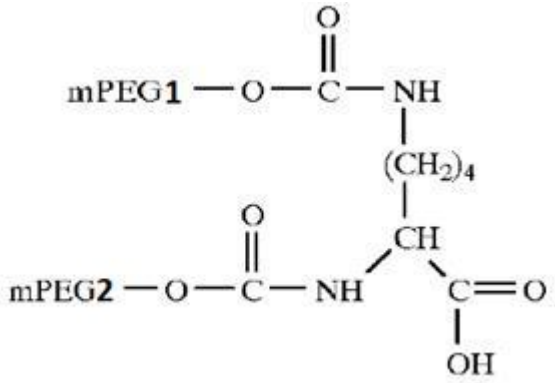
CLAIMS

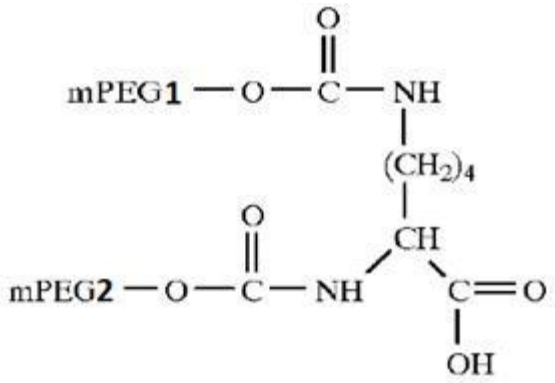
CONJUGATE COMPRISING ERYTHROPOIETIN AND A BRANCHED POLYMERIC STRUCTURE

1. A conjugate comprising erythropoietin (EPO) and an asymmetric branched polymeric structure comprising two branches of monomethoxy polyethylene glycol (mPEG), where the molecular mass of one of the branches of mPEG is between 10 kDa and 14 kDa, and the molecular mass of the other branch of mPEG is between 17 kDa and 23 kDa and wherein the branched polymeric asymmetric structure is represented as:



2. The conjugate according to claim 1 wherein the molecular mass of one of the branches of mPEG is 12 kDa and the molecular mass of the other mPEG branch is 20 kDa.
3. The conjugate according to claim 2 wherein the mPEG1 molecular mass is 12 kDa and the mPEG2 molecular mass is 20 kDa, or the molecular mass of mPEG1 is 20 kDa and the mPEG2 molecular mass is 12 kDa.
4. The conjugate according to any one of claims 1–3 wherein the EPO is recombinant human EPO (rh EPO).
5. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the conjugate of any one of claims 1–4 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.
6. A method for obtaining pegylated EPO wherein said protein is conjugated to an asymmetric branched polymeric structure comprising two branches of monomethoxy polyethylene glycol (mPEG), where the molecular mass of one of the branches of mPEG is between 10 kDa and 14 kDa, and the molecular mass

of the other branch of mPEG is between 17 kDa and 23 kDa and wherein the asymmetric branched polymeric structure is represented as:



.

7. The method according to claim 6 wherein the molecular mass of one of the branches of mPEG is 12 kDa and the molecular mass of the other mPEG branch is 20 kDa.
8. The method according to claim 6 wherein the mPEG1 molecular mass is 12 kDa and mPEG2 molecular mass is 20 kDa, or the mPEG1 molecular mass is 20 kDa and the mPEG2 molecular mass is 12 kDa.
9. The method according to any one of claims 6–8 wherein EPO is recombinant human EPO (rh EPO).