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NOVEL DRUG DELIVERY IN MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HERBAL MEDICINES: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Constipation, a prevalent gastrointestinal disorder affecting a significant portion of the population, necessitates effective and targeted therapeutic interventions. This article explores the multifactorial nature of constipation, its causes, and various strategies for colon-specific drug delivery systems. Traditional oral medication often proves ineffective for colon disorders due to premature absorption in the upper gastrointestinal tract. Colon-specific drug delivery systems, including pH-dependent, time-dependent, pressure-controlled, micro-flora activated, prodrugs, and newly developed technologies like Pulsincap, Osmotic Controlled Drug Delivery, and CODES™, offer promising avenues for improved treatment outcomes. The article also delves into the herbal alternatives used for constipation, such as Senna, Cascara, Frangula, Aloe, and Rhubarb. Nonpharmacologic approaches, including lifestyle modifications and increased fluid intake, complement pharmacological interventions. Understanding the causes, associated medications, and diverse treatment modalities is crucial for comprehensive constipation management.

Keywords – *Constipation, newly developed technologies, Laxatives, colon specific drug delivery system.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Constipation is characterized by delayed defecation and the development of hard stool, stemming from various etiological factors. The diminished intestinal motility associated with aging, emotional influences, a diet low in bulk, and conditions such as atonic or spastic colon, chronic amoebiasis, and pharmacological side effects can contribute to this gastrointestinal disorder. Additionally, intentional avoidance or cessation of fecal evacuation may precipitate constipation.

This prevalent disorder affects a substantial portion of the North American population, with prevalence estimates ranging from 12% to 19%, and up to 27%. Annually, constipation necessitates approximately 2.5 million physician office visits and leads to 92,000 hospitalizations. The economic impact is noteworthy, with an annual expenditure of $800 million on over-the-counter laxatives. Projections indicate a trajectory towards increased financial allocation, reaching an estimated $854 million per year by 2028.

The multifactorial nature of constipation underscores the importance of comprehensive approaches to address its diverse causative factors, ranging from lifestyle modifications to targeted pharmacological interventions. Furthermore, heightened awareness within the scientific and medical communities is imperative for advancing effective management strategies and reducing the societal and economic burden associated with constipation.[1]

Oral administration has been the most convenient and widely utilized way of medication delivery. Solid oral dose forms have traditionally been intended to release their drug load in the upper gastrointestinal system, where circumstances are more conducive to drug disintegration and absorption. Controlling the location of medication release from oral formulations has recently received more attention in order to improve patient compliance and treatment efficiency.[2]

Oral medication is typically ineffective in treating colon disorders since most orally delivered pharmaceuticals are absorbed before reaching the colon. As a result, colon specific drug delivery systems that can transport medications to the lower GI tract without releasing them into the upper GI tract might be predicted to improve the quality of life for individuals suffering from colon specific disorders. If the pharmacological compounds were targeted directly at the site of action in the colon, treatment may be more successful. Lower dosages may be sufficient, and if so, systemic adverse effects may be decreased.[3] If medications were specifically focused at the colon, many major illnesses of the colon could be able to be treated more successfully. Therefore, effective treatment for many chronic illnesses may depend on targeted medication administration with a suitable release pattern. Colon-specific delivery offers the potential to solve significant unmet therapeutic requirements, such as oral administration of macromolecular medications, in addition to offering more effective treatment for colon-related disorders.[4]

Colon-specific drug delivery systems offer several potential therapeutic advantages. Medical rationales for the development of orally administered colonic drug platforms include: [a] the opportunity to reduce adverse effects in the treatment of colonic diseases like, constipation, ulcerative colitis, colorectal cancer, chorn's diseases and amoebiasis by topical application of drugs, active at the mucosal level; [b] the elucidation of the mode of action of some nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs] such as sulindac [metabolized in the colon to the active moiety, sulindac sulfide] [5] that were found to interfere with the proliferation of colon polyps [first stage in colon carcinoma], possibly in a local manner; [c] the recognition that in some cases, the colon is capable of absorbing drugs efficiently; [d] accumulated evidence that drug absorption enhancement works better in the colon than in the small intestine; [6] [e] the anticipation that protein drugs can be absorbed better from the large bowel owing to hypothetic reduced proteolytic activity in this organ [7] and [f] the unique metabolic activity of the colon, which makes it an attractive organ for drug delivery systems designers. [8]

Irritable bowel syndrome [IBS], constipation, and colorectal cancer are examples of disorders unique to the colon. Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are further examples of IBD. Over 4 million individuals in India suffer from constipation on a regular basis. According to research, most of us keep toxins and dietary waste in the colon for too long. This typically results in firm, challenging-to-pass stools from a low-fiber diet. Serious health issues like colon and bowel cancer, hemorrhoids, diverticulosis, varicose veins, and hiatal hernias might result from this circumstance.[9]

2. STRATEGIES FOR COLON SPECIFIC DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEMS

2.1 pH dependent drug delivery system

pH-dependent colon-targeted drug delivery systems represent a promising advancement in drug delivery, offering targeted release in the colon to minimize systemic side effects and enhance therapeutic efficacy. Employing pH-sensitive polymers, such as Eudragit L and S, enables controlled drug release in response to the acidic colonic environment. Eudragit's pH-dependent solubility properties make it a valuable choice for colon-targeted systems, providing advantages like improved therapeutic efficacy, reduced side effects, and enhanced patient compliance. These systems can be tailored for sustained drug release, optimizing treatment outcomes across various diseases and conditions. Overall, pH-dependent colon-targeted drug delivery systems offer a scientifically sound approach for efficient and targeted drug delivery.[10]

2.2 Time dependent system

The development of a time-dependent system for colon-targeted drug delivery represents a pivotal advancement in pharmacology. This innovative approach revolutionizes medication administration by specifically targeting the colon, a crucial site for drug

absorption. Through the utilization of time-dependent mechanisms, precise drug release at the intended site is achieved, ensuring optimal therapeutic effects while minimizing side effects. This targeted drug delivery system offers numerous advantages, including enhanced drug bioavailability, reduced dosing frequency, improved patient compliance, and superior treatment outcomes.

The system incorporates various strategies such as pH-sensitive polymers, prodrug activation, and time-controlled release mechanisms. Enteric coating is employed to prevent rapid swelling and disintegration in the upper gastrointestinal tract, as other controlled-release components based on mechanisms like swelling [gelling], osmosis, or a combination are often included in time-release formulations.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist in formulating a system capable of withstanding the diverse physiological conditions of the gastrointestinal tract. Overcoming these challenges and advancing the time-dependent system for colon-targeted drug delivery holds the promise of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of pharmaceutical treatments, with widespread benefits for patients worldwide. [11-13]

2.3 Pressure controlled drug delivery system

The colon experiences heightened pressure dynamics attributed to peristalsis in comparison to the small intestine. A potential approach to address this involves water-insoluble ethyl cellulose-based pressure-controlled colon-delivery capsules. In these systems, drug release occurs after the disintegration of a water-insoluble polymer capsule under the elevated pressure within the colon lumen. The key factor governing the formulation's breakdown is the thickness of the ethyl cellulose membrane, with capsule density and size also exerting an influence on the mechanism.

Notably, the colon's luminal material exhibits greater viscosity compared to the small intestine due to enhanced water reabsorption in the colon. Consequently, challenges in oral drug delivery systems for the colon arise due to potential issues related to drug dissolution in this milieu. The medication in pressure-controlled ethyl cellulose single-unit capsules assumes a liquid form.

Upon administering pressure-controlled capsules to individuals, observed lag durations of three to five hours highlight delays in medication absorption. This scientific understanding underscores the complexities involved in formulating effective drug delivery systems for the colon under pressure-controlled conditions.[13]

2.4 Micro-flora activated systems

The colon's microflora, comprising primarily anaerobic bacteria at concentrations of 1011–1012 CFU/mL, plays a vital role in fermenting undigested substrates like polysaccharides from the small intestine to meet its energy needs. This fermentation involves a variety of enzymes, such as glucuronidase, xylosidase, arabinosidase, galactosidase, nitroreductase, azareducatase, deaminase, and urea dehydroxylase.

Utilizing biodegradable polymers for colon-specific drug delivery is a targeted strategy. These polymers shield the drug from the stomach and small intestine, releasing it in the colon where biodegradable enzymes are exclusive. Upon reaching the colon, the polymers undergo breakdown by enzymes, microorganisms, or degradation of the polymer's backbone. This leads to a decrease in molecular weight and mechanical strength, facilitating drug release. This approach offers a site-specific and effective means for colon-specific medication delivery. [14-15]

2.5 Prodrugs

The term "prodrug" refers to a pharmacologically inert derivative of a parent drug molecule that has to undergo spontaneous or enzymatic transformation in order to release the active drug in vivo. For colonic distribution, the prodrug is intended to undergo enzymatic hydrolysis in the colon, releasing the active drug moiety from the drug carrier, and minimal hydrolysis in the upper tracts of the GIT. Other connections that are formed with the medication connected to hydrophobic moieties such amino acids, glucoronic acids, glucose, glactose, cellulose, etc. are vulnerable to bacterial hydrolysis, particularly in the colon.

The prodrug technique has certain drawbacks, including the fact that its formulation is dependent on the functional group that may be found on the drug moiety for chemical coupling. Prodrugs are also novel chemical entities that require extensive testing before being utilized as carriers. [16-17]

3. NEWLY DEVELOPED COLON SPECIFIC DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEM

3.1 Intestinal pressure-controlled colon delivery capsules

Peristaltic contractions induce an elevated luminal pressure in the large intestine, surpassing that of the small intestine. This disparity arises from the increased viscosity of the large intestine's contents due to water reabsorption. Numerous investigations have explored harnessing the heightened colonic luminal pressure for the development of colon-specific drug delivery systems. These devices leverage the greater colonic pressure to facilitate drug administration to the colon as opposed to the small intestine.

However, the reabsorption of water from the colon results in a highly viscous luminal material, posing a challenge for site-specific drug delivery. The intricate interplay of luminal pressure dynamics and material viscosity underscores the complexities involved in designing effective colon-specific drug delivery systems. [18-20]

3.2 Pulsincap systems

Owing to the inherent variability in stomach emptying time and gastrointestinal transit, influenced by factors such as peristalsis and conditions like irritable bowel syndrome [IBS], reliance solely on time-dependent drug delivery methods for colon-targeted therapies is not always optimal. Consequently, the integration of a timed-release system with pH-sensitive characteristics offers a more precise approach for colonic drug delivery.

An illustrative formulation employing this dual mechanism is the pulsincap system. Comprising a drug-containing, water-insoluble capsule body, a hydrogel plug sealing the capsule body's opening, and a water-soluble cap covering the hydrogel plug, this system incorporates an acid-insoluble film to prevent premature drug dissolution in the stomach. Upon breakdown of the enteric covering in the small intestine, the hydrogel plug undergoes expansion, introducing a lag time determined by the plug's length and depth of placement. This delay in drug release is facilitated by the swelling of the hydrogel plug, thus optimizing the controlled and targeted delivery of medication to the colon.[21]

3.3 Osmotic controlled drug delivery

Osmotic Controlled Drug Delivery Systems [ORDS-CT] represent a versatile approach for targeted drug delivery to the colon or achieving systemic absorption that may be otherwise challenging. These systems can comprise a single osmotic unit or multiple push-pull units, typically ranging from one to five or six units, each measuring 4 mm in diameter and housed within a hard gelatin capsule. In each bilayer push-pull unit of the ORDS-CT system, there exists both an osmotic push layer and a drug layer, both surrounded by a semipermeable membrane. Adjacent to the drug layer, a perforation is incorporated through the membrane. Upon ingestion of the ORDS-CT, the gelatin capsule rapidly dissolves. The drug-impermeable enteric coating of each push-pull unit prevents water absorption in the acidic environment of the stomach, thereby precluding drug release. Subsequent to the entry into the small intestine, characterized by a higher pH environment [pH > 7], water ingress occurs, leading to the swelling of the osmotic push compartment and the formation of a flowable gel in the drug compartment. The disintegration of the coating allows the controlled release of the drug through the aperture, driven by the regulated pace of water transport across the semipermeable membrane.

Each push-pull device is engineered with a specific 3–4 hours post-gastric delay, designed for applications such as ulcerative colitis treatment, and to terminate drug delivery in the small intestine. Upon entry into the colon, the drug release initiates, underscoring the precision and efficacy of the Osmotic Controlled Drug Delivery System for targeted therapeutic outcomes.[21]

3.4 CODES™ technology

CODES™ represents a distinctive Colonic Drug Delivery System [CDDS] technology designed to overcome challenges associated with pH or time-dependent systems. It employs a synergistic approach, integrating pH dependence and microbial triggering for precise drug release in the colon. The technology relies on a unique mechanism involving lactulose as a trigger for site-specific drug release. CODES™ system comprises a conventional tablet core containing lactulose, overcoated with an acid-soluble material [Eudragit E], and subsequently encapsulated with an enteric material [Eudragit L]. The underlying concept is that the enteric coating safeguards the tablet in the stomach, dissolving rapidly upon gastric emptying. The acid-soluble material coating then shields the formulation as it traverses the alkaline environment of the small intestine. Upon reaching the colon, bacterial enzymatic activity degrades the polysaccharide [lactulose] into organic acid, leading to a reduction in the surrounding pH. This pH change triggers the dissolution of the acid-soluble coating, facilitating subsequent drug release. [22]

4. CONSTIPATION & ITS MANAGEMENT

Constipation is a very complicated problem, and to treat this complication, many novel herbal alternatives have been reported[1]. Safe and effective drugs of herbal origin are available as compared to the few options available via allopathic drugs[2]. Herbal extracts have always drawn much consideration, because of their multidimensional actions [3].

There are several symptoms that can be used to define constipation, and patients will often complain of a combination of the following:

• Infrequent stools [≤3 per week]

• Difficult passage of hard stool

• Sense of incomplete defecation

• Excessive straining or time spent on the toilet [1]

4.1 Causes of constipation

Constipation is a common digestive condition characterized by infrequent or difficult bowel movements, often resulting in the passage of hard and dry stools. The causes of constipation are multifactorial and can be influenced by various factors. Here is an elaboration on some common causes of constipation:

Low Fiber Intake: A diet low in fiber is a common cause of constipation. Fiber adds bulk to the stool and helps it move through the digestive tract more easily.

Inadequate Fluid Intake: Insufficient hydration can lead to harder stools, making them difficult to pass.

Lack of Physical Activity: Sedentary lifestyles and a lack of regular physical activity can contribute to sluggish bowel movements.

Neurological Disorders: Conditions affecting the nervous system, such as multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease, can impact the muscles involved in bowel movements.

Endocrine Disorders: Disorders like hypothyroidism can affect metabolism and contribute to constipation.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome [IBS]: IBS, a functional gastrointestinal disorder, can lead to symptoms of constipation.

Medications: Certain Medications, including certain painkillers, antidepressants, antacids containing calcium or aluminum, and antispasmodics, may cause constipation as a side effect.

Colorectal Cancer or Obstruction: Tumors or other obstructions in the colon or rectum can impede the normal passage of stool.

Anal Fissures or Hemorrhoids: Painful conditions in the anal region can result in a reluctance to pass stools, contributing to constipation.

Psychological Factors:

Stress and Anxiety: Emotional stress and anxiety can affect the functioning of the digestive system, leading to constipation.

Reduced Bowel Motility: Aging is associated with a natural decline in bowel motility, leading to a higher prevalence of constipation in older individuals.

Pregnancy: Hormonal changes during pregnancy, as well as pressure on the intestines from the growing uterus, can contribute to constipation.

Family History: There may be a genetic predisposition to constipation in some individuals.

Insufficient Fluid Retention: In conditions that result in excessive fluid loss, the body may prioritize retaining fluids, leading to harder stools.

It is important to note that constipation can often be a combination of these factors, and identifying the specific cause may require a comprehensive assessment by a healthcare professional. Addressing the underlying cause is crucial for effective management and relief from constipation.[23]

The most frequent cause of constipation is "functional" constipation, which occurs when there is a normal intestinal transit time frame of roughly 72 hours. The prolonged time it takes for feces to move from the cecum to the rectum in slow transit constipation may be caused by a lack of or reduction in propagating peristaltic contractions or by uncoordinated motor activity in the distal colon, which may act as a functional barrier to the movement of feces. Feces that have gathered in the rectum cannot be passed when the pelvic floor is dysfunctional. The processes involved in defecation are complex, and the precise anomalies are poorly understood. A failure of the puborectalis or the external anal sphincter to sufficiently relax during defecation is plausible in many of these individuals. Rectoceles can occur in people with pelvic floor dysfunction.[24]

5. DRUGS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTIPATION

Several classes of drugs show some adverse effects apart from their therapeutic effect. Constipation is also associated with major classes of drugs for e.g. Anticholinergic, analgesics, neurally acting agents, cation containing agents. Systemic illnesses may cause constipation from metabolic derangements [e.g. thyroid disease or diabetes]; destruction of gut muscle [i.e. systemic sclerosis]; or neurologic disease, which may be either central [e.g. multiple sclerosis] or peripheral [e.g. Hirschsprung's disease].[25]

6. TREATMENT OF CONSTIPATION

The treatment of constipation can be divided into pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches.

6.1 Pharmacological approach

6.1.1 Laxatives

Laxatives are substances that help stimulate bowel movements and relieve constipation. They work by either increasing the amount of water in the intestines or stimulating the muscles of the intestines to contract and move stool through the digestive tract. Laxatives are commonly used to treat temporary bouts of constipation but should not be used for long-term use without medical supervision. Additionally, it is advised to address the underlying cause of constipation, such as poor diet or lack of physical activity, rather than relying solely on laxatives.[26]

There are several classes of laxatives, each with different mechanisms of action. Some common classes of laxatives include:

Bulk-forming laxatives: Bulk forming laxatives are a type of medication that are commonly used to treat constipation. They work by absorbing water in the intestine, which increases the bulk of the stool and helps to promote bowel movements. This type of laxative is considered safe and effective for long-term use, as they do not cause dependency or damage to the intestines. Some examples of bulk forming laxatives are Fybogel, Psyllium [Metamucil®], Polycarbophil [FiberCon®].[25]

Stimulant laxatives: Stimulant laxatives are a class of medication used to relieve constipation. They work by irritating the lining of the intestines, which causes the muscles to contract and push stool through the digestive system. This helps to facilitate bowel

movements and relieve constipation. They are generally considered safe for short-term use but should not be used regularly without the guidance of a healthcare professional. In some cases, excessive or prolonged use of stimulant laxatives can lead to dependency and damage to the intestines. Examples of stimulant laxatives include sodium picosulfate, Senna, and bisacodyl.[26]

Osmotic laxatives: Osmotic laxatives are a class of medication used to alleviate constipation by promoting bowel movements. They work by drawing water into the colon, which softens the stool and increases its volume, making it easier to pass. Common osmotic laxatives include magnesium hydroxide [Milk of Magnesia], lactulose, polyethylene glycol [Miralax], and sodium phosphate. These laxatives are available over-the-counter or with a prescription and should be taken as directed. Some possible side effects are bloating, cramping, and diarrhea.

6.1.2 Stool softeners: Stool softeners, also known as emollient laxatives, are medications commonly used to alleviate constipation by facilitating the passage of stools through the intestine. They primarily work by increasing the water content within the stool, making it softer and easier to pass. Some commonly prescribed stool softeners include docusate sodium, docusate calcium, and docusate potassium. These medications are considered a relatively gentle method for treating constipation and are often recommended as the first line of treatment for individuals experiencing infrequent or temporary constipation.[27]

6.2 Nonpharmacologic approach

Nonpharmacologic methods include giving the patient guidance on regular bowel habits, exercise, and consuming enough fiber and water. Patients receiving long-term care may find it challenging to adhere to these suggestions.

6.2.1 Exercise

A higher amount of physical activity is advised for people with constipation, despite the absence of compelling research. Usually, 30 minutes after eating, a daily walking program is beneficial. Adults who are working don't seem to be more likely to experience constipation, although being more physically active was linked to a greater quality of life. Although suggestions to promote physical activity may not change constipation symptoms, they may enhance overall wellbeing.[28]

6.2.2 Fluid intake

There appear to be few studies that have demonstrated the effect of fluid intake on constipation while adequately controlling for other factors. Several observational studies have studied increased fluid intake, but usually with some other measure, such as increased fiber. An increase in fluid intake might be helpful in dehydrated patients, but it may rarely improve the symptoms of constipation in chronically constipated patients. Similarly, an increase in physical activity is also recommended without any clear evidence.[29]

7. HERBAL MEDICINES IN NOVEL DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION

7.1 Psyllium [Isabgol]

- **Active Component:** Mucilage and soluble fiber.
- **Mechanism of Action:** Acts as a bulk-forming laxative by absorbing water and increasing stool volume.
- **Novel Formulation:** Psyllium-based hydrogel capsules offer controlled swelling and gradual release, enhancing patient compliance [30].

7.2 Senna

- **Active Component:** Sennosides A and B [anthraquinone glycosides].
- **Mechanism of Action:** Stimulates colonic motility by irritating the intestinal mucosa.
- **Novel Formulation:** Senna-loaded nanoparticles and enteric-coated tablets ensure delayed and targeted release in the colon [31].

7.3 Aloe Vera

- **Active Component:** Aloins A and B.

- **Mechanism of Action:** Potent stimulant laxative that increases intestinal water content.
- **Novel Formulation:** Aloe vera-loaded nanovesicles provide sustained action and reduced side effects such as griping [32].

7.4 Triphala

- **Active Component:** Polyphenols and tannins from Emblica officinalis, Terminalia chebula, and Terminalia bellirica.
- **Mechanism of Action:** Acts as a mild laxative, improving bowel movements and detoxifying the gut.
- **Novel Formulation:** Triphala microspheres enhance stability and ensure prolonged release [33].

7.5 Flaxseed [Alsi]

- **Active Component:** Soluble fiber and mucilage.
- **Mechanism of Action:** Forms a gel-like substance that softens stools and lubricates the intestinal passage.
- **Novel Formulation:** Flaxseed encapsulated in alginate beads allows delayed-release formulations for sustained action [34].

7.6 Cascara

- **Active Component:** Cascarosides [anthraquinone glycosides].
- **Mechanism of Action:** Enhances colonic motility and fluid secretion in the intestines.
- **Novel Formulation:** Cascara nanosuspensions improve solubility and provide controlled release [35].

7.7 Rhubarb

- **Active Component:** Sennosides A–F and tannins.
- **Mechanism of Action:** Provides a mild laxative effect, with doses ensuring reduced abdominal discomfort.
- **Novel Formulation:** Rhubarb-based tinctures in bioadhesive systems enhance localized delivery in the colon [36].

8. ADVANTAGES OF NDDS IN HERBAL LAXATIVES

1. **Improved Bioavailability:** Encapsulation of herbal extracts in nanoparticles or liposomes enhances their absorption [37].
2. **Targeted Delivery:** NDDS, such as enteric-coated formulations, delivers active compounds directly to the colon, reducing systemic side effects [38].
3. **Sustained and Controlled Release:** Microspheres and hydrogel formulations ensure prolonged laxative effects [39].
4. **Enhanced Stability:** Protects active components from environmental degradation [40].
5. **Reduced Side Effects:** Gradual release minimizes griping and associated discomfort [41].

The benefits of few herbal medicines delivered through NDDS are summarised in table-1 with examples.

Table - 1: Examples of NDDS for Herbal Laxatives

Herb	NDDS	Benefits
Psyllium	Hydrogel beads	Controlled swelling and prolonged action [42].
Senna	Nanoparticles	Colon-specific release, reduced irritation [43].
Aloe vera	Liposomes	Sustained release, reduced griping [44].
Triphala	Microspheres	Enhanced stability, gradual release [45].
Cascara	Solid lipid nanoparticles	Improved bioavailability and controlled release [46].

9. CONCLUSION

Constipation's intricate etiology demands a nuanced approach for effective management. The exploration of colon-specific drug delivery systems and herbal alternatives provides valuable insights into evolving treatment paradigms. The advent of innovative technologies like Pulsincap, Osmotic Controlled Drug Delivery, and CODES™ showcases the ongoing efforts to enhance targeted drug delivery to the colon. Integrating pharmacological and nonpharmacological interventions, including laxatives and lifestyle

modifications, contributes to a comprehensive constipation management strategy. Further research and clinical advancements in drug delivery systems hold the promise of alleviating the societal and economic burden associated with constipation, improving the quality of life for affected individuals.

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