



## Drug delivery polymers: An Analysis Based on Literature Text Mining

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**Abstract:** Many polymers are used as drug carriers for controlled delivery because of its many advantages. To find the most used polymers for this purpose in recent years, we chose to use Text Mining as an evaluation tool. Text Mining tool was precious in this work to identify the main polymers that contributed to drug delivery, allowing us to draw a map year by year based on correlation analyzes. Firstly, an analysis was made on what was most researched per year, and then what were the most cited polymers. Then the most mentioned polymers were separated and organized to observe which year it was more or less cited. It was found with this work that none of the polymers showed only positive correlations in all years. Besides, polymers did not reveal individual growth in their use over the years. The Text Mining presented here proved to be an efficient and quick way to observe the desired theme and open up possibilities for research in different fields.

**Keywords:** Text mining; Polymer; Drug delivery; Biodegradable; Biocompatible, Data mining.

**Adherence to the BJEDIS' scope:** The article is in agreement with the scope since it is a literature review using the data mining tool.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The kinetic control of drug release offers numerous advantages compared to traditional methods, including increased efficacy, reduced toxicity, and increased patient compliance with treatment (1–4). These delivery systems often use natural and synthetic polymers as carriers for drugs (5–8). An important consideration when polymers are used for this purpose is the destination of the polymer after the drug is released (9). Thus, polymers that are naturally excreted by the body, called biodegradable polymers, are desired (10, 11). They can be excreted directly via the kidney or can be metabolized into smaller molecules that will later be excreted. Many polymers are already used as drug carriers. Among these, there are natural polymers such as chitosan(12–14), alginate(15–17) and cellulose-based polymers(18–20), and biodegradable polyesters, such as poly ( $\epsilon$ -caprolactone) – PCL (21–23), poly (lactic acid) – PLA (24, 25) and poly (lactic acid) co-glycolic) – PLGA (26–29). Image 1 shows the natural polymers chitosan, alginate and cellulose and Figure 2 the biodegradable polyesters PCL, PLA and PLGA.

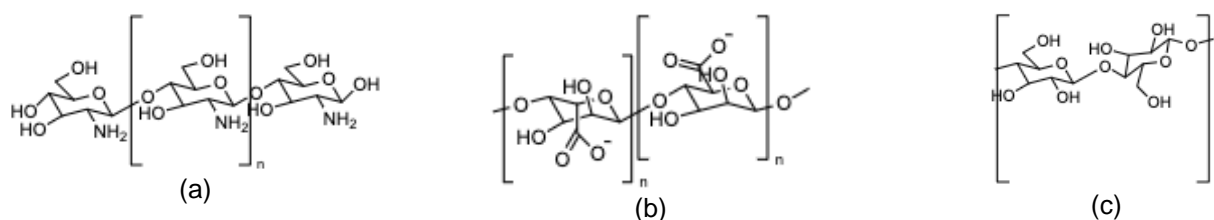


Figure 1. Molecules of (a) chitosan; (b) alginate; (c) cellulose

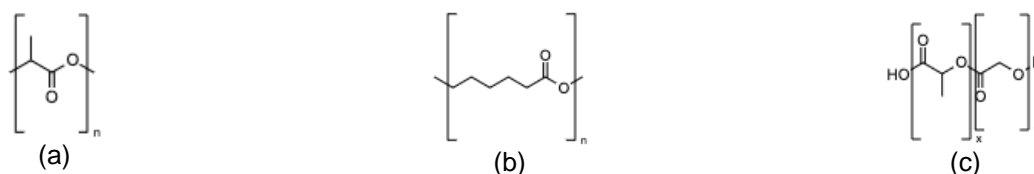


Figure 2. Molecules of (a) PLA; (b) PCL; (c) PLGA

Natural polymers are often used to produce microcapsules due to their advantages of biocompatibility and biodegradability (30, 31). Hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC) polymers are often studied for controlled release systems, as they are non-toxic and easy to handle (32). HPMC is a semi-synthetic ether derived from cellulose (33). The hydrophilic matrix tablets based on it offer several advantages in the development of a prolonged-release formulation orally, such as the flexibility of modulating the release, the simplicity of preparation, low production costs, and “Scaleup” facility (34). Besides, these polymers can be used to control the release of both water-soluble and insoluble drugs (35, 36). Poly ( $\epsilon$ -caprolactone), PCL is a biodegradable polyester widely studied for drug release applications (37–39). PCL is a highly hydrophobic, semicrystalline aliphatic polymer that degrades very slowly “in vitro” and “in vivo” (40,41). As it has a high permeability to many drugs and has no toxicity, PCL is a very

suitable polymer for controlled release of drugs (42). Biodegradable polylactides - PLA, homo, and copolymers have been widely studied as drug carriers. They show great potential as transport systems for increasing active molecules, as they do not cause adverse reactions to tissues. They also have excellent biocompatibility and controlled biodegradability property(43, 44).

As shown above, polymers are widely used in scientific research seeking the controlled release of drugs. Among these polymers, some are more used than others, due to their characteristics and advantages. To find out which polymers are most used for controlled drug delivery, text mining (45–47) was carried out. “Text mining can be broadly defined as a knowledge-intensive process in which a user interacts with a document collection over time by using a suite of analysis tools.”(48, 49)

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In this text mining, scientific articles containing the words “drug delivery” and “polymer” were collected using the ScienceDirect database (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/>) on may 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Ninety thousand eight hundred fifty-six results were retrieved from this database, allowing for observing an increase in the number of publications during studied years, as shown in Figure 3. Based on this search, the time was limited between 2009 and 2019, since the year 2020 was not completed, presenting a smaller number of papers.

The first 100 most relevant papers (filter option selected on ScienceDirect) of each year in the period from 2009 to 2019 were selected and collected totaling 1100 articles. These articles were separated into two topics according to each year: (i) title and (ii) abstract to facilitate analyzing the main words listed in the documents. The used tools were LibreOffice Calc and LibreOffice Writer (both version: 6.2.3.2 Build ID: aecc05fe267cc68dde00352a451aa867b3b546ac). The online tool used for Text Mining was Voyant Tools (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) (50–56). The set conditions were Fixed-term: “polymer” and Minimum coverage: 5%.

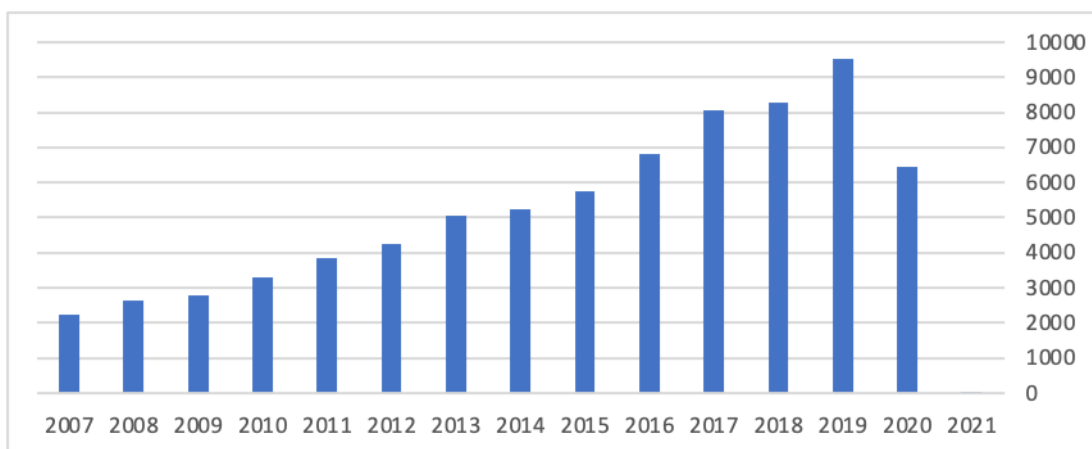


Figure 3. ScienceDirect search sorted by year

For the analysis, the data of the titles were placed on the Voyant, year by year. The correlation tool was used, and the term fixed was “polymer”. The correlation and significance data were copied to an Excel spreadsheet from LibreOffice. The same procedure was followed for abstracts. The purpose of this analysis was to present a broad idea of what each year studied most. Besides, with the arrangement of words organized in order of more excellent correlation, it was possible to verify which polymers were most used. LibreOffice Calc search tool was used for this purpose. The names of the polymers were searched and marked year by year. To identify the names of the polymers, in addition to knowledge in the area, the correlations of the titles were used, since they had fewer words (around 100 words) than the abstracts.

## 3. DISCUSSION

One way to extract text data more naturally is by using the Text Mining technique. Text Mining has invaluable commercial value since it’s a simplified and faster way to collect data and can be applied in different areas (57–73).

A closer observation of each year in the studied period was relevant to understanding the roadmap that the subject has followed along these eleven years. Aiming to perform this complicated assignment, the Voyant’s Correlation tool (74,75) was used, and the most relevant, irrelevant, and non-related terms were listed year by year. Figure 4 and 5 shows a word cloud obtained using voyant from 2010 and 2017 titles file respectively.

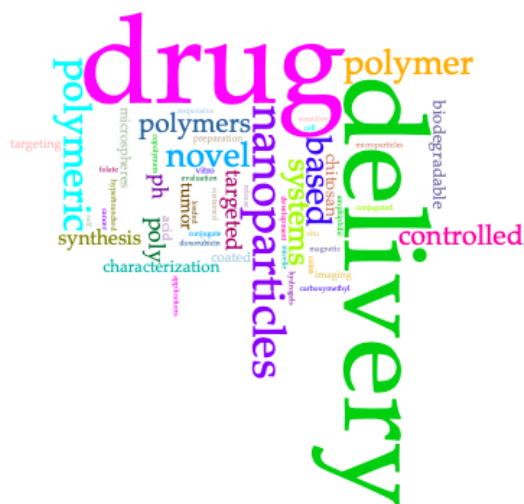


Figure 4. Word cloud extracted from voyant (2010)

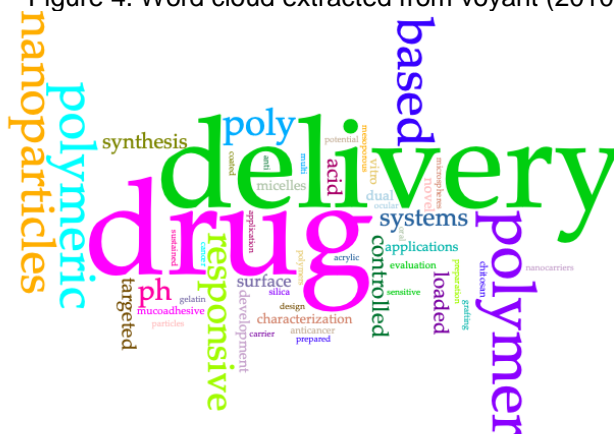


Figure 5. Word cloud extracted from voyant (2017)

It is possible to perform the calculation by comparing the relative frequencies of the exploited terms using Voyant's Correlation tool. However, to analyze the results, a piece of prior statistical knowledge is needed. When the correlation is close to zero indicates that the two words are not related. A positive correlation suggests that the two words move together. On the other hand, the negative correlation indicates that the two words move in opposite directions. In all cases, the relationship between the words becomes more reliable as correlation is closest to  $\pm 1$  (76–79). Another important information that can be extracted is the significance value ( $p$ ). When  $p$  is lower than 0.05, indicates that, with more than 95% probability, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and the studied values are not randomly distributed (80–82). The Correlations tool allows exploring the extent to which the frequencies of terms vary in sync.

Table 1 shows the correlations between the polymer and the most relevant terms extracted in the search, using Voyant Tools, from the Titles and Abstracts. The words that have statistical relevance ( $p < 0.05$ ) (83) were marked with asterisks, however it was only possible to extract the  $p$  values from the first 100 and last 100 words, which is why the tables are incomplete. The highest correlation values, regardless of whether their sign is positive or negative, were listed in Table 1. The non-related and most irrelevant term was also recorded. Besides, all of the generated Weblinks to Voyant Tools' corpus are listed in Table 2.

Table 1 - Correlations between polymer and 2<sup>nd</sup> terms in 2009-2019 Titles & Abstracts

Fixed term	Titles			Abstracts			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> term	r	p	2 <sup>nd</sup> term	r	p	
Polymer	2009	cell*	0.6690	0.03441	like*	0.8981	0.00041
		controlled	-0.0236	0.94832	brust	-0.0074	---
		drug*	-0.6730	0.02393	allow*	-0.7295	0.01665
		degradation	0.7727	0.00878	capability	0.8642	0.00125
	2010	chitosan	-0.0141	0.9689	consisted	-0.0047	---
		conjugate	-0.7793	0.0078	attributed	-0.7394	0.0145
		imaging	0.8427	0.022	micelles	0.9055	0.0003
	2011	chitosan	-0.0171	0.9623	act	-0.0029	---
		diclofenac	-0.6698	0.0340	ir	0.7931	0.0061
		Cell	0.6666	0.3526	cell	0.7906	0.0158
	2012	delivery	-0.0581	0.8732	performance	-0.0022	----
		glycolic	-0.6546	0.0399	chloride	-0.8230	0.0034
		Hybrid	0.6881	0.0278	microspheres	0.9372	0.0001
	2013	Poly	-0.0421	0.9079	inflammation	-0.0016	----
		Film	-0.5976	0.0680	confocal	-0.7936	0.0061
		effect*	0.6522	0.04098	area*	0.8262	0.0032
	2014	nanoparticles	-0.0120	0.97381	cancer	-0,0012	---
		inulin*	-0.9875	0.02802	impact*	-0.7279	0.0170
		nanoparticle*	0.7237	0.01797	nuclear*	0.8879	0.0006
	2015	Anti	-0.0754	0.83604	led	-2.2E-8	---
		novel*	-0.6592	0.03813	addition*	-0.7769	0.0082
		imprinted*	0.8040	0.00506	5.0*	0.7307	0.0164
	2016	Acid	-0.0736	0.83995	caprolactone	-1.3E-8	---
		block	-0.5056	0.13596	particularly*	-0.7573	0.0112
		optimization*	0.8487	0.00190	needles*	0.8460	0.0020
	2017	assessment	-0.0223	0.95130	micellar	-1.3E-8	---
		imaging	-0.3694	0.29351	cell*	-0.8012	0.0053
		gelatin*	0.8249	0.00331	day*	0.8625	0.0013
2018	brachytherapy	-0.0190	0.95853	degree	-3.1E-8	---	
	Drug	-0.2844	0.42573	blood*	-0.7423	0.0139	
	improved*	0.7510	0.01229	capability*	0.8410	0.0023	
2019	efficient	-0.0259	0.94339	characteristics	-1.6066	---	
	liposome	-0.4154	0.23258	dose*	-0.7539	0.0118	

\* Statistically relevant terms

Table 2 – Weblinks to Voyant Tools' corpus

Year	Titles
2009	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=addcd175e457517b133cff5372c986c4">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=addcd175e457517b133cff5372c986c4</a>
2010	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=3be6b49d069b7b61bf4d22ae7e38cde1">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=3be6b49d069b7b61bf4d22ae7e38cde1</a>
2011	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=661f5d5a722b2ee8998b567625ff5422">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=661f5d5a722b2ee8998b567625ff5422</a>
2012	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=c9b6d52409b332a1a4335f61dc0f3d27">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=c9b6d52409b332a1a4335f61dc0f3d27</a>
2013	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=9e3385e84e5fcb043851cb42e7ca76aa">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=9e3385e84e5fcb043851cb42e7ca76aa</a>
2014	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=9e176f171da754f36149c0d7ff24556a">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=9e176f171da754f36149c0d7ff24556a</a>
2015	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=2f64b57058989e71d5982920b2cc5360">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=2f64b57058989e71d5982920b2cc5360</a>
2016	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=734e563770ec987d156c2ea339146034">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=734e563770ec987d156c2ea339146034</a>
2017	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=da714676d7c833f2090b6bffb158377b">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=da714676d7c833f2090b6bffb158377b</a>
2018	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=e711ce509d2c5c80a3f563863a891d4a">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=e711ce509d2c5c80a3f563863a891d4a</a>
2019	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=98c095ef43b28bf74723e711aad9c3ae">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=98c095ef43b28bf74723e711aad9c3ae</a>

Year	Abstracts
2009	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=c59025cbe7f7e7a4df4e721df8ededcc">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=c59025cbe7f7e7a4df4e721df8ededcc</a>
2010	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=d16490252154d995d2734ed0442d71b5">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=d16490252154d995d2734ed0442d71b5</a>
2011	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=b7d7ae341e9253b5e9fc5aeaba2b6a5e">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=b7d7ae341e9253b5e9fc5aeaba2b6a5e</a>
2012	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=de257c4bed398ea85b8f7a4284444131">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=de257c4bed398ea85b8f7a4284444131</a>
2013	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=3088f5db4b98d101e8f29a30f46fc3fe">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=3088f5db4b98d101e8f29a30f46fc3fe</a>
2014	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=ef97b6dba62e14c176d3c59edd72a248">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=ef97b6dba62e14c176d3c59edd72a248</a>
2015	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=02b07e6634d89ec9b2d2bb98d4da166d">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=02b07e6634d89ec9b2d2bb98d4da166d</a>
2016	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=023f68ab26948afba9a26af276188c73">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=023f68ab26948afba9a26af276188c73</a>
2017	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=eed9fe743e83115d982a076b0351cf19">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=eed9fe743e83115d982a076b0351cf19</a>
2018	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=5a25b1d2ba84522b73bb8710530aabc3">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=5a25b1d2ba84522b73bb8710530aabc3</a>
2019	<a href="https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=78dfe39d5ba9f7049df1d62a4d0c565b">https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=78dfe39d5ba9f7049df1d62a4d0c565b</a>

In 2009, the main correlations in the titles with polymers were *cells* and *containing* and in abstracts *like* and *method*. These words do not tell much about what was being researched at this year. Among the polymers with a positive correlation in titles are PLA, chitosan, and PEG. With negative correlations are cellulose, PLGA, and PCL. Among the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations were: polyacrylamide, PLA, PEG, polymethacrylate, PEO, and PLGA. The polymers that appear with negative correlation are chitosan, cellulose, PCL, alginate, PEO, and polyacrylic.

During 2010, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *degradation* and *conjugated* and in abstracts *capability* and *gastric*. With these words, it is possible to have an idea about what was being researched this year, the data allows concluding that the polymers were used in addition to obtaining controlled release, to have a gastric protection, improving bioavailability of drugs. As was done by Hari et al. 2010 (84) and Chen et al. 2010 (5). Among the polymers with a positive correlation in the titles is only cellulose. With negative correlations were chitosan, polyacrylic, alginate PLGA, and PEG. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations were: carboxymethylcellulose, gelatin, PCL, alginate, PLA, PEO, PEG, chitosan, and polymethacrylate. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were dextran, PLGA, pluronic, and cellulose.

In 2011, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *imaging* and *carrier* and in abstracts *micelles* and *labile*. With these words, it is possible to have an idea that the research that year was focused on imaging exams and that for that, the polymer matrices carried some particle in the form of micelles. As was done by Wang et al. 2011(85) and Li et at. 2011(86). Among the polymers with a positive correlation in the titles are PEG, PLGA, acrylic, and carboxymethylcellulose. With negative correlations were chitosan, PEO, and PLA. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations were: PCL, pluronic, PEO, PMA, cellulose, PEG, and collagen. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were alginate, PLA, PEG, PLGA, PGA, and chitosan.

In 2012, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *cell* and *improved* and in abstracts *cell* and *inflammation*. With these words, It is possible to think that the research that year focused more on anti-inflammatory drugs. The research of Gulati et al. 2012, used the anti-inflammatory indomethacin (87) and the research of Machin et al. 2012 used naproxen (88). Among the polymers with a positive correlation in the titles is only the PLGA. Cellulose had a zero correlation, and with negative correlations were chitosan, PEG, alginate, PCL, polyacrylamide,

and PLA. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations were: PEG, cellulose, polyacrylate, PLGA, PEO, dextran, PCL, PMA, pluronic, and PLA. The polymers that appear with a negative correlation were chitosan, polyacrylamide, and alginate.

In 2013, the main correlations in the titles with polymers were *hybrids* and *collagen* and abstract *microspheres* and *extrudates*. With these words, it is possible to have the idea that the research was more focused on hybrid polymers and formation of microspheres with these matrices for drug delivery, just as it was done by Gao et al. 2013 (89), Deng et al. 2013 (90, 91). This year, the macromolecule collagen, had great prominence and appeared among the most cited words. The polymers with a positive correlation were PEG and gelatin and with negative correlation were alginate, PCL, dextran, chitosan, methacrylate, and chitin. In the abstracts, the polymers with positive correlations were: color, PEG, PLGA, cellulose, gelatin, alginate, PLA, chitosan, and PCL. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were pluronic, polyacrylamide, chitin, PEO, PMA, polyglycerol, and dextran.

In 2014, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *effect* and *conjugates* and in abstracts *area* and *designed*. These words did not tell much about what was being researched at the time. Looking for the polymers that appear in these correlations, the only one that appears with a positive correlation in the titles was polyethylene glycol (PEG)—followed by PCL and chitosan, the latter two with negative correlations. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations, in order, were PLA, gelatin, poly(ethylene oxide) (PEO), PEG, PCL, and PLGA. Pluronic and acrylic polymers such as poly (methyl methacrylic) (PMMA) appear with a negative correlation this year and cellulose.

In 2015, the main correlations in the titles with polymers were *nanoparticle* and *MR imaging* and in the abstracts *nuclear* and *conjugate*. Observing these words is possible to conclude that the research was focused on the use of nanoparticles coated with polymers for imaging exams such as magnetic resonance (92), Ho et al. 2015 (93) and Huang et al. 2015 (94). The only polymer that appears with a positive correlation in the titles is chitosan and with negative correlation PEG and cellulose. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations, in order, were the acrylic polymethacrylate and polymethacrylic (PMA), PLA, PEO, the cellulose derivative carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC) and PLGA. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were PCL, gelatin, PEG, chitosan, and alginate.

In 2016, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *imprinted* and *microspheres* and in abstracts *novel* and *grafting*. These words show that the research that year could be focused in molecularly imprinted polymers and the drugs were being inserted more and more into microspheres, to perhaps try to avoid the "burst" release. Hemmati et al. 2016 (95–97) used molecularly imprinted polymers in their research that year. The only polymer that appeared in the positive correlations of the titles was alginate. The PEG appeared with correlation equal to zero, and the polymers with negative correlations were chitosan, pluronic, and PEO. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations, in order, are chitosan, the acrylic polymer methacrylamide, mPEG, alginate, PMMA, and ethyl cellulose. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were PCL, PLA, PEO, and pluronic.

In 2017, the main correlations in the titles with polymers were *optimization* and *alkyl* and in *needless* and *evidenced*. These words did not tell much about what was being researched at the time.

The polymers that appear with a positive correlation in the titles were alginate and gelatin with a very high correlation equal to 0.64 and 0.44, respectively. With negative correlations were PEG and cellulose. In the abstracts, the polymers appear with positive correlations, in order, were: PLA, PEG, methacrylic, PCL and chitosan. The polymers that appear with negative correlations were alginate, gelatin, PCL, HPMC, PEO, PLGA, and cellulose.

In 2018, the main correlations in the titles with polymers were *gelatin* and *multifunctional* and in abstracts *novel* and *day*. These words did not tell much about what was being researched at the time. Among the polymers with a positive correlation in titles were, besides gelatin, PLA and PEG. With negative correlations were chitosan and PLGA. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations, in order, were: PLA, gelatin, polyglycerol, poly isopropyl acrylamide, and PLGA. The polymers with negative correlation were PCL, PEG, polycarbonate, PEO, alginate, chitosan, and cellulose.

In 2019, the main correlations in titles with polymers were *improved* and *intracellular* and in *capability* and *assemblies*. These words could show that the research was focused in self-assembling polymers. Bai et al. 2019 (98), Wang et al. 2019 (99) and Gao et al. 2019 (100) used self-assembling polymers in their research. Among the polymers with a positive correlation in the titles were alginate, pluronic, PEG, and PCL. With negative correlations were chitosan and PGA. In the abstracts, the polymers that appear with positive correlations were: PLA, PEG, polyacrylic, alginate, PLGA, and PCL. The polymers that appear with negative correlation were chitosan, CMC, pluronic, PEO, and PCL.

To have a better idea of how the polymers were used, a separation by polymer was made to follow which year that polymer was used more or less. For this, the most cited polymers were chosen and organized in a decreasing way according to the correlation taken from Voyant as shown in Table 3, using PEG as an example.

Table 3. Organization of PEG citations according to the correlation extracted from the voyant tool

PEG titles				PEG abstracts			
YEAR	POSITION	CORRELATION	P	YEAR	POSITION	CORRELATION	P
2013	8	0.5661	0.0880	2017	99	0.4861	0.1543
2011	13	0.5123	0.1301	2013	244	0.3070	---
2009	39	0.1821	0.6147	2019	264	0.3037	---
2018	36	0.1707	0.6373	2014	260	0.280	---
2019	35	0.1036	0.7758	2016	308	0.1836	---
2014	31	0.0937	0.7967	2012	485	0.1049	---
2016	60		0	1	2015	534	-0.0440
2017	94	-0.3563	0.3121	2018	638	-0.1088	---
2010	83	-0.36364	0.3016	2009	798	-0.1935	---
2015	88	-0.4277	0.2176	2011	840	-0.2126	---
2012	92	-0.4364	0.2073	2010	1143	-0.6083	0.0621

As can be seen, there has been no increase or decrease in PEG use over time, but a disorderly variation from year to year. It was concluded that PEG was more used for drug delivery in 2013 since it had a high positive correlation in titles and abstracts. It was less used in 2010 since it had high negative correlations both in titles and abstracts.

As in the case of PEG, the polymer alginate also had a disorderly variation from year to year. However, unlike PEG, this polymer does not appear in the titles in all the research years. According to the research, in 2019, alginate was the most used polymer for the controlled release of drugs, presenting high values of positive correlation in both titles and abstracts. The research also showed that 2012 was the year that least mentioned alginate since the correlations were negative, and this polymer was in the last place when ordering the years, both in titles and abstracts.

Chitosan had the same disorder profile through the years but with a peculiarity. This polymer had only two years with a positive correlation in the titles, 2009 and 2015, but these years showed negative correlations in the abstracts. Thus, it was not possible to know which year the most used chitosan for drug delivery. On the other hand, it was possible to observe the year that least cited this biopolymer for this purpose, which was 2014, since it presented high negative correlation values in both titles and abstracts.

Polycaprolactone (PCL), like alginate, does not appear in the titles in all the research years. Despite PCL presenting only one positive correlation in the titles in 2019, PLC had a more significant positive correlation in abstracts in 2011 (correlation equal to 0.6081 with p equal to 0.0622), which was much higher than the 2019 correlation in abstracts (equal to 0.0818), showing that this polymer was much more applied to drug delivery in 2011. The year that least used the PCL for this purpose, according to the research, was in 2009 as it presents higher values of negative correlations both in abstracts and in titles comparing with other years.

PLA, which was not cited in the titles every year researched (such as alginate and PCL), was the polymer with the highest number of positive correlations, having only negative correlations in the titles in 2011 and the abstracts in 2011 and 2016. Therefore, it was concluded with the research that the year that least used the PLA for this purpose was in 2011 since it had slightly higher values of negative correlation (equal to -0.1719). The year that PLA was most used was in 2018 (abstract correlation equal to 0.7015). In addition to this polymer having the highest positive correlation value, PLA presented four years with correlation values above or equal to 0.5 in the abstracts, which shows that this polymer deserves great prominence when it comes to controlled drug delivery.

As cellulose is used for controlled release in different forms (different derivatives) such as carboxymethylcellulose and hydroxyethylcellulose), the individual analysis of this polymer has been compromised. It is not shown in this work, despite being widely applied for this purpose.

The data obtained confirm that polymers such as Chitosan, PCL, PLGA, PEO, and Pluronic presented more significant positive correlations in the first years of the studied period. On the other hand, polymers such as alginate, acrylics, PEG, and PLA have the most considerable positive correlations in the last years of the research.



These correlation values allow forecasting that these last polymeric systems will be the most researched in the coming years. This growing interest in these materials is the result of greater control over the physical and chemical characteristics obtained from the synthesis of polymers. In other words, reproducibility will guide the choice of polymers in the coming years.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The Text Mining presented in this work proved to be an efficient, fast, and reliable way to observe the desired theme and opens up a range of possibilities for research in different fields. The study proved that the most used polymers for controlled drug delivery between 2009 -2019 were natural polymers such as alginate, chitosan, gelatin, chitin, and cellulose. In turn, among synthetic polymers, PEG, PCL, PLA, PLGA, pluronic, PEO, and some acrylic polymers such as polyacrylic were the most researched. However, none of the polymers showed only positive correlations in all years. Besides, polymers did not reveal individual growth in their use over the years, proving that they were researched without a primary material target focus in this period. Since polymers such as alginate, acrylics, PEG, and PLA have the most considerable positive correlations in the last years of the research, the correlation values allow forecasting that these polymeric systems will be the most researched in the coming years.

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