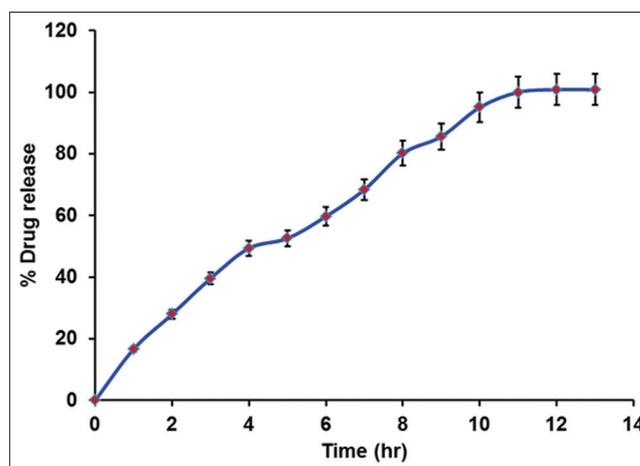


Fig. 5: Release of CoW₁₁CpTi from CoW₁₁CpTi-ChitosanYC-100 nanocomposite

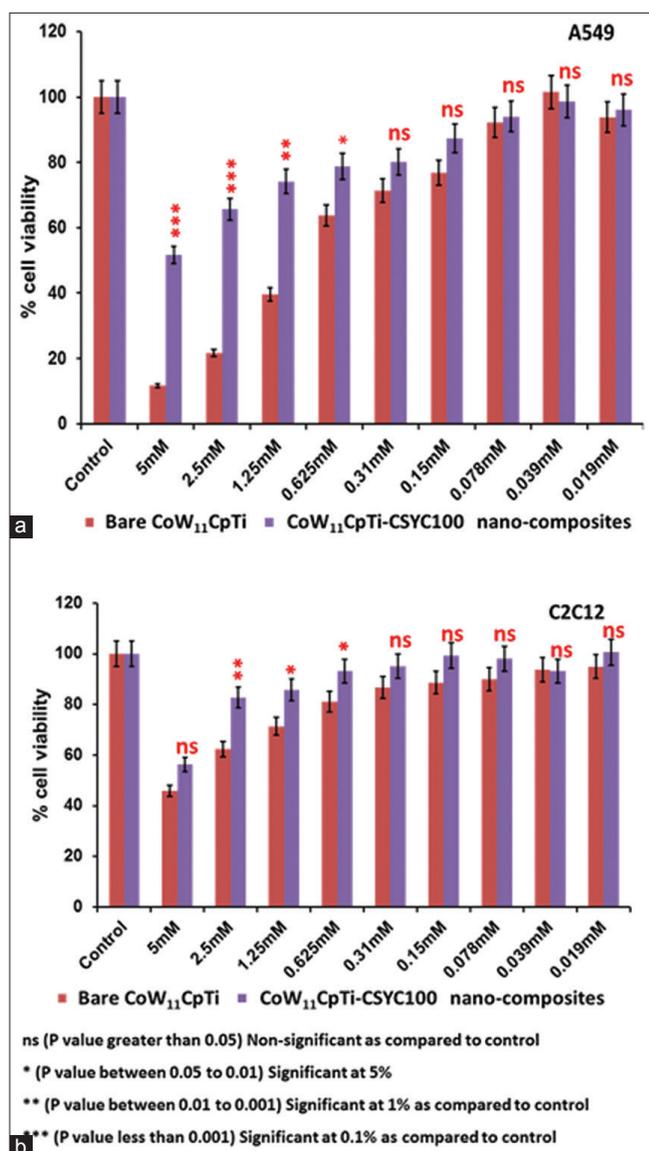


Fig. 6: *In vitro* cytotoxicity investigation of CoW₁₁CpTi and CoW₁₁CpTi-ChitosanYC-100 nano-composite on (a) A549 (adenocarcinomic human alveolar basal epithelial cells) and (b) C2C12 (mouse myoblast cell line) by 24 hrs [3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide] assay. ^{ns}($p > 0.05$) non-significant as compared to control, *(p between 0.05 and 0.01) significant at 5%, **(p between 0.01 and 0.001) significant at 1% as compared to control, ***($p < 0.001$) significant at 0.1% as compared to control

standard protocol reported by Wang *et al.* [8]. Successful synthesis of CoW₁₁CpTi was confirmed by comparing the FT-IR spectra of the same POM originally synthesized by Wang *et al.* [8].

Once the desired POM (CoW₁₁CpTi) was synthesized, its nanocomposite was synthesized. This is the first report for the synthesis of nanocomposites using P₂W₁₇Ni. To categorize any composite particles as "nano" requires strict implementation on the limitation of the particle size which is to be <100 nm. Hence, the first important characterization was to study the size of the CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 formed. With the aid of particle size analysis by DLS and by TEM imaging, it was noted that the average size of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC-100 composites was 50 nm. Thus, with this data, CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 composites can be classified as "nano" in nature [15]. For successful nanocomposite formation to have occurred, they were characterized for the linking of POM with CSYC100

using FT-IR spectral analysis where FT-IR spectrum signifies all the characteristic peaks of chitosan at 3420/cm appeared, and this can be credited to the -NH₂ and -OH groups stretching vibration and a peak at 1620/cm for the amide similar to as characterized by Anitha *et al.* [1]; this proves that CSYC100 forms linkage with POM.

Thermograms of CSYC100, CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite, and bare CoW₁₁CpTi describes that the thermal strength of the nanocomposite is better when compared to the bare gelator. This may be credited due to the formation of a complex by CSYC100 with thermally stable CoW₁₁CpTi having lesser degradation as those are heavy metal salts similar results are also reported by Geisberger *et al.* [3].

Release of CoW₁₁CpTi from CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite was analyzed to understand the profile of POM release from nanocomposite, here it was observed that the release of POM occurred till 11 hrs under simulated physiological conditions. In other words, for 98% of POM to escape from the matrix of nanocomposites requires 11 hrs. This is greatly significant for drug development as POMs at high dosages are lethal of the cells of the body, so its sustained release is inevitable [8]. This can be seen when the cytotoxicity of bare CoW₁₁CpTi and CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite was tested *in vitro* on normal myoblast cell lines C2C12 and A549 lung cancer cell line using MTT assay. Results on normal myoblast cell lines C2C12 are essentially important because it mimics the behavior of normal healthy cells of the body. It was observed that CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite was comparatively less toxic than bare CoW₁₁CpTi; this can be due to the phenomena of sustain release of CoW₁₁CpTi from the CSYC100 nanocomposites [6,8,10,13]. Despite such positive results, extensive research is still needed to be done on model organisms to make highly specific and finely tuned POM bearing nanocomposites as a futuristic medicine.

CONCLUSIONS

Under this study, cytotoxicity of an anticancer POM, CoW₁₁CpTi was reduced by preparing their nanocomposite using CSYC100. To start with, bare CoW₁₁CpTi was prepared and their purity was analyzed using FT-IR. This POM was then used to prepare nanocomposites namely CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 which was characterized using DLS, FT-IR, TEM, and TGA analysis. The release profile of CoW₁₁CpTi from CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite was recorded at physiological pH conditions which showed CoW₁₁CpTi was released from CSYC100 matrix at slow rate, and thus, we concluded that the release was sustained. Finally, the cytotoxicity assays of CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite were performed on normal myoblast cell lines C2C12 and A549 lung cancer cell line. CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 nanocomposite at the concentrations of 1.25 mM and lower did not exhibit toxic effect on C2C12 cells as 95% total C2C12 cell mass remained viable. While in case of A549 cells highest 5 mM concentration of bare CoW₁₁CpTi is toxic to the cancer cells and after encapsulation cell viability increases from 10% to 55%. Cytotoxicity assays show that CoW₁₁CpTi in complex with CSYC100 had reduced toxic effect on C2C12 mouse myoblast cells. Thus, this study has designated the feasibility of consuming CoW₁₁CpTi-CSYC100 chitosan nanocomposite for lesser toxic biomedical applications.

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