



## Microneedling Drug Delivery System: Strategies, Design, Manufacturing, Clinical Aspects and Treatment for Cancer Therapy

Priyanshu Sharma, Abhishek Singh, Kapil Kumar Verma Inder Kumar \*

Minerva College of Pharmacy, Indora-Kangra HP, India.

### Article Info:



#### Article History:

Received 11 Sep 2024  
Reviewed 24 Oct 2024  
Accepted 26 Nov 2024  
Published 15 Dec 2024

#### Cite this article:

Sharma P, Singh A, Verma KK, Kumar I, Microneedling Drug Delivery System: Strategies, Design, Manufacturing, Clinical Aspects and Treatment for Cancer Therapy, Journal of Drug Delivery and Therapeutics. 2024; 14(12):156-165 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22270/jddt.v14i12.6881>

#### \*Address for Correspondence:

Inder Kumar, Minerva College of Pharmacy, Indora-Kangra H.P., India

### Abstract

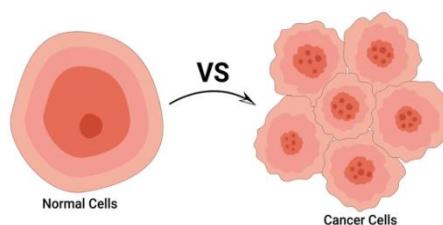
Microneedling, a minimally invasive technique traditionally used in dermatology, has emerged as a promising approach to cancer therapy. The procedure involves creating microchannels in the skin using fine needles, enhancing the delivery of therapeutic agents directly into tumor tissues. This method overcomes the limitations of conventional cancer treatments, such as systemic toxicity and poor drug penetration, by facilitating localized and controlled drug delivery. Microneedling can also stimulate immune responses and induce tissue regeneration, potentially enhancing the effectiveness of immunotherapy and promoting tumor suppression. Recent studies have shown that microneedling can be combined with nanoparticles, chemotherapeutics, or gene therapies, allowing for a more precise and targeted treatment of cancer cells while minimizing damage to healthy tissues. Additionally, microneedling-based drug delivery systems can improve the bioavailability of drugs, reducing required dosages and associated side effects. The technique has been instrumental in treating skin cancers, such as melanoma, but its potential application in other solid tumors is currently being explored. While promising, further clinical studies are needed to optimize microneedling parameters and evaluate its long-term safety and efficacy in cancer therapy. As the field progresses, microneedling may revolutionize the delivery of cancer therapeutics, offering a cost-effective, patient-friendly option that complements existing treatments.

**Keywords:** Microneedling, Cancer therapy, Nanoparticles, Immunotherapy.

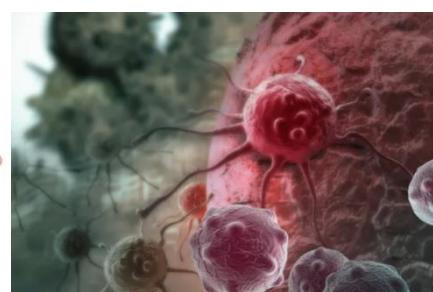
### Introduction

Changes in cell metabolism can play a role in transformation and cancer progression. These metabolic profiles can also image tumors, offer predictive insights, and treat cancer. Therefore, understanding cancer metabolism is crucial for grasping basic cancer pathophysiology and has significant implications for clinical oncology.<sup>1</sup> Human cancers are incredibly diverse, with over 200 distinct types, each differing based on their

normal cell origins, acquired somatic mutations, altered transcriptional networks, and the influence of local tissue environments. Efforts have been made to simplify this complexity into a set of fundamental principles known as cancer hallmarks. Despite major advances in cancer research, diagnosis, and treatment, most patients with advanced metastatic cancer face a terminal illness that remains incurable with current therapies. Approximately 90% of cancer-related deaths are due to metastatic disease rather than primary tumors.<sup>2,3,4</sup>



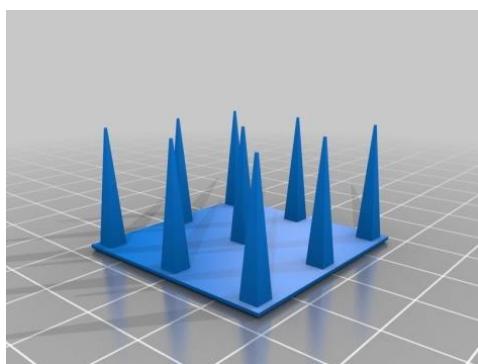
(a)



(b)

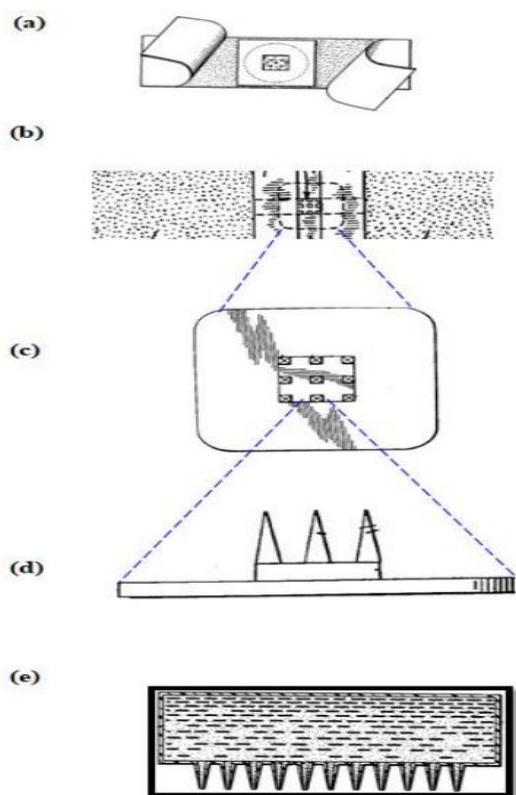
**Figure 1 (a): Difference in Normal Cells & Cancer Cells (b): Microscopic View of Cancer Cell Proliferation.**<sup>2,3</sup>

Microneedles technology is an innovative transdermal therapy that involves a patch embedded with tiny, micron-sized needles. These needles are designed to deliver vaccines, drug molecules, proteins, genes, antibodies, nanoparticles, and more. This approach effectively addresses the limitations of traditional cancer treatments, offering a painless experience for patients.<sup>5</sup> Microneedles are advantageous throughout the entire process, from diagnosis to treatment, and even in theragnostic applications. Microneedles are self-operating tools that extract interstitial fluid transdermally and, simultaneously, deliver drugs, vaccines, and other therapies in a minimally invasive, painless process.<sup>6,7</sup>



**Figure 2: Microscopic view of Microneedles.**<sup>6,7</sup>

### General Attributes of MNs<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 3: History of Microneedles (MNs)**

(a) Plan view of the microneedle device,

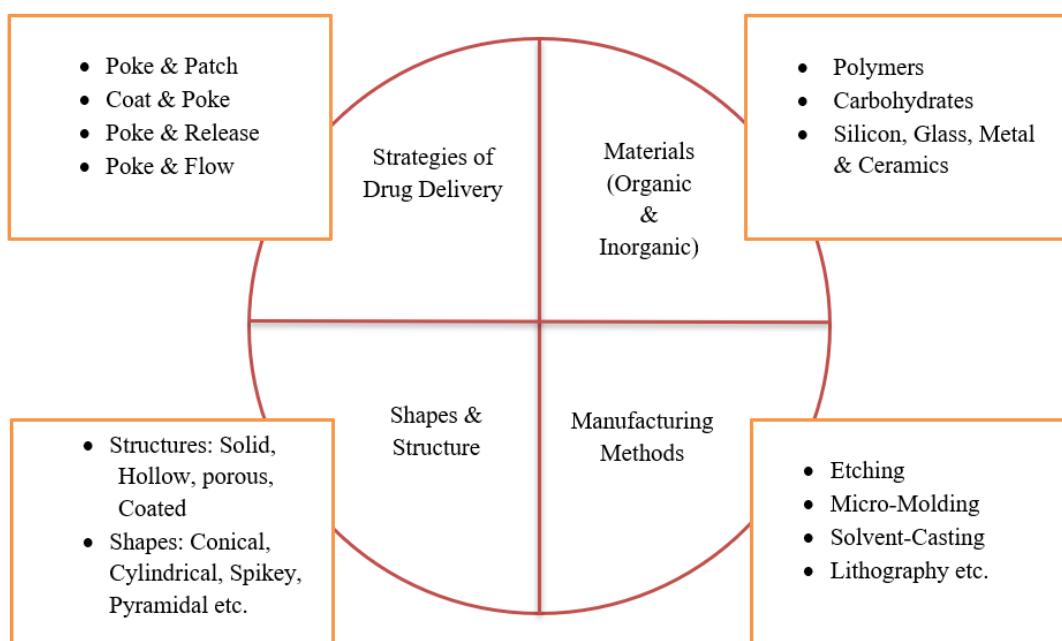
(b-d) Plan view of microneedle device, substantially to scale, blown-up to show the MNs, (e) MNs patented by Alza Corporation.<sup>8</sup>

### Strategies for Drug Delivery

Protein medications can be applied to different cancer growth medicines, inoculations, and treatment of hereditary infections. Quick advancement is normal; be that as it may, drug conveyance is restricted because of the issues of low soundness and ingestion. For instance, during dosing and stockpiling, protein denaturation, drug retention efficiency, and cell porosity related to sub-atomic size can prompt restricted restorative efficiency. Microneedle research is being directed at working on the conveyance efficiency of protein drugs. For instance, microneedle innovation has been produced for proteins including insulin, desmopressin, erythropoietin, lysozyme, glucagon, glucagon-like peptide-1, parathyroid chemical, and development chemical. The determination of materials and plans for protecting protein drug solidness remains a difficult task, particularly in enormous scope stockpiling arranging, and creation chains for clinical use. Detailed a microneedle with glucose reaction and temperature strength that was created utilizing phenylboronic corrosive for insulin drug conveyance in diabetes treatment.<sup>9,10</sup>

### Microneedles Material and Methods of Manufacturing

Going now to MN producing strategies, the most regular techniques for manufacturing include solvent casting, micro-molding, pulling pipettes, etching, lithography, ceramic sintering, laser cutting/ablation, electropolishing, and micro stereolithography.<sup>11</sup> Different natural and inorganic materials are utilized in creating MNs of various designs and shapes. Concerning the materials utilized in manufacturing MNs, Guillot, and partners distinguished different materials and techniques utilized in the manufacture of MNs, and they additionally gave the benefits and detriments of the separate techniques.<sup>12</sup> Regeron Inc., a Korean-based organization, revealed dissolvable MNs of intensity shock protein (HSP90a or potentially its parts) which were ready according to the techniques depicted by Moga and associates.<sup>13</sup> Designers Ronnander and Simon of LTS Lohman and New Jersey Establishment of Innovation fostered a polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP) MNs exhibit fix for conveying macromolecular mixtures, for example, sumatriptan or its succinate salt (utilized for headache) by microporation of the skin. Also, the PVP MNs exhibit organization includes glycerol which is demonstrated as a humectant/conditioner, and polysorbate 80 goes about as a surfactant.<sup>14</sup> The fix of MN exhibit helps in the conveyance of said macromolecules utilizing an ongoing source that is controllable. In any case, on a couple of events, MNs couldn't accomplish a productive helpful impact.<sup>15</sup> Such issues were contemplated and fixed by Wang and partners utilizing polymeric MNs that are gotten utilizing polyvinyl liquor and maltose. Such a mix of polymers not only assisted in that frame of mind with great mechanical strength yet in addition MNs that can enter through the layers of skin to produce micropores.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 4: Schematic representation of general attributes of MNs.**

### Design and Geometry of MNs

When designing microneedles (MN) for optimal performance, considerations such as skin penetration depth, pain minimization, and achieving the intended objective must be taken into account. Parameters such as MN dimensions and geometry play a crucial role in determining the efficacy of MNs. The dimension and geometry of MNs, including tip diameter, aspect ratio, height, and needle density, affect their functionality.<sup>17</sup> Tip diameter influences the force required for skin penetration; smaller tip diameters require less force but do not affect penetration depth. Aspect ratio, the ratio of height to base width, affects insertion ease and mechanical strength. Increasing the aspect ratio facilitates skin penetration but also increases failure force while decreasing it enhances mechanical strength. MN height must be optimized for penetration depth without causing pain or bleeding. The material composition also influences penetration depth.<sup>18</sup>

MN design parameters such as tip diameter, aspect ratio, height, and density significantly impact their functionality and efficacy. Careful consideration and optimization of these parameters are essential to ensure optimal performance, delivery of active ingredients, and minimal discomfort for the subject. Achieving an optimal balance between skin penetration depth, pain

minimization, and intended objective is crucial in designing effective MNs. Geometric factors play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of microneedles (MNs) by improving skin penetration, mechanical strength, delivery efficiency, and tissue adhesion.<sup>19</sup> Different geometric designs have been developed to achieve these goals. Conical and pyramidal MNs have been traditionally used, with pyramidal MNs demonstrating higher mechanical strength due to their larger cross-sectional area. Novel designs like "Tanto-blade" inspired MNs with beveled tips and "I-beam" geometry have also been explored for better penetration and shear strength. The mechanical strength of MNs is not only influenced by their geometry but also by the materials and cargo loaded into them. Studies have shown that incorporating certain microparticles can enhance mechanical strength, while others can weaken it due to poor adhesion.

These designs improve drug efficacy by increasing tissue adhesion, preventing premature removal of MNs. However, achieving consistent skin penetration depth with MNs remains challenging due to variations in human skin composition, condition, and thickness.<sup>20</sup> Customizable MNs may offer a potential solution to tailor skin penetration depth for individual differences, thereby maximizing the efficacy and reliability of biosensing and drug delivery applications.<sup>21</sup>

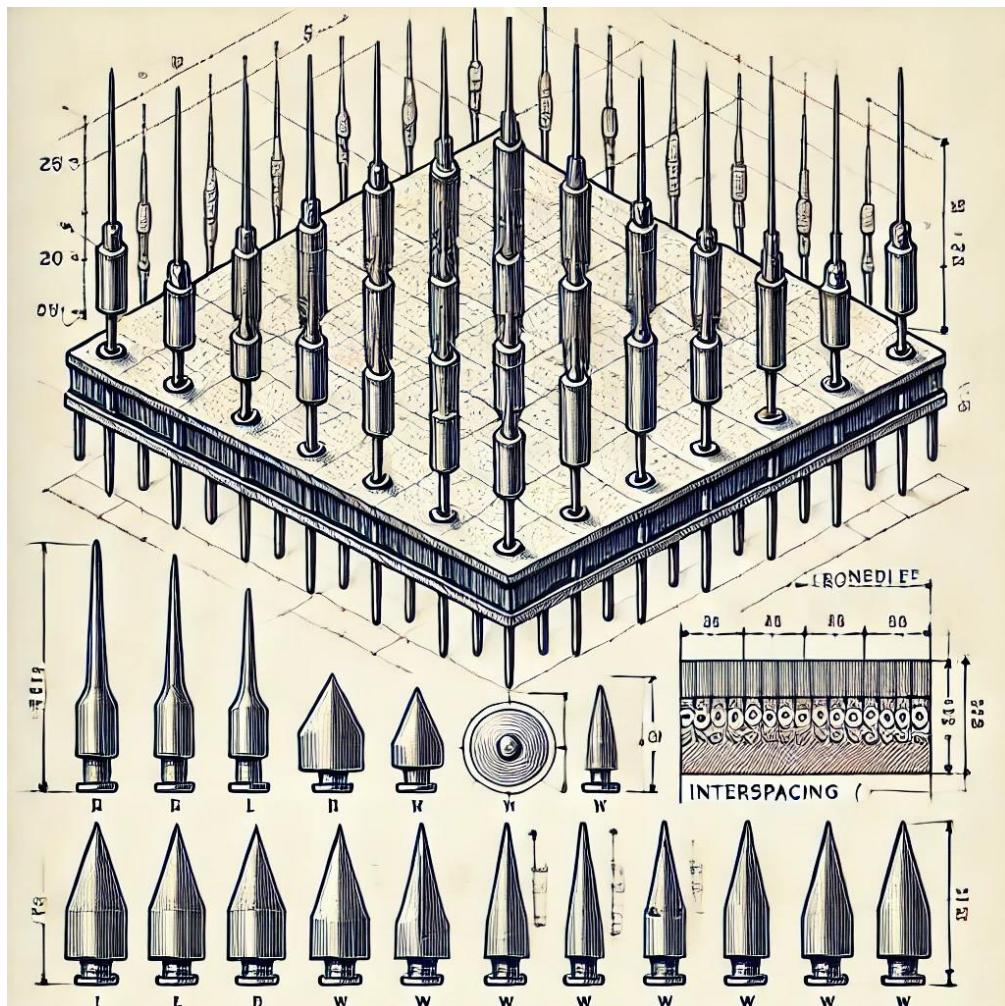


Figure 5: Design and geometry of MNs

(a) Illustration of geometrical parameters in a microneedle array

(b) Geometry of MNs length (L), thickness (T) and width (W)

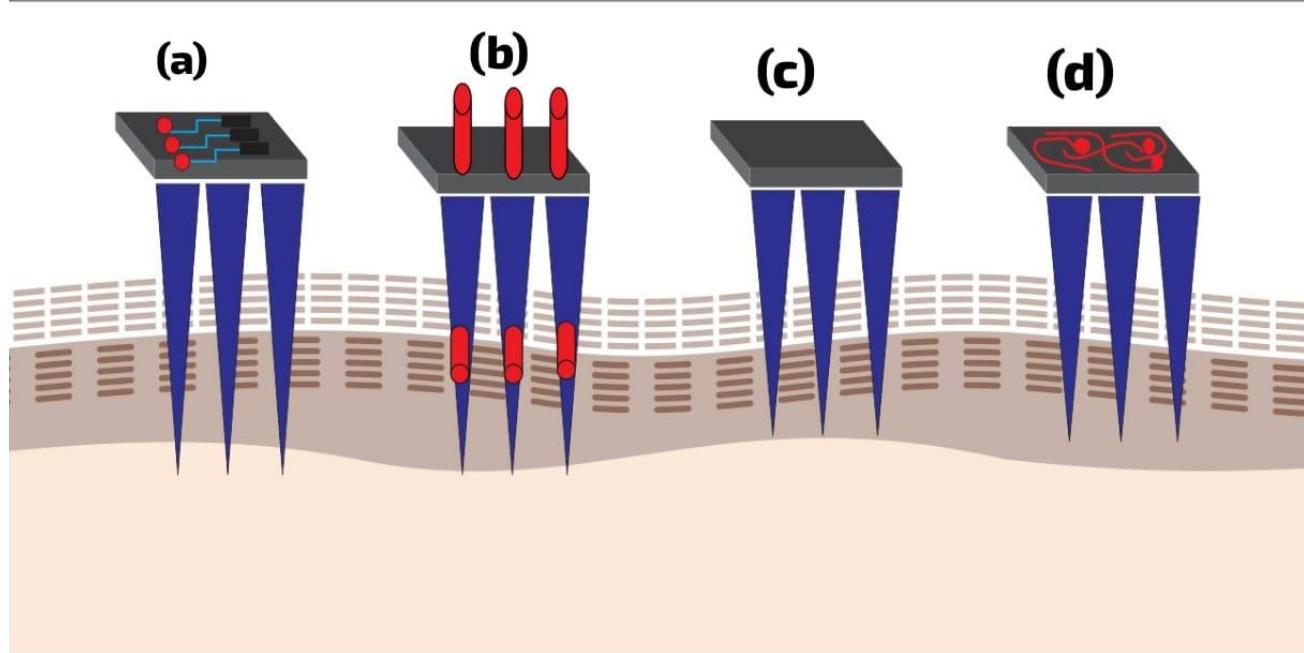
(c) Different shapes of MNs (i) Rectangular microneedle with a sharp edge (ii) cylindrical (iii) conical (iv) tapered (v) arrow headed.<sup>21</sup>

## Different Cancer Treatments Using MNs

MNs help in beating the impediments related to customary medication conveyance frameworks. They have been effectively assessed for the conveyance of little atoms, and enormous particles, like chemotherapeutic specialists, proteins, and hereditary material. MNs additionally help in conveying microparticles or on the other hand nanoparticles of anticancerous drug substances.<sup>22</sup> In the accompanying segments, we examine MNs that work given sensor innovation, MNs that are utilized for therapy of bosom malignant growth, and skin carcinoma, and lastly the 3D printed MNs for therapy of disease.<sup>23</sup>

## MNs Based on Sensor Technology

Reconciliation of MNs with microelectronic sensors is an emerging area. The sensor-based MNs can change over non-electrical sources of info like temperature or tension from its general climate to microcomputer coherent electrical signs. Customarily, blood tests are utilized/ removed from subjects to quantify the grouping of the analyte. As of now, the 'point-test' approach is utilized, wherein blood is gathered as a drop onto a test strip and followed by embedding into an electronic gadget to show the outcome on the presentation screen.<sup>24,25</sup> One substitute to conquer the above restriction is the utilization of sensor-based MNs, which cause no or less aggravation contrasted with hypodermic needles, harmless, safe, and simple to utilize. For the most part, there are four distinct sorts of microneedle-based sensors and their standards of working are delineated in Figure 6.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 6: Microneedles (MNs) sensing modalities**

- (a) a sensor positioned on the MN base or support
- (b) Electrode inserted into the hollow microneedles-acts electrochemically
- (c) The surface of the MNs is functionalized to act as a sensor (d) MNs are metalized to act as bio-electrodes.<sup>26</sup>

Microneedle (MN) sensors consist of an analyte recognition element and a transducer, such as colorimetric MNs that use enzymes like glucose oxidase for analyte recognition. Immunosenor MNs use enzyme-linked immune sorbent assay, while hydrogel MNs immobilize nucleic acids. Wearable orthogonal MNs have been developed for monitoring levodopa levels in Parkinson's disease patients. Gold nanorod-coated MNs

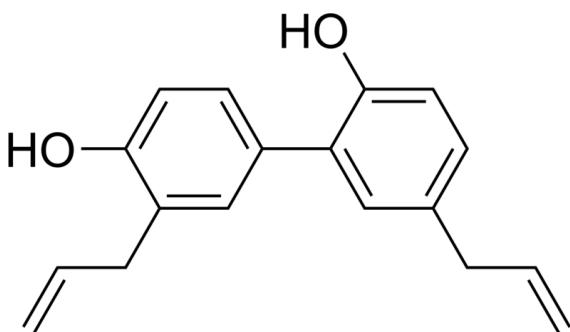
have been used for synergistic tumor therapy, and controlled-release MNs of 5-fluorouracil and indocyanine green are being developed for skin cancer treatment. Different analytes targeted for cancer detection using MNs include glucose, glutamate, lactate, hydrogen peroxide, nitric oxide, potassium levels, and T-cell detection.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1: Various sorts of analytes depended on to recognize disease utilizing microneedles.**

Name of the Analyte	Principle Involved in Detection	Structure and Materials for Sensor	Test Subject	Ref
Glucose	• Colorimetry • Glucose assay • Electrochemistry	• Hydrogel solid MNs • Metal hollow MNs and paper sensor • Silicon hollow MNs and sensor	• Mouse • Rabbit • Human	28,29
Glutamate	Electrochemistry	Hollow or solid MNs of a polymer	-	30
Lactate	Electrochemistry	Hollow or solid MNs of polymer along with carbon paste or carbon nanotubes	-	30
Hydrogen peroxide	Electrochemistry	Solid MNs with platinum or gold electrodes	Mouse	30
Nitric oxide	Electrochemistry	Solid MNs of a polymer or metal with hemin or graphene that is functionalized.	Melanoma mouse Rat	31,32
T cell	Immune response	Solid MNs of polymer with antigens (nano-capsule)	Human skin	33
Potassium	Electrochemistry	Hollow MNs of polymer or metal with ion-specific electrode	Porcine skin	34,35

## Breast Cancer Treatment Using MNs

Skin malignancy is the second most common disease that will eventually kill women after breast disease. Some of the treatments include chemotherapy that will prevent the recurrence of the cancer or careful resection to remove the local growths. Generally, chemotherapy involves the foundational organization of the counter dangerous medications that often result in other adverse effects like concealment of bone marrow, cardiovascular and extra neurotoxicity, mastectomy, chemical treatment, lumpectomy, radiation treatment, and natural treatment using macromolecules.<sup>36</sup> Finding a better line of therapy doctors shifted their attention towards immunotherapy and cancer vaccines.<sup>37</sup> Bhatnagar et al. published MNs of zein (prolamine protein from maize) for drug delivery of tamoxifen and gemcitabine, which are applied in the treatment of breast cancer. Zein MNs were made through the molding process by dissolvable casting, incorporating 3D printing of the expert form using a polymer, cyclobutyl nitrile styrene, and plasticizers specifically glycerol and Stake 400.<sup>38</sup> Tamoxifen and gemcitabine were characterized in zein MNs. Meanwhile, the counter bosom cancer drugs were also coated on zein MNs using rhodamine as a dye to study the properties of coatings. Delivery studies on loading efficiency showed that there was more tamoxifen loading onto zein MNs than gemcitabine. Considering the delivery dynamic studies, it revealed more penetration of gemcitabine counter tamoxifen. The review summarized that the maximum solubility of a drug in water may display improved permeation when administered using zein MNs. Bhatnagar et. Al. also conducted a dissolving MNs composed of polyvinyl pyrrolidone and polyvinyl alcohol for coding of doxorubicin and docetaxel to treat breast cancer. The MNs were fabricated Involving a micro-molding process as recently explained, drugs (doxorubicin and docetaxel) were loaded by encapsulation process employing polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVPK360), and the substrate plate was prepared by use of both PVPK360 and polyvinyl alcohol. The pre-prepared MNs dissolved within less than 60 minutes after it was implanted in the skin. They used 4T1 breast cancer cells to assess the efficacy of MNs. The toxicity focus on animals revealed that the presentation of both drugs using MNs showed a higher survival rate than that of injections (intratumoral). Co-administration of these two drugs proved to have controlled the progression of the tumor than when administered separately.<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 7: Honokiol (C18H18O2): A biphenolic natural compound isolated from the leaves and barks of Magnolia plant species<sup>39</sup>**

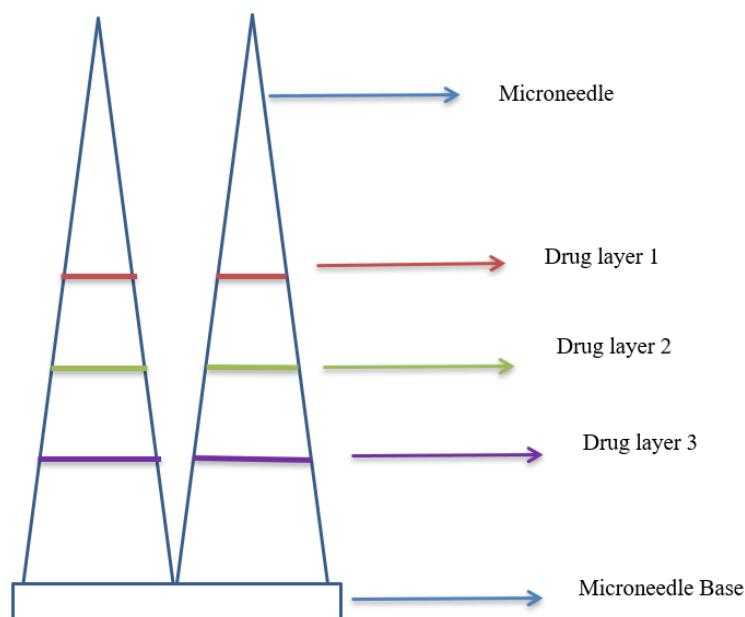
Reports further indicate that *Magnolia glandiflora* contains other anticancer properties; breast prostate liver. MNs formed from maltose were utilized in delivering honokiol through various layers of skin and also via the mammary papilla. In addition to honokiol delivered by MNs, Gao, and co-authors concentrated on the delivery of this natural anticancer drug by Utilizing skin saturation enhancers. The assessment used synthetic enhancers such as propylene glycol, oleic acid, and isopropyl myristate. Oleic acid was observed to be an excellent permeation enhancer compared to the other agents. The two delivery systems (MNs and permeation enhancers) were observed to be promising and economical for the transdermal delivery of honokiol across the skin layers.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the anti-cancer activity of honokiol was observed with reduced release of cytokine interleukin-6 and Ki-67 protein staining. Chablani et al. applied metallic MNs (AdminPatch® 1200) for particulate 1.5 μm size breast cancer immunization prepared by freeze-drying method.<sup>41</sup> Mojeiko et al reported the application of MNs to increase the penetration of celecoxib microemulsion in the treatment of breast cancer. MN-based roller treatment in combination with microemulsion containing 60% water was seen to significantly increase celecoxib penetration through the layers of mammary tissue.<sup>38</sup> In addition, MNs can be used for drug delivery by the transcapillary course (breast) for the treatment of breast malignancy.<sup>42</sup> Chen et al. used MNs with a nano-silver/MBL layer that modulates the siphoning effect for the early diagnosis of breast disease. The approach utilizes the deposition of MNs at the correct region of the breast thus creating a way out for the interstitial space to collect the sample/cells. Due to the siphoning effect of the movie the cells are uptaken onto the layer which is exposed to colorimetric analysis for the detection of early stages of breast cancer in patients.<sup>43</sup> Zandi et al. reported that MNs of electrochemical tests doped with zinc-oxide nanostructures were used for the fabrication of microbubbles. Following the mixing of such MNs into the growth interstitial fluid, sonoporation was used for the formation of microbubbles by electrolysis for the transport of paclitaxel.<sup>20</sup>

## MNs Used in Skin Carcinoma

Skin carcinoma is the most common type of malignancy and statistics show that one in every five individuals in the United States would be diagnosed with it during their lifetime. There are three types of skin cancer basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma carcinoma. The former two are more common than the latter; a more dangerous one compared to the other two.<sup>44</sup> Skin disease is essentially caused due to prolonged exposure to UV radiation. Conventional treatments like chemotherapy, radiotherapy, careful resection, and immunotherapy are related to several limitations. In addition, anticancer drugs when given via the oral or parenteral route will be subjected to gastric degradation or first-pass effect in this way resulting in various side effects. MNs appear to be the safest options considering the above barriers.<sup>45</sup> North Carolina State College

authors Zhen Gu and others reported self-degradable and supported release MNs repair of PD1 antibodies (nivolumab, and pembrolizumab) either alone or in combination with anti-CTLA4 immunizer (ipilimumab). The developed MN repair includes a base end further, the tip coated with nanoparticles that characterize the immunotherapeutic expert (PD1 inhibitor or potential anti-CTLA4 immune response) with glucose oxidase as a pH modifying specialist.<sup>45</sup> The nanoparticles arranged were acidic degradable and arranged using dextran and sodium alginate as surfactants. In some encapsulations, Zhen Gu and co-authors used hyaluronic acid in the preparation of MN patches, which helps lubricate the strata of the skin as soon as the fix is implanted. Zynerba Drugs, a US company discovered MNs containing cannabidiol and its prodrugs that are likely to be used in pancreatic cancer. It proposes hydrogel, the reservoir type of fixation of MNs.<sup>46</sup> Eirion Therapeutics submitted two international patent applications on transdermal transport of huge sub-molecular weight particles that are used in the treatment of skin disorders. The synthesis promised a method for delivering an emulsion composition of botulinum toxin (molecular weight of 100,000 kDa) with an intracellularly active agent (hydrocortisone, lidocaine, Retin A, and others). The method of interest involved steps of skin modification through MNs, followed by the application of the definition. They have integrated the microneedle technology with emulsion technology (water-in-infinitely oil-in-water Nanoemulsions) to deliver botulinum poison, a huge sub-atomic compound. The emulsion definition too included non-interfering and infiltration-improving specialists, for example, "cationic peptide" and a decidedly charged transporter having the arrangement "RKKRRQRRG-(K)15-GRKKRRQRRR". The innovation too Uncovered the utilization of high atomic weight organically dynamic specialists like infliximab, golimumab, adalimumab, certolizumab pegol, siplizumab, and others either alone or in blend with one

another.<sup>47,48</sup> Lu and associates accounted for dacarbazine stacked MNs for skin carcinoma. The MNs were prepared by miniature stereolithography with a polymer of poly (propylene Fumarate) and diethyl fumarate added for the control of polymer thickness. The pre-arranged MNs have a barrel-shaped base and a tapered tip with bright skin inclusion force. Dacarbazine was delivered in a controlled design for more than five weeks.<sup>49</sup> Hamdan and co-worker further explained the breaking of "5, 10, 15, 20 -tetrakis (2, 6-difluoro-3-N-methylsulfamoylphenyl bacteriochlorin", a pre-formed photosensitizer (near IR). The experiments showed that the MNs were vigorously tough mechanically to be driven into the layers of the skin, 5mm deep the skin for the treatment of nodular skin carcinoma. So, in the paper, the authors proposed polymeric (copolymer of methyl vinyl ether and maleic acid) MNs for the photodynamic treatment of deep skin ulcers.<sup>50</sup> Al-mayahy and others reported the use of MNs to facilitate the infiltration of imiquimod for basal cell carcinoma treatment.<sup>51</sup> In other research involving imiquimod, Sabri and others claimed to use oscillating MN pens 'Dermapen' and 'Dermastamp' to improve the penetration of imiquimod when used as a cream by 'jab and-fix' and 'fix and-jab' Methodologies. Discharge dynamic examinations affirmed that imiquimod entrance was in every way higher at the point when managed by the 'fix and-jab' strategy with the help of 'Dermapen'. The brilliant clarification for the same was due to the MNs causing the formation of the intra-dermal terminal of medication and isosteric corrosive (cream excipient) that lingers for around a day.<sup>52</sup> The MNs were organized utilizing CMC, wherein the medications are saved by miniature processing technique as medication freight layers, as appeared in Figure 8, (reorganized from specific reference). Jiangsu School of Data Innovation presented semiconductor-based microneedles that help not just for quality conveyance yet in addition for the conveyance of anticancerous drugs.<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 8: Cross-segment of the microneedle after drug freight stacking by miniature processing.<sup>53</sup>**

## MNs for Prostate Cancer Treatment

The second most common disease in men after cellular damage in the lungs is Prostate Malignant growth (PC). It is frequently discovered in the male population of the developed nations and the death rate is just behind lung and colorectal malignancy. Available treatment modalities for PC include but are not limited to aggressive prostatectomy (surgical intervention for early-stage PC), radiotherapy or image-guided radiotherapy, Androgen Distress Treatment (ADT) either alone or in mixed with radiotherapy and brachytherapy (radioactive material is situated inside the body).<sup>54</sup> The emasculation obstruction seen in ADT is dealt with utilizing different medications in particular abiraterone acetic acid derivation (CYP17- $\alpha$ -hydroxylase inhibitor), docetaxel, prednisone, cabazitaxel, and enzalutamide. Disease antibodies, like PC DNA immunizations, are different options that can be utilized to target cells that are communicating immunogenic cancer-related antigens (TAAs). In any case, Late clinical Phase I trial results regarding PROSTVAC raised concerns over the application of DNA antibodies alone. A PC DNA immunization feasibility can be improved by an appropriate drug delivery system such as MNs. MNs have the aesthetic beauty that the drug can be delivered locally to the tumor site across the layers of the skin to the Antigen Presenting Cells (APCs) in the epidermis and dermis regions.<sup>55</sup>

Chen et al. showed transdermal delivery of goserelin (LHRH simple) using soluble polymeric MNs of Chitosan and polyvinyl alcohol/polyvinyl pyrrolidone base as a support. LHRH for every microneedle was  $73.3 \pm 2.8 \mu\text{g}$ .<sup>56</sup> The pores that are created after the penetration of the skin would seal off after 7 days and the serum LHRH levels increased first and then decreased at the end of the seventh day. About the testosterone levels, they increased to peak by the fourteenth day and decreased to the level of maiming by the end of the 21st day. In addition, electrically utilitarian MNs were reported in human PC cells *in vitro* by electroporation technique. Choi and colleagues published MNs fabricated by micro molding technology to electroporate human PC cells for enhancing transfection by DNA immunizations.<sup>57,58</sup> Recently, Cole and others first demonstrated a highly effective two-layered microneedle-based stage for PC DNA immunization delivery. In its pilot, the RALA/pDNA nanoparticle-based dissolving polymeric microneedle framework was designed to vaccinate mice encoded with mPSCA (Prostate Stem Cell Antigen). The results of the pilot indicated the creation of encoded PSCA. In addition, inoculation with RALA/pPSCA-based MNs manifested anti-cancer activity.<sup>59</sup>

## Future Aspects of MNs

Microneedling, a minimally invasive skin treatment, is primarily used in dermatology for conditions like acne scars, wrinkles, and hyperpigmentation. However, its potential in cancer therapy is emerging as a promising frontier. Microneedling could revolutionize the delivery of drugs, vaccines, and therapeutic agents directly into tumor tissues, overcoming the limitations of traditional cancer treatments. One of the primary advantages of

microneedling is its ability to enhance the delivery of drugs directly into the skin or tumor tissue. This can be particularly beneficial in treating skin cancers like melanoma or other cancers that affect surface-level tissues. Microneedles can create microchannels in the skin, allowing for localized, controlled, and deeper penetration of chemotherapy agents, immunotherapy drugs, or gene therapy constructs. This targeted drug delivery reduces the need for systemic administration, thus minimizing side effects and improving therapeutic efficacy. Microneedling also offers potential when combined with other cancer treatments like photodynamic therapy (PDT), immunotherapy, or radiation therapy. In photodynamic therapy, for example, microneedling can be used to deliver photosensitizing agents directly into the tumor, enhancing the efficacy of light-based treatments. Similarly, microneedling could improve the effectiveness of cancer vaccines by facilitating the transdermal delivery of antigens, boosting the immune response against tumors. Another important future aspect of microneedling in cancer therapy is its potential to address the challenge of drug resistance. Traditional cancer treatments, particularly chemotherapy, often lead to drug resistance, wherein cancer cells mutate and no longer respond to the drugs. By using microneedles to deliver drugs directly to tumor cells, researchers can potentially bypass some of the mechanisms that lead to drug resistance. Microneedling can also enable the use of combination therapies that target multiple pathways, reducing the likelihood of resistance developing.

## Conclusion

Microneedling, a cosmetic procedure involving tiny needles to create controlled micro-injuries, is being researched for its potential in cancer therapy. It has advantages such as enhanced drug delivery, immune response stimulation, and tissue regeneration. Microneedling can improve the penetration of anticancer agents, reducing side effects and increasing efficacy, especially in cutaneous malignancies like melanoma. It also stimulates the immune system, aiding in the recognition and attack of cancer cells, and can be combined with immunotherapies for better outcomes. Additionally, microneedling can enhance other cancer therapies like PDT or gene therapy and promote tissue regeneration to reduce damage from treatments like radiation or surgery. However, before microneedling can be widely used in cancer treatment, more clinical trials are needed to establish safety and efficacy in different cancers and patient groups. Standardized protocols are necessary to ensure consistent results. Questions regarding needle size, treatment frequency, and combination with other therapies need further investigation. Nevertheless, microneedling shows promise in enhancing drug delivery, stimulating immune responses, and aiding in tissue regeneration for cancer patients. It has the potential to improve treatment outcomes, minimize toxicity, and become a valuable addition to cancer care strategies in the future.

**Acknowledgment:** The authors are highly thankful to Minerva College of Pharmacy, Indora-Kangra H.P. for providing the necessary facilities.

**Conflicts of Interests:** There are no conflicts of interest.

**Funding:** Nil

**Authors Contributions:** All the authors have contributed equally.

**Source of Support:** Nil

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting in this paper are available in the cited references.

**Ethics approval:** Not applicable.

## References

1. Vander Heiden MG, DeBenedictis RJ. Understanding the Intersections between Metabolism and Cancer Biology. *Cell*. 2017;168(4):657-69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2016.12.039> PMid:28187287 PMCid:PMC5329766
2. Lambert AW, Pattabiraman DR, Weinberg RA. Emerging biological principles of metastasis. *Cell*. 2017;168(4):670-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2016.11.037> PMid:28187288 PMCid:PMC5308465
3. Schiller JT, Lowy DR. An introduction to virus infections and human cancer. *Viruses Hum cancer from basic Sci to Clin Prev*. 2021;1-11. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57362-1\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57362-1_1) PMid:33200359 PMCid:PMC8336782
4. Johnson DB, Singh G, Sharma D, Natarajan V, Lakshmi KC, Dhakar RC, Tiwari R. Exploring Computational Advancements in ADME: Essential Insights for Drug Disposition, Chinese journal of applied physiology, 2024;40:e20240032 <https://doi.org/10.62958/j.cjap.2024.032> PMID: 39467652
5. Ganeson K, Alias AH, Murugaiyah V, Amirul AAA, Ramakrishna S, Vigneswari S. Microneedles for efficient and precise drug delivery in cancer therapy. *Pharmaceutics*. 2023;15(3):744. <https://doi.org/10.3390/pharmaceutics15030744> PMid:36986606 PMCid:PMC10057903
6. Yang J, Liu X, Fu Y, Song Y. Recent advances of microneedles for biomedical applications: drug delivery and beyond. *Acta Pharm Sin B*. 2019;9(3):469-83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apsb.2019.03.007> PMid:31193810 PMCid:PMC6543086
7. Singh V, Kesharwani P. Recent advances in microneedles-based drug delivery device in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. *J Control Release*. 2021;338:394-409. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jconrel.2021.08.054> PMid:34481019
8. Seetharam AA, Choudhry H, Bakhreba MA, Abdulaal WH, Gupta MS, Rizvi SMD, et al. Microneedles drug delivery systems for treatment of cancer: A recent update. *Pharmaceutics*. 2020;12(11):1101. <https://doi.org/10.3390/pharmaceutics12111101> PMid:33212921 PMCid:PMC7698361
9. Chen S, Miyazaki T, Itoh M, Matsumoto H, Moro-oka Y, Tanaka M, et al. Temperature-stable boronate gel-based microneedle technology for self-regulated insulin delivery. *ACS Appl Polym Mater*. 2020;2(7):2781-90. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acspolym.0c00341>
10. Lahiji SF, Jang Y, Ma Y, Dangol M, Yang H, Jang M, et al. Effects of dissolving microneedle fabrication parameters on the activity of encapsulated lysozyme. *Eur J Pharm Sci*. 2018;117:290-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejps.2018.03.003> PMid:29505815
11. Dharadhar S, Majumdar A, Dhole S, Patravale V. Microneedles for transdermal drug delivery: a systematic review. *Drug Dev Ind Pharm*. 2019;45(2):188-201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03639045.2018.1539497> PMid:30348022
12. Ye Y, Yu J, Wen D, Kahkoska AR, Gu Z. Polymeric microneedles for transdermal protein delivery. *Adv Drug Deliv Rev*. 2018;127:106-18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addr.2018.01.015> PMid:29408182 PMCid:PMC6020694
13. Nam K, Lee K, Youngwook CHO, Oh D. Composition for improving skin conditions comprising a fragment of human heat shock protein 90A as an active ingredient. Google Patents; 2020.
14. Zsikó S, Csányi E, Kovács A, Budai-Szűcs M, Gácsi A, Berkó S. Methods to evaluate skin penetration in vitro. *Sci Pharm*. 2019;87(3):19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87030019>
15. Wang M, Hu L, Xu C. Recent advances in the design of polymeric microneedles for transdermal drug delivery and biosensing. *Lab Chip*. 2017;17(8):1373-87. <https://doi.org/10.1039/C7LC00016B> PMid:28352876
16. Ramaut L, Hoeksema H, Pirayesh A, Stillaert F, Monstrey S. Microneedling: Where do we stand now? A systematic review of the literature. *J Plast Reconstr Aesthetic Surg*. 2018;71(1):1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjps.2017.06.006> PMid:28690124
17. Cheng X, Hu S, Cheng K. Microneedle patch delivery of PROTACs for anti-cancer therapy. *ACS Nano*. 2023;17(12):11855-68. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acsnano.3c03166> PMid:37294705 PMCid:PMC11393661
18. Gadag S, Narayan R, Nayak AS, Ardila DC, Sant S, Nayak Y, et al. Development and preclinical evaluation of microneedle-assisted resveratrol loaded nanostructured lipid carriers for localized delivery to breast cancer therapy. *Int J Pharm*. 2021;606:120877. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijipharm.2021.120877> PMid:34252522 PMCid:PMC8429179
19. Mbituyimana B, Ma G, Shi Z, Yang G. Polymeric microneedles for enhanced drug delivery in cancer therapy. *Biomater Adv*. 2022;142:213151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bioadv.2022.213151> PMid:36244246
20. Zandi A, Khayamian MA, Saghafi M, Shalileh S, Katebi P, Assadi S, et al. Microneedle-based generation of microbubbles in cancer tumors to improve ultrasound-assisted drug delivery. *Adv Healthc Mater*. 2019;8(17):1900613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/adhm.201900613> PMid:31328442
21. Uddin MJ, Scoutaris N, Economidou SN, Giraud C, Chowdhry BZ, Donnelly RF, et al. 3D printed microneedles for anticancer therapy of skin tumours. *Mater Sci Eng C*. 2020;107:110248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.msec.2019.110248> PMid:31761175
22. Gualeni B, Coulman SA, Shah D, Eng PF, Ashraf H, Vescovo P, et al. Minimally invasive and targeted therapeutic cell delivery to the skin using microneedle devices. *Br J Dermatol*. 2018;178(3):731-9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.15923> PMid:28865105
23. Borghetti-Cardoso LN, Viegas JSR, Silvestrini AVP, Caron AL, Praca FG, Kravitz M, et al. Nanotechnology approaches in the current therapy of skin cancer. *Adv Drug Deliv Rev*. 2020;153:109-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addr.2020.02.005> PMid:32113956
24. Li X, Zhao Z, Zhang M, Ling G, Zhang P. Research progress of microneedles in the treatment of melanoma. *J Control Release*. 2022;348:631-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jconrel.2022.06.021> PMid:35718209
25. Xu N, Xu W, Zhang M, Yu J, Ling G, Zhang P. Microneedle-Based Technology: Toward Minimally Invasive Disease Diagnostics. *Adv Mater Technol*. 2022;7(9):2101595. <https://doi.org/10.1002/admt.202101595>
26. Dardano P, Rea I, De Stefano L. Microneedles-based electrochemical sensors: New tools for advanced biosensing. *Curr Opin Electrochem*. 2019;17:121-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colelec.2019.05.012>
27. Shikida M, Hasegawa Y, Al Farisi MS, Matsushima M, Kawabe T. Advancements in MEMS technology for medical applications: Microneedles and miniaturized sensors. *Jpn J Appl Phys*. 2021;61(SA):SA0803. <https://doi.org/10.35848/1347-4065/ac305d>
28. Chang H, Zheng M, Yu X, Than A, Seenii RZ, Kang R, et al. A Swellable Microneedle Patch to Rapidly Extract Skin Interstitial Fluid for Timely Metabolic Analysis. *Adv Mater*. 2017 Oct;29(37):1702243. <https://doi.org/10.1002/adma.201702243> PMid:28714117
29. Li CG, Joung HA, Noh H, Song MB, Kim MG, Jung H. One-touch-activated blood multi-diagnostic system using a minimally invasive hollow microneedle integrated with a paper-based sensor. *Lab Chip*. 2015;15(16):3286-92. <https://doi.org/10.1039/C5LC00669D> PMid:26190447
30. Jin Q, Chen HJ, Li X, Huang X, Wu Q, He G, et al. Reduced Graphene Oxide Nanohybrid-Assembled Microneedles as Mini-Invasive Electrodes for Real-Time Transdermal Biosensing. *Small*. 2019 Feb;15(6):1804298. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smll.201804298> PMid:30605244

31. Keum DH, Jung HS, Wang T, Shin MH, Kim YE, Kim KH, et al. Microneedle Biosensor for Real-Time Electrical Detection of Nitric Oxide for In Situ Cancer Diagnosis During Endomicroscopy. *Adv Healthc Mater.* 2015 Jun;4(8):1153-8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/adhm.201500012> PMid:25728402

32. Tang L, Li Y, Xie H, Shu Q, Yang F, Liu Y ling, et al. A sensitive acupuncture needle microsensor for real-time monitoring of nitric oxide in acupoints of rats. *Sci Rep.* 2017;7(1):6446. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-06657-3> PMid:28744003 PMCid:PMC5527006

33. Mandal A, Boopathy A V, Lam LKW, Moynihan KD, Welch ME, Bennett NR, et al. Cell and fluid sampling microneedle patches for monitoring skin-resident immunity. *Sci Transl Med.* 2018 Nov;10(467):eaar2227. <https://doi.org/10.1126/scitranslmed.aar2227> PMid:30429353

34. Miller PR, Xiao X, Brener I, Burckel DB, Narayan R, Polksky R. Diagnostic Devices: Microneedle-Based Transdermal Sensor for On-Chip Potentiometric Determination of K<sup>+</sup> (Adv. Healthcare Mater. 6/2014). *Adv Healthc Mater.* 2014 Jun;3(6):948. <https://doi.org/10.1002/adhm.201470032>

35. Parrilla M, Cuartero M, Padrell Sánchez S, Rajabi M, Roxhed N, Niklaus F, et al. Wearable All-Solid-State Potentiometric Microneedle Patch for Intradermal Potassium Detection. *Anal Chem.* 2019 Jan;91(2):1578-86. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.analchem.8b04877> PMid:30543102

36. Huang H, Qu M, Zhou Y, Cao W, Huang X, Sun J, et al. A microneedle patch for breast cancer screening via minimally invasive interstitial fluid sampling. *Chem Eng J.* 2023;472:145036. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cej.2023.145036>

37. Heikal LA, Ashour AA, Aboushanab AR, El-Kamel AH, Zaki II, El-Moslemany RM. Microneedles integrated with atorvastatin-loaded pumpkisomes for breast cancer therapy: A localized delivery approach. *J Control Release.* 2024;376:354-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jconrel.2024.10.013> PMid:39413849

38. Mojeiko G, de Brito M, Salata GC, Lopes LB. Combination of microneedles and microemulsions to increase celecoxib topical delivery for potential application in chemoprevention of breast cancer. *Int J Pharm.* 2019;560:365-76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijipharm.2019.02.011> PMid:30772460

39. Fan M, Zheng J, Huang Y, Lu H, Lu M. Transdermal therapeutic systems in breast cancer therapy. *J Drug Deliv Sci Technol.* 2023;105139. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jddst.2023.105139>

40. Li Y, Liang C, Zhou X. The application prospects of honokiol in dermatology. *Dermatol Ther.* 2022;35(8):e15658. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dth.15658>

41. Hegde AR, Raychaudhuri R, Pandey A, Kalthur G, Mutalik S. Exploring potential formulation strategies for chemoprevention of breast cancer: a localized delivery perspective. *Nanomedicine.* 2021;16(13):1111-32. <https://doi.org/10.2217/nnm-2021-0018> PMid:33949895

42. Patil A, Narvenker R, Prabhakar B, Shende P. Strategic consideration for effective chemotherapeutic transportation via transpapillary route in breast cancer. *Int J Pharm.* 2020;586:119563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijipharm.2020.119563> PMid:32569813

43. Chen L, Zhang C, Xiao J, You J, Zhang W, Liu Y, et al. Local extraction and detection of early stage breast cancers through a microneedle and nano-Ag/MBL film based painless and blood-free strategy. *Mater Sci Eng C.* 2020;109:110402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.msec.2019.110402> PMid:32228911

44. Ma J, Tai Z, Li Y, Li Y, Wang J, Zhou T, et al. Dissolving Microneedle-Based Cascade-Activation Nanoplatform for Enhanced Photodynamic Therapy of Skin Cancer. *Int J Nanomedicine.* 2024;2057-70. <https://doi.org/10.2147/IJN.S443835> PMid:38482522 PMCid:PMC10932757

45. Shao J, Li X, Li Y, Lin J, Huang P. Self-Heating Multistage Microneedle Patch for Topical Therapy of Skin Cancer. *Adv Mater.* 2024;36(15):2308217. <https://doi.org/10.1002/adma.202308217> PMid:38198412

46. Gu Z, Wang C, Ye Y. Enhanced cancer immunotherapy by microneedle patch-assisted delivery. Google Patents; 2024.

47. Edelson J. Transdermal delivery of large agents. Google Patents; 2018.

48. Edelson J. Improved delivery of large agents. Google Patents; 2020.

49. Lu Y, Mantha SN, Crowder DC, Chinchilla S, Shah KN, Yun YH, et al. Microstereolithography and characterization of poly(propylene fumarate)-based drug-loaded microneedle arrays. *Biofabrication.* 2015;7(4):45001. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1758-5090/7/4/045001> PMid:26418306

50. Hamdan IMN, Tekko IA, Matchett KB, Arnaut LG, Silva CS, McCarthy HO, et al. Intradermal delivery of a near-infrared photosensitizer using dissolving microneedle arrays. *J Pharm Sci.* 2018;107(9):2439-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xphs.2018.05.017> PMid:29864428

51. Al-Mayahy MH, Sabri AH, Rutland CS, Holmes A, McKenna J, Marlow M, et al. Insight into imiquimod skin permeation and increased delivery using microneedle pre-treatment. *Eur J Pharm Biopharm.* 2019;139:33-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpb.2019.02.006> PMid:30771455

52. Sabri A, Ogilvie J, McKenna J, Segal J, Scurr D, Marlow M. Intradermal delivery of an immunomodulator for basal cell carcinoma; expanding the mechanistic insight into solid microneedle-enhanced delivery of hydrophobic molecules. *Mol Pharm.* 2020;17(8):2925-37. PMid:32510228 <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.molpharmaceut.0c00347>

53. Ye C, Zhang R. Semiconductor Microneedle Assembly Based on Gene Therapy, Manufacturing Method and Manufacturing Mold. Chinese Pat CN106426729A. 2016;9.

54. Alshammari MK, Albutayh BNA, Alhabib B, Alharbi AS, Almutairi YS, Kamal M, et al. Cancer theranostics employing microneedles: Experimental and patented strategies. *J Drug Deliv Sci Technol.* 2023;83:104402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jddst.2023.104402>

55. Wani A, Kasture K, Nigade O, Nadar D, Shende P. Potential of different types of microneedles in diagnosis and treatment of cancer. In: Design and Applications of Microneedles in Drug Delivery and Therapeutics. Elsevier; 2024. p. 343-77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-13881-2.00017-5>

56. Chen MY, Chen YY, Tsai HT, Tzai TS, Chen MC, Tsai YS. Transdermal delivery of luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone with chitosan microneedles: a promising tool for androgen deprivation therapy. *Anticancer Res.* 2017;37(12):6791-7. <https://doi.org/10.21873/anticanres.12139>

57. Choi S, Kim Y, Lee JW, Park J, Prausnitz MR, Allen MG. Intracellular protein delivery and gene transfection by electroporation using a microneedle electrode array. *Small.* 2012;8(7):1081-91. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smll.201101747> PMid:22328093 PMCid:PMC3516926

58. Choi SO, Kim YC, Park JH, Hutcheson J, Gill HS, Yoon YK, et al. An electrically active microneedle array for electroporation. *Biomed Microdevices.* 2010;12:263-73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10544-009-9381-x> PMid:20012696 PMCid:PMC2905216

59. Cole G, Ali AA, McErlean E, Mulholland EJ, Short A, McCrudden CM, et al. DNA vaccination via RALA nanoparticles in a microneedle delivery system induces a potent immune response against the endogenous prostate cancer stem cell antigen. *Acta Biomater.* 2019;96:480-90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actbio.2019.07.003> PMid:31299353