

Self-assembly of Gd³⁺-bound keplerate polyanions into nanoparticles as a route for the synthesis of positive MRI contrast agents. Impact of the structure on the magnetic relaxivity

Elistratova J., Akhmadeev B., Korenev V., Sokolov M., Nizameev I., Gubaidullin A., Voloshina A., Mustafina A.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© The Royal Society of Chemistry. The present work introduces Gd³⁺ complexes with giant keplerate polyanions as a promising basis for MRI contrast agents. The impact of Gd³⁺ binding with different building blocks of keplerates on the magnetic relaxivity of the complexes is revealed by comparative study of the keplerates [Mo₆O₂₁]₁₂[Mo₂O₄(OAc)]₃₀]₄₂⁻, [Mo₆O₂₁]₁₂[Mo₂O₄(HPO₄)]₃₀]₇₂⁻, and [Mo₆O₂₁]₁₂[Mo₂O₂S₂(OAc)]₃₀]₄₂⁻. Unprecedentedly high longitudinal and transverse relaxivity values (up to 250 and 300 mM⁻¹ s⁻¹ correspondingly) are achieved for the keplerates possessing edl{Mo₂O₄(OAc)} and {Mo₂O₄(HPO₄)} moieties under their 1 : 1 complex formation with Gd³⁺. The transformation of the external pores from Mo₉O₉ to Mo₉O₆S₃ in the {Mo₂O₂S₂(OAc)}-keplerate and an increase in the Gd³⁺-to-keplerate ratio are the factors that decrease the relaxivity. The rapid degradation of the free keplerates in aqueous solutions restricts the use of the Gd³⁺-bound keplerates with 1 : 1 stoichiometry as MRI contrast agents. In this work, the optimized stoichiometry of the complexes, their self-assembly into ultra-small nanoparticles and their hydrophilic coating by a triblock copolymer are highlighted as tools for increasing both the colloid and chemical stability of the keplerate complexes. Optimal keplerate compositions have been identified to achieve a compromise of low cytotoxicity and high stability; these Gd³⁺-bound keplerates exhibit longitudinal and transverse relaxivity values (95 and 114 mM⁻¹ s⁻¹, respectively), well within the region of interest for MRI techniques.

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