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ADVANCEMENTS IN INHALABLE DRUG DELIVERY: TECHNOLOGIES, APPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN PULMONARY AND SYSTEMIC THERAPIES

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ABSTRACT

Inhalable drug delivery systems have revolutionized the treatment of respiratory and systemic diseases by offering precise, localized drug delivery to the lungs. The physiological characteristics of the respiratory system, such as its large surface area and extensive vascularization, make it an ideal site for targeted therapy with minimal systemic side effects. This review explores the evolution of inhalable therapies, from early nebulizers to advanced technologies like dry powder inhalers (DPIs), metered-dose inhalers (MDIs), and smart inhalers. It highlights the scientific basis of particle deposition, the influence of lung anatomy, and the role of particle engineering in optimizing drug delivery. Key challenges, such as device-formulation compatibility and patient adherence, are discussed alongside advancements in nanotechnology, controlled-release systems, and receptor-mediated targeting. The review underscores the growing importance of personalized pulmonary therapy and the integration of digital health technologies to improve patient outcomes. Inhalable drug delivery continues to be a promising field with significant clinical implications.

KEY WORDS: Inhalable drug delivery, Pulmonary therapy, Smart inhalers, Particle engineering, Targeted drug delivery.

INTRODUCTION

Inhalable drug delivery has become a central component in contemporary therapeutics extending the possibilities of delivering treatment to the lungs in a target manner, with increased efficacy and reduced systemic exposure [1–4]. Inhalation therapies have been necessitated by the physiological peculiarities of the respiratory tract, including the large surface area, its significant vascularization, and the great ability to absorb substances, which makes this system specific to the treatment of acute and chronic respiratory diseases. As the art of formulation, device technology and aerosol engineering continue to evolve, inhalable systems have expanded today to include both traditional small molecules and complex biologics, nanoparticles and vaccines. The review points to the scientific basis, the technological development, and clinical applicability of inhalable drug delivery, presenting the basis of its increasing importance in modern medicine [2,4–6].

The purpose of inhalable drug delivery is to deliver drugs to the lungs and heart, the absolute location of bronchodilators and vasoconstrictors respectively.

The reason behind inhalable drug delivery is based on the natural benefits of the pulmonary route, which allows direct deposition of drugs in the site of action, fast onset of therapeutic response, and low systemic adverse effects. The respiratory system has a large surface area of alveoli, low levels of enzyme degradation, and a thin lining which all contribute to ease of drug absorption and high bioavailability. © First-pass metabolism is also avoided by inhalation, as the doses can be reduced, and pharmacokinetics can be better predicted. Inhaled formulations are effective in chronic respiratory diseases including asthma and COPD to provide the duration of symptom control, an improved rate of patient compliance, and optimal response to therapy. Such advantages render inhalable delivery a better and more acceptable systemic system compared to traditional routes.

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Historical and Clinical Significance University of Virginia

The history of inhalation therapy is long and started with the ancient methods of inhaling the vapors of the herbs and took a huge leap with the development of early nebulizers in the 19th century [7, 8]. A key breakthrough came with the development of pressurized metered-dose inhalers (pMDIs) in the middle of the 20th century, which made it possible to administer drugs in a portable, accurate and efficient way. As the years have gone by, other types of inhalers, including dry powdered inhalers, soft-mist inhalers, ultrasonic nebulizers, and smart inhalation devices have continued to enhance efficiency in delivery, dose consistency, and ease of use to patients. Inhalable therapies have made a clinically groundbreaking advance in the treatment of asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary infection and emerging systemic uses. They are increasingly relevant to clinical needs (as illustrated by their role in vaccine delivery, proteins, peptides and nanomedicines) [2, 5, 9].

Objectives and Scope of the Review

The present review seeks to offer a thorough analysis of the inhalable drug delivery systems in terms of its basic mechanisms, formulation approaches, and use in a clinical. It dwells on the aerodynamic principle, physicochemical determinants and biological interactions that dictate the deposition and absorption of drugs in the lungs. The review also analyses the development associated with the inhalation device, such as nebulizers, pMDIs, DPIs, and next generation smart inhalers, as well as novel particle engineering strategies in the development of small molecules, biologics, and nanocarriers. The combination of scientific knowledge and the trend in the existing clinical practice will allow providing a detailed picture of the opportunities, constraints and the future of the sphere of inhalable drugs delivery

Lung Physiology and Anatomy

Human lungs are highly specialized organs that are meant to promote effective exchange of gases and act as an effective pathway of delivering drugs[2,3,5,10,11]. Their complicated branching structure, the trachea to bronchi, bronchioles, and down to millions of alveoli, forms a huge surface area and produces a very thin epithelial layer that is suited to rapid absorption. The lungs have an abundant capillary system, low metabolic rate, and a mucus-ciliary clearance system which plays a role in determining the effectiveness of the inhaled therapeutic drug. The anatomical structure, physiological environment and functional dynamics of the respiratory system is critical in maximising inhalable drug delivery systems because the mentioned parameters directly influence particle deposition, retention and therapeutic efficacy.

Structure and Surface Area of the Lungs.

The lungs have a highly hierarchical structure that is characterized by conducting airways as well as the respiratory areas, where drug absorption would be the primary occurrence [12, 13]. Air passages begin with the trachea and are further divided into 23 generations of branching routes and end up with more than 300 million alveoli. All these alveolar sacs give a large surface area of about 140 m² and are covered by thin, permeable epithelium facilitating efficient gas and drug exchange. The existence of type I and type II pneumocytes, surfactant layers and a large pulmonary vasculature increases the distribution of compounds once inhaled. The unusual anatomical and physiology configuration renders the lungs an ideal location of providing drugs fast and with specific direction.

Problems to Pulmonary Drug Delivery

Although the pulmonary route has its benefits, there are a number of biological and physicochemical barriers to the route that affect the delivery of drugs. Mucus layers, mucociliary clearance, alveolar macrophages and epithelial tight junctions serve to protect the respiratory tract, and could limit the penetration and retention of particles[9,14–16]. Deposition behavior can also change due to variations in airway geometry, airflow patterns, humidity and due to the presence of diseases such as asthma or COPD which also can change the behavior of deposition. Moreover the features of the particles such as size, shape, density, solubility and hygroscopicity are critical in overcoming these barriers. These barriers can only be solved through a comprehensive comprehension of the reasons behind their formation and designing effective inhalable preparations, which attain the best deposition and therapeutic results.

Physics of Particle Deposition

Three major mechanisms determine the deposition of particles in the lungs, namely inertial impaction, gravitational sedimentation, and Brownian diffusion[17]. The most common effects are inertial impaction that takes place in the upper airways where bigger particles (>5 µm) leave the streamlines of the flow and hit the surfaces of the airways. The effects of gravitational sedimentation affect medium-sized particles (1-5 mm) in the bronchioles and alveolar areas in slower airflow or breath-holding. Brownian diffusion influences the ultrafine particles (less than 1 µm), randomly moves and further penetrates to the alveolar spaces. The interaction of particle size, anatomy of airways, breathing patterns and velocity of airflow, controls the eventual deposition profile and these processes are essential to the development of effective inhalation therapies.

Inhalable Drug Formulations

The inhalable drug formulations comprise a wide variety of systems to transport therapeutic agents effectively into the lungs[18]. The primary types are inhalers with dry powder (DPIs), metered dose inhalers (MDIs), and nebulizers that have their own benefits based on the needs of the patients, the attributes of the drugs, and the treatment objectives. Most of the latest concepts have enlarged this picture with new sophisticated platforms like liposomal aerosols and nanoparticle-based suspensions providing the opportunity to control the release, enhance stability, and penetrate the lung more deeply. It is important to understand the principles of formulation and the performance characteristics of these systems in order to design optimized inhaled therapies with an appropriate balance between efficacy, safety and compliance by patients[19–21].

Dry Powder Inhalers (DPI)

Dry powder inhalers administer drugs as small crystals in suspension and the dispersion of the crystals depends on the inspiratory effort of the patient that is to deaggregate and carry the particles into the lungs[21–23]. DPIs are propellant-free and environmentally friendly, stable, portable systems that are appropriate with moisture-resistant drugs. Their efficiency depends on the dispersion and deposition efficiency which is determined by the flowability of powder, the aerodynamic particle size, and resistance to the devices. The DPIs have found extensive applications in the management of chronic respiratory conditions, where they provide an equal dosing consistency as long as they have been adequately designed to fit the profiles of patients with regards to inhalation.

Carrier-based and Carrier-free DPIs

This approach is applied to identify carriers in the data stream

Carrier-based DPIs often employ lactose as an inexpensive excipient to improve the handling of powder, its stability and dose uniformity[23–26]. Through adsorption, the drug particles attach to the carrier surface and dissociate when inhaled hence delivering it effectively. Carrier-free DPIs i.e. with engineered microparticles or nanoparticles, do not require a carrier and permit increased drug loading with enhanced deep lungs deposition. The morphology and dispersibility of particles can be accurately controlled with the help of advanced methods of particle engineering like spray-drying, jet milling, and supercritical fluid processing. Each of the two systems has its own benefits based on drug characteristics and treatment needs.

Formulation Challenges

The process of creating DPIs is associated with a number of challenges such as the cohesion of particles, low flowability, hygroscopicity, and the need to ensure the same level of aerosol functioning with different types of inhalation in patients[22,24,27,28]. The sample of drug and carrier particles can be altered by electrostatic forces, whereas agglomeration and decreased dispersibility can occur because of water sensitivity. Moreover, it is essential to attain optimal fine particle fraction and deagglomeration during the process of inhalation so that the pulmonary deposition is efficient. Such difficulties demand the prudent choice of excipients, sophisticated engineering approach and compatibility of equipment-formulation studies.

Metered Dose Inhalers (MDI)

Metered dose inhalers are pressurized and small devices that provide a certain amount of medication with the use of a propellant. MDIs have fast actuation, consistent dosing and are ubiquitously accepted in clinics to treat respiratory disease including asthma and COPD. They require stability of the formulations, design of the valve system and coordination of actuation and inhalation. Even though MDIs are cost-effective and efficient, the technique used on the patients is critical towards achieving the best therapeutic results and therefore education and training of the device is a significant part of an effective treatment.

Propellant Systems

Contemporary MDIs are mostly filled with hydrofluoroalkane (HFA) propellants, and the chlorofluorocarbons have been substituted by HFA because of environmental factors[29]. HFAs are efficient in aerosolizing, enhancing suspension stability and when using a variety of excipients and surfactants. The selection of propellant also affects spray pattern, the geometry of the plume, particle size distribution and total deposition. To obtain consistent results, formulation scientists have to balance the propellants of the formula, the mechanics of the valve, and the solubility of the drug.

Dose Uniformity

The homogeneous suspension, stability of solutions (suspension) and the use of the correct valves in MDIs controls dose uniformity. Depending on the canister, variability could be caused by sedimentation, creaming or agglomeration of the particles in the canister, which necessitates optimization of the surfactant and a thorough shake down prior to usage. Dose delivery throughout the entire canister life is an important factor in the reliability of its therapeutic use, and the regulatory standards require rigid uniformity testing. Formulation robustness with the help of device engineering makes it

possible to provide dependable dosing even in case of variation in the conditions of use.

Nebulizers

Nebulizers liquefy their formulations and convert them to inhalable aerosols; hence are applicable in patients with inability to produce strong inspiratory flow. They allow delivery of high dose, complicated biologics, and drugs that do not fit DPIs or MDIs. Nebulizers find a wide application in the emergency sector, paediatrics, geriatrics and chronic lung diseases that involve long term inhalation therapy. They are reliant on the size of aerosol droplets, the effectiveness of nebulization, and the design of the device, and the modern technologies are better in their portability and less time of treatment [30, 31].

Jet vs. Ultrasonic Nebulizers.

Jet nebulizers produce droplets of aerosol with the help of compressed air and are associated with durability, ability to work with different formulations, and low price[30]. The ultrasonic nebulizers utilize high frequency vibrations to create aerosols with less noisy operation and higher output rate although they can cause heating and are therefore less appropriate with thermolabile drugs or some suspensions. Jet nebulizers have a superior degree of formulation flexibility but ultrasonic devices are more comfortable to patients and have less treatment time. Selection of device will be based on the nature of the drug, clinical case and patient requirements.

Pediatrics and Elderly Use

Nebulizers are very important in pediatrics and the elderly who might experience a problem of coordinating the inhalation or getting an adequate flow of inspiratory to take the DPIs or MDIs. Their free hands operation, low coordination needs and the capability of administering high doses over long periods of time, makes them the best in these populations. Children may need child friendly interfaces and masks, whereas aged users need simple operation and less physical effort. Nebulizers therefore overcome age-related obstacles and guarantee effective administration of drugs to frail patients.

Novel Delivery Platforms

Development of the inhalation technology has resulted in novel platforms to increase the stability of the drugs, increase the residence time, deep lung targeting, and delivery of complex molecules[32–35]. These systems: liposomal aerosol, nanoparticles suspension, microparticle and engineered hybrid formulations provide controlled release, increased mucosal penetration and have potential to treat pulmonary, as well as systemic disease. New delivery options are a major advancement

in the direction of individualized and novel inhalation therapies.

Liposomal Inhalers

The liposomal inhalers entrap drugs inside phospholipid vesicles, which allow the release to be more sustained, toxicity to be less, and molecules to be stable. Such systems can increase the retention of drugs in the lungs, stabilize the fragile compounds, and deliver specific treatment to disorders, such as pulmonary infections, lung cancer, and cystic fibrosis[36–40]. The liposomal formulations also reduce the systemic exposure and allow the controlled drug release kinetics and hence can be useful in chronic therapy environments.

Nanoparticle Suspensions

The nanoparticle suspensions involve the use of engineered particles, including polymeric nanoparticles, nano-liposomes, metallic nanoparticles, or solid lipid nanoparticles in order to attain deep lung penetration and increased cellular uptake. It helps them penetrate the airways with help of its small size which enhances diffusion in airway mucus and facilitates contact with alveolar epithelial cells. These systems allow the delivery of biologics, nucleic acids and the poorly soluble drugs and also provide tunable release profiles. Inhalable therapeutic nanoparticles have enormous potential in the application of targeted therapy, precision therapy, and regenerative therapy in pulmonology.

Formulation Technologies

Inhalable drug delivery formulation technologies are aimed at production of particles with the best qualities of aerodynamics, chemical stability, and biologic performance to achieve an efficient lung deposition and therapeutic activity[2,3,36,41]. Inhalation products adapted to small molecules, peptides, proteins, and nanocarriers have been developed by advances in particle engineering, choice of excipient and controlled-release strategies. The innovations of state-of-the-art inhalable formulations, using new processing techniques, alongside customized excipient systems, can be of high dispersibility, deep lung penetration, long residence time, and patient outcomes. The subsequent sections illuminate the important formulation technologies that are used to support the design of the next-generation inhalation therapies.

The engineering methods that are used in the processing of particles are described

Particle engineering is at the forefront in formulating inhalable formulations with defined size, morphology, density and surface characteristics which promote aerosolization and deposition[19,42,43]. These methods enable the accurate control of powder properties to reach an aerodynamic diameter of between 1-5 mm to

deliver to the deep lung. The use of sophisticated engineering technologies like spray drying, supercritical fluid processing, jet milling and freeze drying can be used to formulate crystalline, amorphous or composite particles having preferred dispersibility and stability. The flexibility of resulting surface roughness, porosity and hygroscopicity is vital in designing effective DPI, MDI and nebulizable systems.

Spray Drying

One of the common methods of getting respirable powders is through spray drying in which a solution or a suspension of a drug is atomized in a chamber with a heating medium, causing the solvent to evaporate and the formation of particles quickly [44–46]. The process enables the production of fine control of the particle size distribution, porosity, density and morphology through the control of the feed concentration, inlet temperature, type of atomizer used and conditions of drying. Spray drying can be useful especially in the preparation of heat-sensitive proteins, peptides, amorphous dispersions and engineered microparticles that have carriers, e.g. leucine or mannitol. The method is scalable, reproducible and versatile, and as such, it forms a foundation of inhalation powder production today.

Our product is processed using supercritical fluid technology, which is a technique involving the application of solvents under high temperature and pressure to extract the product's components.

4.1.2 Super Critical Fluid Processing

The technology that our product is processed is the supercritical fluid technology, which is the method of using solvents at high temperature and pressure to obtain the components of the product.

Supercritical fluid processing is a method used to produce solvent-free homogeneous sized particles of good aerodynamic performance using the supercritical CO₂[47–50]. Drugs of low solubility and generation of nanoparticles of controlled crystallinity and surface characteristics can be achieved using such methods as Rapid Expansion of Supercritical Solutions (RESS) and Supercritical Anti-Solvent (SAS) processing. It is an environmentally friendly technique, which does not thermally degrade or causes residual solvents and produces a higher dispersible and lung penetrative particle. Supercritical fluid technology can particularly be very beneficial in precision engineering of complex molecules and carrier-free DPI systems.

Sustained Release Systems and mucoadhesive

Mucoadhesive and sustained release inhalation systems are developed provide a higher residence time in lungs to reduce frequency of dosing and improve the therapeutic outcomes of chronic diseases [51–54]. Mucoadhesive polymers include chitosan, carbomers,

and hydroaluronic acid which react with mucin to bind particles to airway surfaces to enhance localized retention. In sustained-release technologies, biodegradable polymers, liposomes, microparticles or hydrogel-based technologies are used to deliver a payload in a gradual manner, reducing drug concentration peaks and troughs. The systems are especially useful in antibiotics, anti-inflammatory agents and biologics that need prolonged exposure to the lungs. Advanced formulations have a significant positive effect on the effectiveness of treatment and patient compliance by enhancing the effectiveness of mucoadhesion and controlled release kinetics.

Excipients and Carriers

Powder flowability, aerosolization, compatibility with devices and inhalable formulation stability would not be maximized, without excipients and carriers. Lactose has been employed as a carrier-based DPI excipient, leucine as a surface-modifying amino acid and polymers like PLGA, PVP and HPMC as a controlled-release or stabilizing agent. The characteristics that are affected by these components include those related to deagglomeration of particles, moisture resistance, dispersibility and adhesion properties of drugs and carriers. Good choice of excipients is very important to ensure that dose is delivered consistently, sensitive molecules are not destroyed, and better deposition patterns are obtained in the respiratory tract.

Lactose, Leucine, Polymers

Lactose is the most popular carrier in DPIs because it is crystalline, has good flow characteristics, and can be used as a carrier, and blends uniformly with micronized drugs. Leucine is an amphiphilic amino acid, which enhances aerosol performance by increasing interparticle distance and corrugated low-density surfaces, thereby increasing dispersibility. Controlled release, particle stabilization, encapsulation efficiency, and enhanced structural robustness are part of the roles played by polymers like PLGA, Eudragit, HPMC, chitosan and PVP. In combination, all these excipients are the heroes of the inhalation formulation design as they provide a dependable delivery and versatile functionality.

The role in Stability and Deposition.

The depositional rates of the alloy are influenced by the atomic composition of the alloy itself.

Excipients are also important in stabilizing inhalable formulations to reduce moisture absorption, eliminate particle aggregation, and protect delicate molecules in case of degradation[3,42,43,55]. Those carriers like lactose provide a uniform drug adhesion-detachment behavior and leucine provides protective surface layers that increase dispersibility and decrease

hygroscopicity. The modulation of density, porosity, and rates of dissolution make polymers physically stable, promote sustained release and enhanced aerodynamic behavior. Together, these components will define the efficiency of deposition in different regions of the lung, alter the uptake of the macrophage as well as predictable therapeutic functioning of different patient groups and inhalation devices.

Targeted Lung Delivery

Targeted lung delivery is expected to gain the benefit of spatial and temporal distribution of inhaled drugs by placing the drug in the respiratory tract to maximize therapeutic response and minimise systemic exposure. The contemporary inhaled therapies are capable of delivering drugs to isolated lung regions or a select group of cellular targets, thereby adjusting particle properties, the techniques of inhalation, and a molecular design approach. These local strategies are essential in the management of local diseases like asthma, COPD, pulmonary infections and lung cancer besides facilitating systemic delivery of peptides and proteins and vaccines. The development of aerodynamic engineering, nanotechnology and receptor-mediated targeting has greatly increased the accuracy as well as the breadth of pulmonary drug delivery systems.

Local vs. Systemic Drug Delivery.

Local pulmonary drug delivery is aimed at treating lung-based diseases, including asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary infections, and others, through the introduction of high medication concentration into the problematic tissues with minimal side effects on the entire body[5,35,56–58]. Instead, systemic delivery through the lungs takes advantage of the large alveolar surface area, thin epithelial barrier, and extensive vascularization to allow rapid uptake of therapeutics into circulation so as to provide an alternative to injections, which is non-invasive. High bioavailability can be reached by Biologics, peptides, hormones and vaccines using this route. The decision between local and systemic delivery is based on the properties of the drug, the desired effect of action, and the therapeutic effect, with the lungs, as a local therapeutic site, and a portal of systemic absorption.

Deep Lung Deposition strategies

To attain deep lung deposition, aerodynamic particle size, density, shape and surface properties must be well controlled to ensure that the particles are carried to the alveolar region effectively. Aerodynamic median mass of 1-3 μg particles are ideal in the process of penetrating the distal airways and not deposited in the upper respiratory tract. Particle engineering, surface corrugation, low-density porous particles and hygroscopic growth modifiers are techniques that

improve alveolar targeting. Inhalation maneuvers, such as slow deep inspiration, breath-holding and optimum device resistance also enhance deposition efficiency. Moreover, the more sophisticated platform, including nanosuspensions, liposomal aerosols, and spray-dried microparticles, allows distributing and retaining in deep lung tissue.

Active vs. Passive Targeting

Passive targeting is based mostly on the aerodynamic characteristics of particles and physiological processes (sedimentation, diffusion and electrostatic interactions) to direct deposition to certain parts of the lung[18,24]. The method is very popular in traditional DPIs, MDIs, and nebulizers. Active targeting however, entails functionality of particles with ligands, antibodies, peptides or molecular motifs that identify distinct receptors or biomarkers on lung epithelial cells, macrophages or tumor tissues. Active targeting increases cellular uptake, increases localization to diseased areas and decreases off-target effects. A strong approach to precision pulmonary therapeutics, particularly of cancer, fibrosis, and nanoparticle-based drug delivery, is the combination of particle engineering with biochemical targeting mechanisms.

Pulmonary Targeting

via receptors. Receptor-mediated targeting takes advantage of receptors that are overexpressed or disease-specific in the pulmonary environment to target the desired specific cellular delivery of a drug[59–62]. Transferrin receptors, folate receptors, integrins, mannose receptors of alveolar macrophages and epithelial growth factor receptors (EGFR) overexpressed in lung cancer are common receptors used in this application. Inhaled formulations may be better bound, internalized, and release drugs in cells by conjugating them appropriately to nanoparticles, liposomes or microparticles. The approach facilitates better therapeutic specificity, lower dosage rate and increased effectiveness in diseases like pulmonary infections, inflammation and lung malignancies. Receptor mediated targeting is one of the significant developments made towards site-specific action in the respiratory tract.

Applications in Therapy

The inhalable drug delivery system has revolutionized the treatment of respiratory and systemic illnesses by providing an accurate, fast, and localized drug delivery into the lungs. Their capacity to avoid first-pass metabolism, attain high concentrations in the locality and reduce systemic toxicity make them essential in treating chronic and infectious lung diseases. Additionally, the new developments in nanotechnology, controlled-release carriers and biologic aerosolization, have increased their use in complicated disease

conditions including lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension and systemic metabolic diseases. As presented in the following subsections, the key clinical uses of the inhalation therapies are in a variety of disease areas.

The pulmonary system suffers from asthma and the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Asthma and COPD are the best-defined therapeutic localities of inhalable drugs delivery, the standard of care of which is composed of inhaled corticosteroids, bronchodilators, anticholinergics, and combination therapies[63–67]. Inhaled drugs have fast bronchodilating action, less airway inflammation, and better symptoms control and minimal systemic exposure. Agents administered by DPIs, MDIs, or nebulizers include salbutamol, formoterol, tiotropium, and budesonide that are characterized as having better lung targeting and increased lung functionality parameters. The development of device engineering, breath-actuated inhalers and smart inhaler technologies has further streamlined dose reliability, individualized therapy monitoring, and patient compliance which has greatly enhanced the overall disease management outcome.

Tuberculosis and Respiratory Infections.

Inhalation treatment has considerable benefits in terms of tuberculosis (TB) and other respiratory diseases because the drug can be directly introduced to the infected lung tissue bypassing poor penetration of oral/systemic therapies. Anti-TB drugs like rifampicin, isoniazid, and bedaquiline inhaled in nanoparticle or liposomal forms have been shown to increase intracellular delivery of the drugs into alveolar macrophages, where *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is located. Inhaled antivirals, antibiotics, monoclonal antibodies and interferons are preferred in cases of viral and bacterial respiratory infections because they are fast acting locally and less toxic systemically. Antimicrobials that are nebulized such as amikacin and colistin are currently predominantly employed in the hospital setting in the cases of severe pneumonia, multidrug-resistant infections, and ventilator-associated conditions.

Cystic Fibrosis

The inhalable drug preparations revolutionize the treatment of cystic fibrosis (CF), treating the obstruction of mucus, lasting infections, and inflammation[68–71]. Tobramycin, aztreonam, and colistin are nebulized antibiotics that are used to address those infections that are persistent in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, which enhances lung function and decreases exacerbations. Hypertonic saline and inhaled mannitol are used to increase the mucociliary clearance, and recombinant human DNase decreases the viscosity of the mucus by degrading the DNA debris in airway secretions. New inhalable gene therapies, CFTR

modulators, and nanoparticle-based systems are being developed to enhance drug delivery across the thickened mucus barrier, which has new promise in disease modification over a long period.

Lung cancer and Pulmonary Hypertension.

Lung cancer can be treated using inhalable agents which allow delivery of chemotherapeutics, immunotherapeutic and targeted agents to local tumor sites, circumventing systemic toxicity and maximizing therapeutic levels in the tumor microenvironment. There has been potential results on nanoparticles, liposomes, inhalable micro particles that are used in transporting drugs like paclitaxel, cisplatin and siRNA in preclinical and clinical trials. Inhaled vasodilators, such as nitric oxide, iloprost, treprostinil, and prostacyclin analogs, provide a rapid onset and better selectivity of the pulmonary arteries of the body by dilation of the pulmonary arteries without any systemic hypotension in pulmonary hypertension. The therapies offer symptomatic palliation, enhanced fitness and quality of life to the sufferers.

Inhaled insulin and systemic delivery are also available

Inhalation insulin is a significant breakthrough in the area of systemic drug delivery through the pulmonary system, which takes advantage of the extensive surface area and smooth alveolar epithelium to absorb rapidly and provide postprandial glycemic regulation. The aerosolisation, absorption and systemic distribution of peptides and proteins without injections are demonstrated by such products as Technosphere 2 - insulin (Abruzzi 2). In addition to insulin, inhalable preparations of hormones, vaccines, analgesics and biologics are currently under development to either substitute or complement parenteral administration. The innovations underscore the growing development of the pulmonary route as a non-invasive delivery systemic platform, leading to improved patient compliance and improved patient comfort.

Regulatory and Clinical Issues.

The regulatory and clinical factors are of great significance in the development, approval and successful use of inhalable drug products. Contrary to traditional dosage delivery methods, inhalation treatments demand strict consideration of formulation delivery and device operation to achieve consistent dose delivery, aerodynamic outcomes and user-friendliness. The regulatory agencies require a rigorous characterization of the behavior of particles, inhaler design, pharmacokinetics and clinical outcome to ensure therapeutic equivalency, safety and reliability. Also, the real-life compliance and patient education are part of optimal clinical benefit since the achievement of optimal

pulmonary drug delivery depends on the device used. All these factors guarantee that inhalable medicines are of high quality, effectiveness, and user-friendly forms.

Inhaler bioequivalence applies to two categories of inhalers, which are Inhalers

The inhaler bioequivalence testing is more complicated than oral preparations since the therapeutic efficacy of inhalers relies on both the drug preparation and the device itself. The regulatory bodies like the FDA and EMA demand a mixture of in vitro, in vivo and occasionally the clinical outcomes to prove equivalence. The main measurements are aerodynamic particle size distribution, uniformity of emitted dose, fraction of fine particles and plume geometry. Pharmacokinetic can be necessary to identify systemic exposure and pharmacodynamics indicators - bronchodilation of asthma can be used to determine therapeutic response. Having bioequivalence is a guarantee that generic and innovator products can be interchanged without any safety or efficacy loss.

Device Approval Guidelines

Guidelines on the approval of devices are aimed at providing a consistent delivery of the desired dose of inhalers in a variety of conditions and situations of patient use. The regulatory measures like FDA Guidance on Combining Products and EMA Guidance on inhalation argue the importance of compatibility of devices and drugs, mechanical stability, dose consistency, and stability of the device during its life. The parameters that manufacturers have to consider include device resistance, actuation force, aerosol plume consistency, and operation at high or low humidity or temperature conditions. The aspect of human factors engineering, such as reviewing ease of usage, error possibility, and labeling readability, is one of the most important elements of device approval that is necessary to operate safely and intuitively by a wide range of patient populations.

Patient Adherence and Training

One of the critical factors in the effectiveness of inhalation therapy is patient adherence because the inaccurate approach can greatly decrease the dose delivery and clinical effectiveness. A large number of patients find coordination, timing, and flow of inhalation to be an issue particularly with MDIs or DPIs. Patient education techniques such as demonstrations, use of a spacer, audiovisual and follow-up assessment should be used to ensure that techniques errors are reduced. The adherence is also facilitated by smart inhalers with sensors and digital applications, which monitor the use of inhalers and inform or remind about the use. The pressures on patient training programs within the clinical evaluation framework have become key elements in

regulatory agencies to guarantee uniform real-life performance.

Pharmacokinetics and Pulmonary Absorption Investigations.

Inhaled drugs must be evaluated pharmacokinetically with special techniques to describe the deposition of the drug in the lungs, its absorption into the system, and local concentrations. In contrast to oral or intravenous products, inhaled therapies can have low systemic exposure thus making the conventional PK assessment difficult. Pulmonary deposition and distribution are measured with the help of such techniques as gamma scintigraphy, PET imaging, and pharmacokinetic modeling. Lung absorption experiments determine the rate and the extent of drug uptake across the alveolar epithelium and determined by the size of the particle, solubility, and mucociliary clearance. The reason why it is important to understand these parameters is to optimize dose design, predict therapeutic response, and regulatory compliance.

Difficulties and Future prospects

Although significant breakthroughs have been made in the sphere of inhalation technology, there are still significant concerns that restrict the entire potential of inhalable drug delivery systems. Incompatible device-formulations, sensitivities in the environment, different techniques in patients and the difficulty of maintaining consistent aerosol performance under different clinical conditions are still key hindrances. At the same time, swift technological revolution in smart inhalers, biomarker-directed treatment and nanotechnology is supporting emerging opportunities of precision pulmonary medicine. The future will be aimed at combining more advanced engineering with digital health technologies and individualized treatment plans to increase patient adherence, safety, and effectiveness. The collaboration of such initiatives will create the future generation of smart patient-centered inhalation therapies.

The compatibility of the devices and formulations studied

The issue of device-formulation compatibility is also one of the most important issues in inhalation therapy since the performance of drugs is determined by the smooth interaction between the formulation and aerosolization mechanism and inhaler device. The differences in the device resistance spray dynamics, particle dispersion energy and actuation force may have a significant impact on the emitted dose and fine particle fraction. Recipes need to be developed to be agglomeration resistant, have consistent aerodynamic characteristics and be reproducible with varying inhalation pressure and environmental conditions. The future innovations will need integrated design methods,

that is, particle engineering, device mechanics, and human factors are optimized to guarantee predictable and robust drug delivery.

Stability and Environmental Issues

Inhalable formulations are extremely susceptible to the environmental conditions; humidity, temperature and oxidative stress which may result in particle agglomeration, chemical degradation or they may lead to changes in aerosol performance. The DPIs can hold water and become followable, whereas the MDIs are based on the consistency of propellant action and the integrity of the valves. Stability Long-term storage stability is a problem particularly with biologics, peptides and nanoparticle systems where denaturation or aggregation of the system needs protection. Greener propellants and inhaler parts that can be refurbished should also become a priority since the global regulatory focus moves to a reduction of carbon emissions. The future studies will be aimed at enhancing the formulation resilience, moisture protection programmes, and environmentally friendly device materials.

Smart inhalers and digital monitoring offer an enhanced chance to monitor asthma progression and its effects on patients via an inhaler, offering an alternative to current methods. <|human|>8.3 Smart Inhalers and Digital Monitoring Smart inhalers and digital monitoring can provide an even better opportunity to track the progression of asthma and its impact on the patient through an inhaler, which is an alternative to modern approaches.

Smart inhalers are one of the most significant advances in the inhalation therapy because they combine a sensor, the ability to be connected wirelessly, and

digital platforms to track the level of inhaler use, technique, and adherent behavior in real-time. These gadgets may trace actuation times, inhalation flow patterns and frequency of utilization, which gives patients and clinicians information-based insights to maximize treatment results. Smart inhalers are connected to mobile applications that allow customized alerts, coaching on technique and remote monitoring that have significantly enhanced management of diseases in asthma, COPD, and chronic respiratory diseases. The further perspectives are the AI-assisted prediction of adherence, connection with telemedicine platform, and real-time dose optimization through support of physiological feedback.

Pulmonary therapy may be individualized by using a personalized treatment plan. <|human|>8.4 Personalized Pulmonary Therapy Pulmonary therapy can be individualized with the use of a personalized treatment plan.

Pulmonary therapy is personalized to match inhalation treatment to the individual patient which depends on the physiological parameters, genetic profiles, disease phenotypes, and behavioral pattern. New technologies like computational modeling, digital twin of the respiratory system, and advanced imaging, and multi-omics technologies can accurately predict drug deposition, therapeutic response, and optimal dosing strategies. Biomarker-directed targeting, tailored particle engineering, and settings of the device increase the specificity of pulmonary treatments even further. Inhalable therapies of the future could be tailored to the geometry of the airways, disease progression, and responsive biomarkers and move inhalation medicine towards a wholly personalized and precision-driven concept.

Table 1: Types of Inhalation Devices and Their Characteristics.

Device Type	Key Features	Use Case
Dry Powder Inhalers (DPI)	Propellant-free, breath-actuated, portable	Chronic respiratory conditions (e.g., asthma, COPD)
Metered Dose Inhalers (MDI)	Propellant-driven, fast actuation, consistent dosing	Widely used in asthma/COPD treatment
Nebulizers	Converts liquid to mist, good for high doses or weak breath	Pediatrics, geriatrics, emergency care

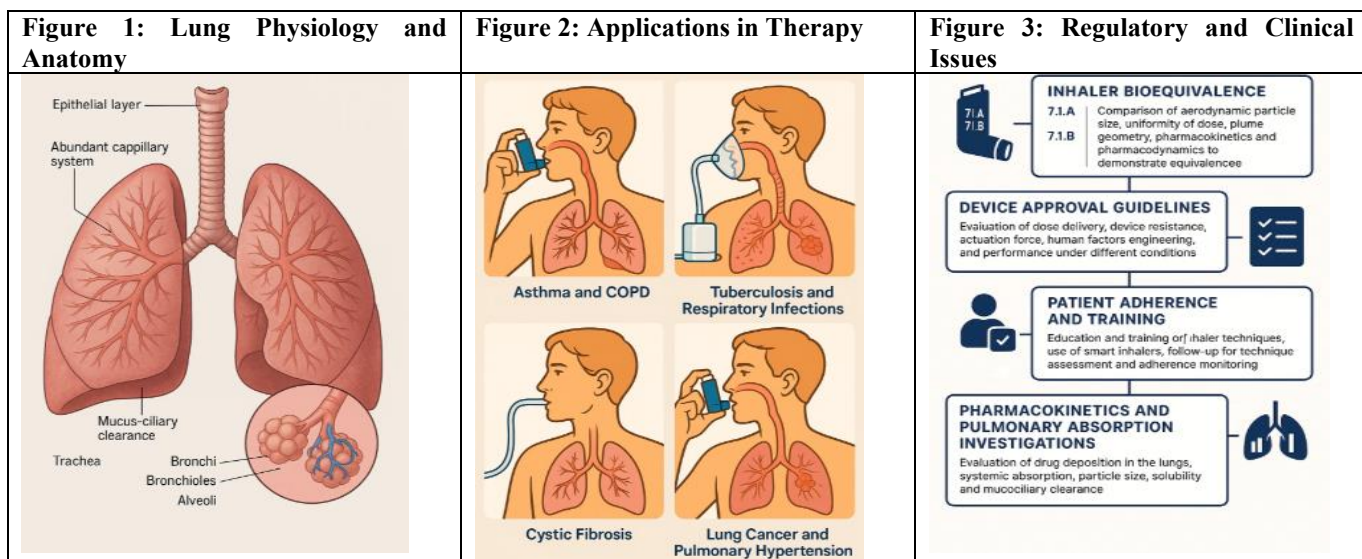
Table 2: Particle Engineering Technologies and Their Functions.

Technology	Purpose	Applications
Spray Drying	Produces	DPIs,
Supercritical Fluid Processing	Solvent-free nanoparticle production	Carrier-free systems, precision formulations
Jet Milling	Size reduction and	Crystalline powders, DPI formulations

Table 3: Local vs. Systemic Inhaled Drug Delivery

Delivery Type	Target	Benefits	Example Conditions
Local	Lung tissue	High local concentration, fewer systemic side effects	Asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis
Systemic	Entire body via alveolar	Non-invasive, fast onset, bypasses first-pass	Diabetes (inhaled insulin),

	absorption	metabolism	vaccines
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CONCLUSION

The delivery of inhalation drugs has been revolutionized in the formulation science, development of devices, and therapeutics, which have empowered its utilization in the central modality of managing pulmonary and systemic ailments. The availability of innovations in both particle technology (e.g., engineered nanoparticles), excipient technology, and smart inhaler technology, has broadened the number of molecules (small drugs to biologics) that can be delivered efficiently to the lungs. This has led to increased accuracy of aerosol delivery, increased targeting to the lungs and better pharmacokinetic predictability which has shown significant advances in contemporary inhalation therapeutics.

One of the key effects of these developments is that patient outcomes and treatment precision have significantly increased. Targeted lung delivery now allows increased local drug concentrations, less systemic toxicity and quicker activations of action, which has been proven especially in asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, and pulmonary infections. New development of receptor-mediated

targeting, sustained-release respiratory systems, and digital methods of monitoring has further improved disease management, compliance, and optimization of real-time treatment. All these capabilities lead to patient-centred, efficient and outcomes-based respiratory care.

The next-generation studies and clinical trials should be aimed at enhancing the compatibility of devices and formulations, enhancing the long-term stability of formulation, and enhancing the digital health implementation to tailored therapy. Further exploitation of nanocarriers, gene delivery systems and inhalable biologics will further expand the therapeutic potential whereas regulatory frameworks will have to change to accommodate more complex combination products and smart inhaler technologies. Patient education, inhaler technique evaluation, and adherence monitoring should be the priority of clinicians to achieve real- Life therapeutic success. On balance, inhalation drug delivery is a field that is undergoing tremendous innovation, and its future remains highly prospective to re-establish precise respiratory and systemic therapeutics.

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