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Application of Nanotechnology in Identifying and Eliminating Biotoxins

Saba Rana[1], Vipin Kumar Saini[2], Shalini Mishra[1], Vikas Kumar[2], Ashu Chaudhary[1] and Zehra Husaini[1]*

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Biosciences, Shri Ram College, Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh), India.
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Biosciences, Shri Ram College, Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh), India.

(Corresponding author: Saba Rana)*

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ABSTRACT: Detection and neutralization of biotoxins represent significant challenges that are desperately needed for the protection of public health, environmental safety and national security. They are natural or artificial poisons that pose a significant risk due to their extreme toxicity and ability to disperse quickly. Nanotechnology is an area which can address these kinds of issues, offering the ability to manipulate materials at the nanoscale. Here, we review recent developments in the biosensing and detoxification of biotoxins, as well as the critical participation of nanotechnology during that process. The use of nanomaterials, including gold nanoparticles, quantum dots, carbon nanotubes, and magnetic nanoparticles, has improved the sensitivity and specificity of detection methods. Additionally, catalytic nanomaterials and targeted delivery systems hold considerable potential for biotoxin neutralization. These advancements are not free of challenges. Nanotechnology of biotoxins has many advantages, and the author mentions some future research directions of these biomolecules; which not only improve biosafety but also bio-efficacy.

Keywords: Nanotechnology, Biotoxins, Detection, Neutralization, Nanomaterials, Public Health.

INTRODUCTION

Biotoxins, toxic compounds produced by living organisms such as bacteria, fungus, plants and animals, pose significant threats to the health of people, agriculture, and ecosystems. The increasing threat of exposure to biotoxins, resulting from industrial processes, bioterrorism and natural outbreaks, necessitates the development of rapid, sensitive and reliable detection and neutralisation methods (Ahmed & Hussein 2020). Conventional techniques frequently do not have the sensitivity or selectivity needed for efficient neutralisation and early identification. With its capacity to create materials with distinct physicochemical characteristics, nanotechnology presents encouraging ways to get around these restrictions. Recent developments in nanotechnology-based methods for identifying and eliminating biotoxins are examined in this study. It offers a summary of the different kinds of nanomaterials that are employed, their modes of behaviour, and their uses in diverse settings. Lastly, it talks about the difficulties and prospects for this new sector (Chen & Zhao 2024).

NANOTECHNOLOGY IN BIOTOXIN DETECTION

Nanomaterials for Detection. Nanomaterials offer high levels of sensitivity, specificity, and diversity in sensor technologies, they have completely changed the way biotoxins are detected. These materials are perfect for biosensing applications because of their special physicochemical qualities, which include substantial surface area, tuneable visual and electrical features, and simplicity of functionalisation. Due to their exceptional optical characteristics, such as limited surfaces plasmon resonance (LSPR), which permits colorimetric and fluorescence-based toxicity detection, gold nanoparticles have become the most frequently utilised nanomaterials in detection systems. Functionalised AuNPs have demonstrated exceptional speed and precision in the sensitive and quick detection of botulinum neurotoxins (Al-Jumaili & Alancherry 2019).

By creating advanced nanomaterials, nanotechnology improves the degree of sensitivity and specific of biotoxin detection. These comprise of –

Gold Nanoparticles. In addition to their stable optical characteristics and simplicity in surface functionalisation, gold nanoparticles are frequently employed in colorimetric and fluorescence-based biosensors. For instance, high-sensitivity detection of botulinum neurotoxins has been achieved using functionalised gold nanoparticles (Gupta & Singh 2020).

Quantum Dots. Semiconductor nanocrystals with exceptional fluorescence characteristics are called quantum dots. They are employed in biosensors based on the transfer of fluorescence resonance energy (FRET) to identify toxins such as staphylococcal enterotoxins and ricin (Feng *et al.*, 2024).

Carbon Nanotubes. Because of the size of their surfaces and electrical conductivity, carbon nanotubes are perfect for electrochemical sensors. Aflatoxin detection in food products has been accomplished using functionalised carbon nanotubes (Doe & Lee 2024).

Magnetic Nanoparticles. Target poisons may be quickly separated and concentrated thanks to magnetic nanoparticles, which improves detection effectiveness. The magnetic nanoparticles are currently utilised in conjunction with immunoassays to identify bacteria that produce Shiga toxin (Kumar *et al.*, 2020).

Sensing Mechanisms. Sensing techniques based on nanotechnology make use of the special qualities of nanoparticles to enable accurate and effective biotoxin detection. These processes can be divided into three categories: mass-sensitive, optical, and electrochemical. Each of these techniques has unique benefits in terms of sensitivity and use. Optical sensors use modifications to fluorescence, adsorption, or scattering to identify biotoxins by interacting with nanomaterials. For example, because of their high photostability and adjustable emission characteristics, quantum dots (QDs) are frequently employed in fluorescence-based detection systems, allowing for the sensitive detection of toxins such as botulinum neurotoxin and ricin. Similar to this, colorimetric sensors use gold nanoparticles (AuNPs), where changes in specialised surface radiation (LSPR) signal the presence of a specific toxin (Huang & Liu 2021).

The high conductivity of electricity and surface reactive properties of materials like graphene and carbon nanotubes (CNTs) are used by electrochemical sensors. These sensors provide quick and label-free detection by measuring changes in voltage, current, or resistance when a toxin interacts with the sensor. For instance, customised CNTs have been utilised to accurately identify mycotoxins in food products. Nanomaterials incorporated into devices such as surface acoustic wave devices or quantum crystal microbalances (QCMs) are essential for mass-sensitive sensors. These sensors identify mass changes brought on by toxins attaching to the surfaces of functionalised nanomaterials. By allowing a preliminary concentration of target analytes, metallic nanoparticles (MNPs) are frequently used in conjunction with these devices to increase sensitivity. To potentially unmatched sensitivity, quick reaction times, and flexibility with portable, tiny devices, these mechanisms taken together have transformed the application of biotoxin detection (Jain *et al.*, 2022). Research and development is still needed to deal with issues such as interference with signals, environmental stability, and cost-effectiveness.

NANOTECHNOLOGY IN BIOTOXIN NEUTRALIZATION

Mechanisms of Neutralization. Nanotechnology facilitates biotoxin neutralization through:

Catalytic Degradation. In order to break down biotoxins into innocuous byproducts, catalytic degradation uses nanomaterials with enzyme-like characteristics, such as metal-organic frameworks, cerium oxide nanoparticles, and gold nano catalysts (Lee & Park 2021). These nanoparticles can neutralise toxins such aflatoxins, ricin, and botulinum because of their high selectivity, catalytic effectiveness, and stability in a variety of environments. Applications in biological defence, environmental remediation, and medical therapeutics are made possible by their adaptability. Their efficacy is further increased by their reusability and functionalisation potential, providing a viable strategy for extensive toxin neutralisation initiatives (Lim *et al.*, 2020; Smith & Johnson 2024).

Targeted Delivery. Nanocarriers including liposomes as nanoparticles of polymers, and dendrimers are used in targeted delivery to carry antidotes or neutralising chemicals straight to the locations where toxins are present. These methods minimise potential negative effects while increasing the effectiveness of therapies for pathogens like clostridium and tetanus by increasing the drug absorption and the decreasing off-target effects on human (Patel & Chauhan 2020).

Adsorption and Sequestration. Two important mechanisms in neutralisation processes are adsorption and sequestration. Adsorption is the process by which neutralising agents adhere to surfaces, whereas sequestration is the process by which pollutants are trapped inside a matrix. Both processes improve neutralisation effectiveness, making it easier to remove or neutralise dangerous compounds in a variety of settings (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

APPLICATIONS

Medical Interventions. The use of micron-sized particles and nanomaterials to isolate and neutralise dangerous toxins at the molecular level is the main focus of medical interventions utilising nanotechnology for biotoxin neutralisation of gases. By precisely binding to biotoxins, these small particles can be designed to help the body eliminate or neutralise them. Additionally, regulated drug distribution made possible by nanotechnology increases the efficacy of antidotes. It also improves diagnostic capabilities, enabling more accurate therapy and quicker detection. This strategy has a lot of promise for creating innovative treatments for illnesses and crises linked to toxins (Sarmah *et al.,* 2023).

Environmental Remediation. Using nanotechnology for environmental remediation in biotoxin neutralisation entails using nanoparticles to adsorb, break down, or change harmful chemicals in contaminated environments. By effectively targeting biotoxins in the ground, water, or air, these nanomaterials can improve their clearance and lessen environmental damage. This technique provides economical and sustainable ways to reduce biotoxin pollution (Zang *et al.,* 2021).

Biodefense. Developing modern nanomaterials for quick biotoxin detection, containment, and neutralisation is the main goal of biodefense uses of nanomaterials in biotoxin neutralisation. Nanoparticles are an essential defence versus biological terrorism and biological hazards in both armed forces and civilian contexts because they may precisely target dangerous pathogens, improve the effectiveness of defensive measures, and serve as early warning systems (Yoon & Park 2020).

Future Perspectives

Advancements in nanotechnology offer exciting opportunities for enhancing the detection and neutralization of biotoxins. Future research should focus on:

Developing Biocompatible Nanomaterials. The goal of developing bio compatible nanomaterials for further application is to produce safe, non-toxic, and efficient nanoparticles for use in medicine and the environment. In order to advance personalised medicine, environmental sustainability, and regeneration of tissues, delivery of drugs, and toxin neutralisation while minimising side effects, these substances must blend in seamlessly with biological systems (Tile *et al.,* 2016).

Integrating Artificial Intelligence

The goal of incorporating the use of artificial intelligence (AI) with upcoming technologies is to improve precision, streamline procedures, and make better decisions in industries like biotechnology, healthcare, and environmental monitoring (Wang *et al.,* 2021). AI can drive advancements in robotics, diagnostics, and nanotechnology while improving productivity and environmental sustainability across industries. It can also speed up data processing, personalise treatments, and forecast results (Sarmah *et al.,* 2023).

Improving Scalability and Cost-Effectiveness. Future technologies will be more scalable and cost-effective if production techniques are optimised, procedures are streamlined, and innovative materials are used. These advancements in automation, the use of sustainable resources, and efficiency will make technology more widely available and feasible for adoption, which will promote economic growth and wider industry applicability (Zang *et al.,* 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

As nanotechnology offers improved sensitivity, specificity, and efficiency, it has the potential to completely transform the detection and neutralisation of biotoxins. Rapid and accurate detection of dangerous poisons is made possible by the use of nanoparticles in biosensing devices, such as carbon nanotubes, quantum dots, and gold nanoparticles. Furthermore, effective countermeasures in defence, environmental, and medical applications are made possible by nanotechnology's participation in biotoxin neutralisation mechanisms such adsorption, targeted distribution, and catalytic degradation. The broad adoption of these technologies will be accelerated as research advances by the creation of biocompatible nanomaterials, their incorporation with artificial intelligence, and advancements in scalability and cost-effectiveness. A viable avenue for preserving environmental protection, human health, and national security is the use of nanotechnologies in biotoxin monitoring and neutralisation.

FUTURE SCOPE

Future research in nanotechnology for biotoxin detection and neutralization should focus on enhancing biocompatibility, scalability, and cost-effectiveness while integrating artificial intelligence for improved precision. Developing smart, responsive nanomaterials capable of real-time toxin identification and neutralization can significantly advance biodefense, medical, and environmental applications. Additionally, improving sustainable manufacturing processes and ensuring regulatory compliance will be crucial for widespread adoption. Multifunctional nanoplatforms that combine detection, detoxification, and monitoring will further enhance efficiency. Addressing these challenges will pave the way for safer, more effective nanotechnology-based solutions to protect public health, environmental safety, and national security against biotoxin threats.

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