



PEPTIDE BASED SELF-ASSEMBLED NANOSTRUCTURES

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Abstract

Self-assembly of biomolecules facilitates the creation of a diverse range of hierarchical nanostructures from a wide range of polymeric and non-polymeric materials. Peptides and specifically short peptides are very attractive in this respect due to their unmatched biocompatibility, ease of synthesis, function ability as well as tunable bioactivity along with the availability of rich chemistry for fine-tuning the structure and function of peptides according to environmental conditions. Self assembled peptide based nanostructures such as tubes, filaments, fibrils, hydrogels, vesicles; monolayers have been studied by many research groups and found application as three-dimensional cell growing scaffolds, dental implants, neural tissue engineering scaffolds and as carriers for drugs, proteins and genes, nucleotides. Nanostructures are also being developed from designed or modified amino acids to have enhanced cellular as well as in vivo stability. These modified nanostructures showed enhanced drug delivery properties both under in vivo and in vitro conditions.

Keywords: Nanostructures, peptides, drug delivery, tissue engineering, self-assembly.



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Introduction:

Self-assembly is defined as the autonomous organization of components into ordered patterns or structures.¹ Living cells consist of many self-assembling systems that work in synchronization to achieve a defined goal. Self-assembly, as a process contributes significantly in biology such as maintaining the cell integrity, performing important cellular functions as well as inducing abnormalities that cause disease.¹ Thus, understanding life necessitates a better understanding of self-assembly. Concepts of self-assembly have also been used in many disciplines for constructing useful materials. Molecular self-assembly is in fact a very practical way of making ensembles of nanostructures. The ubiquitous existence of self-assembly processes in living systems along with the prevalence of various non-covalent interactions (van der Waals, electrostatic, and hydrophobic metal—ligand, π - π stacking interactions, hydrogen and coordination bonds) in biology, have resulted in rapid development of self-assembling biomaterials as a promising research area.²⁻⁴ Self-assembly provides the flexibility of developing novel materials with tailored morphologies and desired functions through single-molecule design and engineering. This results in controlling the bulk properties of the resultant material by modulating individual monomeric building blocks.

Thus, by modulating structural changes in constituent molecules it becomes possible to dictate the behavior of the end product. In recent past, many self-assembling nanomaterials are being generated from various organic polymers, carbohydrates, nucleic acids, proteins etc. either to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon or to use them for applications ranging from molecular devices to delivery systems or scaffolds.

Research Methodology:

Materials and Methods

Peptide Synthesis and Purification

Detailed procedures have been described in Chapter 2. All ^{13}C -labeled N- and C-capped AP (16-22) analogs were synthesized on a Rain in Symphony QUARTET multiplex solid-phase peptide synthesizer. Final purity and identity was confirmed by MALDI-TOF. The single mass unit difference confirmed both C-label incorporation and sample purity (data not shown).

Freezing process optimization

CD spectrum minimum shifts were used to compare the protection efficiency.

(1) Freezing temperature optimization

Mature AP (16-22) nano tube solution 20 μL were flash-frozen in liquid N_2 (-200°C), methanol/dry ice bath (-80°C) and acetonitrile/dry ice bath (-40°C) respectively. The frozen solutions were allowed to thaw gradually at room temperature and CD spectra were measured after the solutions were completely thawed. The lower the freezing temperature was, the more nano tube damages were observed.

(2) Freezing rate optimization:

Mature AP (16-22) nano tube solution 20 μL was firstly incubated at 4°C for equilibrium and then gradually cooled to -7°C before ice crystal formation occurred (Studelska 2003). The sample was then plunged into -80°C baths for complete freezing. After thawing, the solution was analyzed by CD. No obvious nano tube protection was observed.

(3) Cryoprotectant optimization

PEG concentration optimization. Nano tube solution 20 μL was mixed with 20 μL excipient 40% acetonitrile/water (pH 2) solution having different PEG concentration from 0% to 40%. Freeze the solution at -40°C and thaw gradually at room temperature. 1% PEG was enough to protect the nano tubes.

Trehalose concentration optimization. Nano tube solution 20 J..lL was mixed with 20J..lL of excipient 40% acetonitrile/water (pH2) solution having 1% PEG and different concentration of trehalose from 0 to 200 m M. Freeze the solution at -40 oc and thaw gradually at room temperature. 30 mM was the optimized trehalose concentration.

Dextran concentration optimization. Nanotube solution 20J..lL was mixed with 20J..lL of excipient 40% acetonitrile/water (pH2) solution having 1% PEG, 30 mM trehalose and different concentration of dextran (70kDa and 500kDa) from 0 to 10 mg/ml. Freeze the solutions at -40 oc and thaw gradually at room temperature. 0.67 mg/ml dextran was chosen as the protectant.

Objectives:

- The main objectives of the study are as follows:
- To obtain the important peptide registry information using IE-I Rands-NMR techniques.
- To check out the peptide organizations within the P-sheet.
- To find out the difference between peptide registry of Nano tube at pH2 and fibrils at pH6.
- Whether the electrostatic interactions between K and E, together with maximizing the hydrophobic packing, can stabilize the fibril architecture or not.
- To study why pH13 nano tube adopts the in-register antiparallel IP- sheet structure after the deprotonation of the lysines instead of using the favorable packing at pH2 nanotubes.
- With the same peptide registry, why AP (16-22) forms fibrils in pH6, however, nano tubes in pH 13? Understanding the questions will further the understanding of the amyloid fibril structures.
- To find peptide registry whether the same or different in nanotubes and fibrils?
- What determines the supra molecular organization in nano tubes vs fibrils?
- Energetically, what controls the assembly pathway?

Hypothesis

We have to conduct a hypothesis test about the research proportion. This approach consists of four steps:

- (1) State the hypothesis
- (2) Formulate an analysis plan

(3) Analyze sample data

(4) Interpret results.

H0: The discovered PNTs possess remarkably similar structural elements to those of the normal assembled amyloid fibrils, such as cross- β diffraction pattern, CR binding and β -sheet secondary structures.

H1: Differently, they differ from the fibrils by extending the lamination from the 6 sheets of Ap(10-35) fibrils to 130 sheets of AP(16-22) nano tubes.

Scope of the study:

Life could not exist without proteins. These large bio polymers fold in to a variety of structures and perform various functions in nature. Unfortunately, upto this point, the understanding of how sequence dictates structure remains elusive. Protein folding cannot be fully predicted and controlled. Several basic forces, such as electric interactions, hydrophobic interactions, hydrogen bonding and vander Waals interactions, have been identified to be crucial to α - β structure. In addition, protein folding is sensitive to the environment, for example, ionic strength, temperature and pH, making the process even more complicated as the local conditions change during folding. Proteins associated with the conformational diseases, including the notorious Alzheimer's disease, are normally soluble and fold normally, but for some reason, populate an alternate structure that allows self-association into fibrous arrays in tissues. Given that understanding the driving forces and mechanisms for protein folding will be essential not only for drug design in inhibitors/drugs but also to fabricate novel bio materials with defined structures, these amyloid models may facilitate the assignment of the separate ways.

Conclusion:

Self-assembly is a marvelous strategy to make ensemble of nanostructures. Small peptide-based self-assembled nanostructures, due to their inherent biocompatibility, easy tunability, simple and cost-effective synthesis could offer a myriad of potential uses in biomedical applications. Peptides could spontaneously self-assemble into tubular or fibrillar or vesicular nanostructures. The nanostructures have been shown to entrap a wide range of bioactive molecules with a controlled release pattern. Peptide based hydrogels with nanofibrillar morphology has been shown to support 3D growth of various cell types along with promoting cell differentiation in many cases. Thus small peptides have tremendous potential to be developed as intelligent biomedical scaffolds with many biomedical applications. Thus

peptide self-assembly is emerging as a new area of research and has spurred intense interest in the fabrication of nano scale devices and demand for miniaturization in both academia and industries necessitate progress in this area.

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