

4.5 <i>In vitro</i> protein expression studies.....	95
4.5.1 Cell Lysate Preparation.....	95
4.5.2 Gel Casting and Electrophoresis.....	97
4.5.3 Protein Transfer.....	99
4.5.4 Western blotting.....	100
4.6 Biodistribution Studies.....	101
4.7 Tumor Regression Studies.....	102
4.8 References.....	104

## **Chapter 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

5.1 Synthesis of Polymer Conjugates.....	107
5.2 Characterization of Polymer Conjugates.....	110
5.2.1 Structural Analysis by <sup>1</sup> H- NMR.....	110
5.2.2 SYBR Green I Binding Assay.....	115
5.2.3 Electrophoretic Mobility Shift Assay (EMSA) .....	118
5.2.4 DNase I Protection Assay.....	123
5.2.5 Heparin Challenge/Dissociation Assay.....	124
5.2.6 Cytotoxicity Assay by MTT.....	126
5.3 Formulation of Nanoplexes.....	129
5.4 Characterization of Nanoplexes.....	130
5.4.1 Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS) Studies.....	130
5.4.2 Zeta Potential Studies.....	132
5.4.3 Transmission Electron Microscopy.....	135
5.4.4 <i>In vitro</i> Transfection (GFP Expression) Studies.....	136
5.4.4.1 GFP Expression in 293T Cells by Fluorimetry & Microscopy.....	137
5.4.4.2 GFP Expression in 293T Cells by Flow Cytometry.....	140
5.4.4.3 GFP Expression in CB-MSK Cells by Fluorimetry.....	141
5.4.4.4 GFP Expression in CB-MSK by Flow Cytometry and Microscopy.....	142
5.4.4.5 GFP Expression in U87MG Cells by Flow Cytometry.....	145
5.4.4.6 GFP Expression in SKOV3 and NT8e cells by Flow cytometry.....	149
5.4.4.7 GFP Expression in SKOV3 and NT8e cells by Microscopy.....	152
5.4.5 Time Dependent Transfection Study.....	153

5.4.6 Stability of Nanoplexes.....	154
5.4.7 BMP-2 Production in hBMSC cells.....	156
5.4.8 pDNA (pp53) Digestion Study.....	157
5.4.8 Cell Cycle Analysis in NT8e cells.....	158
5.5 <i>In vitro</i> protein expression studies.....	159
5.6 Biodistribution Studies.....	162
5.7 Tumor Regression Studies.....	165
<b>Chapter 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	
6.1 Summary.....	172
6.2 Conclusions.....	175

## List of Figures

Sr. No.	Figures	P. No.
Figure 2.1	Report related to statistics for brain and other nervous system cancer in the United States provided by National Cancer Institute	10
Figure 2.2	Facts about brain tumors	11
Figure 2.3	Brain and CNS tumors are disseminated according to the site of occurrence	13
Figure 2.4	Brain and CNS tumors are disseminated according to the tumor histology.	13
Figure 2.5	Typical drawing of glial cells	14
Figure 2.6	Overview of the human gene therapy	18
Figure 2.7	Schematic representation of extracellular barriers for nonviral nanoparticulate DNA carriers	26
Figure 2.8	Schematic representation of intracellular barriers for nonviral nanoparticulate DNA carriers	26
Figure 2.9	The transfection of lipid mediated gene carriers after typical internalization by endocytosis	29
Figure 2.10	Barriers to gene transfer	33
Figure 2.11	Various morphological structures arise out of DNA carrier complexes.	36
Figure 2.12	Gene delivery vehicle uptake proceeds via two main endocytic pathways with different intracellular trafficking mechanisms	38
Figure 2.13	Typical sequence of steps occurring from administration to internalization of nonviral gene carriers	38
Figure 2.14	Typical cell cycle	43
Figure 4.1	Schematic overview of the nanoplex preparation and transfection protocol	87
Figure 5.1	Schematic of amide bond formation using carbodiimide chemistry	108
Figure 5.2	Schematic of cholic acid polymer conjugate (PEI-ChA) formation using polyethylenimine and cholic acid	109
Figure 5.3	Schematic of synthesis of cholic acid polymer conjugates with	110

	polyethylenimine/polyallylamine (PEI/PAA)	
Figure 5.4	Typical <sup>1</sup> H-NMR of ChA in D <sub>2</sub> O showing characteristic peaks corresponding to ChA protons ( $\delta \sim 0.95$ ppm)	111
Figure 5.5	Typical <sup>1</sup> H-NMR of ChA substituted PEI2 in DMSO, showing characteristic peaks corresponding to PEI ( $\delta \sim 2.5-2.8$ ppm) and ChA protons ( $\delta \sim 0.95$ ppm)	112
Figure 5.6	Typical <sup>1</sup> H-NMR of ChA substituted PAA15 in D <sub>2</sub> O, showing characteristic peaks corresponding to PAA ( $\delta \sim 1.3-1.7$ ppm) and ChA protons ( $\delta \sim 0.95$ ppm)	112
Figure 5.7	<sup>1</sup> H-NMR spectra PEI2 and ChA substituted PEI2 in DMSO, showing characteristic peaks corresponding to PEI ( $\delta \sim 2.5-2.8$ ppm) and ChA protons ( $\delta \sim 0.95$ ppm)	113
Figure 5.8	<sup>1</sup> H-NMR spectra PAA15 and ChA substituted PAA15 in D <sub>2</sub> O, showing characteristic peaks corresponding to PAA ( $\delta \sim 1.3-1.7$ ppm) and ChA protons ( $\delta \sim 0.95$ ppm)	113
Figure 5.9	Correlation between the lipid:polymer feed ratio (mol:mol) and the substitution levels achieved for PEI2-ChA, PEI25-ChA and PAA15-ChA conjugates	114
Figure 5.10	Binding curves for three series of polymer conjugates (A. PEI2, B. PEI25, and C. PAA15) as obtained after complexation with pDNA at different polymer:plasmid weight ratios. %pDNA binding values obtained from SYBR green I assay were plotted against polymer:plasmid weight ratios	116
Figure 5.11	EMSA for PEI2 and PEI2-ChA conjugates	120
Figure 5.12	EMSA for PEI25 and PEI25-ChA conjugates	121
Figure 5.13	EMSA for PAA15 and PAA15-ChA conjugates	122
Figure 5.14	Comparison of BC50 values and 100% binding values as obtained by SYBR green I assay and EMSA, respectively, for three different polymers and their conjugates at various polymer:plasmid DNA weight ratios	123

Figure 5.15	Protection of plasmid DNA by polymer and polymer conjugates against DNase I treatment	124
Figure 5.16	Qualitative evaluation of dissociation of nanoplexes of polymer conjugates with pDNA by anion (heparin) challenge at concentrations 0.01, 0.05, 0.1, 0.5 mg/ml (the complexes were formed in 150 mM saline)	125
Figure 5.17	Dissociation assay for nanoplexes by anion challenge (heparin), at concentrations ranging from 0.01 mg/ml to 1.0 mg/ml (the complexes were formed in 150 mM saline with 10% DMEM containing 5% serum) <b>A.</b> assay results for PEI2 and <b>B.</b> assay results for PEI2-ChA nanoplexes	126
Figure 5.18	The cytotoxicity of PEI2 (Panel A), PEI25 (Panel B) and PAA15 (Panel C) polymers and their ChA conjugates on 293T cells	128
Figure 5.19	Particle size of the nanoplexes prepared with different polymers (PEI2, PEI25 and PAA15) or their conjugates	131
Figure 5.20	Typical particle size distribution graph showing hydrodynamic diameter (in nm)	132
Figure 5.21	Zeta potential ( $\zeta$ ) of nanoplexes prepared with different polymers (PEI2, PEI25 and PAA15) or their conjugates	134
Figure 5.22	Typical zeta potential ( $\zeta$ ) graph showing zeta potential ( $\zeta$ ) in mV for nanoplexes with Tf (A) and without Tf (B)	135
Figure 5.23	Morphology of nanoplexes (89,000 $\times$ magnification) made with unmodified and modified polymers (PEI2, PEI25 and PAA15) with plasmid DNA at weight ratio 10, as observed by Transmission Electron Microscopy (Philips/FEI (Morgagni))	136
Figure 5.24	Transfection efficiencies of polymer conjugates with different substitution ratios from three different polymer series (A. PEI2, B. PEI25 and C. PAA15) as evaluated in 293T cells using gWIZ-GFP plasmid.	138
Figure 5.25	Representative fluorescent microscopy images of 293T cells 24 h after treatment of polyplexes of indicated polymers and gWIZ-GFP. The	139

	polymer:pDNA ratio was 10 for PEI25 and 15 for all the other polymers	
Figure 5.26	Transfection efficiencies of PEI2, PEI25 and PEI2-ChA with different levels of lipid substitution evaluated in 293T cells using gWIZ-GFP plasmid, 24 h post nanoplexes addition	141
Figure 5.27	Transfection efficiencies of polymer conjugates of PEI2 (PEI2-ChA), as evaluated in 293T cells using gWIZ-GFP plasmid 24 h post nanoplexes addition	142
Figure 5.28	Fluorescent images of CB-MSC, 48 after treatment of nanoplexes of polymer or polymer conjugates and plasmid gWIZ-GFP at polymer to plasmid weight ratio 10	143
Figure 5.29	Transfection efficiency of nanoplexes prepared with polymer or polymer conjugates with different substitution ratios from two polymer series (PEI2, PEI25) evaluated in CB-MSC using gWIZ-GFP plasmid as analyzed by flow cytometry. Panel A, B and C represents mean GFP fluorescence, %GFP positive cells and cell concentration for PEI2 and its conjugates, whereas panel D, E and F represent same parameters, respectively, for PEI25 and its conjugates	144
Figure 5.30	Correlation between number of lipids/PEI and transfection efficiency of polymer conjugates in terms of mean GFP fluorescence obtained in CB-MSC using gWIZ-GFP ( $r^2$ value of 0.498 and 0.300 was obtained for PEI2 and PEI25 conjugates, respectively)	145
Figure 5.31	The % GFP positive U87MG cells (after normalization) corresponding to different treatment groups with and without transferrin	147
Figure 5.32	Flow cytogram showing GFP positive and negative cells (shift from gated region) corresponding to different treatment groups with and without transferrin	148
Figure 5.33	Gated region of control cell population for NT8e cells	149
Figure 5.34	GFP expression for nanoplexes prepared in 150 mM saline with	150

	polymer to plasmid weight ratio of 10 (B) and 12 (C) in NT8e cells after 48 h by fluorescence microscopy; A is cells treated only with 150 mM saline	
Figure 5.35	Gated region of control cell population for SKOV-3 cells	151
Figure 5.36	GFP expression for nanoplexes prepared in 150 mM saline with polymer to plasmid weight ratio of 10 (B) and 12 (C) in SKOV-3 cells after 48 h by fluorescence microscopy; A is cells treated only with 150 mM saline	151
Figure 5.37	GFP expression for nanoplexes prepared in 150 mM saline with polymer to plasmid weight ratio of 10 (B) and 12 (C) in NT8e cells after 48 h by fluorescence microscopy; A is cells treated only with 150 mM saline	152
Figure 5.38	GFP expression for nanoplexes prepared in 150 mM saline with polymer to plasmid weight ratio of 10 (B) and 12 (C) in SKOV-3 cells after 48 h by fluorescence microscopy; A is cells treated only with 150 mM saline	152
Figure 5.39	Time course study with successful polymer conjugates from PEI2 and PEI25 conjugates as evaluated in CB-MSA using gWIZ-GFP plasmid. Panels A, B and C represents mean GFP fluorescence, %GFP of positive cells and mean GFP fluorescence of GFP positive cells for PEI2 and its conjugates, while panels D, E and F represents the same parameters for PEI25 and its conjugates)	154
Figure 5.40	Mean fluorescence intensity of FL1+ cells for treatment groups with nanoplexes with 'no incubation' after preparation and '24 h incubation' after preparation (incubation at RT)	155
Figure 5.41	BMP-2 production in hBMSC cells using the nanoplexes prepared with PEI2-ChA and PEI25. No treatment group was used as a control (with 150 mM saline) and plasmid BMP-2 group was used as negative control	157
Figure 5.42	Gel electrophoresis image showing p53 insert	157

Figure 5.43	Cell cycle analysis in NT8e cells showing cell polulation corresponding cell cycle phases (G0-G1, G2-M and S phases)	158
Figure 5.44	Calibration curve of BSA by Lowry's protein estimation assay.	160
Figure 5.45	The p53 protein was harvested (25 µg) and analyzed for the expression by western blot analysis using anti-mouse primary antibody p53 in NT8e cells (A) and SKOV-3 cells (B)	161
Figure 5.46	In vivo imaging of mice treated with nanoplexes of PEI2-ChA without transferrin (A, B & C) and with transferrin (D, E & F). Control mice (G) wers treated only with 150 mM saline. H & I are images for organs isolated from animals treated with and without transferrin	163
Figure 5.47	Bright light (A) and UV light (B) images of organs isolated from the mouse treated with transferrin containing nanoplexes of polymer conjugate (PEI2-ChA) with pDNA	164
Figure 5.48	Treatment with wild-type plasmid p53 induces regression of ectopic solid tumors. Pictures showing tumor volume of untreated/control mice (B) and mice treated with transferrin containing nanoplexes of PEI2-ChA with plasmid p53 (A). The numbers in the pictures denotes in-house animal numbers for identification and are unique for each animal	165
Figure 5.49	Tumor size of two groups (termed as control and treated) after tumor induction (cm)	167
Figure 5.50	Tumor size of control and treated group after treatment (cm) (p<0.001)	167

## List of Tables

Sr. No.	Tables	P. No.
Table 2.1	Spending by Therapeutic Area in 2017, Pharmerging Markets	9
Table 2.2	Commonly inherited cancers and associated tumor suppressor genes	19
Table 2.3	Distinct characteristics of viral and nonviral gene carriers	23
Table 1.4	The various cationic polymers, copolymers both block and grafted studied as gene carriers.	30
Table 4.1	Solubility studies for polymers (PEI2, PEI25 & PAA15 and ChA) used for polymer conjugate synthesis	75
Table 4.2	Reactants and their quantities used for synthesis of polymer conjugates of PEI 2 kDa. Values in the bracket represents theoretical feed ratio chosen for actual reaction	77
Table 4.3	Reactants and their quantities used for synthesis of polymer conjugates of PEI 25 kDa. Values in the bracket represents theoretical feed ratio chosen for actual reaction	77
Table 4.4	Reactants and their quantities used for synthesis of polymer conjugates of PAA 15 kDa. Values in the bracket represents theoretical feed ratio chosen for actual reaction	78
Table 4.5	Calculation of polymer, conjugates, plasmid DNA and SYBR Green dye I as per volume and weight basis for pDNA binding studies by SYBR Green I assay	80
Table 4.6	Calculation of polymer or conjugates, plasmid DNA and gel loading dye as per volume basis for pDNA binding studies by EMSA	81
Table 4.7	Calculation of polymer or conjugates, plasmid DNA and gel loading dye for DNase I protection assay	82
Table 4.8	Calculation of quantity of polymer conjugate, plasmid DNA and heparin used for preparation of nanoplexes in 150 mM HEPES buffered saline for anion challenge assay	83
Table 4.9	Calculation of quantity of polymer or polymer conjugate, plasmid DNA and heparin used for preparation of nanoplexes in 150 mM HEPES	83

	buffered saline for anion challenge assay	
Table 4.10	Calculation of quantity of polymer/ polymer conjugate for cytotoxicity study in 293T cell line using MTT assay	84
Table 4.11	Treatment of 293T cells with nanoplexes prepared with different polymer or polymer conjugates in 150 mM saline	87
Table 4.12	Treatment of U87MG cells with nanoplexes prepared with different polymer or polymer conjugates with or without transferrin in 150 mM saline	90
Table 4.13	Sample preparation for standard graph using bovine serum albumin (BSA) for total protein estimation using Lowry's protein estimation assay	96
Table 4.14	Dilution of cell lysates from the NT8e and SKOV-3 cells for estimation of total protein using Lowry's protein assay	96
Table 5.1	Substitution level achieved for polymer conjugates corresponding to theoretical feed ratio of lipid:polymer (mol/mol)	114
Table 5.2	Average % bound pDNA values for unmodified polymer and its conjugates (PEI2) corresponding to different polymer to plasmid DNA weight ratio	117
Table 5.3	Average % bound pDNA values for unmodified polymers and their conjugates (PEI25) corresponding to different polymer to plasmid DNA weight ratio	118
Table 5.4	Average % bound pDNA values for unmodified polymers and their conjugates (PAA15) corresponding to different polymer to plasmid DNA weight ratio	118
Table 5.5	Particle size of the nanoplexes prepared with different polymers or polymer conjugates (three different series) prepared in 150 mM saline at polymer:plasmid ratio of 10	130
Table 5.6	Zeta potential ( $\zeta$ ) of the nanoplexes prepared with different polymers or polymer conjugates	133
Table 5.7	Treatment groups of nanoplexes with corresponding mean %GFP	146

	positive cells after normalization in U87MG cells	
Table 5.8	Cell cycle analysis in NT8e cells	159
Table 5.9	Calibration plot of BSA by Lowry's protein estimation assay	159
Table 5.10	Treatment groups for protein expression studies of p53 in two different cell lines (i.e. NT8e and SKOV-3 cells). PEI25 was used as positive control and naked pDNA as negative control	160
Table 5.11	Tumor size of control group at tumor induction and post-tumor induction (cm <sup>3</sup> )	166
Table 5.12	Tumor size of treated group before and after treatment (cm <sup>3</sup> )	166