Transmission of SiRNA *In Vivo*, A Modern Biotechnology Frontier

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Opinion

In order to reduce the expression of transcripts with complementary sequence specificity, some RNAs go through a process of sequence-specific degradation, which is known as RNA interference. Small Interfering RNAs (siRNAs) are essential to the process of RNA interference and are involved in a number of biological pathways, including the regulation of gene expression and a defensive mechanism against invasive infections. Recent advances in molecular biology have led to the discovery and understanding of cellular RNA interference pathways, establishing siRNA technology as a potent new tool for modifying the expression of particularly targeted genes. Although siRNA technology has advanced quickly from in vitro studies to the cell culture stage, the creation of efficient in vivo siRNA delivery vehicles continues to be a significant obstacle. The editorial that follows provides an overview of siRNA-based delivery technologies as they stand today. SiRNA is a kind of double-stranded (ds)RNA molecules with 2-nucleotide 3' overhangs at each terminus and an average length of 20–25 nucleotides. The function of siRNA in post-transcriptional gene silencing has been established; these molecule families are capable of directly inhibiting or destroying the mRNA that encodes genes that correspond to their corresponding particular sequence, hence suppressing the expression of those genes. This mechanism involves the target RNA being cut into short 21 bp fragments by a cellular endonuclease called Dicer, which are then added to a multiprotein complex called the RISC. One strand of the siRNA is selectively degraded by the RISC; the guide strand, which is still present, joins the complex and can now base pair and cleave any complementary RNA species. As a result, the gene corresponding to this specific RNA species is silenced and RNAs originating from any creature that have complementarity to the siRNA present in this complex are unable to serve as a template for protein synthesis. SiRNA technology has been widely used in reverse genomics studies to determine the role of an unknown gene in a biological pathway, to silence genes that specifically contribute to diseases like cancer, and even to alter the phenotype of a crop or stop an insect from serving as an infectious disease vector. Effective transport of siRNA into living creatures has proven to be the biggest obstacle, even though studies employing cell culture have been essential for the development of siRNA as a technology. Variations in siRNA stability in different cell types, toxicity of the delivery vehicle, immunological response or negative effects by the host, and the accidental co-suppression of additional, off-target sequences are only a few of the many issues that occur. Currently, attempts are being made to improve target cell uptake, intracellular trafficking, and release into the cytoplasm, decrease negative effects, and boost siRNA stability. Increasing siRNA stability and decreasing its susceptibility to nucleases has been one difficulty that has been overcome with great success. In order to boost siRNA's in vivo stability, resistance to nucleases, and retention in the body, a number of chemical alterations have been made to its native structure. This is because siRNAs can be quickly damaged by ribonucleases found in the blood. Additionally, the successful synthesis of siRNA conjugates with other stable substances has also been demonstrated. The efficacy of siRNA uptake and internalisation into cells has been considerably enhanced by siRNA-cholesterol conjugates, which are the main examples. Additionally, siRNA has been successfully coupled to aptamers; for instance, it has been shown that an aptamer specific for the HIV-1 envelope glycoprotein may carry siRNAs to HIV-infected cells, suppressing viral infection.

HIV-derived lentivirus expression vectors have also been used as efficient siRNA delivery systems. A potential gene therapy for cancers and other diseases has been developed using lentivectors derived from the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that can stably incorporate either siRNAs or siRNAs to permanently down-regulate the expression of a specific gene in the human body. By further engineering lentivirus vectors to be replication-incompetent, a level of safety has been added to their use. Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) in mice and their offspring has been shown to be silenced by lentiviral vectors, demonstrating their potential as siRNA delivery vehicles. As siRNA delivery systems, adenovirus and herpes simplex virus type 1 are among the other viral expression vectors currently being researched. The ability to deliver siRNA with tissue-specificity and high efficiency is a benefit of using virus expression vectors, but problems like erroneous immune responses by the host still exist and can be very problematic. Several hundred nanometer-sized synthetic polymers called nanocarriers are also being developed as siRNA delivery systems. SiRNA Nanocarriers have the benefit of being secure, capable of binding to and entering precise target cells, undergoing biodegradation, and quickly releasing their siRNA payload. Lipid nanocarriers' lipid composition, siRNA-to-lipid ratio, and particle size have all been improved for greater efficacy and reduced toxicity. For instance, as the nanoliposomes circulate in the body, the polymer polyethylene glycol applied to their outer surface may lengthen their half-life. Protamines, cationic polypeptides rich in arginine residues, are an alternative that can aid in directing siRNAs to particular tissue types, such as tumours. In order to target nanoparticles to particular cell types, antibodies have also been added to nanocarriers' outer surfaces. Even more sophisticated developments have resulted in the creation of delivery systems with a single multifunctional polymer that can effectively silence the target transcript while also allowing for stable siRNA delivery in the bloodstream, efficient target cell recognition, and endosomal escape and trafficking. The dosage of siRNA needed for gene silencing is drastically reduced by nanoparticle delivery systems like these, which lowers the cost and risk of side effects from this course of treatment. SiRNAs have been demonstrated to have a variety of functions, from avoiding incurable human diseases to enhancing crop agronomic features. The widespread use of siRNA technologies for in vivo research is still hampered by a number of issues, including sensitivity to nuclease degradation, host toxicity, short retention times, ineffective uptake into target cells, and poor release into the cytosol. To solve these issues and make siRNA technology a viable innovation for the future, it is currently necessary to put new innovations into practice, some of which have been mentioned in this editorial.