

SN-38 LIPID COMPLEXES AND METHODS OF USE

DESCRIPTION

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention pertains to complexes of SN-38 with lipids, their methods of manufacture, and their use in the treatment of diseases, especially diseases involving eukaryotic cellular proliferation.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE BACKGROUND

The compound known as 7-ethyl-10-hydroxycamptothecin (SN-38) and more formally as ((+)-(4S)-4,11-diethyl-4,9-dihydroxy-1H-pyrano[3',4':6,7]-indolizino[1,2-b]quinoline-3,14(4H,12H)-dione, first disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,473,692, is an active metabolite of irinotecan, a derivative of camptothecin. It is thought to bind to the enzyme topoisomerase I, the enzyme responsible for relieving torsional strain in DNA by inducing reversible single-strand breaks. The bound SN-38 appears to block religation of the single-strand breaks by topoisomerase-I thereby causing cytotoxicity in mammalian cells which, apparently, can not otherwise sufficiently repair the breaks.

The metabolic conversion of irinotecan to SN-38 occurs primarily in the liver by carboxylesterase-mediated cleavage of the carbamate bond between the camptothecin moiety and a dipiperidino side chain. Subsequently, this derivative undergoes conjugation to form the glucuronide metabolite.

SN-38 is approximately 1000 times more potent than irinotecan as an inhibitor of topoisomerase I purified from human and rodent tumor cell lines. In vitro cytotoxicity assays show that SN-38 is up to 2,000-fold more potent than irinotecan. Consequently, SN-38 has the potential to be a highly effective antineoplastic agent. In addition, SN-38 has an advantage over its camptothecin precursors in that it does not require activation by the liver. Therefore, an appropriate formulation could be used in local as well as systemic treatment methods.

SN-38 is exceedingly insoluble in aqueous solutions. Despite its lack of solubility in water, it also has a low affinity for lipid membranes from which it tends to precipitate into aqueous phase. These solubility characteristics interfere with the use of SN-38 as a therapeutic. Moreover, the effectiveness of SN-38 after repeated administrations can be limited by the development of multi-drug resistance which not only reduces its effectiveness but also reduces the effectiveness of certain other antineoplastic therapeutics. The general toxicity of SN-38 also limits its use therapeutically.

Thus, formulations are needed that improve SN-38 efficacy such that SN-38 can be used effectively in the treatment of diseases associated with cellular proliferation. Such a formulation should have suitable solubility and toxicity characteristics and will be useful in the treatment of certain proliferative diseases such as cancer.

The invention provides such a composition and methods. These and other advantages of the present invention, as well as additional inventive features, will be apparent from the description of the invention provided herein.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is for novel SN-38 compositions, their preparation methods, and their use in treating diseases caused by proliferating eukaryotic cells, such as cancer, particularly in mammals, especially humans. The SN-38 compositions include SN-38 complexed with a lipid wherein more than 50 wt.% of the SN-38 is complexed with the lipid. The complexes, include liposomes, and can contain any of a variety of neutral or charged lipid materials and, desirably, cardiolipin. Suitable lipids include any pharmaceutically acceptable lipophilic materials that bind SN-38 to provide a stable pharmaceutical formulation and facilitate its administration to mammals. Cardiolipin can be synthetic or derived from natural sources. The lipid complexes can carry net negative, or positive charges, or can be neutral. Preferred complexes also contain α -tocopherol. The SN-38 complexes can be used advantageously with secondary therapeutic agents other than SN-38, including antineoplastic, antifungal, antibiotic, or other active agents. Liposome complexes can be multilamellar vesicles, unilamellar vesicles, or their mixtures, as desired. The invention also encompasses methods for preparing such SN-38 complexes. The invention is further directed to methods in which a therapeutically effective amount of the SN-38 complexes are included in a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient and administered to a mammal, such as a human, to treat proliferative diseases, such as cancer.

In one particularly preferred method of preparing the SN-38 complexes. SN-38 is dissolved in an alkaline solution and used to hydrate a lipid film to form liposomes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides compositions and methods for delivering SN-38 to a mammalian host. The compositions and methods are characterized by avoidance of solubility problems of SN-38, high SN-38 and complex stability, ability to administer SN-38 as a bolus or short infusion in a high concentration, reduced SN-38

toxicity, increased therapeutic efficacy of SN-38, and modulation of multidrug resistance.

The inventive composition is a lipid complex with SN-38 in which the complex desirably contains cardiolipin. Suitable complexes are characterized by having SN-38 bound with a lipophilic compound that imparts solubility characteristics such that stable pharmaceutical preparations can be generated and used. The complexes include, but are not limited to, liposomes and micelles. In the complexes the SN-38 can be bound to the lipid by covalent, hydrophobic, electrostatic, hydrogen, or other bonds and is considered bound even where the SN-38 is simply be entrapped within the interior of a liposome. The SN-38 compositions include SN-38 complexed with a lipid wherein about 50 wt.% or more of the SN-38 is complexed with the lipid, more preferably about 70 wt.% or more, even more preferably about 80 wt.% or more, and most preferably about 90 wt.% or more of the SN-38 is complexed with lipid.

Desirably, the SN-38 lipid complexes contain cardiolipin. Any suitable cardiolipin can be used. For example, cardiolipin can be purified from natural sources or can be chemically synthesized, such as tetramyristylcardiolipin, by such methods as are known in the art.

SN-38 complexes generally contain other complexing agents in addition to cardiolipin. Suitable agents include pharmaceutically acceptable synthetic, semi-synthetic (modified natural) or naturally occurring compounds having a hydrophilic region and a hydrophobic region. Such compounds include amphiphilic molecules which can have net positive, negative, or neutral charges or which are devoid of charge. Suitable complexing agents include compounds, such as phospholipids which can be synthetic or derived from natural sources, such as egg or soy. Suitable phospholipids include compounds such as phosphatidylcholine (PC), phosphatidylethanolamine (PE), phosphatidylserine (PS), phosphatidylglycerol (PG), phosphatidic acid (PA), phosphatidylinositol (PI), sphingomyelin (SPM), and the like, alone or in combination. The phospholipids dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine (DMPC), dimyristoylphosphatidylglycerol (DMPG), dioleoylphosphatidylglycerol (DOPG), distearoylphosphatidyl choline (DSPC), dioleoylphosphatidylcholine (DOPC), dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine (DPPC), diarachidonoyl phosphatidylcholine (DAPC), or hydrogenated soy phosphatidylcholine (HSPC) can be used.

The SN-38 lipid complexes generally include at least one steroid component such as cholesterol, polyethylene glycol derivatives of cholesterol (PEG-cholesterols), coprostanol, cholestanol, or cholestane, or α -tocopherol. They may also contain sterol derivatives such as cholesterol hemisuccinate (CHS), cholesterol sulfate, and the like. Organic acid derivatives of tocopherols, such as α -tocopherol hemisuccinate (THS),

can also be used. Suitable SN-38 complexes can also be formed with glycolipids, or natural or derivatized fatty acids and the like. The preferred SN-38 complexing agents include cardiolipin, a phosphatidyl choline, cholesterol, and α -tocopherol which are combined to form of a liposome.

5 Any suitable amount of SN-38 can be used. Suitable amounts of SN-38 are those amounts that can be stably incorporated into the complexes of the present invention. The SN-38 should preferably be present in the abovementioned compositions at a concentration of about 0.01 to about 5 mg/ml, more preferably about 0.1 to about 4 mg/ml, still more preferably about 0.5 to 3 mg/ml, and even more
10 preferably about 0.8 to 2, or most preferably about 1 to 1.5 mg/ml SN-38.

Suitable compositions also generally contain from about 1 to about 50 wt.% cardiolipin, or preferably about 2 to about 25 wt.% cardiolipin, or more preferably about 5 wt.% to about 20 wt.% cardiolipin. Such compositions also generally contain about 1 wt.% to about 95 wt.% phosphatidylcholine, or more preferably about 20 wt.%
15 to about 75 wt.% phosphatidylcholine. The preferred compositions also generally contain α -tocopherol in a concentration of about 0.001 wt.% to about 5 wt.%.

The complexing agents can also be considered liposome-forming materials when they are used to generate liposomes by methods such as are known. To generate the desired complexes, they can be dissolved by themselves or with the other lipophilic
20 ingredients, including SN-38, in suitable solvents. Suitable solvents are those which provide sufficient solubility and can be evaporated without leaving a pharmaceutically unacceptable amount of a pharmaceutically unacceptable residue. For example, the cardiolipin can be dissolved in non-polar or slightly polar solvent such as ethanol, methanol, chloroform, or acetone. SN-38 can be dissolved in a non-polar, a slightly
25 polar, or a polar solvent. Examples of suitable SN-38 solvents include methanol, chloroform, acetone, or aqueous alkaline solvent.

Generally, the method involves mixing dissolved lipophilic ingredients together and evaporating or lyophilizing the solvent(s) to form a homogeneous lipid film. Solvent evaporation can be by any suitable means that preserves the stability of the
30 components. SN-38 can be said to be stable as long as most of the drug retains its chemical structure or a chemical structure that is in equilibrium with its chemical structure. Chemical structures in equilibrium with SN-38 specifically include structures that impart greater solubility at high pH but which are converted to SN-38 when the pH is lowered.

35 SN-38 complexes, including liposomes or micelles, can then be formed by adding a suitable solvent to the dry lipid film mixture. Suitable solvents include pharmaceutically acceptable polar solvents. Generally, solvents are aqueous solutions

containing pharmaceutically acceptable salts, buffers, or their mixtures. In one method, a lipid film is hydrated with an aqueous solution of SN-38 having an alkaline pH. Suitable pHs range from about 7 to about 11, pHs of about 8 to about 10 are more preferred, and pHs of about 9 to about 10 are most preferred. Aqueous solutions
5 having a suitable pH can be prepared from water having an appropriate amount of NaOH dissolved therein. Alternatively, such solutions can be prepared with buffers, such as TrisHCl, which have pKs within about 1 pH unit of the desired pH.

The liposome complexes are formed by dispersing the lipid in the aqueous solution with vigorous mixing. Any method of mixing can be used provided that the
10 chosen method induces sufficient shearing forces between the lipid film and polar solvent to strongly homogenize the mixture and form the desired complexes. For example, mixing can be by vortexing, magnetic stirring, and/or sonicating. Where multilamellar liposomes are desired, they can be formed simply by vortexing the solution. Where unilamellar liposomes are desired, a sonication or filtration step is
15 included in the process.

Liposomal SN-38 complexes can be prepared by mixing SN-38, cardiolipin, cholesterol, phosphatidyl choline and α -tocopherol in a suitable solvent to form a homogeneous mixture. The mixture is dried to form a lipid film and hydrated into liposomes by the addition of water or an aqueous solution and mixing.

20 Alternatively, SN-38 liposomes can be prepared by dissolving the lipophilic ingredients (with the exception of SN-38) together and evaporating them to form a lipid film. A solution of SN-38 is prepared in an aqueous solution at alkaline pH and used to hydrate the dry lipid film and form liposomes.

In general, any suitable method of forming liposomes can be used so long as it
25 generates liposome entrapped SN-38. Multilamellar vesicles, stable plurilamellar vesicles, and reverse phase evaporation vesicles can be used. As can be appreciated, the present invention is intended to cover SN-38-entrapped liposome compositions, however made.

Suitable liposomes can be neutral, negatively, or positively charged, the charge
30 being a function of the charge of the liposome components and pH of the liposome solution. For example, at neutral pH, positively charged liposomes can be formed from a mixture of phosphatidyl choline, cholesterol and stearyl amine. Negatively charged liposomes can be formed, for example, from phosphatidyl choline, cholesterol, and phosphatidyl serine.

35 Targeting agents can be bound to the SN-38 complexes such that the complexes can be targeted to particular tissues or organs. The agents can be bound through covalent, electrostatic, or hydrophobic bonds with the complexes. Suitable targeting

agents include carbohydrates and proteins or other agents as are known to target desired tissues or organs. For example, U.S. Patent 6,056,973, which is herein incorporated by reference, discloses a number of targeting agents and target cells. (See col. 11, l. 1-41). Methods of preparing suitable conjugates are also disclosed. (See
5 Col. 11, l. 55 – col. 14, l. 20).

SN-38 complexes can be filtered through suitable filters to control their size distribution. Suitable filters include those that can be used to obtain the desired size range of liposomes from a filtrate. For example, the liposomes can be formed and thereafter filtered through a 5 micron filter to obtain liposomes having a diameter of
10 about 5 microns or less. Alternatively, 1 μ m, 500 nm, 200 nm, 100 nm or other filters can be used to obtain liposomes having diameters of about 1 μ m, 500 nm, 200 nm, 100 nm or any suitable size range, respectively. Alternatively, filtration can occur after formulation in liquid excipients or diluents, as hereinafter described.

When desired, liposomes can be dried such as by evaporation or lyophilization and the liposomes resuspended in any desirable polar solvent. Where liposomes are
15 lyophilized, nonreducing sugars can be added prior to lyophilization to provide stability. One such suitable sugar is sucrose. Where liposomes are formed by hydrating lipid films with alkaline, aqueous solvents containing SN-38, it is desirable to use a low pH buffer to resuspend the lyophilized liposomes. Suitable solvents for
20 resuspending the liposomes include for example a lactate buffered solution having a pH of about 3.5.

The invention includes pharmaceutical preparations which, in addition to non-toxic, inert pharmaceutically suitable excipients, contain the SN-38 complex and methods for preparing such compositions. By non-toxic, inert pharmaceutically
25 suitable excipients there are to be understood solid, semi-solid or liquid diluents, fillers and formulation auxiliaries of all kinds.

The invention also includes pharmaceutical preparations in dosage units. This means that the preparations are in the form of individual parts, for example capsules, pills, suppositories and ampoules, of which the content of the SN-38 complex
30 corresponds to a fraction or a multiple of an individual dose. The dosage units can contain, for example, 1, 2, 3 or 4 individual doses or 1/2, 1/3 or 1/4 of an individual dose. An individual dose preferably contains the amount of SN-38 which is given in one administration and which usually corresponds to a whole, a half, a third, or a
quarter of a daily dose.

35 Tablets, dragees, capsules, pills, granules, suppositories, solutions, suspensions and emulsions, pastes, ointments, gels, creams, lotions, powders and sprays can be suitable pharmaceutical preparations.

For the oral mode of administration, the SN-38 complex can be used in the form of tablets, capsules, lozenges, powders, syrups, aqueous solutions, suspensions, and the like. Carriers such as lactose, sodium citrate, and salts of phosphoric acid can be used to prepare tablets. Further, disintegrants such as starch, and lubricating agents, such as magnesium stearate, sodium lauryl sulfate and talc can be included. Diluents such as lactose and high molecular weight polyethylene glycols can be used in the preparation of dosages in capsule form. The active ingredient can be combined with emulsifying and suspending agents to generate aqueous suspensions for oral use. Flavoring agents such as sweeteners can be added, as desired.

For topical administration and suppositories drug complexes can be provided in the form of such gels, oils, and emulsions as are known by the addition of suitable water-soluble or water-insoluble excipients, for example polyethylene glycols, certain fats, and esters or mixtures of these substances. Suitable excipients are those in which the drug complexes are sufficiently stable to allow for therapeutic use.

The abovementioned pharmaceutical compositions are prepared for administration in the usual manner according to known methods, for example by mixing the complexed SN-38 with suitable excipient(s).

The present invention also includes the use of SN-38 according to the invention and of pharmaceutical preparations which contain SN-38 according to the invention in human and veterinary medicine for the prevention, amelioration and/or cure of diseases, in particular those diseases caused by cellular proliferation, such as cancer, in any mammal, such as a cow, horse, pig, dog or cat. However, it is particularly preferred for use in the treatment of human patients, particularly for cancer and other diseases caused by cellular proliferation. The inventive compositions have particular use in treating human lymphoma, ovarian, breast, lung and colon cancers in addition to multiple sclerosis.

The active compound or its pharmaceutical preparations can be administered orally, parenterally, intraperitoneally, rectally, or by intratumoral injection. As SN-38 does not require activation by the liver, it is advantageous to employ the present compositions locally, such as by directed injection into an arm or leg, or in the case of a human, a hand.

In a human of about 70 kg body weight, for example, about 0.1 to 2 mg or about 0.5 to 1 mg SN-38 can be administered per kg of body weight can be administered. Preferably, about 0.5 to 2.0 mg of SN-38 per kg of body weight is administered. However, it can be necessary to deviate from the dosages mentioned and in particular to do so as a function of the nature and body weight of the subject to be treated, the nature and the severity of the illness, the nature of the preparation and if

the administration of the medicine, and the time or interval over which the administration takes place. Thus it can suffice in some cases to manage with less than the abovementioned amount of active compound whilst in other cases the abovementioned amount of active compound must be exceeded. The particular
5 required optimum dosage and the type of administration of the SN-38 can be determined by one skilled in the art, by available methods. Suitable amounts are therapeutically effective amounts that do not have excessive toxicity, as determined in empirical studies.

A significant advantage of cardiolipin-containing compositions is that they
10 provide a method of modulating multidrug resistance in cancer cells which are subjected to SN-38. In particular, the present compositions reduce the tendency of cancer cells subjected to chemotherapy with SN-38 to develop resistance thereto, and reduces the tendency of cancer cells to develop resistance to other therapeutic agents, such as taxol or doxorubicin. Thus, other agents can be advantageously employed with
15 the present treatment in combination with SN-38.

Having described the present invention, reference will now be made to certain examples which are provided solely for purposes of illustration and which are not intended to be limiting.

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EXAMPLE 1

SN-38 (3 μ moles) can be dissolved in chloroform containing 3 μ moles cardiolipin. To this mixture, 14 μ moles of phosphatidyl choline dissolved in hexane and 10 μ moles cholesterol in chloroform can be added. The mixture can be stirred
25 gently and the solvents can be evaporated under vacuum at below 30° C to form a thin dry film of lipid and drug. Liposomes can then be formed by adding 2.5 ml of saline solution and aggressively mixing the components by vortexing. The flasks can then be vortexed to provide multilamellar liposomes and optionally sonicated in a sonicator to provide small unilamellar liposomes. The efficiency of SN-38 encapsulation can be
30 determined by dialyzing an aliquot of the subject liposomes overnight in a suitable aqueous solvent or centrifuging an aliquot of the subject liposomes at 50,000 x g. for 1 hour. Thereafter the liposome fraction is dissolved in methanol and analyzed by standard methods using high pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC), such as reverse phase HPLC. Generally the encapsulation efficiency of SN-38 in liposomes will be
35 between 80 to 95 % of the initial input dose.

EXAMPLE 2

Similar experimental conditions can be utilized with varying quantities of drug and lipid. For example, concentrations of 6 μ M SN-38, 6 μ M cardiolipin, 28 μ M phosphatidyl choline and 20 μ M cholesterol can be used by dissolving them in a suitable solvent, evaporating the solvent, and dispersing the dried lipid/drug film in a suitable aqueous solvent such as 5 ml of 7% trehalose-saline solution. Hydration of the liposomes can be facilitated by vortexing and/or sonicating the mixture. The liposomes can then be dialyzed, as desired, and the percent encapsulation of SN-38 in liposomes measured, as described above. Typically, SN-38 encapsulation will be greater than about 75% and more generally between about 85 to 95% or more as assayed by HPLC.

EXAMPLE 3

SN-38 can be encapsulated in liposomes by using 3 μ M of the drug, 15 μ M of dipalmitoyl phosphatidyl choline, 1 μ M cardiolipin, and 9 μ M cholesterol in a volume of 2.5 ml. The drug and lipid mixture can be evaporated under vacuum and resuspended in an equal volume of saline solution. The remainder of the process can be similar to that described above. The SN-38 encapsulation efficiency will generally be higher than 75% in this system.

EXAMPLE 4

In this example, liposomes containing 2 μ M SN-38, 2 μ M of phosphatidyl serine, 11 μ M phosphatidyl choline, 2 μ M cardiolipin, and 7 μ M cholesterol prepared by the method described in Example 1 is contemplated with greater than 75% SN-38 encapsulation efficiency.

EXAMPLE 5

In this example liposomes containing over 1 mg/ml SN-38 in solution are demonstrated.

A lipid film is prepared by adding about 0.2 g of D- α -tocopherol acid succinate to about 1 kg of t-butyl alcohol which is warmed to about 35-40° C. The solution is mixed for about 5 min until the tocopherol is dissolved. About 6.0 g of tetramyristoyl cardiolipin is added to the solution and the solution is mixed for about 5 minutes. About 10 g of cholesterol is added to the solution and the solution is mixed for about 5 more minutes then about 30 g of egg phosphatidyl choline is added and mixed for

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another 5 min. Approximately 11 grams of the resulting lipid solution is lyophilized to generate a lipid film.

To prepare liposomal SN-38, a 1.2 mg/ml solution of SN-38 is prepared by dissolving the drug in an aqueous alkaline solution having a pH of between 8 and 10.

5 Approximately 15 ml of this SN-38 solution is added to a vial containing the lipid film. The vial is swirled gently, allowed to hydrate at room temperature for 30 min, vortexed vigorously for 2 min, and sonicated for 10 min in a bath-type sonicator at maximum intensity. The pH of the liposome solution is reduced to acid pH. Using this method more than 90 wt.% of the SN-38 is complexed with lipid in the form of liposomes.

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Having described the present invention it will be apparent that one skilled in the art can make many changes and modifications to the above-described embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composition comprising a compound selected from SN-38 or a chemical in equilibrium with SN-38 and a lipid, wherein about 70 wt.% or more of the compound is in a complex with a portion of the lipid, and wherein the lipid comprises cardiolipin.
2. The composition of claim 1, wherein the complex comprises a liposome.
3. A liposomal composition comprising a compound selected from SN-38 or a chemical in equilibrium with SN-38 and liposomes comprising a lipid, wherein at least about 75% of the compound is entrapped with the liposomes and wherein the lipid comprises cardiolipin.
4. The composition of any of claims 1-3 wherein the composition is in a lyophilized form.
5. The composition of any of claims 1-4, further comprising a nonreducing sugar.
6. The composition of any of claims 2-5, wherein at least about 80% of the compound is entrapped with the liposomes.
7. The composition of any of claims 2-5, wherein at least about 85% of the compound is entrapped with the liposomes.
8. The composition of any of claims 2-5, wherein at least about 90% of the compound is entrapped with the liposomes.
9. The composition of any of claims 2-5, wherein at least about 95% of the compound is entrapped with the liposomes.
10. The composition of any of claims 1-9, wherein the compound is SN-38.
11. The composition of any of claims 1-10, wherein the cardiolipin is selected from a group consisting of natural cardiolipin and synthetic cardiolipin.

12. The composition of any of claims 1-11, wherein the lipid further comprises at least one of the lipids selected from a group of lipids consisting of phosphatidylcholine, phosphatidylethanolamine, phosphatidylserine, phosphatidylglycerol, phosphatidic acid, phosphatidylinositol, sphingomyelin, sterol, tocopherol, fatty acid, and mixtures thereof.
13. The composition of claim 12, wherein the phosphatidylglycerol is selected from a group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidylglycerol, dioleoylphosphatidylglycerol, distearoylphosphatidylglycerol, dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol, diarachidonoylphosphatidylglycerol, and mixtures thereof.
14. The composition of claim 12, wherein the phosphatidylcholine is selected from a group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine, distearoylphosphatidylcholine, dioleoylphosphatidylcholine, dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine, diarachidonoyl phosphatidylcholine, egg phosphatidylcholine, soy phosphatidylcholine, hydrogenated soy phosphatidylcholine, and mixtures thereof.
15. The composition of claim 12, wherein the sterol is selected from a group consisting of cholesterol, polyethylene glycol derivatives of cholesterol, coprostanol, cholestanol, cholestane, cholesterol hemisuccinate, cholesterol sulfate, and mixtures thereof.
16. The composition of any of claims 1-15, wherein about 80 wt.% or more of the compound is in a complex with a portion of the lipid.
17. The composition of any of claims 1-15, wherein about 90 wt.% or more of the compound is in a complex with a portion of the lipid.
18. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound in the composition is about 0.1 or more to about 20 mg/ml.
19. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound is about 0.01 or more to about 5 mg/ml.

20. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound is about 0.1 or more to about 4 mg/ml.
21. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound is about 0.5 or more to about 3 mg/ml.
22. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound is about 0.8 or more to about 2 mg/ml.
23. The composition of any of claims 1-17, wherein the concentration of the compound is about 1 or more to about 1.5 mg/ml.
24. The composition of any of claims 2-23, wherein the liposomes have a diameter of about 1 micron or less.
25. The composition of any of claims 2-23, wherein the liposomes have a diameter of about 500 nm or less.
26. The composition of any of claims 2-23, wherein the liposomes have a diameter of about 200 nm or less.
27. The composition of any of claims 2-23, wherein the liposomes have a diameter of about 100 nm or less.
28. The composition of any of claims 1-27, further including a pharmaceutically acceptably excipient.
29. The composition of any of claims 1-28, further including a targeting agent.
30. The composition of claim 29, wherein the targeting agent is a protein.
31. The composition of claim 30, wherein the protein is selected from a group of proteins consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, peptides, peptide hormones, receptor ligands, and mixtures thereof.

32. The composition of claim 29, wherein the targeting agent is a carbohydrate.
33. A method of forming a lipid composition comprising a compound selected from SN-38 or a chemical in equilibrium with SN-38, involving forming a lipid phase and thereafter hydrating the lipid phase with an aqueous solution including the compound so as to form a lipid composition including the compound and wherein the pH of the lipid composition, including the compound, is reduced to an acidic pH.
34. The method of claim 33, wherein the lipid phase is formed in an organic solvent.
35. The method of claim 33 or 34, wherein the aqueous solution has an alkaline pH.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein the pH of the aqueous solution is between about 7 and about 11.
37. The method of claim 35, wherein the pH of the aqueous solution is between about 8 and about 10.
38. The method of any of claims 33-37, wherein the hydration step is performed with vigorous mixing.
39. The method of any of claims 33-38, wherein the lipid phase comprises cardiolipin.
40. The method of claim 39, wherein the cardiolipin is selected from a group consisting of natural cardiolipin and synthetic cardiolipin.
41. The method of any of claims 33-38, wherein the lipid phase comprises at least one of the lipids selected from a group of lipids consisting of phosphatidylcholine, phosphatidylethanolamine, phosphatidylserine, phosphatidylglycerol, phosphatidic acid, phosphatidylinositol, sphingomyelin, sterol, tocopherol, fatty acid, cardiolipin, and mixtures thereof.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the phosphatidylglycerol is selected from a group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidylglycerol, dioleoylphosphatidylglycerol, distearoylphosphatidylglycerol, dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol, diarachidonoylphosphatidylglycerol, and mixtures thereof.

43. The method of claim 41, wherein the phosphatidylcholine is selected from a group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine, distearoylphosphatidyl choline, dioleoylphosphatidylcholine, dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine, diarachidonoyl phosphatidylcholine, egg phosphatidylcholine, soy phosphatidylcholine, hydrogenated soy phosphatidylcholine, and mixtures thereof.

44. The method of claim 41, wherein the sterol is selected from a group consisting of cholesterol, polyethylene glycol derivatives of cholesterol, coprostanol, cholestanol, cholestane, cholesterol hemisuccinate, cholesterol sulfate, and mixtures thereof.

45. The method of any of claims 33-44, wherein the lipid composition is a liposomal formulation.

46. The method of any of claims 33-45, further involving filtering the lipid composition.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the filtration is through a filter of about 5 microns or less.

48. The method of claim 46, wherein the filtration is through a filter of about 1 micron or less.

49. The method of claim 46, wherein the filtration is through a filter of about 500 nm or less.

50. The method of claim 46, wherein the filtration is through a filter of about 200 nm or less.

51. The method of claim 46, wherein the filtration is through a filter of about 100 nm or less.
52. The method of any of claims 33-51, further involving drying the lipid composition to form a dried lipid composition.
53. The method of claim 52, further involving adding a nonreducing sugar to the lipid composition.
54. The method of any of claims 33-53, wherein the acidic pH is sufficient to convert structures in equilibrium with SN-38 to SN-38.
55. The method of claim 54, wherein the acidic pH is about 3.5.
56. A lipid composition comprising a compound selected from SN-38 or a chemical in equilibrium with SN-38 prepared in accordance with the method of any of claims 33-55.
57. The composition of claim 56, wherein the compound is SN-38.
58. The composition of claim 56 or 57, wherein the lipid phase comprises cardiolipin.
59. The use of a composition according to any one of claims 1-32 or 56-58 for the manufacturing of a pharmaceutical for the treatment of mammalian disease.
60. A use according to claim 59, wherein the disease is cancer.
61. A use according to claim 60, wherein the cancer is lymphoma, ovarian, breast, lung, liver, or colon cancer.
62. A use according to claim 59, wherein the disease is multiple sclerosis.