# MICROSPHERES – A REVIEW

**Dr. M. Sabareesh*, K.Mounika, K.C.S AnuPriya, N.ThanujaAnnapoorna, Dr.Anna Balaji**

**Department of Pharmaceutics, Sree Vidyanikethan College of Pharmacy, Sree Sainath Nagar, A.Rangampeta, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh - 517102, India.**

**Corresponding Author**

Dr.M. Sabareesh, M.Pharm., Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Department of Pharmaceutics

Sree Vidyanikethan College of Pharmacy, Tirupati.

## Abstract:

Microspheres are free-flowing powders with particle sizes ranging from 1 to 1000 µm that are composed of biodegradable proteins or synthetic polymers.Advantages of using microspheres in areas including medicine administration, forming bone tissue, and pollutant absorption and desorption via regeneration. The study demonstrates the procedure for organizing and calculating microsphere properties. Microspheres come in a variety of sophisticated forms, including bio adhesive, polymeric, magnetic, floating, and radioactive microspheres.The features of microspheres carrying drugs that can be changed to the desired extent by changing the materials, processes, polymers, or procedures utilized determine how effectively they can treat patients. The process for making microspheres offers several choices for managing elements of medication administration and boosting a particular medicine's therapeutic effectiveness.The goal of this review is to examine many features of the microparticulate drug delivery system, including preparation technique, assessment, application, and microsphere characterization.

**Keywords:** Microspheres, microsphere properties, sophisticated forms, microparticulate drug delivery.

## INTRODUCTION:

The best method of taking drugs is by far oral delivery.However, the therapeutic potential of many medicines is constrained by their brief circulation half-lives and restricted absorption by a specific intestinal segment.[1]A frequent dose of medication is frequently required to achieve therapeutic efficacy due to such a pharmacokinetic constraint.As a result, the patient

complains because they have too many pills.Release of the medication in a regulated and site-specific way is a rational strategy to increase bioavailability and enhance pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic characteristics[2].The particle size of microparticles, a form of medication delivery device, ranges from one micron (one thousandth of a millimeter) to a few mm.With the use of microencapsulation technology, drugs can be protected from the environment, delicate drug compounds can be stabilized, compatibility issues may be resolved, or undesirable tastes can be covered up.As a result, they are crucial components of drug delivery systems that increase the bioavailability of traditional medications while reducing negative effects.[3]

**MICROSPHERES:**

Small particles between 0.1 and 100 m in size are referred to as microparticles.In regular living, one may come into contact with pollen, sand, dust, flour, and powdered sugar.

Microsphere Types1. Microcapsules2.Micromatrices

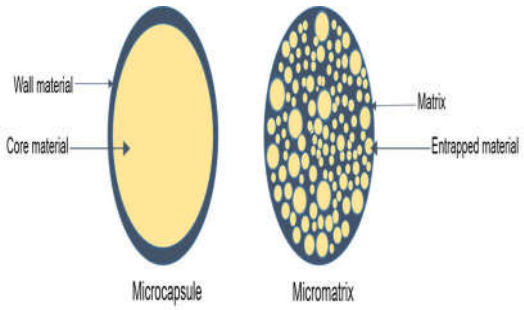


Fig.1. Microcapsules, Micromatrics

**Benefits of using microspheres:**[4]

1. Reducing the size of the particles to improve a drug's low solubility.

2. Offer a sustained and ongoing therapeutic impact.

3. Reduce toxicity and dosage.

4. Protect the medication against enzymatic and photolytic cleavage, making it the ideal option for protein drug delivery.

5. Decrease the dosage frequency to increase patient compliance.

6. To cover up the bitter flavor.

**Negative aspects of microspheres:**[4,5]

1. Compared to ordinary formulations, the prices of the components and processing for the controlled release preparation are much greater.

2. Process variables such as temperature variation, pH changes, solvent addition, and agitation/evaporation may have an impact on the stability of the core particles to be encapsulated.

3. The influence on the environment of the polymer matrix breakdown products that are created in reaction to heat, hydrolysis, oxidation, solar radiation, or biological agents.

**TYPES OF MICROSPHERES**[6,7,8]

**Bio-adhesive microspheres:**

The method of adhesion involves leveraging the adhesive qualities of water-soluble polymers to adhere a medication to a membrane.The attachment of a medication delivery system to a mucosal membrane, such as the nasal, buccal, ocular, or rectal mucosa, is referred to as bio adhesion. These microspheres stay longer at the application site, interacting closely with the absorption site and enhancing the therapeutic effect.

**Magnetic microspheres:**

The ability to deliver the medicine to the precise spot where it is required makes this form of delivery device crucial. In this circumstance, a smaller amount of the magnetically targeted medicine will take the place of a greater amount of the drug that is freely circulating. Magnetic responses to a magnetic field can be observed in chitosan, dextran, and other integrated materials utilised in magnetic microspheres.

**Floating microspheres:**

Floating forms float in the stomach and have no effect on the pace of gastric emptying since their bulk density is lower than that of gastric fluid. The medicine is released slowly and at the optimal pace if the system is floating on stomach content, which increases gastric residency and plasma concentration variability. Additionally less probable are strikes and dosage dumping. It also has a more prolonged therapeutic impact, which reduces the frequency of dose.

**Radioactive microspheres:**

Radioembolization therapy Larger than capillary microspheres, 10–30 nm-sized microspheres are tapped in the first capillary bed as they pass through and then implanted into the arteries

that give rise to an interesting tumour. In each of these scenarios, radioactive microspheres provide a high dosage of radiation to the desired locations while sparing the healthy tissues around them. 19 It is different from a medicine delivery system in that radiation is not discharged from the microspheres but rather acts from a distance that is usual for the radioisotope, and the various radioactive microspheres are α emitters, β emitters, γ emitters.

**Polymeric microspheres:**

The different types of polymeric microspheres can be classified as:

**Biodegradable polymeric microspheres:** Since starch is biodegradable, biocompatible, and bioadhesive, it is employed in natural polymers. Biodegradable polymer extends the residence duration when in touch with mucous membranes, resulting in the production of gels, due to its great degree of swelling in an aqueous media. The level and speed of medication release are controlled by polymer concentration and release pattern throughout time. The fundamental drawback of biodegradable microspheres in clinical application is their problematic drug loading performance, which makes controlling drug release challenging.On the other hand, they have a wide range of uses in microsphere-based treatment.

**Synthetic polymeric microspheres:**Synthetic polymeric microspheres have been demonstrated to be safe and biocompatible and are often utilised in clinical applications as bulking agents, fillers, embolic particles, drug delivery vehicles, and other purposes.The primary drawback of these microspheres is that they tend to disperse after injection, increasing the risk of embolism and subsequent organ injury.

**CLASSIFICATION OF POLYMERS:**[9,10]

Polymers used in preparation of microsphere development are divided into two types.

**1. Natural Polymers:**

These are obtained from different sources like proteins, carbohydrates, and chemically modified carbohydrates.

**Proteins:** Albumin, gelatin, and collagen, carbohydrates: agarose, carrageenan, chitosan, starch

C**hemically modified carbohydrates:** poly (acryl) dextran, poly (acryl) starch.

**2. Synthetic Polymers:**

**Non-biodegradable Polymers:**Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), acrolein, glycidyl methacrylate, epoxy polymers.

**Biodegradable Polymers:**Lactides, their glycolides, and their copolymers, polyalkyl cyanoacrylate, polyanhydrides.

**MECHANISM OF MICROSPHERES:[11]**

Synthetic polymeric microspheres are often used in clinical applications as bulking agents, fillers, embolic particles, drug delivery vehicles, and other uses since they have been shown to be safe and biocompatible.These microspheres' main flaw is their propensity to scatter after injection, which raises the possibility of embolism and consequent organ damage.

**METHODS OF PREPARATION:[12,13,14]**

Methods used for the preparation of microspheres are:

- ❖ Single emulsion technique
- ❖ Double emulsion technique
- ❖ Polymerization
    - Normal polymerization
    - Interfacial polymerization
- ❖ Phase separation coacervation technique
- ❖ Spray drying
- ❖ Solvent evaporation
- ❖ Ionic gelation method

**Single emulsion technique:[15]**

Numerous proteins and carbs can be prepared using this technique. The aqueous phase in which the natural polymers are initially dissolved is followed by their dispersion in the non-aqueous oil phase. That is the first stage of the procedure.

There are two ways to cross-link the next step:

**Cross-linking by heat:**

By adding the dispersion into heated oil, but it is unsuitable for the thermolabile drugs.

**Chemical cross-linking agents**

By using substances like glutaraldehyde, diacid chloride, and formaldehyde. However, when used during preparation and subsequently exposed to centrifugation, washing, and separation, it is harmful to the active components' unnecessary exposure to chemicals. Applying chitosan solution (in acetic acid) to liquid paraffin that contains a surfactant without using an emulsion is possible. As a cross-linking agent, glutaraldehyde is dissolved in a 25 percent solution to create microspheres.

**Double emulsion technique:**[16]

W/O/W is made by adding the main w/o emulsion to an aqueous polyvinyl alcohol solution. It is the development of multiple emulsions. For 30 minutes, this w/o/w emulsion must be continuously stirred. Pour water into the emulsion gradually over the course of 30 minutes. Microcapsule collection by filtering and drying under vacuum. It works well for vaccinations, peptides, proteins, and water-soluble medications. Both natural and artificial polymers can be applied in this technique. The continuous organic lipophilic phase distributes the aqueous protein solution. The active components in this protein solution will be present. Disperse in oil/organic phase homogenization/vigorous, or the creation of the first emulsion, followed by the addition of the PVA (Poly Vinyl Alcohol) aqueous solution, or following this separation, the wide aqueous phase denaturation/hardening is added to create the multiple emulsion. Next, the microspheres are washed, dried, and collected using the o/w/o multiple emulsion method.

**Polymerization techniques:**[17]

Two techniques are mainly used for the formulation of microspheres are as follows

**Normal polymerization:** In bulk polymerization, the polymerization process is typically started by heating a monomer or a combination of monomers, the catalyst, and the initiator. The resulting polymer may be shaped into microspheres. Medication administration is possible by including the drug during the polymerization process. Although it is a pure method of polymer production, it is highly challenging to disperse the heat of the process without damaging the thermolabile active components. Suspension polymerization, also known as pearl polymerization, is carried out at a lower temperature and involves heating the monomer combination with the active ingredient as droplets dispersion in the continuous aqueous phase.

**Interfacial polymerization:** A film of polymer is created that effectively envelops the dispersed phase as a result of the interaction of different monomers at the interface between the two immiscible liquid phases. Two reactive monomers are used in this method; one is dissolved in the continuous phase, while the other is watery in nature and distributed in continuous phase, while the second monomer is emulsified.

**Phase separation coacervation technique:**[18]

This approach is based on the notion that by reducing the polymer's solubility in the organic phase, coacervatesa polymer-rich phasecan be influenced to develop. In this procedure, a polymer solution containing the drug particles is mixed with an incompatible polymer, which separates the first polymer phase and engulfs the drug particles. The polymer solidifies as a result of the addition of the non-solvent. Butadiene has been employed as an incompatible polymer in this method to manufacture polylactic acid (PLA) microspheres. Process factors are crucial because the dispersion of the polymer film is determined by the coacervate accomplishment rate. the size of the particles and how the produced particles are grouped together. Because the generated polymerized globules start to attach and form agglomerates as the process of microsphere creation begins, agglomeration must be avoided by stirring the solution using an adequate speed stirrer. Since there is no specific equilibrium state to achieve, process factors are crucial because they control the kinetics of the produced particles.

**Spray Drying:**[19]

Before being spray dried, the polymer must first be dissolved in a suitably volatile organic solvent, such as dichloromethane or acetone. The chemical is then homogenised at high speed and disseminated in a polymer solution. Then, a heated air stream atomizes this dispersion. The process of atomization produces minute droplets or a fine mist, from which the solvent instantly evaporates to create microspheres in the 1-100 m size range. A cyclone separator is used to separate microparticles from hot air, and vacuum drying is used to remove any remaining solvent. The procedure's feasibility of action in aseptic circumstances is one of its key advantages. The creation of porous microparticles results from this quick procedure.

**Solvent Evaporation:**[20]

A liquid production vehicle is used to carry out the processes. The volatile, non-toxic solvent is used to distribute the microcapsules. Included into the liquid phase of the manufacturing

process. The dissolution of the core substance before micro encapsulation diluted in a coating polymer solution. The man was upset as he during the liquid phase, the core material combination is disseminated. The vehicle's production process to accomplish the necessary microcapsule size. When the combination is if at all feasible, heated to cause the polymer's solvent to evaporate a dispersion of the primary substance in the polymer solution, the polymer contracts away from the centre. In a polymer coating solution, the core material can be dissolved to create a matrix that takes the shape of capsules. Either water-soluble or water-insoluble materials can be used for the core. Water-soluble or water-insoluble materials can be used for the core. Aqueous (o/w) or non-aqueous forms can result from solvent evaporation.

**Ionic gelation method:**[21]

The alginate/chitosan particle system was ready for the release of diclofenac sodium using this method. This procedure involves adding the medication to a solution of aqueous sodium alginate. The stirring is continued while the Ca2+/Al3+ solution is added dropwise to create a full solution. The created microspheres were kept in the original solution for 24 hours to allow for internal jellification, then were filtered to separate them. The drug will not release at an acidic pH, but the complete release is achieved between pH 6.4 and 7.2.

## EVALUATION PARAMETERS OF MICROSPHERES[22,23,24]

### Characterization

The characterization of the microparticulate carrier is a significant phenomenon that aids in the development of a suitable carrier for the delivery of proteins, drugs, or antigens. The microstructures of these microspheres vary. The release and stability of the carrier are determined by these microstructures.

### Particle size and shape

SEM and conventional light microscopy (LM) are the two most widely used techniques for seeing microparticles (SEM). Both methods may be used to examine the size and makeup of microparticles. In the situation of double-walled microspheres, LM offers control over the coating settings. The structure of the microspheres may be seen before and after coating, and the difference can be observed and quantified microscopically. SEM has a better resolution than LM, in comparison. SEM makes it possible to examine the surfaces of the microspheres,

and when the particles are cut crosswise, it may also be used to examine structures with two walls.

**Electron spectroscopy for chemical analysis**

Using electron spectroscopy for chemical investigation, the surface chemistry, atomic composition, and surface degradation of biodegradable microspheres may be identified.

**Density determination**

A multi volume pychnometer can be used to determine the density of the microspheres. A cup containing a precisely weighed sample is put into the multi volume pychnometer. In the chamber, helium is supplied at a steady pressure and given room to expand. The pressure inside the chamber decreases as a result of this expansion. It is noticed that there are two consecutive observations of pressure decrease at various beginning pressures. The volume and subsequently the density of the microsphere carrier are calculated from two pressure readings.

**Isoelectric point**

An instrument called a micro electrophoresis is used to gauge the electrophoretic mobility of microspheres so that the isoelectric point may be calculated. The microspheres' ion-absorbing properties, ionisable behaviour, or surface-contained charge can all influence their electrophoretic mobility.

**Angle of contact**

To assess a micro particle carrier's wetting ability, the angle of contact is assessed. It establishes whether microspheres are hydrophilic or hydrophobic based on their nature. At the interface of the solid, air, and water, the angle of contact is measured.

***In vitro* methods**

In vitro drug release studies have been used as a quality control process in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, in the development of new products, etc. There is currently no accepted standard in vitro approach, although sensitive and repeatable release data produced from physico-chemically and hydrodynamically established conditions are required. Depending on the form and usage of the created dosage form, different workers have utilised apparatus of diverse designs and under varying circumstances. A separate appropriate dissolving media is

used to carry out release tests for a particular type of microsphere, frequently via rotating paddle device.

**Drug entrapment efficiency**

Holding the microspheres in the buffer solution and letting lysing will reveal the microspheres' entrapment effectiveness or the percent entrapment. The resulting lysate is filtered or centrifuged, and the active ingredients are then identified according to the specifications in the monograph. The following equation can be used to determine drug entrapment efficiency

*% Entrapment = Actual content/Theoretical content x 100.*

**Percentage yield**

It is determined as the total weight of the medication and polymer required to make each batch divided by the weight of the microspheres obtained from that batch, multiplied by 100.

*Percentage yield=Actual yield/theoretical yield×100*

**Swelling index**

The swelling index of the microsphere was determined by using the formula,

Swelling index = (mass of swollen microspheres - mass of dry microspheres)/mass of dried microspheres

**Bulk density**

It is calculated by adding a sample of known-weight microspheres to a measuring cylinder without tapping, measuring the length of the cylinder, and dividing the weight by the volume.

Bulk density = wt. of microspheres/bulk volume

**Tapped density**

By carefully tapping a sample of microspheres with a known weight into a measuring cylinder, measuring its volume, and then dividing the weight by the volume, it may be calculated by,

Tapped density = wt. of the microspheres/volume after tapping

**Hausner's ratio**

The ratio of the tapped density to the microspheres bulk density, known as Hausner's ratio, can be utilised to forecast microsphere flow. A free-flowing microsphere is indicated by a Low Hausner's ratio of less than 1.2.

$$\text{Hausner's ratio} = \text{bulk density} - \text{tapped density}$$

**Angle of repose**

It is described as the greatest angle that a mass of microspheres may make with respect to the horizontal. Among the techniques for determining the angle of repose are the fixed height cone and the fixed base cone.

$$\text{Angle of Repose}, \theta = \tan^{-1} h/r$$

r = the radius of the base of the heap of microspheres

h = height of the heap of microspheres

**Zeta potential:**

Chitosan of varying atomic loads is combined into the W2 stage to form the polyelectrolyte shell, and the ensuing particles are determined by zeta potential estimate.

**Attenuated total reflectance Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy**

The carrier device polymer matrix degradation is evaluated using FT-IR. The alternative cumulative reflectance will be used to analyse the microspheres' surface (ATR). Depending on the circumstances and parameters of the manufacturing process, the ATR-FTIR must contain information regarding the surface composition of the microspheres.

**APPLICATIONS[25,26]**

**1. Microspheres in vaccine delivery**

An ideal vaccination must meet the criteria for effectiveness, safety, ease of use, and cost. The drawback of conventional vaccines may be overcome by biodegradable delivery technologies for vaccines administered parenterally. Parenteral (subcutaneous, intramuscular, and intradermal) carriers are appealing because they have a number of advantages, including:

- Improved antigenicity by adjuvant action
- Modulation of antigen release
- Stabilization of antigen.

**2.Targeting using microparticulate carriers**

The idea of targeting, or site-specific drug delivery, is an accepted orthodoxy that is now receiving much of attention. The drug's ability to reach and engage specifically with its candidate receptors is essential to its therapeutic effectiveness. The main pharmacological action is mediated by the employment of a carrier system, which allows the drug to exit the pool in a repeatable, effective, and precise manner.

**3. Monoclonal antibodies mediated microspheres targeting**

Microspheres that are immune to mAbs are called microspheres. This kind of targeting is used to accomplish specific targeting to particular places. Monoclonal antibodies are highly specialised substances. mAbs can be covalently coupled to the microspheres directly to form an attachment. Any of the following techniques can be used to secure the mAbs to microspheres:

- Non-specific adsorption and Specific adsorption
- Direct coupling
- Coupling via reagents

**4. Chemoembolization**

Chemoembolization is an endovascular therapy that entails the local delivery of a chemotherapeutic agent concurrently with or after the selective arterial embolization of a tumour.

**5. Imaging**

When employing radio labelled microspheres to image specific areas, the particle size range of the microspheres is a crucial consideration. Apart from the portal vein, the intravenously administered particles will become stuck in the lungs capillary bed. When utilising tagged human serum albumin microspheres for scintiographic imaging of lung tumour masses, this phenomenon is taken advantage of.

**6. Topical porous microspheres**

Microsponges are porous microspheres with several interconnected voids ranging in size from 5 to 300 micrometres. These microsponges are employed as topical delivery systems because they have the capacity to entrap a wide variety of active substances, including emollients, perfumes, and essential oils.

### 7. Medical applications

The prolonged release of hormones, peptides, and proteins.The delivery of insulin together with DNA plasmid-based gene therapy. The distribution of vaccines for the prevention and treatment of diseases such hepatitis, influenza, pertussis, ricin toxoid, diphtheria, and contraception.By intra-arterial/ intravenous administration, passive targeting of leaky tumour arteries, active targeting of cancer cells, and antigens. Doxorubicin and doxorubicin-based tumour targeting Leishmaniasis treatments. Magnetic microspheres can be used to purge the bone marrow and retrieve stem cells. Used in affinity chromatography for toxin extraction, cell separation, and antibody isolation. Used in a variety of diagnostic procedures for infectious disorders such bacterial, viral, and fungal illnesses.

### 8. Radioactive microspheres applications

It can be utilised for local radiation, interactivity care, radiosynovectomy of arthritis joints, liver and spleen tumours, and liver and spleen tumours. The liver, spleen, bone marrow, lung, and even the thrombus in a deep vein thrombosis can all be seen on an x-ray.

## CONCLUSION:[27]

Because they have better patient compliance and targeting precision than other drug delivery methods, microspheres are safer for medication delivery than other drug delivery systems. Due to its benefits of continuous and controlled release action, improved stability, decreased dosing frequency, dissolving rate, and bioavailability, the microspheres drug delivery system is the most popular drug delivery technology. The efficient and safe microsphere drug delivery method has a number of uses, including precise medication targeting, floating and vaccination administration, among others. Microsphere preparation and assessment techniques are extensively used and efficient. In addition to distributing medications, microspheres are also utilised to diagnose biomolecular interactions, scan tumours, and cure cancer. Microspheres will play a key role in novel drug delivery in the future by fusing together a variety of other strategies, particularly in diseased cell sorting, diagnostics, gene & genetic materials, safe, targeted, and efficient in-vivo delivery, and supplements as miniature representations of diseased organs and tissues in the body.

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