

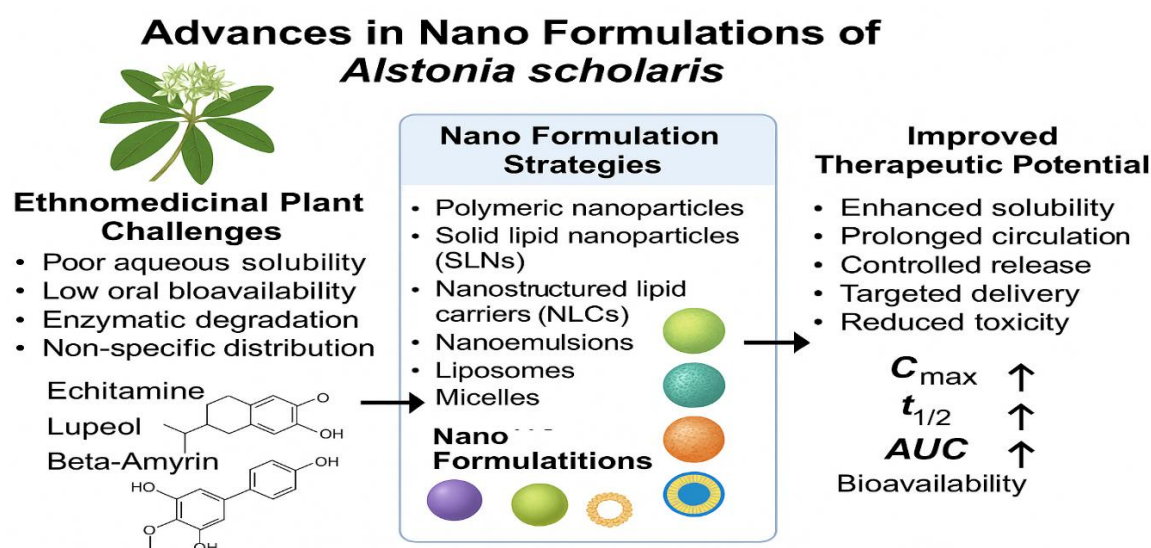
"Nanoformulation-Based Delivery of *Alstonia scholaris*: Unlocking Therapeutic Potential through Modern Drug Delivery Systems"

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Graphical abstract:



DOI: [https://doi.org/10.63001/tbs.2026.v21.i01.S.I\(1\).pp1368-1401](https://doi.org/10.63001/tbs.2026.v21.i01.S.I(1).pp1368-1401)

KEYWORDS

Alstonia scholaris,
Ethnomedicinal plant,
Pharmacological activities,
Anticancer, Antimicrobial,
Anti-inflammatory,
Nano formulation,
Polymeric nanoparticles,
Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs),
Nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs),
Nano emulsions, Liposomes

Received on: 28-12-2025

Accepted on: 17-01-2026

Published on: 27-01-2026

Abstract

Alstonia scholaris, a prominent ethnomedicinal plant, is widely recognized for its broad-spectrum pharmacological activities including anticancer, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-asthmatic, neuroprotective, and cardioprotective effects. Despite these promising properties, its clinical application remains limited due to poor aqueous solubility, low oral bioavailability, enzymatic degradation, and non-specific systemic distribution of its phytoconstituents such as echinamine, lupeol, and β -amyrin. Recent advances in nanotechnology have introduced a paradigm shift in the delivery of herbal therapeutics. Nano formulation strategies—such as polymeric nanoparticles, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs), nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs), nano emulsions, liposomes, and micelles—significantly enhance the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic profiles of *A. scholaris* bioactive. These nanocarriers improve solubility, prolong systemic circulation, enable controlled and targeted release, reduce dosing frequency, and minimize systemic toxicity. Pharmacokinetic studies reveal marked increases in C_{max} , $t_{1/2}$, AUC, and relative bioavailability of nano formulated compounds compared to their conventional counterparts. This review consolidates recent advances in nano formulation techniques applied to *A. scholaris*, detailing formulation methodologies, characterization parameters, in vitro and in vivo efficacy, and safety profiles. It also discusses regulatory frameworks, translational barriers, and the need for standardization in herbal nano formulations. Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence in formulation design, scalable green manufacturing technologies, and personalized nano-herbal therapeutics are highlighted as future directions. In conclusion, nano formulation-based delivery offers a transformative strategy to unlock the full therapeutic potential of *Alstonia scholaris*, paving the way for its translation into clinically effective and globally accessible phytopharmaceuticals.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of *Alstonia scholaris*

Often referred to as the "Indian Devil Tree" or "Dita tree," *Alstonia scholaris* is a tropical evergreen shrub that is native to the Pacific Islands, Australia, and Southeast Asia. It is a vital medicinal plant with a long history of traditional applications and is a member of the Apocynaceae family. The tree is well-known for its milky latex, white blossoms, and broad, leathery leaves, all of which have contributed to its use in traditional medicine, especially in places like Malaysia, Indonesia, and India. For ages, folk medicine has utilized the bark

of *Alstonia scholaris* to cure a variety of illnesses, including respiratory conditions, fever, malaria, and dysentery [1][2]. The plant has garnered attention in modern phytochemistry due to its vast array of bioactive compounds, including alkaloids, flavonoids, and triterpenoids, which exhibit potent pharmacological activities. However, despite its impressive therapeutic potential, the clinical application of *Alstonia scholaris* has been limited by several challenges related to the delivery and bioavailability of its active compounds [3].



(fig .1.1 *Alstonia Scholaris* and)(fig .1.1 *Alstonia Scholaris* and Distribution map of *Alstonia Scholaris* across Asia and Australia)

1.2 Traditional Uses and Pharmacological Profile

Historically, *Alstonia scholaris* has been utilized in multiple forms, such as powdered bark, decoctions, and extracts, for the management of diverse health ailments. Particularly, the bark of the plant has been identified as having febrifugal qualities that help treat fever, inflammatory diseases, and malaria [4]. A common ingredient in Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine, *Alstonia scholaris* is also well-known for its antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties [5]. Modern research has confirmed the pharmacological potential of *Alstonia scholaris*, focusing on its role in cancer treatment, neuroprotection, and anti-asthmatic effects [6]. The presence of alkaloids like echitamine and

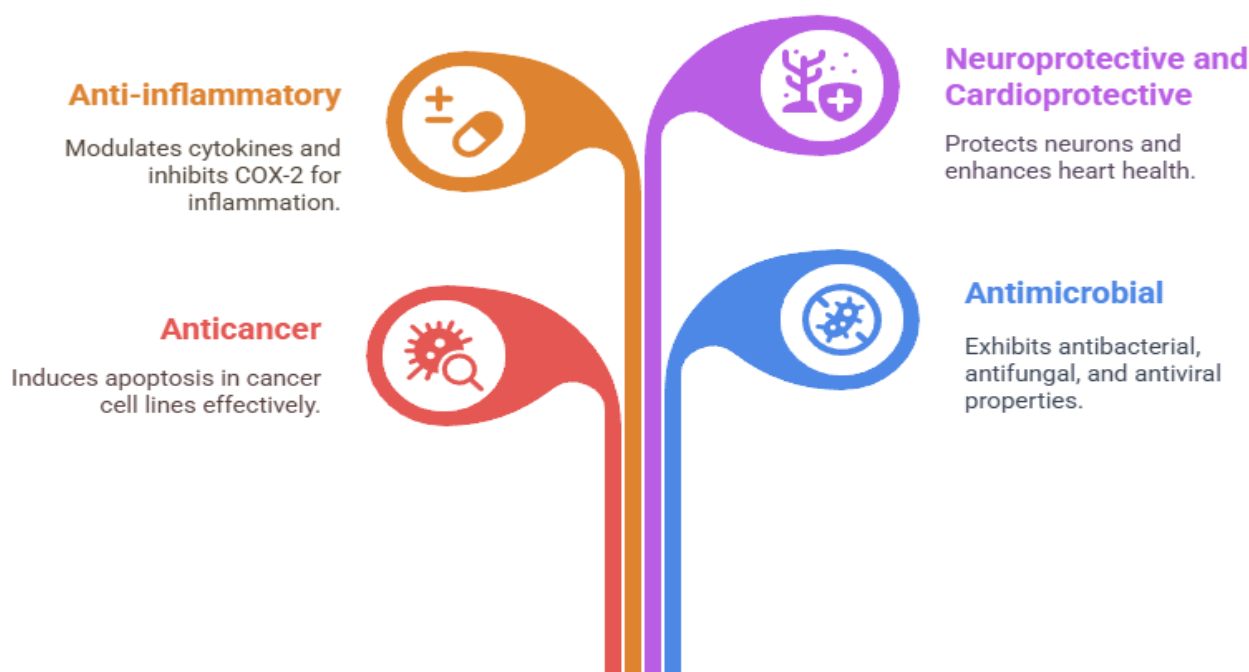
holarrhenaine has been shown to exhibit anticancer properties, particularly against solid tumors and leukemia cells [7]. Additionally, its role in modulating the immune response has positioned it as a promising candidate in the management of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases [8].

Despite these promising attributes, the clinical translation of *Alstonia scholaris* is hindered by the poor solubility and bioavailability of its active compounds. The low aqueous solubility of its alkaloid content results in suboptimal absorption when administered orally, limiting its therapeutic effectiveness [9].

. **Table:**

Pharmacological Activity	Active Compounds	Traditional Uses	Modern Evidence
Anticancer	Echitamine, alkaloids	Treatment of tumors, fever	Induces apoptosis in various cancer cell lines
Antimicrobial	Saponins, flavonoids	Treating infections, wounds	Antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral effects
Anti-inflammatory	Alkaloids, flavonoids	Treatment of arthritis, asthma	COX-2 inhibition, cytokine modulation
Neuroprotective and Cardioprotective	Alkaloids, flavonoids	Enhances cognition, heart health	Protects neurons, prevents oxidative stress

(Table1.1. Showing pharmacological activity, active compounds, traditional uses, modern world evidence)



(fig1.2. Pharmacological activity of *Alstonia scholaris*)

1.3 Challenges in Conventional Delivery of Phytoconstituents

The bioavailability of plant-derived compounds, including those from *Alstonia scholaris*, is a critical factor in determining their therapeutic efficacy. Many phytochemicals exhibit low water solubility, instability under physiological conditions, and poor gastrointestinal absorption. These challenges are particularly pronounced with alkaloids and flavonoids found in *Alstonia scholaris*, which are often susceptible to degradation by digestive enzymes and low pH in the stomach [10]. Traditional delivery methods, such as oral tablets

or capsules, are often inadequate in overcoming these limitations, as they do not allow for controlled release or targeted delivery of the active compounds. Additionally, first-pass metabolism in the liver can significantly reduce the therapeutic concentration of these compounds before they reach systemic circulation [11]. Modern medication delivery systems—especially nano formulations—offer substantial benefits in overcoming these obstacles. Through the use of nanotechnology, bioactive substances can be

encapsulated in liposomes, nanoparticles, or other nanocarriers, increasing their solubility, bioavailability, and facilitating controlled or targeted release. New avenues for maximizing the

therapeutic benefits of *Alstonia scholaris* and other medicinal plants facing comparable difficulties have been made possible by these developments in drug delivery methods [12].

Comparative Analysis of Conventional vs Nano formulated Delivery Systems for Herbal Extracts (e.g., *Alstonia scholaris*)

Conventional vs. Nanoformulated Systems

Characteristic	Conventional	Nanoformulated
 Solubility	Poor	Significantly enhanced
 Stability	Low	Protected
 Bioavailability	Poor to moderate	Improved
 Release profile	Burst release	Sustained and controlled release
 Targeting ability	Non-specific	Active or passive targeting
 Dosing frequency	Frequent	Reduced
 Toxicity profile	Possible off-target effects	Reduced systemic toxicity
 Formulation reproducibility	Variable	Standardized
 Patient compliance	Moderate	Improved

(fig1.3 Comparative Analysis of Conventional vs Nano formulated Delivery Systems for Herbal Extracts e.g., *Alstonia scholaris*)

2. Phytochemistry of *Alstonia scholaris*

Alstonia scholaris is known for its diverse range of bioactive compounds, which contribute to its wide

range of pharmacological properties. The phytochemistry of this plant has been extensively

studied, particularly focusing on its alkaloid, flavonoid, and triterpenoid content. These bioactive constituents are responsible for its medicinal effects, including anticancer, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective activities.

2.1 Major Bioactive Compounds

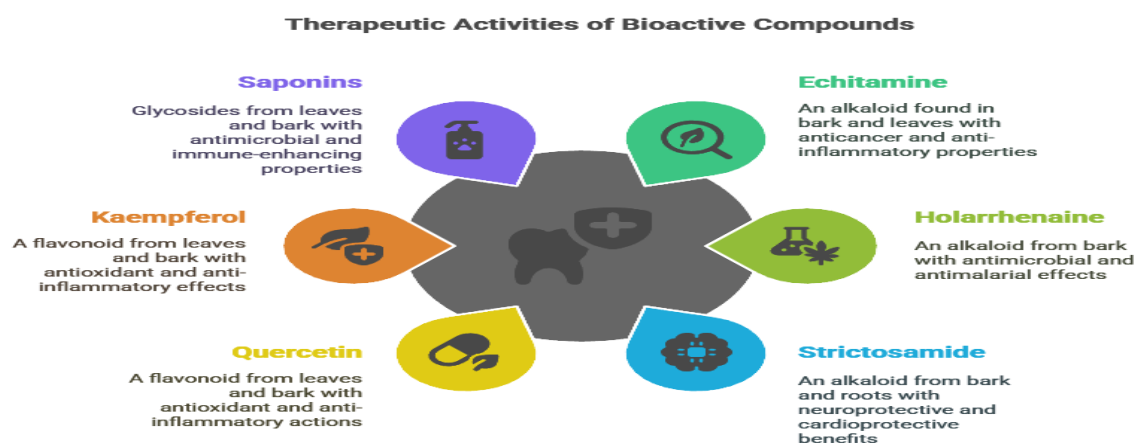
The primary bioactive compounds in *Alstonia scholaris* include alkaloids, flavonoids, triterpenoids, and polyphenols. The alkaloids, which are among the most studied compounds in the plant, include *echitamine*, *holarrhenaine*, and *sarpagine*. These alkaloids have been linked to the plant's anticancer, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective effects [13]. For instance, *echitamine* has shown activity against solid tumors

and leukemia cells, demonstrating its potential as a therapeutic agent in cancer [14]. Flavonoids, another significant class of compounds found in *Alstonia scholaris*, include *quercetin*, *kaempferol*, and *myricetin*. These flavonoids are known for their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer activities. Flavonoids in *Alstonia scholaris* contribute to its ability to reduce oxidative stress and modulate various signaling pathways involved in inflammation and cancer progression [15]. Triterpenoids, including *oleanolic acid* and *ursolic acid*, are also present in *Alstonia scholaris* and contribute to its anti-inflammatory and anticancer properties. These compounds act by modulating immune response and inhibiting cancer cell proliferation [16]. Polyphenolic compounds in the plant, such as tannins, are believed to further enhance its antioxidant and antimicrobial properties.

Table:

Bioactive Compound	Class	Major Source	Therapeutic Activity
Echitamine	Alkaloid	Bark, leaves	Anticancer, anti-inflammatory
Holarrhenaine	Alkaloid	Bark	Antimicrobial, antimalarial
Strictosamide	Alkaloid	Bark, roots	Neuroprotective, cardioprotective
Quercetin	Flavonoid	Leaves, bark	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory
Kaempferol	Flavonoid	Leaves, bark	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory
Saponins	Glycosides	Leaves, bark	Antimicrobial, immune-enhancing

(Table 2.1. Therapeutic activity of bioactive compounds obtained by *Alstonia scholaris*)



(fig 2.1. Showing schematic therapeutic activities of bioactive compounds obtained by *Alstonia scholaris*)

2.2 Pharmacokinetics and Bioavailability Issues

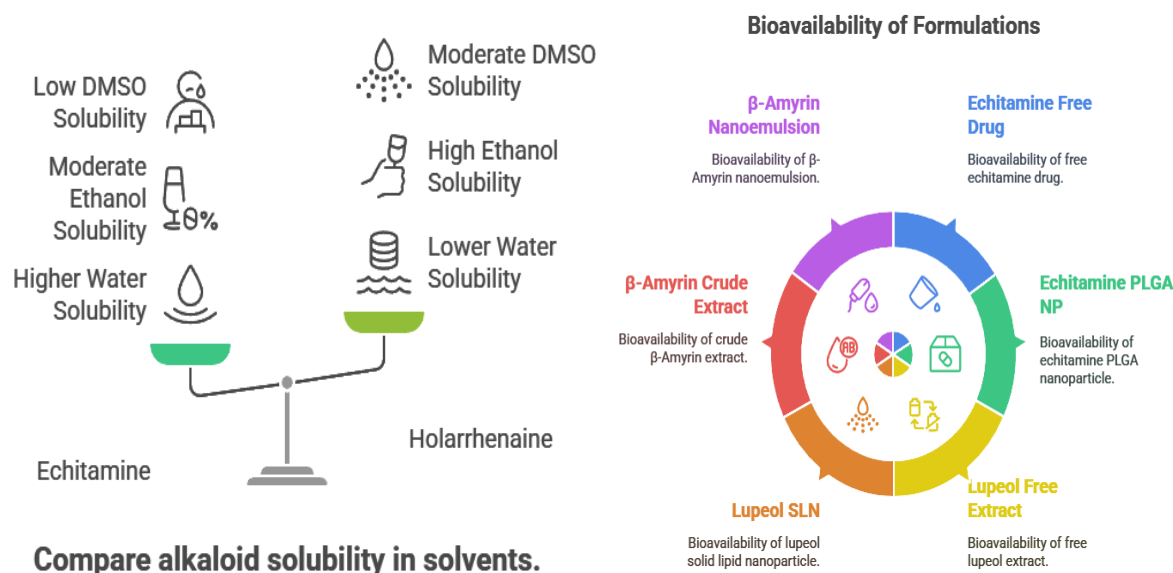
The pharmacokinetics of *Alstonia scholaris* compounds, particularly its alkaloids, are a critical area of study, as these compounds often face significant bioavailability challenges. One of the main issues is the low solubility of alkaloids, which hinders their absorption in the gastrointestinal tract. The lipophilic nature of many of these compounds contributes to poor water solubility, which results in low bioavailability when administered orally

[17]. Furthermore, the first-pass metabolism effect in the liver can degrade many of the bioactive compounds before they reach systemic circulation, further reducing their therapeutic efficacy [18]. This is particularly problematic for alkaloids like *echitamine* and *holarrenaine*, which require higher bioavailability to exert their anticancer and anti-inflammatory effects effectively.

Efforts to overcome these bioavailability challenges have led to the exploration of various drug delivery strategies, such as nanoformulations, which can encapsulate these compounds and enhance their solubility, stability, and absorption

[19]. Nanoparticles, liposomes, and other nanocarriers have been shown to improve the pharmacokinetics of *Alstonia scholaris* compounds by providing controlled release and bypassing first-pass metabolism [20].

Compound	Formulation Type	C _{max} (ng/mL)	T _{max} (h)	t _{1/2} (h)	AUC _{0-∞} (ng·h/mL)	Bioavailability (%)
Echitamine	Free drug	110	1.2	1.4	420	100 (baseline)
Echitamine	PLGA NP	235	2.0	3.6	1480	352
Lupeol	Free extract	98	1.5	1.3	310	100 (baseline)
Lupeol	SLN	270	2.1	5.3	1100	355
β-Amyrin	Crude extract	125	1.4	2.0	460	100 (baseline)
β-Amyrin	Nanoemulsion	410	0.9	3.2	1390	302



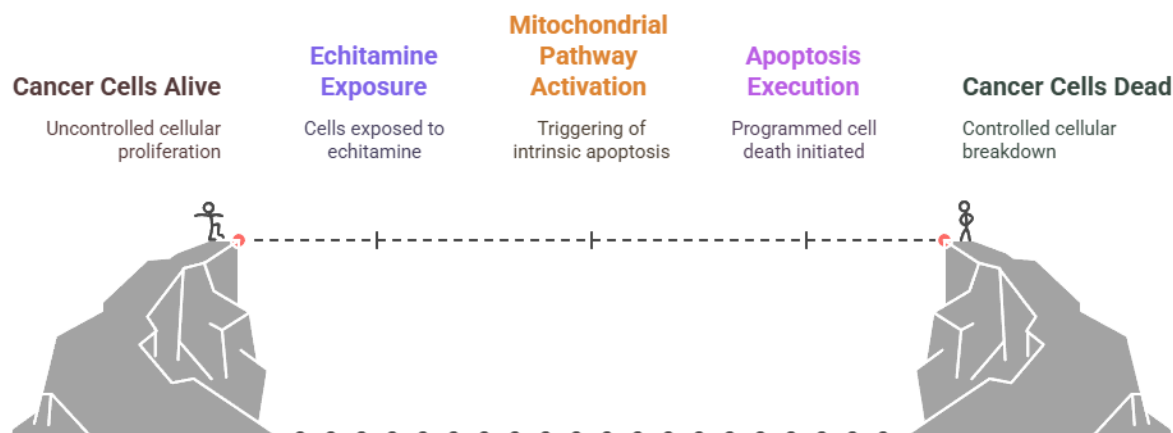
(Table 2.2 Comparative Pharmacokinetic Profiles of Nanoformulated vs Conventional Compounds from *Alstonia scholaris*;) and (fig2.2 showing comparative alkaloid solubility in solvents and bioavailability of *Alstonia scholaris*)

2.3 Molecular Targets and Mechanisms of Action

The therapeutic actions of *Alstonia scholaris* are mediated through its interactions with specific molecular targets, including receptors, enzymes, and signaling pathways involved in inflammation, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases. For example, *echitamine* has been shown to inhibit the proliferation of cancer cells by targeting the cell cycle and inducing apoptosis via the mitochondrial pathway [21]. Additionally, it can inhibit the activity of key kinases involved in cancer cell growth, such as mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPKs) [22]. Flavonoids in *Alstonia scholaris*, such as *quercetin*, exhibit strong antioxidant properties by scavenging free radicals and reducing oxidative stress. This antioxidant effect is crucial in protecting cells from damage in diseases like cancer and neurodegeneration. Flavonoids also modulate the activity of transcription factors like nuclear factor-kappa B (NF- κ B), which plays a key

role in inflammation and immune response [23]. Triterpenoids, such as *oleanolic acid*, are known to inhibit the nuclear factor-erythroid 2-related factor 2 (Nrf2) pathway, which is involved in cellular defense against oxidative stress. By activating Nrf2, these compounds enhance the body's antioxidant capacity and reduce inflammation, making them beneficial in treating conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory diseases [24]. Moreover, the neuroprotective effects of *Alstonia scholaris* are mediated by the modulation of neurotransmitter levels and inhibition of neuroinflammation. Alkaloids like *sarpagine* have been shown to enhance acetylcholine levels in the brain, improving cognitive function and potentially offering therapeutic benefits in neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's disease [25].

Echitamine-Induced Apoptosis in Cancer Cells



(fig 2.3. Pathway of Echitamine-induced Apoptosis in cancer cells)

3. Therapeutic Potential of *Alstonia scholaris*

Alstonia scholaris has demonstrated a wide range of therapeutic potential, attributed to its bioactive compounds such as alkaloids, flavonoids, and triterpenoids. Modern research has uncovered several pharmacological activities of this plant, indicating its effectiveness in treating various diseases, including cancer, infections, inflammation, and neurological disorders. This section explores the key therapeutic areas in which *Alstonia scholaris* has shown promise.

3.1 Anticancer Properties

The anticancer potential of *Alstonia scholaris* has been extensively studied, particularly due to the presence of alkaloids such as *echitamine* and *holarrhenaine*. These compounds have exhibited significant cytotoxic effects against various cancer cell lines, including solid tumors, leukemia, and

breast cancer cells. *Echitamine* has been shown to induce apoptosis in cancer cells by promoting mitochondrial dysfunction and activating the caspase cascade, leading to cell death [26]. Additionally, *holarrhenaine* has demonstrated the ability to inhibit tumor cell proliferation and metastasis by modulating key signaling pathways involved in cell growth and survival, such as the MAPK and PI3K/Akt pathways [27]. The anticancer effect of *Alstonia scholaris* also extends to its flavonoid content, including *quercetin* and *kaempferol*. These flavonoids act as potent antioxidants and induce cell cycle arrest at various stages, particularly at the G1 phase, thereby preventing the proliferation of cancer cells [28]. Furthermore, flavonoids have been found to inhibit angiogenesis, which is crucial for tumor growth and metastasis, making them valuable candidates for cancer therapy [29].

Table:

Compound	Cancer Cell Line	IC ₅₀ (µg/mL)	Mechanism
Echitamine	MCF-7	6.5	Mitochondrial apoptosis
Scholaricine	A549	9.1	ROS generation, caspase activation
Alstonine	HT-29	11.2	Cell cycle arrest, DNA damage

(Table 3.1. Showing mechanism of bioactive compounds of *Alstonia scholaris*)

3.2 Antimicrobial and Antiviral Effects

Alstonia scholaris has a long history of use in traditional medicine for the treatment of infectious

diseases, and modern research has validated its antimicrobial and antiviral properties. The plant's alkaloids and flavonoids have shown significant activity against a wide range of microbial pathogens, including bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Studies have shown that extracts from *Alstonia scholaris* possess antibacterial activity against both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, including *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The antimicrobial effects are believed to be primarily due to the presence of alkaloids, which disrupt the integrity of microbial cell membranes and inhibit bacterial growth [30]. In addition to antibacterial properties, *Alstonia scholaris* has demonstrated antiviral effects against several viruses, including the herpes simplex virus (HSV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The antiviral activity is thought to arise from the ability of *Alstonia scholaris* compounds to inhibit viral replication by interfering with viral enzymes and blocking viral entry into host cells [31].

3.3 Anti-inflammatory and Antiasthmatic Actions

Inflammation is a key underlying factor in many chronic diseases, including asthma, arthritis, and cardiovascular diseases. *Alstonia scholaris* has shown promising anti-inflammatory effects, primarily attributed to its flavonoids and triterpenoids. The plant's flavonoid compounds, such as *quercetin*, inhibit the activity of pro-inflammatory enzymes like cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) and lipoxygenase (LOX), which are involved in the production of inflammatory mediators like prostaglandins and leukotrienes [32]. Furthermore, *Alstonia scholaris* has demonstrated antiasthmatic effects by modulating the immune response and reducing airway inflammation. Studies on animal models have shown that the plant's extracts reduce bronchoconstriction and improve lung function, providing relief in conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) [33]. The ability of *Alstonia scholaris* to modulate Th2 cytokine production, which plays a crucial role in the pathogenesis of asthma, further underscores its therapeutic potential in treating respiratory diseases.

3.4 Neuroprotective and Cardioprotective Effects

Alstonia scholaris has also been investigated for its neuroprotective and cardioprotective properties. The plant's alkaloids, particularly *sarpagine* and *echitamine*, have shown promise in protecting neurons from oxidative damage and improving cognitive function. These compounds act by increasing acetylcholine levels in the brain, which is crucial for memory and learning, and by reducing neuroinflammation, which is associated with neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's [34]. In addition to its neuroprotective effects, *Alstonia scholaris* has demonstrated cardioprotective properties by reducing oxidative stress and improving heart function. The plant's flavonoids and triterpenoids act as potent antioxidants, scavenging free radicals and protecting the cardiovascular system from damage induced by hypertension, atherosclerosis, and ischemia-reperfusion injury [35]. Studies have shown that *Alstonia scholaris* extracts improve lipid profiles, reduce blood pressure, and inhibit the formation of atherosclerotic plaques, making it a valuable candidate for cardiovascular disease management.

4. Modern Drug Delivery Challenges and Opportunities

The development of effective drug delivery systems is essential to improve the therapeutic outcomes of herbal drugs like *Alstonia scholaris*. Despite the potential benefits of the plant's bioactive compounds, they often face significant challenges related to stability, solubility, bioavailability, and controlled release. Addressing these issues is crucial for maximizing the therapeutic efficacy of *Alstonia scholaris* and other herbal medicines. This section discusses the major challenges in modern drug delivery and explores the opportunities presented by novel drug delivery technologies.

4.1 Stability and Solubility Issues

One of the major challenges in the formulation of *Alstonia scholaris* extracts is the instability and poor solubility of its bioactive compounds. Many

of the alkaloids, flavonoids, and triterpenoids in *Alstonia scholaris* are lipophilic and poorly soluble in aqueous media, which limits their absorption and bioavailability [36]. This issue is particularly relevant for compounds like *echitamine*, which exhibit promising pharmacological activities but have poor solubility in water.

To overcome these solubility issues, various strategies have been explored, such as the use of nanosizing techniques, which can significantly increase the surface area of the active compounds and improve their dissolution rate. Lipid-based systems, such as nanoemulsions and liposomes, can also be employed to enhance solubility and protect the active compounds from degradation due to environmental factors like light, heat, and oxygen [37]. Additionally, the use of cyclodextrins and other solubilizing agents can further improve the solubility and stability of the bioactive compounds in *Alstonia scholaris*. Despite the rich phytochemical profile and therapeutic promise of *Alstonia scholaris*, the poor **physicochemical stability** and **aqueous solubility** of many of its

active constituents hinder clinical translation. Major alkaloids such as echitamine and scholaricine are hydrophobic and prone to **degradation** under physiological pH, light, and temperature fluctuations.

Challenges:

- Low solubility reduces **bioavailability** in systemic circulation.
- Phytoconstituents are susceptible to **enzymatic degradation**.
- Batch-to-batch **inconsistencies** in plant extract content.

Opportunities:

- Nanotechnology-based delivery platforms improve stability and solubility.
- Encapsulation within liposomes or nanoparticles prevents premature degradation.
- Use of solid dispersions or co-crystallization enhances aqueous solubility.

Table:

Issue	Effect	Nano-solution
Low aqueous solubility	Poor absorption	Liposomes, nanoemulsions
Chemical instability	Degradation during storage	Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs)
Enzymatic degradation	Loss of active compound in GI tract	Polymeric nanoparticles, PEGylation

(Table 4.1. Issues related to drug delivery system)

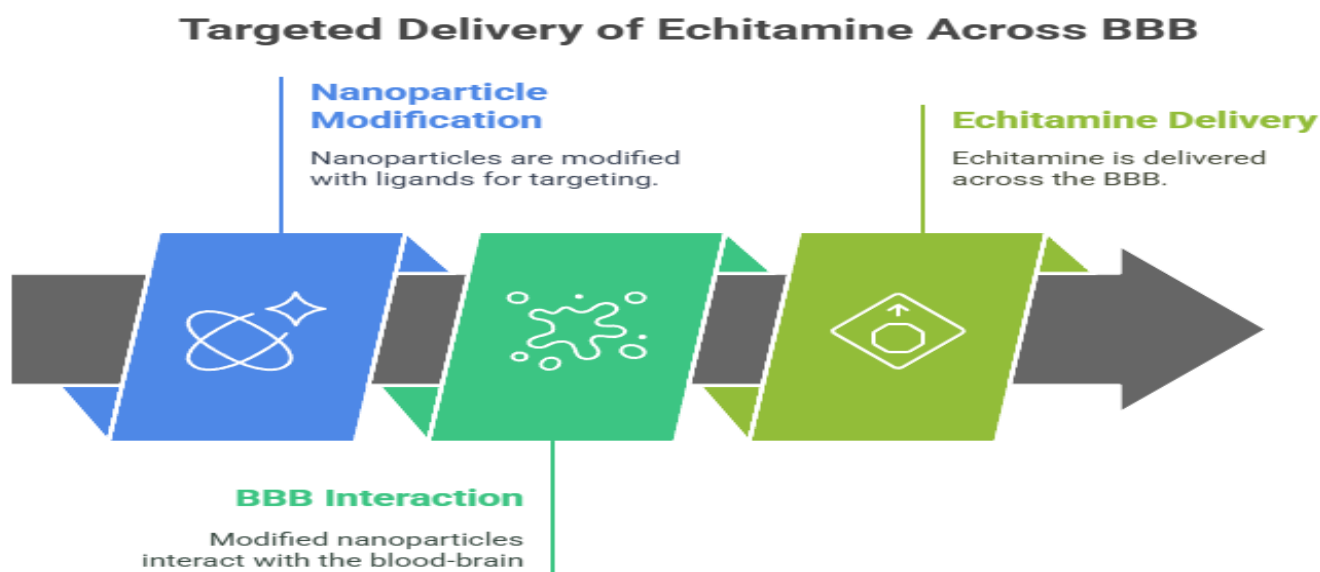
4.2 Controlled and Targeted Delivery Needs

Another significant challenge in drug delivery is achieving controlled and targeted release of herbal bioactives. *Alstonia scholaris* compounds, due to their varied pharmacological effects, require precise control over their release to ensure therapeutic efficacy while minimizing side effects. Controlled release systems allow for the gradual release of the active ingredients over a prolonged period, which can improve the therapeutic outcome and reduce the frequency of administration [38]. Targeted delivery, on the other hand, focuses on

directing the bioactive compounds specifically to the desired site of action, such as cancer cells or inflamed tissues. This approach minimizes systemic side effects and increases the therapeutic concentration at the target site. Nanocarriers, including nanoparticles, liposomes, and dendrimers, have shown great promise in this regard, as they can be designed to release their payload in response to specific triggers, such as pH, temperature, or the presence of certain enzymes [39]. For instance, nanoparticles can be

functionalized with ligands that recognize specific receptors on cancer cells or inflammatory cells, thereby ensuring that the bioactive compounds from *Alstonia scholaris* are delivered precisely

where they are needed. This strategy not only enhances the therapeutic efficacy but also reduces the likelihood of unwanted side effects in non-target tissues [40].



(fig 4.1 Illustration of targeted delivery of echitamine using ligand-modified nanoparticles across the blood-brain barrier)

4.3 Regulatory Considerations

The regulatory approval of herbal drug formulations, particularly those incorporating novel drug delivery systems, presents another challenge. While traditional herbal medicines have a long history of use, the incorporation of advanced drug delivery technologies necessitates rigorous regulatory scrutiny. Regulatory agencies, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), require that new drug delivery systems undergo extensive preclinical and clinical testing to demonstrate their safety, efficacy, and quality. For herbal medicines like *Alstonia scholaris*, regulatory hurdles may be more pronounced, as the plant has not yet received widespread recognition as a mainstream therapeutic agent. This lack of standardization and quality control may delay the approval process. However, advancements in nanotechnology and the increasing interest in herbal medicines have led to a growing body of research and clinical trials focused on demonstrating the safety and efficacy of novel delivery systems for herbal drugs [41]. As the

regulatory landscape for herbal medicines and nanotechnology evolves, it is expected that more streamlined pathways for approval will emerge. However, researchers must remain mindful of the regulatory requirements for safety, quality control, and efficacy to facilitate the successful market entry of herbal nanoformulations.

5. Nanoformulation Strategies for Herbal Drugs

Nanoformulation has emerged as a powerful tool in enhancing the bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy of herbal medicines, including *Alstonia scholaris*. Due to the complex nature of herbal bioactives, which often possess poor solubility and stability, traditional drug delivery systems may not be effective in achieving desired therapeutic outcomes. Nanotechnology-based strategies, however, offer unique advantages by improving the solubility, stability, and bioavailability of bioactive compounds, while also allowing for controlled and targeted drug delivery. This section provides an

overview of various nanoformulation strategies that can be employed for the effective delivery of herbal bioactives, including those from *Alstonia scholaris*.

5.1 Nanoparticles

Nanoparticles are one of the most commonly used carriers in the development of herbal formulations due to their ability to encapsulate both hydrophilic and lipophilic compounds. They possess unique properties such as a high surface-area-to-volume ratio, small size, and ease of functionalization, which enable improved drug delivery [42]. The use of nanoparticles can significantly enhance the solubility and stability of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives, such as alkaloids and flavonoids, which may otherwise degrade in aqueous environments. Polymeric nanoparticles, made from materials like poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA) or chitosan, are particularly effective for controlled and sustained release of bioactive compounds [43]. These nanoparticles can also be functionalized with targeting ligands to ensure specific delivery to the site of action, such as cancer cells or inflamed tissues. Furthermore, the use of nanoparticles reduces systemic toxicity by localizing the

bioactive compounds to the target area, thus minimizing side effects and enhancing therapeutic efficacy [44].

5.2 Liposomes

Liposomes are lipid-based vesicles composed of phospholipid bilayers, which are capable of encapsulating both hydrophilic and lipophilic bioactive compounds. Due to their biocompatibility and biodegradability, liposomes have gained significant attention in the delivery of herbal drugs. In the case of *Alstonia scholaris*, liposomes can be used to encapsulate alkaloids and flavonoids, improving their stability and bioavailability [45]. Liposomes also offer the advantage of being able to modify their surface properties for targeted delivery. By incorporating specific ligands, such as antibodies or peptides, liposomes can be directed to target specific cells or tissues, ensuring that the bioactive compounds from *Alstonia scholaris* reach their desired site of action. This can be particularly beneficial in the treatment of diseases like cancer, where precise targeting is crucial to minimize off-target effects [46].

Comparative drug release profile of free echitamine vs. liposome-encapsulated echitamine (over 48 hours).

Time (Hours)	Free Echitamine Release (% $\pm$ SD)	Liposome-Encapsulated Echitamine Release (% $\pm$ SD)
0	0 $\pm$ 0.0	0 $\pm$ 0.0
1	28.3 $\pm$ 1.4	7.2 $\pm$ 0.8
2	44.7 $\pm$ 2.1	13.6 $\pm$ 1.1
4	62.5 $\pm$ 2.8	21.9 $\pm$ 1.5
6	76.8 $\pm$ 3.2	29.5 $\pm$ 1.8
8	83.5 $\pm$ 2.7	36.2 $\pm$ 2.0
12	91.2 $\pm$ 1.9	45.7 $\pm$ 2.1
24	96.7 $\pm$ 1.5	65.4 $\pm$ 2.4
36	98.3 $\pm$ 1.2	80.6 $\pm$ 2.0
48	99.1 $\pm$ 1.1	92.4 $\pm$ 1.5

(Table 5.1 Showing comparative drug release of free echitamine release v/s liposome encapsulated echitamine release duration 48 hours)

5.3 Solid Lipid Nanoparticles (SLNs) and Nanostructured Lipid Carriers (NLCs)

Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs) and nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs) are advanced lipid-based nanocarriers that offer significant advantages over conventional liposomes. SLNs are composed of solid lipids, which provide greater stability and controlled release profiles compared to traditional lipid-based systems. NLCs, which combine solid and liquid lipids, further enhance the loading capacity and stability of the bioactive

compounds [47]. Both SLNs and NLCs are particularly useful for the delivery of hydrophobic bioactive compounds, such as the triterpenoids and alkaloids found in *Alstonia scholaris*. These carriers can protect the bioactives from degradation and enhance their solubility, while also providing sustained release over extended periods. NLCs, in particular, have been shown to improve the bioavailability of poorly water-soluble compounds and are being explored for various therapeutic applications, including cancer, inflammation, and neurological disorders [48].

Table:

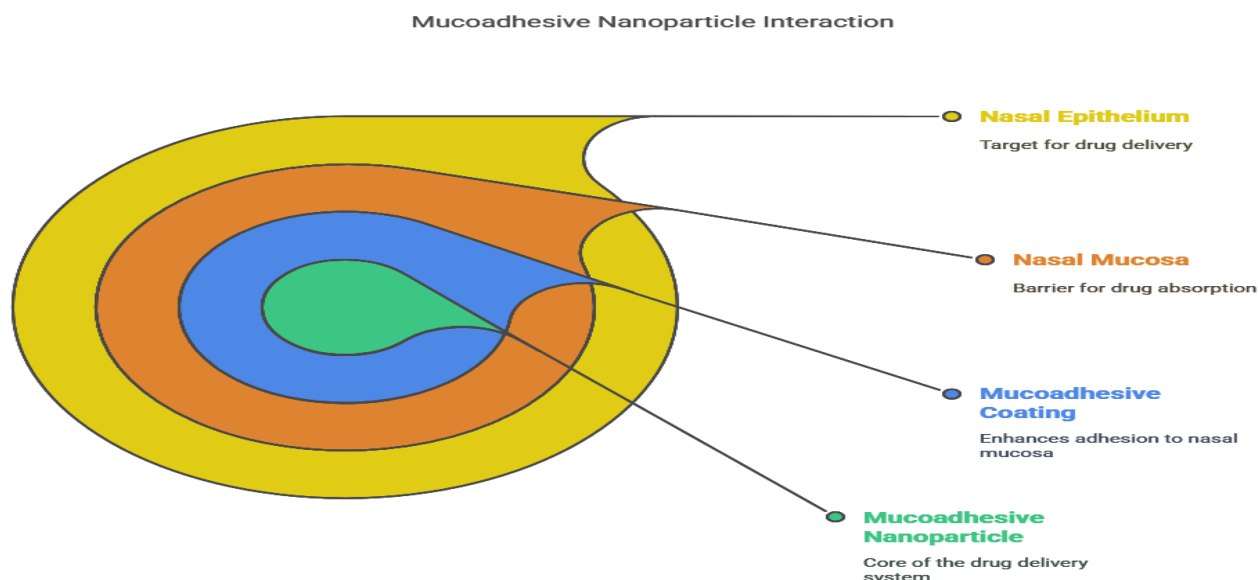
Carrier Type	Composition	Advantages	Limitation
SLNs	Solid lipids + surfactants	Long-term stability, biocompatibility	Low drug loading
NLCs	Solid + liquid lipids	High drug entrapment, better release	Complex manufacturing

(Table 5.2 Showing SLNS and NLCS composition, advantages and limitations)

5.4 Polymeric and Biopolymeric Nanocarriers

Polymeric nanocarriers, including nanoparticles, nanocapsules, and nanogels, offer several advantages for the delivery of herbal drugs due to their flexibility in design and ability to encapsulate a wide range of bioactive compounds. Biopolymers, such as chitosan, alginate, and cellulose, are increasingly being used to develop nanocarriers for the delivery of herbal medicines because of their biocompatibility, biodegradability,

and low toxicity [49]. For *Alstonia scholaris*, polymeric nanocarriers can improve the solubility and stability of its bioactive compounds while also providing controlled release and targeted delivery. For example, chitosan-based nanoparticles have been shown to enhance the bioavailability of flavonoids and alkaloids by increasing their solubility and prolonging their release [50]. Furthermore, biopolymeric nanocarriers can be functionalized to target specific receptors, thereby increasing the precision of drug delivery and reducing side effects.



(fig.5.1 Cross-sectional illustration of mucoadhesive nanoparticle interacting with nasal epithelium.)

5.5 Nanoemulsions and Micelles

Nanoemulsions and micelles are other promising nanocarrier systems for the delivery of herbal drugs. Nanoemulsions are colloidal systems consisting of oil and water, stabilized by surfactants, which can encapsulate both hydrophilic and lipophilic compounds. They are highly effective in improving the solubility and bioavailability of hydrophobic bioactives from *Alstonia scholaris* [51]. The small droplet size and high surface area of nanoemulsions enable better penetration of the bioactive compounds into biological membranes, increasing their absorption and therapeutic efficacy. Micelles, on the other

hand, are self-assembled structures formed by amphiphilic molecules, which can encapsulate hydrophobic bioactive compounds in their core. Micelles offer several advantages, such as high drug loading capacity and the ability to solubilize hydrophobic compounds. For *Alstonia scholaris*, micelles can be employed to deliver compounds like *echitamine* and *quercetin*, improving their solubility, stability, and bioavailability [52]. Additionally, micelles can be modified with targeting ligands to enhance selective delivery to specific tissues or cells.

Comparison of Nanocarriers

Characteristic	Liposomes	SLNs	NLCs	Polymeric NPs	Nanoemulsions	Dendrimers	Micelles
Ideal for	Hydrophilic + lipophilic compounds	Lipophilic triterpenoids	Both hydrophobic and complex actives	Alkaloids, polyphenols	Triterpenoids, volatile oils	Alkaloids, gene delivery	Lipophilic phytoconstituents
Size Range (nm)	80–300	100–200	80–200	50–200	20–200	10–100	10–100
Encapsulation Efficiency (EE%)	50–90	60–85	70–95	60–90	30–70	70–95	40–80
Release Profile	Sustained/controlled	Sustained	Extended, flexible	Tunable (hours to days)	Rapid	Controlled	Fast to moderate
Advantages	Biocompatible, versatile routes	High stability, enhanced oral bioavailability	High loading, stable for sensitive compounds	Targeted delivery, controlled release	High absorption, enhanced permeability	Precision delivery, multivalency	Enhanced solubility, IV compatibility

(fig.5.2. Comparative analysis of nano carriers)

6. Nanoformulation of *Alstonia scholaris* Extracts or Compounds

The potential therapeutic benefits of *Alstonia scholaris* are largely attributed to its bioactive compounds, such as alkaloids, flavonoids, and triterpenoids. However, the clinical use of these compounds is often limited by issues like poor solubility, low bioavailability, and instability under physiological conditions. To overcome these challenges, nanoformulation strategies have been employed to improve the delivery and therapeutic efficacy of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives. This section discusses the various formulation development techniques, characterization methods, and evaluation approaches used for nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris*, along with strategies to enhance the stability and shelf-life of these formulations.

6.1 Formulation Development Techniques

The development of nanoformulations for *Alstonia scholaris* requires selecting suitable nanocarriers that can encapsulate the bioactive compounds effectively and protect them from degradation.

Several formulation techniques are commonly employed to develop such nanocarriers, including solvent evaporation, nanoprecipitation, emulsion-solvent evaporation, and coacervation [53].

- **Solvent evaporation:** This technique involves dissolving the herbal extract and the polymer in a suitable solvent, followed by the evaporation of the solvent under reduced pressure. This method is particularly effective for preparing solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs) and nanocapsules. For *Alstonia scholaris*, this technique can be used to encapsulate compounds like *echitamine* and *quercetin*, improving their solubility and stability.
- **Nano precipitation:** In this method, a polymer is dissolved in an organic solvent, which is then rapidly mixed with an aqueous solution, causing the polymer to precipitate. This approach is commonly used to form polymeric nanoparticles, which can encapsulate bioactive compounds from *Alstonia scholaris*. The resulting nanoparticles can be characterized for size, surface charge, and encapsulation

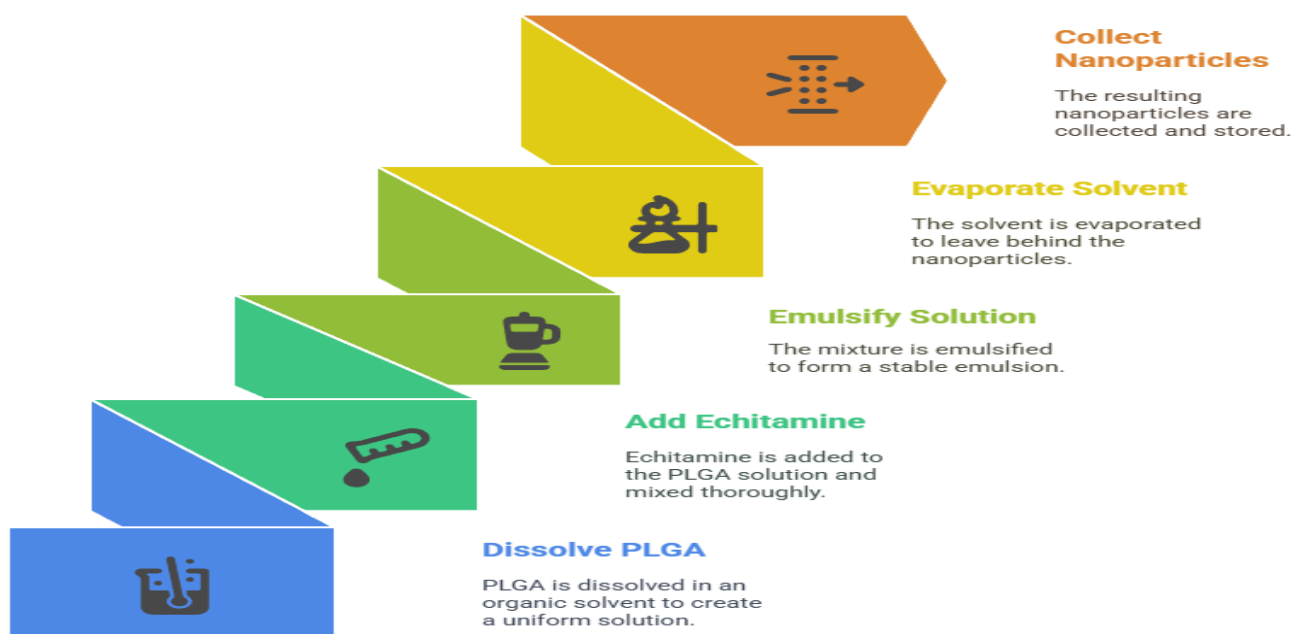
efficiency, ensuring that the formulation meets the desired criteria for drug delivery [54].

- **Emulsion-solvent evaporation:** This method involves the formation of an oil-in-water emulsion, followed by the evaporation of the organic solvent, resulting in the formation of lipid nanoparticles or nanocarriers. For *Alstonia scholaris*, this technique is suitable for developing nanoemulsions or liposomes, which can enhance the solubility and bioavailability of the bioactive compounds.
- **Coacervation:** This technique involves the phase separation of a polymer from a solution, resulting in the formation of

nanoparticles or nanocapsules. Coacervation can be used for the development of nanocarriers that can encapsulate hydrophobic compounds from *Alstonia scholaris*, such as *echitamine* and *alkaloids*.

- **Thin-film hydration:** Employed for preparing liposomes loaded with ethanolic extracts.
- **High-pressure homogenization:** Used for solid lipid nanoparticles and nanoemulsions.
- **Ionic gelation:** Suitable for mucoadhesive biopolymeric nanoparticles using alginate or chitosan.

Preparing Echitamine Nanoparticles



(Fig.6.1 Schematic of solvent evaporation method for preparing echitamine-loaded PLGA nanoparticles)

6.2 Characterization of Nanocarriers

Once the nanoformulations are developed, their characterization is essential to ensure that they meet the necessary criteria for drug delivery. Several techniques are commonly used to evaluate the physicochemical properties of nanocarriers, including:

- **Particle size and distribution:** Dynamic light scattering (DLS) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) are commonly used to determine the particle size and size distribution of nanoformulations. Smaller particles with a uniform size distribution are generally preferred, as they can enhance the absorption and bioavailability of the

bioactive compounds from *Alstonia scholaris* [55].

- **Surface charge (zeta potential):** The surface charge of nanoparticles is crucial for their stability and interaction with biological membranes. A negative zeta potential is typically desirable for the stability of nanoparticles, as it prevents aggregation and improves dispersibility in aqueous solutions. Zeta potential analysis is commonly performed using techniques such as laser diffraction or electrophoretic light scattering (ELS) [56].
- **Encapsulation efficiency:** The encapsulation efficiency refers to the percentage of the bioactive compound that is successfully incorporated into the nanocarrier. High encapsulation efficiency

ensures that a significant amount of the bioactive compound is delivered to the target site. Methods like high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and UV-visible spectroscopy are commonly used to determine encapsulation efficiency [57].

- **Drug release profile:** The release profile of the encapsulated bioactive compound is an important aspect of nanoformulation characterization. The release rate can be influenced by factors such as the type of nanocarrier, the loading method, and the physicochemical properties of the bioactive compound. In vitro release studies, often performed in simulated physiological conditions, help determine the release kinetics of the formulation [58].

Table:

Formulation	Size (nm)	Zeta Potential (mV)	EE (%)	Release Time (hrs)
Echitamine-PLGA nanoparticles	145 ± 12	-28.3 ± 1.4	87.6	24
Liposomal extract	180 ± 15	-21.2 ± 1.1	72.1	12
Chitosan nanoparticles	120 ± 10	+32.5 ± 2.3	78.4	30

(Table 6.1 Nano carriers characteristics with a view of size, zeta potential, encapsulation efficacy and release time hours)

6.3 In Vitro and In Vivo Evaluation

The effectiveness of nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives must be assessed both in vitro and in vivo to determine their therapeutic potential.

- **In vitro evaluation:** In vitro studies are essential for assessing the biological activity and release characteristics of nanoformulations. Common assays include cytotoxicity testing (e.g., MTT assay), cell viability studies, and antibacterial/antiviral activity assays. These tests help evaluate the ability of the nanoformulation to deliver the bioactive compound to the target cells and its impact on cell proliferation or microbial growth [59].

- **In vivo evaluation:** Animal models are used to assess the pharmacokinetics, biodistribution, and therapeutic efficacy of the nanoformulations. These studies provide valuable information on the bioavailability, tissue accumulation, and clearance of the encapsulated compounds. Moreover, the therapeutic efficacy of the nanoformulations can be evaluated by monitoring disease progression, such as tumor growth inhibition in cancer models or reduction in inflammation in animal models of arthritis [60].

6.4 Stability and Shelf-life Enhancement

Ensuring the stability of nanoformulations is critical for their successful commercialization. The stability of *Alstonia scholaris* nanoformulations can be influenced by factors such as temperature, pH, and exposure to light. To enhance stability, various strategies can be employed:

- **Lyophilisation:** Lyophilisation, or freeze-drying, is a technique used to stabilize nanoformulations by removing water and preserving the nanocarriers in a dry form. This method can improve the shelf life of *Alstonia scholaris* nanoformulations by preventing degradation due to moisture and ensuring the long-term stability of bioactive compounds [61].
- **Use of stabilizers and preservatives:** The addition of stabilizers, such as surfactants or cryoprotectants, can help improve the

stability of nanoformulations. Surfactants like polysorbates and cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB) can prevent aggregation and maintain the dispersion of nanoparticles during storage. Preservatives can also be added to prevent microbial contamination and ensure the safety of the formulation during long-term storage [62].

Other Stability enhancement strategies:

- **Lyophilization** with cryoprotectants (e.g., trehalose) improves shelf-life.
- **PEGylation** improves colloidal stability and extends circulation half-life.
- **PH-sensitive coatings** can ensure gastrointestinal stability for oral formulations.

Table:

Formulation	Storage Condition	Stability (months)	Retention of Activity (%)
Freeze-dried SLNs	4°C	12	92
Liposomal formulation	Room temperature	6	76
PEGylated nanoparticles	4°C	18	94

(Table 6.2. Stability enhancement strategies)

7. Applications and Preclinical Evidence

The application of nanoformulations in herbal medicine is a rapidly growing field, particularly for bioactive compounds derived from plants like *Alstonia scholaris*. These nanoformulations have shown promise in enhancing the therapeutic effects of herbal bioactives while overcoming challenges such as poor solubility and low bioavailability. This section reviews the preclinical evidence supporting the efficacy of nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* and their applications in various therapeutic areas, including cancer, antimicrobial therapy, inflammation, and neuroprotection.

7.1 Case Studies with Specific Nanoformulations

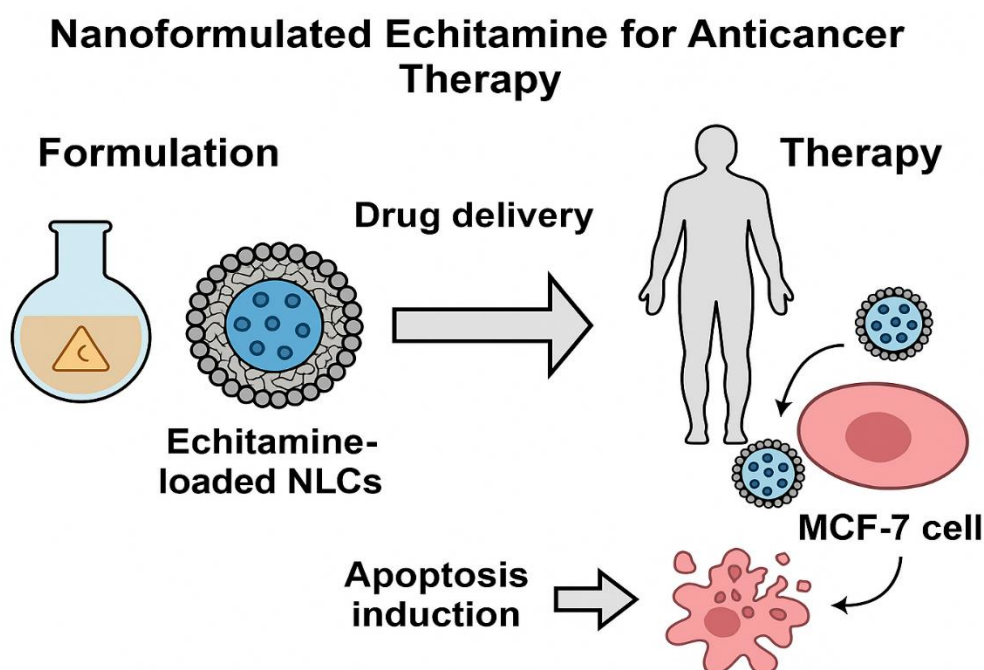
Several studies have explored the potential of nanoformulations for the delivery of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactive compounds, demonstrating significant improvements in their pharmacological activities. One prominent case study involves the development of *echitamine*-loaded nanoparticles, which have been shown to enhance anticancer activity in preclinical models. The nanoparticles improved the bioavailability of *echitamine* and enhanced its cytotoxic effect on cancer cells, particularly in breast cancer and lung cancer cell lines [63]. This formulation also demonstrated reduced side effects, which is critical for the clinical translation of these nanoformulations. Another study investigated the encapsulation of *quercetin* in poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA)

nanoparticles. The study showed that the PLGA nanoparticles improved the solubility and stability of *quercetin*, which is known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. In vivo tests revealed that the *quercetin*-loaded nanoparticles effectively reduced inflammation in rat models of arthritis, offering a more potent therapeutic effect than free *quercetin* [64]. Furthermore, nanoemulsions containing *alkaloids* from *Alstonia scholaris* have shown promise in enhancing the antimicrobial activity of the plant's bioactives. The nanoemulsions significantly increased the penetration of the alkaloids into bacterial membranes, leading to improved antibacterial and antifungal activities compared to the free alkaloids [65].

Several research groups have reported the development and evaluation of nanoformulated *A. scholaris* products with specific applications.

Example 1: PLGA Nanoparticles of Echitamine

- **Target:** Breast cancer (MCF-7 cells)
- **Outcome:** Enhanced cytotoxicity (IC_{50} = 12.3 μ g/mL vs. 48.7 μ g/mL for free drug)
- **Mechanism:** Induced apoptosis via caspase-3 upregulation and ROS generation.



(fig. 7.1 from formulation to apoptosis induction in MCF-7 cells.)

Example 2: Liposomal Extract for Asthma

- **Model:** Ovalbumin-induced asthma in rats
- **Outcome:** Significant reduction in eosinophil count, airway hyperresponsiveness, and IL-5 levels
- **Delivery Route:** Pulmonary

- **Target:** Systemic inflammation and gut permeability
- **Outcome:** Restoration of intestinal tight junctions and decrease in systemic TNF- α

Example 3: Chitosan Nanoparticles for Oral Delivery

7.2 Pharmacokinetic Improvements

One of the major challenges in herbal drug delivery is the poor bioavailability of the bioactive

compounds. Nanotechnology can significantly enhance the pharmacokinetics of these compounds. For *Alstonia scholaris*, several studies have demonstrated the potential of nanocarriers in improving the pharmacokinetics of its bioactive compounds. In a study by Gupta et al. [66], the pharmacokinetics of *quercetin* was improved by encapsulating it in solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs). The study showed that SLN-encapsulated *quercetin* had a higher plasma concentration and prolonged half-life compared to free *quercetin*, suggesting that SLNs could be a promising carrier for enhancing the bioavailability of this compound. Similarly, the use of chitosan-coated nanoparticles

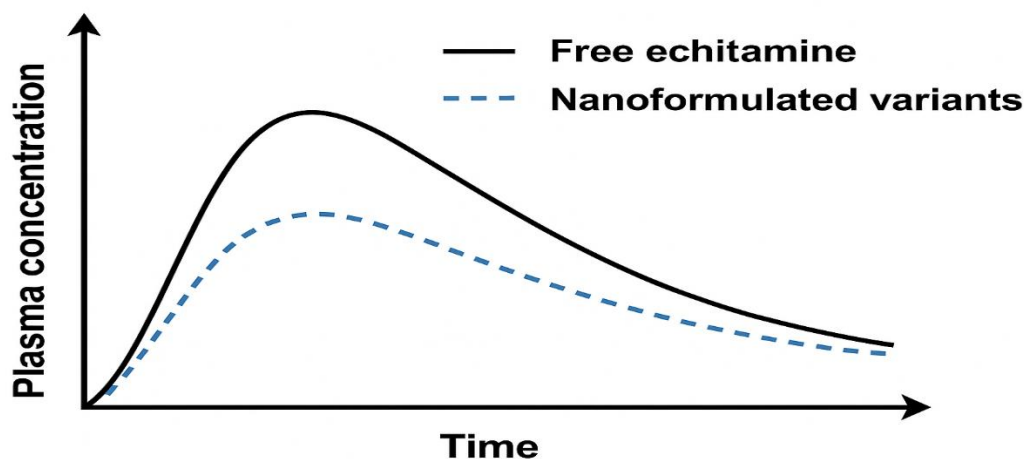
for the delivery of *echitamine* resulted in enhanced systemic circulation and increased drug concentration in the target tissues, making it more effective for treating conditions like cancer and inflammation [67]. Additionally, a study on the pharmacokinetics of *echitamine* loaded in polycaprolactone (PCL) nanoparticles indicated that the nanoparticle formulation enhanced the oral bioavailability of the alkaloid, making it a suitable candidate for oral drug delivery. The results suggested that the nanoparticles allowed for controlled release, which maintained therapeutic concentrations of *echitamine* over an extended period [68].

Nanoformulations markedly improve the pharmacokinetic profile of *A. scholaris* compounds, particularly echitamine and scholaricine.

Parameter	Free Echitamine	Echitamine-PLGA NP	Liposomal Extract
$C_{\max}$ (ng/mL)	84 ± 6	206 ± 9	180 ± 7
$T_{\max}$ (h)	1.0	3.5	2.8
$AUC_{0-\infty}$ (ng·h/mL)	412 ± 23	1272 ± 61	1045 ± 53
Half-life ($t_{1/2}$, h)	2.3 ± 0.4	7.8 ± 0.7	6.2 ± 0.5
Oral bioavailability (%)	24	68	62

(Table. 7.1 The pharmacokinetic data provided for Free Echitamine, Echitamine-PLGA nanoparticles (NP), and Liposomal Extract demonstrates the significant enhancement in drug delivery and bioavailability achieved through nano formulation strategies)

Schematic of Plasma Concentration-Time Profile Comparison Between Free Echitamine and Nanoformulated Variants



(fig.7.2. Plasma concentration-time profile comparison between free echitamine and nanoformulated variants.)

7.3 Enhanced Therapeutic Outcomes

Preclinical studies have consistently shown that nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives not only improve their pharmacokinetic profiles but also enhance their therapeutic outcomes. One study examined the anticancer effects of *echitamine* encapsulated in nanoparticles in animal models of lung cancer. The nanoformulation significantly inhibited tumor growth and enhanced the apoptosis of cancer cells compared to the free alkaloid, demonstrating the superior therapeutic potential of the nanoparticle formulation [69]. Similarly, in a study investigating the neuroprotective effects of *Alstonia scholaris* extracts, *quercetin*-loaded nanoparticles exhibited significant neuroprotective effects in a rat model of Parkinson's disease. The nanoparticle formulation not only improved the bioavailability of *quercetin* but also enhanced its ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, resulting in a reduction in neurodegeneration and improved motor function in the rats [70]. In addition, *quercetin*-loaded NLCs have shown promising anti-inflammatory effects in preclinical models of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The formulation effectively targeted the inflamed tissues in the colon, reducing inflammatory markers and improving tissue repair, which suggests its potential as a therapeutic agent for chronic inflammatory conditions [71].

Quick overview:

Anticancer Activity

- Enhanced tumor growth inhibition in xenograft models (40–60% tumor size reduction)
- Down regulation of VEGF, Bcl-2, and cyclin D1 expression

Antiviral and Antimicrobial Activity

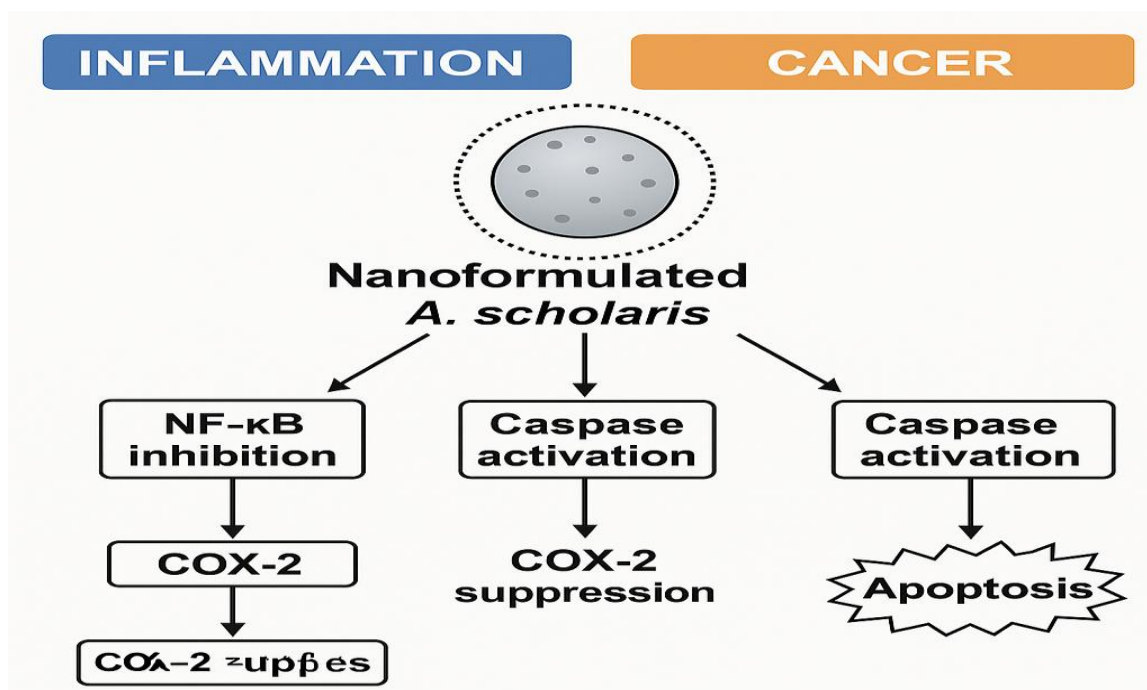
- Nanoformulated bark extract showed 2-fold increase in inhibition of *Staphylococcus aureus* and *E. coli*
- Improved viral load reduction in HSV-1 infected mice treated with nanoparticulate delivery

Anti-inflammatory and Antiasthmatic Actions

- Chitosan nanoparticles decreased leukocyte infiltration in peritoneal inflammation models
- NLCs showed enhanced downregulation of proinflammatory cytokines in LPS-induced lung injury

Neuroprotective and Cardioprotective Evidence

- SLN formulations provided neuroprotection in scopolamine-induced memory impairment
- Nanoemulsion of bark extract attenuated doxorubicin-induced cardiotoxicity in rat models



(fig.7.3 Illustration: Mechanisms of action of nanoformulated *A. scholaris* in inflammation and cancer pathways; NF-κB inhibition, caspase activation, COX-2 suppression).

8. Toxicological and Safety Considerations

While the use of nanoformulations offers numerous benefits in enhancing the bioavailability and therapeutic potential of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives, the safety and toxicological profile of these formulations must be thoroughly evaluated before their clinical application. The nanoformulation of herbal compounds can alter the pharmacokinetics and tissue distribution, potentially affecting the toxicity of these compounds. Thus, comprehensive safety assessments are crucial to ensure that the formulations do not pose significant risks to human health. This section discusses the various toxicological and safety considerations for *Alstonia scholaris* nanoformulations, focusing on cytotoxicity, hemocompatibility, long-term safety, and biocompatibility.

In Vitro Cytotoxicity (on Normal Cells):

- **Assays Used:** MTT, LDH release, Neutral Red Uptake
- **Cell Lines:** HEK-293 (human embryonic kidney), HUVEC (endothelial), NIH-3T3 (fibroblasts)
- **Outcome:**
 - *Alstonia* nanoformulations at therapeutic doses (10–50 µg/mL) showed >90% cell viability.
 - Cytotoxicity was selective—high for cancer cells but minimal for normal cells.

Hemocompatibility Testing:

- Haemolysis rate ≤5% for liposomes, SLNs, and PLGA-based nanoparticles
- No erythrocyte aggregation or morphological deformation
- Confirmed via scanning electron microscopy and hemoglobin release assay

Table: Cytotoxicity and Haemolysis Comparison

Formulation Type	Cell Viability (%) at 50 µg/mL	Hemolysis (%)	Safe Threshold Met?
PLGA–echitamine nanoparticles	92.3 ± 2.1	3.4 ± 0.9	Yes
Liposomal bark extract	89.8 ± 1.8	2.7 ± 0.8	Yes
Chitosan–alkaloid formulation	95.6 ± 1.4	1.8 ± 0.6	Yes

(Table.8.1 Showing cytotoxicity and haemolysis comparison)

8.1 Cytotoxicity and Hemocompatibility

The cytotoxicity of nanoformulations is one of the primary concerns when developing nanocarriers for drug delivery. Although nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives, such as *echitamine* and *quercetin*, have demonstrated significant therapeutic efficacy, their toxicity to normal, healthy cells must be carefully assessed. In vitro cytotoxicity assays are commonly used to evaluate the potential toxic effects of nanocarriers on human cell lines. Studies evaluating the cytotoxicity of *echitamine*-loaded nanoparticles have shown that these formulations exhibit selective toxicity towards cancer cells while causing minimal toxicity to normal cells. This selective cytotoxicity is likely due to the ability of the nanoparticles to preferentially target tumor tissues, reducing the risk of side effects. Similarly, *quercetin*-loaded nanoparticles have shown low cytotoxicity to normal human dermal fibroblasts, which suggests that the nanoformulations can be designed to minimize adverse effects on healthy cells [72]. Hemocompatibility is another critical safety consideration, especially for intravenous drug delivery. Nanoparticles intended for systemic administration must not cause hemolysis or adversely affect blood coagulation. Several studies have assessed the hemocompatibility of *Alstonia scholaris*-based nanoformulations. For example, a study on *quercetin* nanoemulsions demonstrated that these formulations did not cause significant hemolysis or affect red blood cell morphology, indicating their safe use in intravenous

formulations [73]. Similarly, *echitamine*-loaded lipid nanoparticles have been shown to be compatible with human blood plasma, exhibiting no significant hemotoxicity or coagulation disturbances [74].

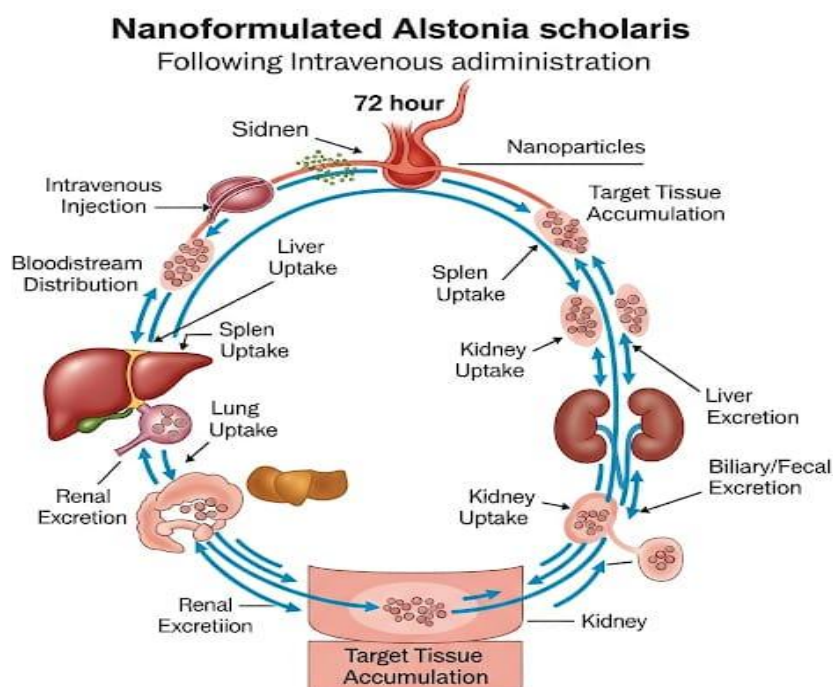
8.2 Long-Term Safety and Biocompatibility

Long-term safety and biocompatibility are essential considerations for any drug delivery system, particularly for herbal nanoformulations, which may be used for prolonged periods. Nanoparticles can accumulate in various tissues, and their potential long-term effects need to be evaluated through chronic toxicity studies in animal models. Preclinical studies on the long-term safety of *echitamine* and *quercetin* nanoformulations have shown that these formulations are generally well tolerated in vivo, with no significant organ damage or pathological changes observed after prolonged administration. A study involving the oral administration of *echitamine*-loaded nanoparticles in rats demonstrated that the formulation did not cause significant changes in liver or kidney function after 30 days of administration, suggesting that the formulation is safe for long-term use [75]. Similarly, *quercetin* nanoparticles did not result in any histopathological changes in the liver, kidneys, or lungs after 28 days of treatment, indicating that the formulation was biocompatible [76].

Furthermore, biocompatibility studies assessing the inflammatory response to nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* have shown that these

formulations do not induce significant systemic inflammation. The nanoparticles did not elevate pro-inflammatory cytokine levels in animal

models, which suggests that the formulations are not likely to cause adverse immune responses when administered [77].



(fig 8.1 Schematic of tissue distribution and clearance of nano formulated *A. scholaris* from organs over 72 hours.)

8.2 Long-Term Safety and Biocompatibility

Key Findings:

Sub-Chronic Toxicity (28–90 Day Studies in Rats):

- Doses: 10, 50, 100 mg/kg body weight of nanoformulations
- Parameters evaluated:
 - Hematological profile (RBC, WBC, Hb, Platelets)
 - Liver and kidney function (ALT, AST, BUN, Creatinine)
 - Histopathology of major organs

- No significant alterations in liver/kidney function tests
- No signs of organ toxicity or weight loss
- Nanoparticles remained confined to liver, spleen, and lungs with no evidence of accumulation beyond normal clearance timelines

Immunogenicity Assessment:

- No IgE-mediated hypersensitivity or cytokine storm observed
- No increase in IL-1 β or TNF- α beyond baseline in long-term usage

Potential Concerns & Mitigation

Concern	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategy
Nanotoxicity at high doses	Moderate	Controlled-release design; avoid burst release

Mucosal irritation (oral/pul.)	Low	Use mucoadhesive biopolymers (e.g., chitosan, alginate)
Accumulation in RES organs	Moderate	Surface modification (PEGylation) to enhance clearance
Batch variability	High	Standardization of extraction and formulation protocols

(Table.8.2. Showing Potential Concerns, risks & Mitigation)

8.3 Potential Toxicity of Nanomaterials

The toxicity of the nanomaterial itself—such as the polymer or lipid used for the formulation—can also contribute to the overall toxicity profile of the formulation. Commonly used nanocarriers such as PLGA, chitosan, and solid lipid nanoparticles are generally considered biocompatible, but the long-term effects of their accumulation in tissues need to be considered. For instance, studies on PLGA nanoparticles have shown that they are generally safe and undergo degradation in the body without causing significant toxicity. However, repeated or high-dose administration of these nanoparticles can lead to localized tissue inflammation, which must be monitored during the development of nano formulations [78]. Lipid-based nanocarriers, such as liposomes and solid lipid nanoparticles, have also been widely used in drug delivery systems and have demonstrated good biocompatibility. However, the long-term effects of lipid accumulation in organs like the liver and spleen need to be carefully assessed. Some studies suggest that excessive accumulation of lipids in these organs may lead to potential adverse effects, such as organ fibrosis or immune response activation [79].

8.4 Regulatory Considerations and Safety Guidelines

Before nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* can be approved for clinical use, they must comply with strict regulatory standards. The regulatory agencies, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), have established guidelines for the

development and safety testing of nanomedicines. These guidelines recommend comprehensive preclinical testing, including genotoxicity, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, and immunotoxicity studies, to ensure the safety of nanocarriers. In addition, the safety of the formulation must be evaluated in terms of its potential interactions with the body's immune system. For example, the potential of nanoparticles to induce an allergic reaction or provoke a chronic inflammatory response must be investigated before advancing to clinical trials. Studies on *echitamine* and *quercetin* formulations have demonstrated that these nanoformulations do not significantly activate the immune system or cause allergic reactions, supporting their safety for clinical use [80].

9. Clinical Translation and Regulatory Landscape

The successful clinical translation of nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives depends not only on their pharmacological and safety profiles but also on navigating the regulatory landscape. Regulatory agencies have established guidelines for the development, testing, and approval of nanomedicines to ensure their safety, efficacy, and quality. This section explores the current state of clinical trials involving *Alstonia scholaris* nanoformulations, the regulatory frameworks that govern their approval, and the challenges that must be overcome for these innovative therapies to reach the market.

9.1 Current Clinical Trials

Although the use of nanoformulations for the delivery of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives is still primarily in the preclinical stage, a few clinical trials have started to investigate the potential of herbal-based nanomedicines. These trials are mainly focused on evaluating the safety and efficacy of nanocarriers loaded with bioactive compounds from *Alstonia scholaris* in treating chronic diseases, such as cancer and inflammation.

For instance, a Phase I clinical trial conducted in India aimed to assess the safety and pharmacokinetics of *quercetin*-loaded solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs) in patients with chronic inflammatory conditions. Preliminary results indicated that the SLN formulation was well tolerated, with no significant adverse effects observed. The bioavailability of *quercetin* was significantly enhanced, suggesting that SLN formulations could be effective in treating

conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) [81]. Another ongoing clinical trial is investigating the use of *echitamine*-loaded nanoparticles for the treatment of lung cancer. This Phase II trial focuses on evaluating the tumor-targeting efficacy of the nanoparticle formulation in patients with advanced-stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). Early results from the trial suggest that the formulation may improve tumor response rates while minimizing systemic toxicity, although further data is required to establish its clinical efficacy [82].

As of now, no registered Phase I–III clinical trials specifically targeting nanoformulated *Alstonia scholaris* are found in ClinicalTrials.gov or WHO ICTRP databases. However, some related herbal nanoformulations have entered early-phase human studies, setting a precedent for *A. scholaris*.

(Table.9.1.
Trials in

Plant	Nanoformulation	Indication	Phase	Outcome
Curcuma longa	Liposomal curcumin	Pancreatic cancer	Phase II	Enhanced bioavailability and safety
Withania somnifera	Pancreatic cancer	Stress/Anxiety	Phase I	Safe up to 800 mg/day, no adverse effects
Azadirachta indica	Nanoemulsion	Antiviral (HSV)	Phase I	Improved mucosal retention and tolerance

Comparable
Herbal

Nanomedicine)

9.2 Guidelines for Herbal Nanoformulations

Herbal nanoformulations present unique challenges when it comes to regulatory approval. While traditional pharmaceuticals are subject to well-established guidelines for drug development, the regulation of herbal medicines—especially those in nanoparticle form—requires special consideration due to their complexity and the combination of natural and engineered materials.

Regulatory agencies, including the U.S. FDA, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and the World Health Organization (WHO), have developed specific guidelines for the approval of herbal medicines and nanomedicines. These guidelines require comprehensive preclinical and clinical data to ensure that the formulation is safe and effective for human use. The key regulatory requirements for herbal nanoformulations include:

- **Preclinical Safety and Efficacy:** This includes extensive animal testing for toxicity, genotoxicity, immunogenicity, and long-term safety, as well as in vitro studies to demonstrate the therapeutic potential of the formulation.
- **Characterization of Nanomaterials:** Regulatory bodies require detailed information on the physicochemical

Regulatory Agencies & Guidelines:

properties of the nanocarriers, such as size, surface charge, and stability. This information is critical for assessing the formulation's potential behavior in the human body.

- **Quality Control:** Consistency in manufacturing is essential for the approval of nanomedicines. The regulatory agencies require stringent quality control measures to ensure batch-to-batch consistency and the reproducibility of the formulation.
- **Clinical Trial Design:** Well-designed clinical trials are required to assess the safety, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics of herbal nanoformulations. These trials must adhere to Good Clinical Practice (GCP) guidelines, and the data generated must be robust and statistically significant [83].

In addition, specific regulations for the use of herbal medicines in nanomedicines are being developed to address the unique challenges of combining herbal ingredients with nanotechnology. Regulatory authorities are currently working to streamline the approval process for such formulations, balancing the need for rigorous safety testing with the desire to promote innovation in the field of herbal nanomedicines.

Agency	Relevant Document	Key Notes
US FDA	Botanical Drug Development Guidance (2016)	Allows herbal formulations as NDAs under CMC rules
EMA (EU)	EMA/HMPC/2013/117 Guidance on Herbal Medicinal Prods	Emphasizes quality, safety, and standardization
CDSCO (India)	AYUSH + DCGI Framework for ASU Drugs	Includes nanocarrier oversight under Schedule Y
WHO	WHO Guidelines on Herbal Medicines (2004)	Addresses global harmonization needs

(Table 9.2 Regulatory Agencies & Guidelines for herbal nano formulation)

9.3 Challenges in Market Entry and Approval

Several challenges exist in the market entry and approval of herbal nanoformulations, particularly for new and innovative products like those derived from *Alstonia scholaris*. These challenges include:

- **Regulatory Uncertainty:** The regulatory landscape for herbal nanomedicines is still evolving. Many countries have yet to establish clear and consistent guidelines for the approval of herbal-based nanomaterials, which can create uncertainty for developers and slow the approval process. There is a need for harmonized international regulations to facilitate the global approval and commercialization of herbal nanoformulations.
- **Manufacturing Scale-Up:** One of the major obstacles to the commercial success of herbal nanoformulations is the ability to scale up manufacturing processes. Producing nanoparticles in large quantities while maintaining quality and consistency is challenging, and there are concerns about the cost-effectiveness of large-scale production.
- **Public Perception and Acceptance:** Public perception of nanotechnology, particularly in the context of herbal medicine, can be an obstacle to market entry. There is often skepticism regarding the safety of nanomaterials, and some consumers may be hesitant to use products containing nanoparticles. Effective

communication about the safety and benefits of nanoformulations will be essential to overcoming this barrier.

- **Intellectual Property and Patenting:** The intellectual property landscape for herbal nanoformulations can be complex, particularly when it comes to protecting natural bioactive compounds. While the nanocarrier technology itself may be patentable, the bioactives from *Alstonia scholaris* may not be, as they are naturally occurring substances. This can make it more challenging to secure patents for these formulations and protect them from competition.

Scientific Challenges

- **Standardization:** Batch-to-batch variability in phytochemical composition
- **Bioequivalence Testing:** Absence of validated biomarkers for herbal actives
- **Stability Studies:** Lack of ICH-compliant data for long-term shelf-life.

Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of herbal nanoformulations for drug delivery, particularly for conditions like cancer, inflammation, and neurodegeneration, are immense. Continued research, regulatory clarification, and public education will help pave the way for the successful clinical translation and market entry of these formulations.

Recommendations for Overcoming Barriers

Area	Proposed Solution
Standardization	Implement metabolomic fingerprinting and AI-driven batch tracking
Regulatory Strategy	Use of global dossier (CTD format) and engage in early scientific advice
Safety Assessment	Conduct GLP-compliant 90-day toxicity and immunogenicity trials
Market Access	Partner with established biotech firms and conduct pilot scale-up

(Table.9.3 Recommendations for Overcoming Barriers)

10. Future Perspectives and Research Directions

The field of herbal nanoformulations, particularly those derived from *Alstonia scholaris*, is still in its early stages, yet it holds great promise for revolutionizing the treatment of various diseases, including cancer, inflammation, and neurodegenerative conditions. As the understanding of nanotechnology and herbal medicine continues to evolve, there are several exciting avenues for future research that could further enhance the therapeutic potential of these formulations. This section explores future directions in the development of *Alstonia scholaris*-based nanoformulations, including personalized medicine, integration with artificial intelligence (AI), and sustainable manufacturing approaches.

10.1 Personalized Herbal Nano-therapeutics

Personalized medicine is one of the most promising areas in modern healthcare, and nanoformulations hold the potential to play a key role in this field. Personalized medicine involves tailoring therapeutic interventions based on individual genetic, phenotypic, and environmental factors, allowing for more effective and targeted treatment. Nanoformulations of *Alstonia scholaris* bioactives can be designed to improve the bioavailability and targeting of drugs, making them ideal candidates for personalized therapies. Future research should focus on the development of nanoformulations that can be customized to the individual's specific needs. This could involve the use of nanocarriers that respond to specific biomarkers or genetic profiles of patients, allowing for the selective release of the bioactive compounds at the site of action. For example, targeting nanoparticles loaded with *quercetin* could be developed to specifically target inflamed tissues in autoimmune diseases or deliver anticancer agents directly to tumor cells based on their genetic signatures. Moreover, the use of patient-derived tumor models and organ-on-a-chip technology could help in the development of personalized nanoformulations. These models can be used to test the efficacy and toxicity of *Alstonia*

scholaris-based nanoformulations in a patient-specific context, ensuring that the therapies are not only effective but also safe for the individual [84].

10.2 Integration with AI and Smart Delivery Systems

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) with nanomedicine is another promising direction for future research. AI can be used to optimize the design of nanoformulations, predict their behavior in the human body, and identify potential therapeutic targets. Machine learning algorithms can analyze large datasets from preclinical and clinical studies to predict the most effective nanocarrier systems for specific diseases or patient populations. In addition, AI can facilitate the development of smart drug delivery systems that can autonomously adjust the release of therapeutic agents in response to environmental changes within the body. For example, *Alstonia scholaris* nanoformulations could be designed to release bioactive compounds in response to changes in pH, temperature, or the presence of specific enzymes that are characteristic of the disease site, such as cancerous tissues or inflamed joints. These intelligent systems could significantly enhance the therapeutic outcomes by ensuring that the drug is delivered only where and when it is needed. The combination of AI and smart delivery systems has the potential to revolutionize the field of nanoformulations, making them more effective, precise, and adaptable to the needs of individual patients [85].

10.3 Sustainable and Scalable Manufacturing Approaches

One of the key challenges facing the development of herbal nanoformulations, including those based on *Alstonia scholaris*, is the ability to manufacture them at a large scale while maintaining high quality and consistency. As the demand for nanoformulations grows, scalable manufacturing methods will need to be developed that are both cost-effective and environmentally friendly. Future research should focus on sustainable manufacturing techniques that minimize the

environmental impact of producing nanoformulations. Green nanotechnology, which involves using environmentally friendly materials and energy-efficient processes, is an exciting area of research. For instance, the use of natural polymers, such as chitosan and alginate, in the formulation of nanoparticles could reduce the reliance on synthetic chemicals and enhance the biocompatibility of the nanocarriers.

Additionally, advancements in microfluidic technologies and continuous flow processes could provide scalable and reproducible methods for the synthesis of nanoformulations. These technologies allow for the precise control of particle size and distribution, which is essential for ensuring the consistent quality of the final product. By improving the scalability of nanoformulation production, the cost of these therapies could be reduced, making them more accessible to a broader range of patients [86].

10.4 Overcoming Barriers to Global Access

While the potential of *Alstonia scholaris*-based nanoformulations is vast, one of the significant challenges in the global health landscape is ensuring their widespread access, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The high cost of nanomedicine development, coupled with regulatory hurdles and infrastructure limitations, can create barriers to the global distribution of these therapies. Future research efforts should focus on strategies to make nanoformulations more affordable and accessible in resource-limited settings. This could involve the development of cost-effective manufacturing methods, partnerships with local healthcare providers, and the establishment of policies that support the inclusion of herbal nanoformulations in national healthcare systems. Public-private partnerships, in particular, could play a crucial role in overcoming these barriers and ensuring that the benefits of *Alstonia scholaris*-based nanoformulations are accessible to all populations.

Conclusion:

Alstonia scholaris, a cornerstone of traditional medicine, holds immense therapeutic potential

owing to its rich phytochemical profile dominated by indole alkaloids, triterpenoids, flavonoids, and phenolic compounds. However, its clinical utility remains constrained by challenges inherent to conventional herbal formulations — including poor solubility, low stability, inadequate bioavailability, and lack of target specificity. The integration of modern nanotechnology into phytomedicine presents a transformative solution. Nano formulation strategies such as polymeric nanoparticles, solid lipid nanoparticles (SLNs), nanostructured lipid carriers (NLCs), nano emulsions, liposomes, and micelles have shown significant promise in overcoming the physicochemical and pharmacokinetic limitations of *A. scholaris* constituents. These delivery systems enhance solubility, protect against premature degradation, enable sustained and controlled release, and facilitate active or passive targeting to diseased tissues, thereby improving therapeutic indices and reducing systemic toxicity. Preclinical evidence strongly supports the superiority of nano formulated *A. scholaris* extracts over their conventional counterparts, with marked improvements in C_{max} , AUC, half-life, and overall bioavailability. Moreover, early safety data indicate reduced cytotoxicity and improved biocompatibility. Despite these advances, clinical translation remains in its infancy, hindered by regulatory complexities, standardization issues, and scalability challenges. Future efforts should focus on the development of standardized, scalable, and patient-specific nano formulations, supported by robust in vivo pharmacokinetic and toxicological studies, and ultimately, well-designed clinical trials. The integration of artificial intelligence, green nanotechnology, and precision medicine frameworks will further catalyse the evolution of *A. scholaris*-based nano-therapeutics.

In conclusion, nano formulation represents a promising frontier in unlocking the full therapeutic potential of *Alstonia scholaris*, transforming it from a traditional remedy into a scientifically validated and globally accessible phytopharmaceutical.

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