

Fig.3 The dry thickness (●) and the static water contact angle (○) of the PMPC brush layers.

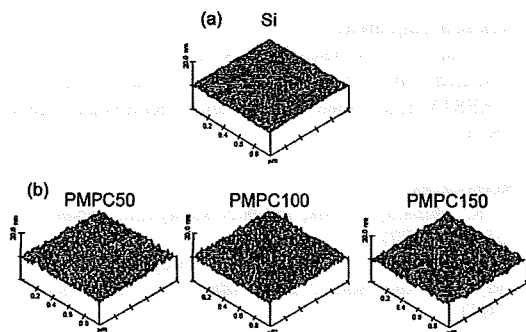


Fig.4 The AFM images of (a) the unmodified Si, (b) PMPC 50, PMPC 100, and PMPC 150.

($1.30\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ for PMPC¹³), N_A is Avogadro's number, and M_n is the number-average molecular weight of a polymer chain grafted on surface. M_n was determined by measuring the molecular weight of a free polymer because previous reports described that the molecular weight of a polymer chain grafted on surface was the same as that of a free polymer¹⁸. As a result, the average of the graft density of the PMPC brush layers was 0.17 chains/ nm^2 . It was said that polymer-grafted layer which had more than 0.10 chains/ nm^2 graft density became high dense brush conformation¹⁹. We confirmed that the PMPC grafted layer prepared via ATRP became "brush" layer. We also confirmed the brush conformation of the PMPC grafted layers with an AFM in dry condition. The AFM images are shown in Fig.4. Compared with the unmodified Si, brush structure of the PMPC 50, 100, and 150 (the numbers, 50, 100, and 150, were the polymerization degree) was observed. The root-mean-square (RMS) surface roughness of all samples was about 0.5 nm, which indicated that the PMPC brush layers prepared by ATRP were very homogeneous.

3.2 Friction properties

Interfacial friction forces for the unmodified Si, PMPC 50, PMPC 100, and PMPC 150 measured as a function of normal load in air (a) and in water (b) are shown in Fig.5. In air, the friction coefficients of the PMPC brush layers were the same value as those of the unmodified Si, and showed the same behavior, which characteristically showed the high friction coefficients under lower load. These results were due to the adhesion force between the AFM cantilever and the substrate acting as normal load. The adhesion force between the AFM cantilever and the unmodified Si was $10\text{-}30$ nN, measured by the $f\text{-}d$ curves. Under lower load, the adhesion force had relatively a large effect on normal load and the friction coefficients became very high. The same value of the adhesion force was measured by the $f\text{-}d$ curve measurements about the PMPC brush layers in

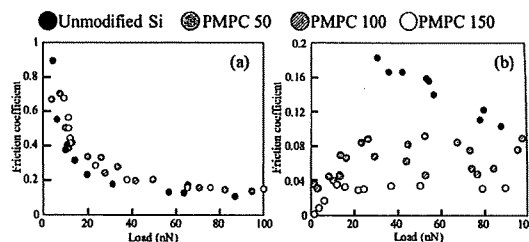


Fig.5 The friction coefficients as a function of normal load in (a) air and in (b) water.

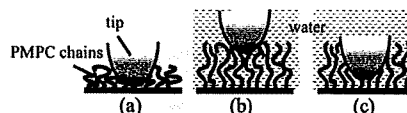


Fig.6 Schematic illustration of the sliding interface (a) in air, (b) in water under lower load, and (c) in water under higher load.

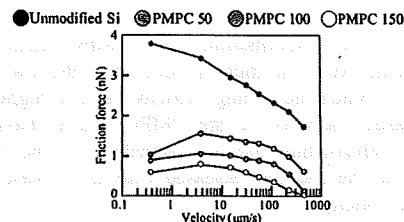


Fig.7 The friction force as a function of sliding velocity in water.

air. It was indicated that the PMPC chains were compressed in air and had no effect on interaction between the AFM cantilever and the silicon substrate (Fig.6 (a)). On the other hand, in water, the friction coefficients of the PMPC brush layers greatly decreased. Under lower load, the friction coefficients of the PMPC brush layers were especially low, and gently increased as normal load increased. These results indicated that the adhesion force between the AFM cantilever and the substrate did not occur on the PMPC brush layers in water because the hydrophilic PMPC chains elongated in water, took in a lot of water, and made the hydrated layer (Fig.6 (b)). The PMPC hydrated layer prevented from the direct contact between the AFM cantilever and the substrate, and achieved highly lubricity. As normal load increased, the AFM cantilever penetrated into the layer (Fig.6 (c)), and the interaction against the substrate gradually occurred. This was the reason why the friction coefficients increased as normal load increased. Seen from the thickness dependency, the friction coefficients of the PMPC brush layers decreased with an increase in the thickness of the PMPC brush layer because the thicker brush layer made the thicker hydrated layer. Satisfying the condition of noncontact friction interfaces leads to very low friction.

The friction forces measured as a function of a sliding velocity in water are shown Fig.7. The friction force of the unmodified Si decreased monotonically with an increase in the sliding velocity. On the other hand, there was maximum value in the friction force-velocity curve about the PMPC brush layers. These phenomena were also found in gel friction reported by Gong *et al.*²⁰. By

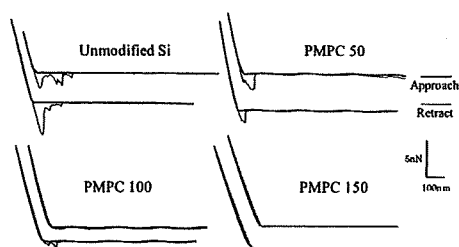


Fig.8 The representative f - d curves measured with the BSA- immobilized cantilever.

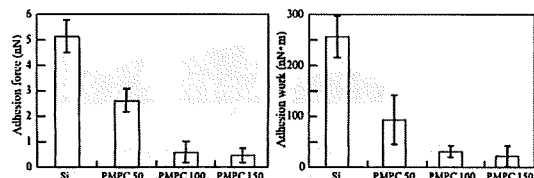


Fig.9 (a) F_{ad} and (b) W_{ad} calculated with f - d curves.

reference to this report, the reason for these results was that the elastic deformation of the PMPC brush chains was measured as the friction force under the low sliding velocity. When the sliding velocity became higher than the elastic mobility of the PMPC brush chains, the elastic deformation did not contribute to the friction force and the friction decreased with an increase in the sliding velocity.

3.3 Protein adhesion properties

The representative f - d curves measured with the BSA immobilized cantilever are shown in Fig.8, and F_{ad} and W_{ad} are shown in Fig.9. It was confirmed that the adhesion force between the BSA and the PMPC brush layers was markedly reduced and then decreased with an increase in the thickness of the PMPC brush layers. The F_{ad} and W_{ad} of PMPC 150 was nearly measurement limit, so it was believed that PMPC 150 had little or no interaction with BSA. Hydrophobic interaction is a main interaction when a protein adheres a solid surface, reported by Kidoaki *et al.*²¹. The hydrophilic PMPC brush layers resisted hydrophobic interaction with the BSA. In addition to the reduction of hydrophobic interaction, hydration repulsive force caused the resistance of the BSA adhesion force. Hydration repulsive force said to be a short-range force that usually appeared at nanoscale separation distances and arose whenever water molecules bind to strongly hydrophilic materials. Therefore, the required properties for resisting the protein adhesion are not only just hydrophilicity but also the ability to couple many water molecules, which means that making the thick hydrated layer. The thickness of the hydrated layer increased as the thickness of the polymer brush layer increased, considered from the friction measurements. Hydration repulsive force is the reason why the resistance of the BSA adhesion force depended on the thickness of the polymer brush layer.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We prepared the well-controlled PMPC brush layer using an ATRP method. We controlled the thickness of the PMPC brush layers on nanoscale by changing the amount of the MPC monomer in the polymerization solution. From the nanoscale friction measurements by

AFM, it was most important for obtaining lubricity to satisfy the condition of noncontact friction interfaces with the hydrated layer. From the f - d curves measurements using the BSA-immobilized cantilever, the BSA adhesion force was clearly decreased by the PMPC grafting because of both the reduction of hydrophobic interaction and the increase of hydration repulsive force. The hydrated layer made by the elongated PMPC brush layer in water served a key role in leading to excellent lubricity and biocompatibility.

Acknowledgement

A part of this research was supported by the Core Research for Evolution Science and Technology (CREST) from Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).

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(Received December 9, 2007 ; Accepted April 5, 2008)



A study of disease management activities of hip osteoarthritis patients under conservative treatment

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KEYWORDS

Disease management;
Hip osteoarthritis;
Conservative treatment

Summary The study aimed to determine the status of disease management activities that patients under conservative treatment actually performed and to examine the relevant factors in performing or not performing the activities. A survey was conducted with hip OA patients of the orthopaedic outpatient service of one university hospital in Japan. Results indicated that it is necessary to advise patients at an earlier stage of the disease to perform the management activities and to develop a program to link the advice to actual performance of the activities.

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Editor's comments

Mobility and mobilising patients are the essence of orthopaedics. This study provides a fascinating and much needed insight into the approach we should adopt when using conservative treatments for osteoarthritis of the hip even though many patients go on to have the almost inevitable surgery. PD

Introduction

Hip osteoarthritis (OA) is a progressive chronic disease with pain and restricted range of motion, causing disorder in activities in daily life (ADL). In Japan, secondary disease of the hip joint resulting from dysplastic hip is common. In most cases, patients have symptoms such as pain or discomfort in their 1920s and 1930s and are diagnosed as having hip

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disease. Gradual degeneration over time is a characteristic of the disease, and in the slow progression of the symptoms, pain and restriction in the range of motion gradually increase over 10–30 years. If congruency is not acceptable, osteotomy is performed to prevent further development of OA (Honda et al., 1999). However, a limited number of patients can have surgery because of the indication required for arthroplasty, such as joint compatibility and the rate of progression. Typical surgery, total hip replacement (THR), is performed in Japan for OA patients aged 60 or over who have disorders in ADL due to unrelieved pain (Creamer et al., 1998; Anon., 2000; Dolin et al., 2003). Therefore, conservative treatment is the first line in treatment of OA. Patients are required to find a way of controlling their pain and managing the disease, by doing weight management and muscle training in daily life (Anon., 2000; Manek and Lane, 2000).

In conservative treatment, weight reduction and muscle training are firstly recommended. Weight reduction is important to reduce the load on the hip joint (Arokoski, 2005). The hip joint is subjected to a load three times that of the body weight (Davy et al., 1988) and patients are directed not to lift heavy objects or remain standing for long periods. A large randomized clinical trial (RCT) (van Baar et al., 1998) verified that weight reduction and muscle training lead to pain relief and improvement in the range of motion of the hip. The guideline suggests that exercises, including stretching and muscle training, have an effect of slowing the progress of the disease (Hochberg et al., 1995; Anon., 2000). Doctors explain this importance to patients and advise them to accept and practice the therapy in their daily lives.

However, in contrast to those who have surgery, patients having conservative treatment regimes usually visit the university hospital only about once a year and have few opportunities for medical guidance and information provision. If the disease becomes worse, and patients cannot relieve their pain even though muscle training is performed aggressively, doctors may suggest total hip replacement. Doctors give most patients the instruction of muscle training, mainly strengthening the adductors by lifting each leg in a recumbent position. Additionally, individual training can be provided whenever they request. Disease management is controlled by the patients themselves.

Methods

The survey was conducted with OA patients of the orthopaedic outpatient service of one university

hospital who agreed in writing to participate in the study and satisfied the following conditions:

- Had not undergone a joint-preserving procedure or THA.
- Receiving conservative treatment using a cane and drugs such as NSAIDs and physical therapy – including exercises and stretch exercises.
- Were between the ages of 20 and 80 at the time of survey.
- Could communicate in Japanese.
- Had no dementia and could fill in the questionnaire sheet.

Patients were asked through doctors to cooperate in the research. Our staff explained the aim of the survey to the patients in a private room and received their letters of consent. Staff gave the patients the questionnaire to fill in by themselves in the room and collected the questionnaire directly from the patients. Their current Japanese Orthopaedics Association (JOA) score and number of years of being a patient were extracted from medical records, and the height and weight of the patients were measured. The survey was conducted from August 2003 to August 2004.

The questionnaire presented nine statements regarding disease management activity:

1. I try not to remain standing for long periods of time.
2. I do not choose shoes with high heels or hard soles.
3. I am careful about the walking distance and speed in daily life.
4. I use a cane or hold a handrail when necessary.
5. I try not to lift heavy objects.
6. I do muscle training.
7. I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain.
8. I do stretching.
9. I do exercise to prevent weight gain.

The subjects answered Yes or No to these statements.

Other factors relevant to the disease management activity, such as age, number of years of being a patient, body mass index (BMI), JOA score, and discomfort in daily life were also studied. ‘‘Discomfort in daily life’’ was investigated by asking patients about what they felt was difficult in their daily life using answers graded from 1 to 5. The questions were:

1. There are no local medical specialists for disease management.
2. I find it difficult to maintain my body weight appropriately.

3. I have a hard time controlling pain in daily life.
4. I am reluctant to use a walking stick.
5. I have a hard time moving joints as I wish.
6. It is difficult to choose a treatment method.
7. I feel that I am putting burdens on my family or friends.
8. I have a hard time sleeping well due to pain.

These eight statements were created by researchers based on the result of preliminary interviews with 24 OA patients of the orthopaedic outpatient service and on earlier studies. Then necessary revision was made to the statements according to the examination of face validity based on the opinions of five medical specialists and five nurses who had more than 3 years experience in orthopedics. To examine the effectiveness of the survey sheets, a preliminary survey was conducted for eight patients, and necessary revision was made on the questions for the main survey.

Sex, age, disease stage, and number of years of being an OA patient were extracted from medical records. Occupation if any, financial status, and academic background were asked about on the survey sheet.

We analyzed the disease stage by dividing it into four stages: pre OA, primary stage, advanced stage, and end stage. If a patient had hip OA on both sides, the stage and JOA score on the more advanced side were used.

The ratio of the answers to the statements on the disease management activities was calculated for each disease stage. We used Mantel-Haenszel's chi-square test to examine any tendency in the fraction of the activities at each stage. A *t*-test was used for differences between one-side hip OA and two-side hip OA of disease management activities. We performed factor analysis on the nine statements of the disease management activities using the principal factor method with Promax Rotation, and calculated the coefficients of the correlation between the total score of the domain, derived from the factor analysis, and related factors. We performed a two-sided test with 5% significant level, using SAS Windows edition Version 9.1.

The Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Tokyo, approved the study. We explained the details of the study to the patients using a briefing document. They could stop participating in the study whenever they wished, as we thus tried not to force them to agree to the participation, and assured them that subsequent medical treatment would not be affected even if they refused or stopped the participation. We explained all of these factors to the patients and conducted the research for those patients

who provided written consent to participate in the study.

Results

The questionnaire was distributed to 339 patients and the completed questionnaire was collected from 330 patients (response rate of 97%). Those who did not agree to cooperate gave their reasons for disagreement: 7 patients answered that they did not have enough time, 1 answered that he/she felt bad, and 1 answered that he/she did not understand the purpose of the research.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of all the patients and of the patients at each disease stage. The average age of the patients was 51 years (SD13). Females occupied 89% and the BMI was 23 (SD 3). The average period of being a patient was 7 years (SD 3), and the JOA score was 68 points (SD 20).

Table 2 shows the achievement ratio of the management activities. More than 85% of the patients answered yes to the statement "I try not to remain standing for long periods of time." and "I do not choose shoes with high heels or hard soles." Seventy-three percent of patients answered yes to the statements "I do muscle training." and "I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain." The patients at the advanced stage tended to answer yes to these statements. To the statements "I do stretching." and "I do exercise to prevent weight gain," more than half of all the patients, and less than half of the patients answered no.

Differences between one-side hip OA and two-side hip OA of disease management activities are shown in Table 3. Results of a *t*-test showed no significant differences between two groups.

About 70% of the patients answered that they performed the disease management activities because "I do not want to let OA progress" or "I want to control pain." About 50% gave the reason that "I do not want to have surgery." About 20% answered that "I was told by doctors to do so" (Table 4).

We show in Table 5 the result of the factor analysis to examine the pattern of the nine disease management activities. As a consequence, we extracted (muscle training and weight management activities) as the first factor, (Activities to prevent load on hip) as the second, and (Activities to aid careful walking) as the third. The factor loading of "I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain" was relatively low, 0.3, but we included it in the first factor (Positive management activities) from the clinical perspective. Cronbach's α coefficient of each factor was in the

Table 1 Background of the patients

	Total N = 330	Pre OA n = 56	Primary n = 49	Progressive n = 68	End n = 157
Age (years)	Mean (SD) 51 (13)	38 (10)	44 (12)	50 (10)	59 (9)
Sex (Female)	% 89%	91%	90%	91%	88%
Weight (kg)	Mean (SD) 55 (9)	54 (8)	55 (8)	57 (9)	54 (9)
BMI ^a (kg/m ²)	Mean (SD) 23 (3)	22 (3)	22 (3)	23 (3)	23 (3)
Duration of osteoarthritis (years)	Mean (SD) 7 (7)	6 (5)	7 (7)	6 (7)	9 (8)
Academic background (high school graduate or below)	% 44%	25%	24%	35%	60%
Economic condition (the better) ^a	% 12%	13%	18%	7%	13%
Job-having	% 48%	66%	47%	59%	37%
JOA score ^b	Mean (SD) 68 (20)	88 (10)	81 (13)	71 (15)	56 (17)
Range of motion	Mean (SD) 13 (6)	19 (2)	18 (2)	15 (3)	9 (5)
Pain	Mean (SD) 26 (10)	31 (7)	28 (8)	25 (9)	23 (11)
Ability to walk	Mean (SD) 14 (5)	18 (3)	17 (3)	14 (4)	11 (5)
Activity of daily life	Mean (SD) 16 (4)	19 (2)	18 (3)	16 (3)	13 (3)
Difficulty in their daily life ^c					
There are no local medical specialists for disease management	% 20%	5%	22%	10%	29%
I find it difficult to maintain my body weight appropriately	% 45%	41%	43%	46%	47%
I have a hard time controlling pain in daily life	% 23%	16%	10%	24%	30%
I am reluctant to use a walking stick	% 43%	36%	43%	44%	46%
I have a hard time moving joints as I wish	% 49%	13%	31%	51%	68%
It difficult to choose a treatment method	% 41%	27%	39%	41%	46%
I feel that I am putting burdens on my family or friends	% 42%	27%	31%	41%	52%
I have a hard the sleeping well due to pain	% 19%	9%	8%	18%	27%

^a BMI: Body Mass Index.

^b JOA score (in the bi-lateral hip OA group, the score of the more advanced hip joint was adopted).

^c The numbers in the table show the rate of responses for "I live in fairly affluent circumstances," and "I live in very affluent circumstances".

Table 2 Disease management activities

	Total		Pre OA		Primary		Progressive		End		P-Value ^a
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
I try not to remain standing for long periods of time	282	85%	37	66%	41	84%	61	90%	143	91%	<.001
I do not choose shoes with high heels or hard soles	281	85%	33	59%	42	86%	60	88%	146	93%	<.001
I am careful about the walking distance and speed in daily life	259	78%	37	66%	40	82%	57	84%	125	80%	0.10
I use a cane or hold a handrail when necessary	257	78%	20	36%	35	71%	55	81%	147	94%	<.001
I try not to lift heavy objects	251	76%	26	46%	35	71%	49	72%	141	90%	<.001
I do muscle training	241	73%	35	63%	30	61%	52	76%	124	79%	0.00
I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain	241	73%	35	63%	30	61%	52	76%	124	79%	0.00
I do stretching	148	45%	26	46%	23	47%	36	53%	63	40%	0.33
I do exercise to prevent weight gain	146	44%	22	39%	28	57%	30	44%	66	42%	0.70

^a Mantel-Haenszel's chi-square test P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01, and *** P < 0.001.

Table 3 Differences between uni-lateral hip OA and bi-lateral hip OA of disease management activities

	Uni-lateral		Bi-lateral		t-Score	P-Value ^a
	n = 127		n = 203			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
I try not to remain standing for long periods of time	0.8	(0.4)	0.8	(0.4)	-0.49	0.63
I do not choose shoes with high heels or hard soles	0.8	(0.4)	0.9	(0.3)	0.91	0.36
I am careful about the walking distance and speed in daily life	0.9	(0.3)	0.8	(0.4)	0.36	0.72
I use a cane or hold a handrail when necessary	0.8	(0.4)	0.7	(0.4)	1.94	0.05
I try not to lift heavy objects	0.7	(0.5)	0.7	(0.4)	0.64	0.53
I do muscle training	0.4	(0.5)	0.4	(0.5)	-0.92	0.36
I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain	0.8	(0.4)	0.7	(0.4)	-0.44	0.66
I do stretching	0.3	(0.5)	0.4	(0.5)	-1.13	0.26
I do exercise to prevent weight gain	0.4	(0.5)	0.5	(0.5)	0.18	0.85

^a t-Test P-value * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, and *** $P < 0.001$.

range of 0.63–0.69, indicating that the internal consistency remained at the acceptable level. Then we summed up the figures of each domain to obtain the personal management activity score of the domain.

Table 6 shows the correlation between the disease management activity score of domain 3 and each related factor. No factor was found significantly relevant in a statistical sense for (Muscle training and weight management activities). (Activities to prevent load on hip) had a statistically significant relevance to higher age ($r = 0.38$, $P < 0.001$), more advanced disease stage ($r = 0.51$, $P < 0.001$), larger BMI ($r = 0.13$, $P = 0.02$), lower total JOA score ($r = -0.33$, $P < 0.001$), lower score in each subscale of JOA score ($r = -0.32 - 0.49$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in finding medical specialists nearby ($r = 0.25$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in weight management ($r = 0.18$, $P = 0.00$), more difficulty in controlling pain ($r = 0.25$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in moving joints ($r = 0.41$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in choosing a therapy course ($r = 0.20$, $P = 0.00$), stronger feeling of placing burden on family or friends ($r = 0.30$, $P < 0.001$), and more difficulty in sleeping due to pain ($r = 0.16$, $P = 0.00$).

(Activities to aid careful walking) had a statistically significant relevance to higher age ($r = 0.17$, $P = 0.00$), more advanced disease stage ($r = 0.18$, $P = 0.00$), lower JOA pain score ($r = -0.14$, $P = 0.01$), lower JOA ability to walk score ($r = -0.22$, $P < 0.001$), lower JOA ADL score ($r = -0.24$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in finding medical specialists nearby ($r = 0.14$, $P = 0.01$), more difficulty in weight management ($r = 0.12$, $P = 0.03$), more difficulty in moving joints ($r = 0.22$, $P < 0.001$), more difficulty in choosing a therapy course ($r = 0.11$, $P = 0.05$), stronger feeling of placing burden on family or friends ($r = 0.20$, $P = 0.00$).

Discussion

The present study clarified the current status of the disease management activities of the patients who were in conservative treatment courses, the relevant factors, and the reasons why they performed the activities.

Current status of disease management activities

Seventy-three percent of all the patients, and more than 60% of those in each disease stage, answered yes to the statement "I do muscle training." This percentage was higher among the patients who were at the more advanced stage than the pre OA of OA with few symptoms. Muscle training is the foundation of the conservative therapies and is sometimes difficult for patients to continue; however, the present study showed that many patients actually did the muscle training. It is important to strengthen the gluteus medius muscle to enhance the bearing ability of the hip joint, and muscle training was proved by a large RCT to be effective (Messier et al., 2004). A previous study indicated that, since the difference in instructional methods had no difference in their effects (Ravaud et al., 2004), making appropriate efforts for the individual patient, such as personal guidance, group exercise, or home exercise, was necessary for continuing muscle training. In particular, since only a limited number of exercises can prevent putting a burden on joints, information to individual patients about suitable exercise should be received from specialists.

Only less than half of the patients were performing "stretching" or "exercise to prevent weight gain". This may indicate that the ease of the

Table 4 Reason for the disease management activities

	Total		Pre OA		Primary		Progressive		End		P-Value ^a
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
I do not want to let OA progress	245	74%	42	75%	37	76%	56	82%	110	70%	0.38
I want to control pain	224	68%	29	52%	36	73%	46	68%	113	72%	*
I do not want to have surgery	173	52%	24	43%	26	53%	39	57%	84	54%	0.25
I cannot walk	135	41%	13	23%	14	29%	23	34%	85	54%	***
I cannot move joint	129	39%	12	21%	12	24%	18	26%	87	55%	***
I was told by doctors to do so	75	23%	11	20%	18	37%	15	22%	31	20%	0.36
I am anxious about the way of walking	61	18%	2	4%	11	22%	13	19%	35	22%	0.01
Because it is the condition that it can't operate at present	36	11%	4	7%	6	12%	12	18%	14	9%	1.00

As for the reasons of the disease control behavior, it asked in several answers.
^a Mantel-Haenszel's chi-square test P < 0.05, * P < 0.01, and *** P < 0.001.

activities made a difference in actual performance. According to the guideline, exercises including stretching and muscle training are expected to have the effect of suppressing the progress of OA. Future progression of OA could be slowed by performing and continuing the disease management activities in the primary stage of the disease. It may be necessary to develop a program to improve the management activities that are not easy for patients to perform.

There were no significant differences between one-side hip OA and two-side hip OA of disease management activities. It may be because there were more than half of patients who performed disease management activities.

Reasons for disease management activities

The top reason for performing the management activities was 'I do not want to let OA progress', to which 74% of the patients answered yes. Sixty-eight percent chose the reason 'I want to control pain' and about half of the patients selected the reason 'I do not want to have surgery'. The reason 'I was told by the doctor to do so' was chosen by only 23% of the patients. The patients performed the management activities to prevent progression of OA, and the information provision and suggestion from doctors did not largely enhance their motivation. Doctor's advice of performing the management activities did not always lead to actual performance of the activities. Personal guidance in accordance with individual understanding or interest may also be necessary.

Relevant factors in disease management activities

We found that higher age, more advanced disease stage, and lower score in each subscale of the JOA score were relevant to (Activities to prevent load on hip) and (Activities to aid careful walking). Patients at a higher age tended to be in a more advanced disease stage and present a lower JOA score, and hence the patients at a higher age had severe symptoms in the advanced stage and had to decide whether to perform the management activities. Also, a statistically significant relevance was found in difficulty in finding medical specialists nearby, difficulty in weight management, difficulty in controlling pain, difficulty in moving joints, difficulty in choosing a therapy course, feeling of placing a burden on family or friends, and difficulty in sleeping due to pain. In consideration of the result that the difficulty in their daily lives was

Table 5 The results of factor analysis of the disease management activities: factor loadings after Promax rotation and Cronbach's alpha coefficients ($N = 330$)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Muscle training and weight management activities $\alpha = 0.69$</i>			
I do muscle training	0.70	-0.01	0.01
I do stretching	0.67	0.02	-0.06
I do exercise to prevent weight gain	0.63	-0.05	0.03
I am careful with my diet to avoid weight gain	0.31	0.25	0.07
<i>Activities to prevent load on hip $\alpha = 0.63$</i>			
I use a cane or hold a handrail when necessary	-0.04	0.59	0.01
I do not choose shoes with high heels or hard soles	-0.04	0.55	-0.03
I try not to lift heavy objects	0.07	0.48	0.18
<i>Activities to aid careful walking $\alpha = 0.66$</i>			
I am careful about the walking distance and speed in daily life	0.00	0.09	0.53
I try not to remain standing for long periods of time	-0.03	0.18	0.54
Total contribution 38%			

Table 6 Related factors of the disease management activities

$N = 330$	Muscle training and weight management activities		Activities to prevent load on hip			Activities to aid careful walking			
	r^a	P -Value	r^a	P -Value		r^a	P -Value		
Age	0.07	0.22	0.38	<.001	***	0.17	0.00	***	
Duration of osteoarthritis	-0.02	0.78	0.00	0.98		-0.04	0.46		
Disease stage	0.02	0.76	0.51	<.001	***	0.18	0.00	***	
BMI	-0.05	0.34	0.13	0.02	*	0.07	0.22		
<i>JOA score</i>									
Range of motion	0.08	0.15	-0.33	<.001	***	-0.09	0.11		
Pain	0.03	0.60	-0.32	<.001	***	-0.14	0.01	**	
Walk	-0.04	0.45	-0.46	<.001	***	-0.22	<.001	***	
ADL	0.04	0.48	-0.49	<.001	***	-0.24	<.001	***	
<i>Difficulty in their daily life^b</i>									
There are no local medical specialists for disease management	0.03	0.60	0.25	<.001	***	0.14	0.01	**	
I find it difficult to maintain my body weight appropriately	-0.07	0.18	0.18	0.00	***	0.12	0.03	*	
I have a hard time controlling pain in daily life	0.01	0.91	0.25	<.001	***	0.08	0.16		
I am reluctant to use a walking stick	-0.07	0.18	0.02	0.76		0.08	0.13		
I have a hard time moving joints as I wish	-0.02	0.68	0.41	<.001	***	0.22	<.001	***	
It difficult to choose a treatment method	-0.01	0.85	0.20	0.00	***	0.11	0.05	*	
I feel that I am putting burdens on my family or friends	0.04	0.47	0.30	<.001	***	0.20	0.00	***	
I have a hard the sleeping well due to pain	0.03	0.64	0.16	0.00	***	0.07	0.19		

^a r are expressed as Spearman's coefficients. P -value * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, and *** $P < 0.001$.

^b Difficulty in their daily life using answers graded from 1 to 5 which ranged from "I feel exactly the same" to "I do not feel any at all".

statistically significant, it is likely that the patients performed the management activities out of neces-

sity because they had problems caused by OA symptoms.

Since weight loss and muscle training can relieve the pain of OA and improve the range of motion (van Baar et al., 1998) and exercises including stretching and muscle training are expected to slow the progression of OA (Hochberg et al., 1995; Anon., 2000), we consider it necessary to advise patients at an earlier stage of the disease to perform the management activities and to develop a program to link the advice to actual performance of the activities.

In terms of muscle training and weight management activities, a small number of patients performed half of its items. Also, stages of the disease did not affect motivation of patients' training performance. These two facts are considered to be the reasons why there were no related factors.

Caution is required when generalizing this result since the present study focused on the patients of an orthopaedic outpatient service specializing in hip joints at one university hospital. Also, we used the answers from the patients to determine whether they performed the disease management activities, and did not verify whether they actually did or did not. Since it is important to continue the management activities, we consider it necessary to study temporal change of the result in addition to the present cross-sectional survey at a specific point in time.

Conclusions

The present study clarified the status of the disease management activities of the patients who were having conservative treatment. We consider it necessary to advise patients at an earlier stage of the disease to perform the management activities and to develop a program to link the advice to actual performance of the activities.

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Enhanced Wear Resistance of Orthopaedic Bearing Due to the Cross-Linking of Poly(MPC) Graft Chains Induced by Gamma-Ray Irradiation

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Received 17 January 2007; revised 31 March 2007; accepted 30 April 2007

Published online 22 June 2007 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/jbm.b.30874

Abstract: We assumed that the extra energy supplied by gamma-ray irradiation produced cross-links in 2-methacryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine (MPC) polymer grafted cross-linked polyethylene (CLPE-g-MPC) and investigated its effects on the tribological properties of CLPE-g-MPC. In this study, we found that the gamma-ray irradiation produced cross-links in three kinds of regions of CLPE-g-MPC: poly(MPC) layer, CLPE-MPC interface, and CLPE substrate. The dynamic coefficient of friction of CLPE-g-MPC slightly increased with increasing irradiation doses. After the simulator test, both the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups exhibited lower wear than the untreated CLPE ones. In particular, the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups showed extremely low and stable wear. As for the nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups, the weight change varied with each cup. When the CLPE surface is modified by poly(MPC) grafting, the MPC graft polymer leads to a significant reduction in the sliding friction between the surfaces that are grafted because water thin films formed can behave as extremely efficient lubricants. Such a cross-link of poly(MPC) slightly increases the friction of CLPE by gamma-ray irradiation but provides a stable wear resistant layer on the friction surface. The cross-links formed by gamma-ray irradiation would give further longevity to the CLPE-g-MPC cups. © 2007 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. *J Biomed Mater Res Part B: Appl Biomater* 84B: 320–327, 2008

Keywords: joint replacements; polyethylene; phosphorylcholine; sterilization

INTRODUCTION

The number of primary and revised artificial hip and knee joints used are substantially increasing in the world every year.¹ This means that the quality of artificial joints has been becoming increasingly important. Most of the patients who receive an artificial joint experience a dramatic pain relief and enjoy a rapid improvement in the quality of life. The most popular artificial joint system is a bearing couple composed of an ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene

(UHMWPE) and Co-Cr-Mo alloy. However, osteolysis caused by wear particles of UHMWPE has emerged as a serious issue.^{2–4} The reduction in the number of UHMWPE wear particles is a method to prevent osteolysis. From this viewpoint, different combinations of bearing surfaces and improvement in the bearing materials have been focused upon.

We have recently developed a novel artificial joint system with 2-methacryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine (MPC) polymer grafted onto the surface of cross-linked polyethylene (CLPE-g-MPC),^{5–7} aiming to reduce wear and avoid bone resorption. MPC is a methacrylate monomer that has a phospholipid polar group in a side chain and is used to make novel biomaterials as designed by Ishihara et al., who were inspired by the natural phospholipids of biomembranes.⁸ MPC can be a good polymer biomaterial owing to

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Contract grant sponsor: Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology; Contract grant number: 15390449
Contract grant sponsor: Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

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the reduction of protein adsorption and cell adhesion.^{9–18} On the basis of the biocompatibility and hydrophilicity of MPC polymers, we have been developing new artificial joints with highly lubricated bearing surfaces that are produced by photo-induced radical graft polymerization.¹⁹ This technique grafts MPC directly onto CLPE, forming C—C covalent bonds between the CLPE substrate and the MPC polymer.

Medical devices, including artificial joints, are normally sterilized by using several methods, for example, gamma-ray sterilization, ethylene oxide gas sterilization, and gas plasma sterilization. In particular, gamma-ray irradiation is the sterilization method typically used for the UHMWPE components of artificial joints. However, gamma-ray sterilization probably influences the properties of medical devices. Generally, when a high energy beam generated by gamma-ray sterilization is irradiated on to a polymer, free radicals are formed by the scission of the molecular chains. This is followed by the retermination and cross-linking of the molecules. The irradiation of high-dose gamma-rays onto UHMWPE severs the C—C or C—H bonds, and it then produces cross-linking and subsequent chemical bonding involving C=O and C—C.²⁰ It has been reported that gamma-ray sterilized UHMWPE sometimes exhibits improved wear resistance due to the formation of many cross-links. Several investigators have reported that wear resistance is better in gamma-ray sterilized UHMWPE than that in ethylene oxide sterilized UHMWPE.^{21–24}

The purpose of this study is to investigate the dependence of gamma-ray irradiation on the tribological (friction and *in vitro* wear) properties of CLPE-g-MPC and to examine the possibility of controlling the longevity of artificial joints by using this material. This is based on the hypothesis that the extra energy supplied by gamma-ray irradiation could produce cross-links in CLPE-g-MPC.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Chemicals and MPC Graft Polymerization

Benzophenone and acetone were purchased from Wako Pure Chemical Industries (Osaka, Japan). MPC was industrially synthesized using the method reported by Ishihara et al.⁸ and was supplied by Ai Bio-Chips (Tokyo, Japan).

A compression-molded UHMWPE (GUR1020 resin, Poly Hi-Solidur, IN) bar stock was treated with a dose of 50 kGy gamma irradiation in N₂ gas and annealed at 120°C for 7.5 h in N₂ gas in order to attain cross-linking. The CLPE specimens were machined from this bar stock after cooling. They were immersed in an acetone solution containing 10 mg/mL benzophenone for 30 s and then dried in the dark at room temperature to remove acetone. The amount of benzophenone adsorbed on the surface was 3.5×10^{-11} mol/cm².²⁵ The MPC monomer was dissolved in pure degassed water up to a concentration of 0.5 mol/L. The CLPE specimens coated with benzophenone were

immersed in the aqueous MPC solution. The photo-induced graft polymerization on the CLPE surface was carried out with an ultraviolet irradiation (UVL-400HA ultra-high pressure mercury lamp, Riko-Kagaku Sangyo, Funabashi, Japan) of 5 mW/cm² at 60°C for 90 min using a filter (Model D-35; Toshiba, Tokyo, Japan) to pass only ultraviolet light with a wavelength of 350 ± 50 nm. After the polymerization, the CLPE-g-MPC specimens were removed, washed with pure water and ethanol, and dried at room temperature. The CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC specimens were sterilized by gamma-ray irradiation of 25 or 50 kGy in N₂ gas.

Surface Analysis by Fourier-Transform Infrared and X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopies and Water-Contact Angle Measurement

The functional group vibrations of both the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC surfaces were examined by Fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy using attenuated total reflection (ATR) equipment. The FTIR/ATR spectra were obtained in 32 scans over a range of 800–2000 cm⁻¹ using an FTIR analyzer (FT/IR-615; JASCO International, Tokyo, Japan) at a resolution of 4.0 cm⁻¹.

The surface elemental conditions of CLPE before and after MPC grafting were analyzed by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS). The XPS spectra were obtained using an XPS spectrophotometer (AXIS Hsi 165; Kratos Analytical, UK) equipped with an Mg-K α radiation source at 15 kV at the anode. The take-off angle of the photoelectrons was kept at 90°. Each sample was scanned five times.

The static water-contact angles of CLPE-g-MPC with various photo-polymerization periods were measured by a sessile drop method using an optical bench-type contact angle goniometer (Model DM300; Kyowa Interface Science, Saitama, Japan). Drops of purified water (1 μ L) were deposited onto the surface of CLPE-g-MPC, and the contact angles were directly measured by using a microscope after 60 s according to the ISO 15989 standard.²⁶ Fifteen replicate measurements were performed on each sample, and the average values were taken as contact angles.

Friction Test

The friction test was performed using a ball-on-plate machine (Tribostation 32; Shinto Scientific, Tokyo, Japan). Six sample pieces were prepared using each of the sterilization methods. The Co-Cr-Mo alloy ball was 9 mm in diameter and its surface roughness was $R_a \geq 0.01$ —as smooth as a femoral ball. The friction tests were carried out with a load of 0.98 N and a sliding distance of 25 mm with a frequency of 1 Hz at room temperature. The measurements were performed using pure water as lubricant. The friction tests were performed up to a maximum of 100 cycles. The mean static (μ_s) and dynamic (μ_d) coefficients of friction were determined by averaging five data points in 10 (8–12) and 100 (96–100) cycle measurements.

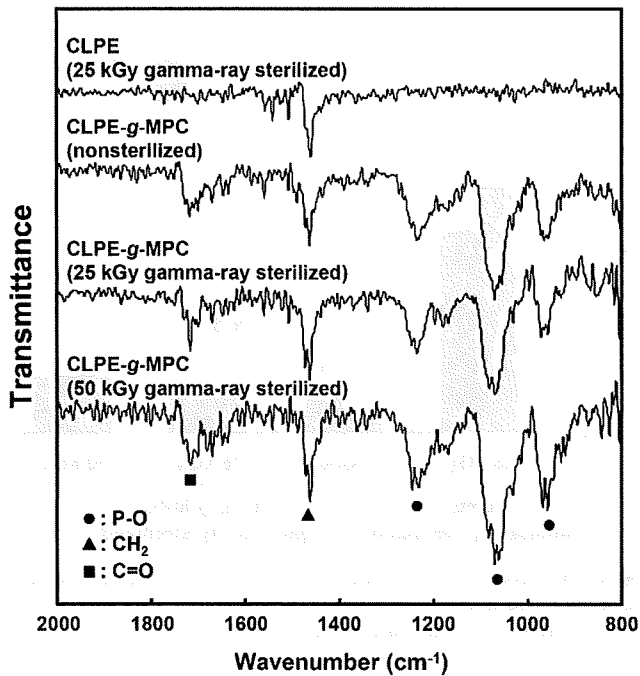


Figure 1. FTIR/ATR spectra for nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC.

Statistical Analysis

For the water-contact angle measurement and friction test, the results derived from each measurement were expressed as mean values and the standard deviation. The statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) was judged by the Student's *t*-test.

Hip Joint Simulator Test

The inner and outer diameters of the CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC cups used in the hip joint simulator were 26 and 52 mm, respectively. Four pieces for each condition was prepared. The wear test was performed using a 12-station hip joint simulator (MTS Systems, MN). A Co-Cr-Mo alloy femoral ball component with a size of 26 mm (Japan Medical Materials, Osaka, Japan) was used as a femoral component. A mixture of 25 vol % bovine serum, 20 mM/L of ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA), and 0.1 mass % sodium azide was used as lubricant, according to the ISO 14242-1 standard.²⁷ The lubricant was replaced every 0.5

$\times 10^6$ cycles. Loads simulating a physiologic loading curve with double peaks of 1793 and 2744 N loads were applied with a frequency of 1 Hz. The wear was determined by weighing the polyethylene cups. Load-soak controls ($n = 2$) were used to compensate the fluid absorption of specimens. The weights of the cups were measured every 0.5×10^6 cycles. Then, the testing was continued until a total of 5.0×10^6 cycles were completed.²⁸

To evaluate the wear conditions, the surface features of the bearing surfaces of the cups were observed with a confocal laser scanning microscope (OLS1200; Olympus, Tokyo, Japan) after a simulator test with 5.0×10^6 cycles.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the FTIR/ATR spectra for the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC. An absorption peak was observed at 1460 cm^{-1} for both CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC. This peak is attributed mainly to the methylene chain in the CLPE substrate and MPC graft polymer. However, the transmission absorptions at 1240, 1080, and 970 cm^{-1} were observed only for the CLPE-g-MPC. These peaks are due to the phosphate group in the MPC unit. Similarly, an absorption peak at 1720 cm^{-1} observed for CLPE-g-MPC only corresponds to the carbonyl group in the MPC unit. The FTIR/ATR spectra did not differ significantly between the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC.

Table I summarizes the elemental compositions of the untreated CLPE and the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Both the elemental composition of nitrogen and phosphorous in the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surface were approximately 5.2. It should be noted that the contents of nitrogen and phosphorous in the CLPE-g-MPC surface remained unchanged after gamma-ray sterilization. The elemental composition of the CLPE-g-MPC surface was almost equivalent to the theoretical elemental composition (N = 5.3, P = 5.3) of poly(MPC). On the other hand, the carbon content in the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC slightly increased as compared with that of the nonsterilized one.

Figure 2 shows the static water-contact angle of the untreated CLPE and the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. The static water-contact angle

TABLE I. Surface Elemental Composition (%) of Gamma-Ray Sterilized CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC

Sample (Sterilization Method)	Surface Elemental Composition (%) (n = 5)			
	C	O	N	P
CLPE (nonsterilized)	99.8 (0.3) ^a	0.2 (0.3)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
CLPE (25 kGy γ -sterilized)	99.5 (0.2)	0.6 (0.2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
CLPE (50 kGy γ -sterilized)	99.1 (0.2)	0.9 (0.2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
CLPE-g-MPC (nonsterilized)	58.0 (0.2)	31.5 (0.2)	5.2 (0.1)	5.3 (0.1)
CLPE-g-MPC (25 kGy γ -sterilized)	63.7 (2.3)	26.0 (2.3)	5.2 (0.1)	5.1 (0.2)
CLPE-g-MPC (50 kGy γ -sterilized)	65.0 (0.6)	24.6 (0.5)	5.2 (0.1)	5.2 (0.1)
MPC polymer ^b	57.9	31.6	5.3	5.3

^a The standard deviation is in parentheses.

^b Theoretical elemental composition of MPC polymer.

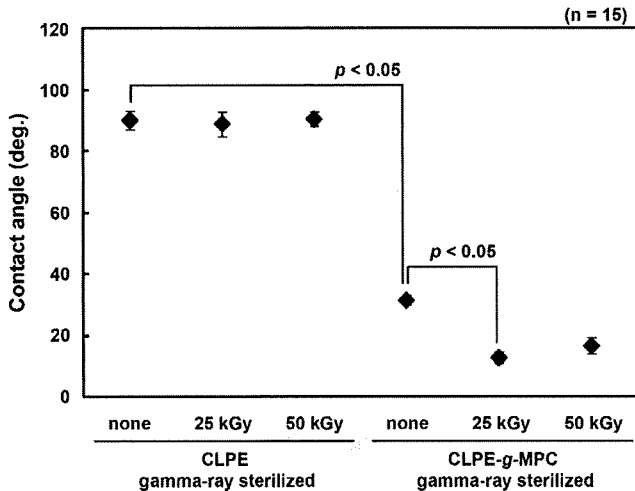


Figure 2. Static water-contact angle of the untreated CLPE and the nonsterilized and the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Bar; Standard deviations.

of the untreated CLPE was approximately 90° before and after gamma-ray sterilization, and it drastically decreased (approximately 30°) because of MPC grafting. Furthermore, the static water-contact angles of CLPE-g-MPC decreased to 15° after gamma-ray sterilization.

The static and dynamic coefficients of friction of gamma-ray sterilized CLPE and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC are shown in Figures 3 and 4. Both the static and dynamic coefficients of friction of CLPE-g-MPC decreased drastically when compared with those of untreated CLPE. The degree of reduction in the coefficient was larger in the latter as compared to the former. Considering the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC, regardless of the dose of the gamma-ray sterilization and the cycles, approximately 50% reduction (i.e., 46–65%) was observed in the static coefficients of friction for both the 10 and 100 cycles when com-

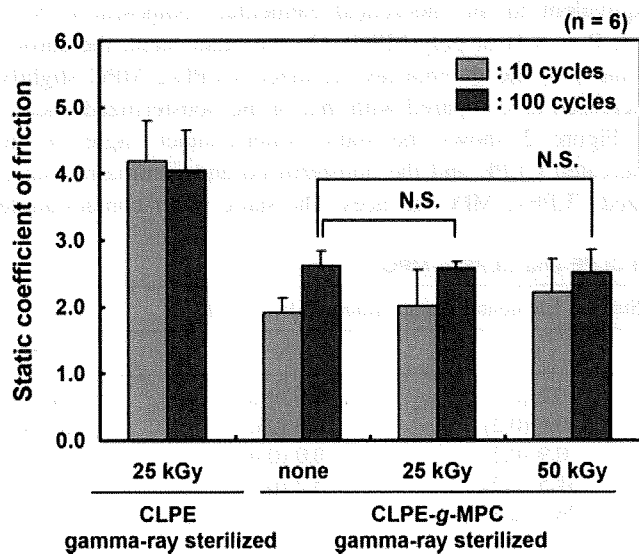


Figure 3. Static coefficients of friction of the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE surfaces and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Bar; Standard deviations.

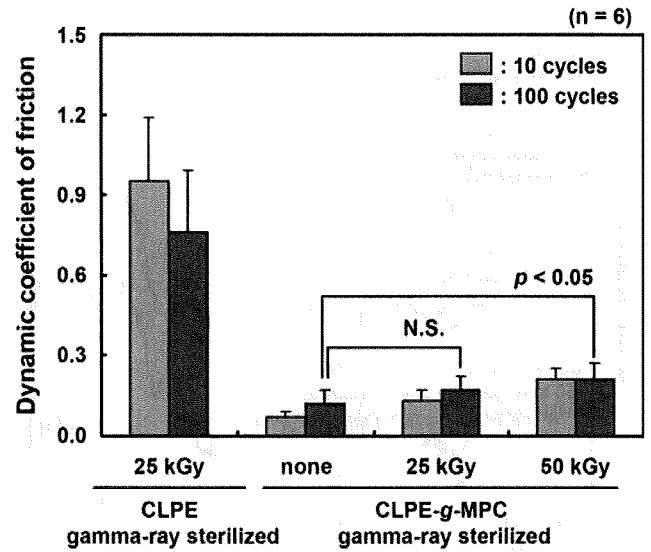


Figure 4. Dynamic coefficients of friction of gamma-ray sterilized CLPE surfaces and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Bar; Standard deviations.

pared with those of untreated CLPE. On the other hand, the dose of gamma-ray sterilization affected the dynamic coefficient of friction of CLPE-g-MPC. That is, it slightly increased from 0.007 (none) to 0.021 (50 kGy) with an increase in the gamma-ray sterilization dose for 10 cycles. The dynamic coefficient of friction of CLPE-g-MPC with gamma-ray sterilization of 50 kGy was 75% greater ($p < 0.05$) than that of CLPE-g-MPC with nonsterilization.

Figure 5 shows the weight change (gravimetric wear) of the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE cups and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups in the hip joint simulation test. When the gravimetric method is used, the weight loss was corrected for the fluid absorption by sub-

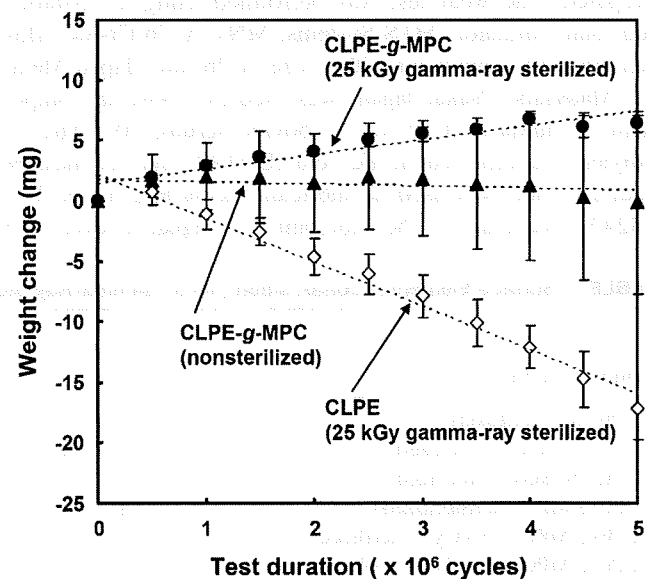


Figure 5. Weight change (gravimetric wear) of gamma-ray sterilized CLPE cups and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups in the hip joint simulation test. Bar; Standard deviations.

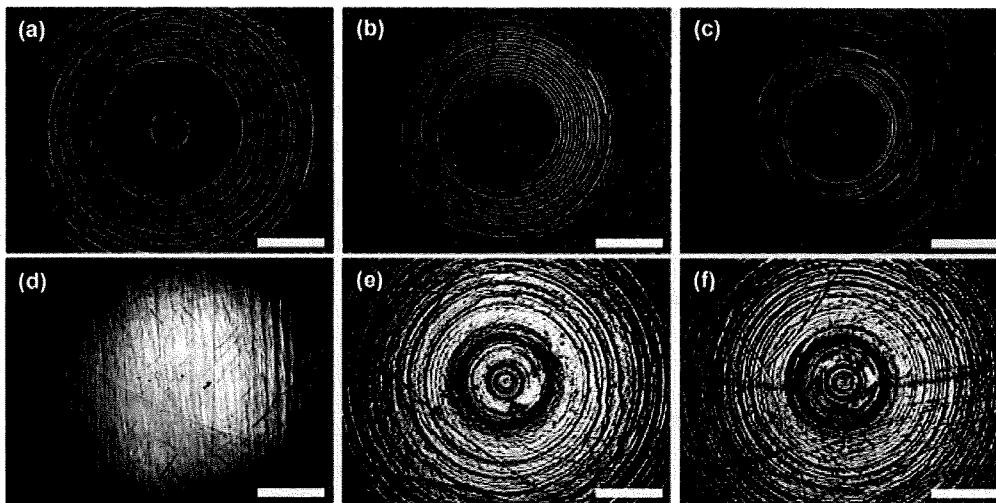


Figure 6. Confocal laser scanning microscope images of the CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC bearing surfaces before and after the hip simulator test. (a) CLPE (gamma-ray sterilized), (b) CLPE-g-MPC (nonsterilized), (c) CLPE-g-MPC (gamma-ray sterilized) before the hip simulator test, (d) CLPE (gamma-ray sterilized), (e) CLPE-g-MPC (nonsterilized), and (f) CLPE-g-MPC (gamma-ray sterilized) after the hip simulator test. The bar indicates 500 μm .

tracting the weight gain that occurred in the load-soak controls. Since the tested cups are subjected to a motion and load, such a “load-soak” correction is not necessarily satisfactory. Therefore, the tested cups absorb slightly more fluid than their load-soak controls. Consequently, the correction for using the load-soak control data may result in a slight underestimation of the actual weight loss. After 5.0×10^6 cycles of the simulator test, both the CLPE-g-MPC cups were found to undergo lesser wear than the untreated CLPE cups. In particular, the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups showed extremely low and stable wear. As for the nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups, the weight change varied for each cup (standard deviation = 7.6 mg, $n = 4$). Figure 5 indicates that certain gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups exhibit a slight increase in weight because of slightly enhanced fluid absorption when compared with that in the load-soak controls.

Figure 6 shows the confocal laser scanning microscope images of the bearing surfaces of the untreated gamma-ray sterilized CLPE cups and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups before and after the simulator test. Before the simulator test, regular circular machining marks were seen on the all the bearing surfaces of the CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC cups. After the simulator test, the machining marks on these surfaces of the CLPE cups disappeared completely. On the contrary, clear machining marks with regular circles were observed on the surface of the nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups, indicating almost no wear on the surface.

DISCUSSION

We have developed an artificial hip joint using CLPE-g-MPC on the bearing surface with an objective of reducing

wear and avoiding bone resorption. The static and dynamic coefficients of friction of CLPE-g-MPC reduced by $>50\%$ and $>90\%$, respectively, as compared to those of the untreated CLPE, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. These friction coefficients were much lower than those usually found for the measurable shear interactions between UHMWPE and the Co-Cr-Mo alloy.^{29,30} The significant reduction in the coefficients of friction of the grafted MPC polymer resulted in a substantial improvement in wear resistance, as shown in Figure 5. We assumed that the bearing surface of the artificial hip joint combined with the MPC polymer layer 100–200 nm thick exhibited the fluid film lubrication (or mixed lubrication) of the intermediate hydrated layer.^{5,7,19}

These sterilizations may affect the properties of medical devices. Generally, when a high energy beam by gamma-ray sterilization is irradiated on a polymer, free radicals are formed by the scission of molecular chains.²⁰ This is followed by the retermination and cross-linking of the molecules. In this study, we therefore assumed that the extra energy supplied by gamma-ray irradiation produced cross-links in three kinds of regions of the CLPE-g-MPC: poly (MPC) layer, CLPE-MPC interface, and CLPE substrate, as shown in Figure 7.

As shown in Table I, the contents of nitrogen and phosphorous in the CLPE-g-MPC surface were hardly different between the nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC and the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC. On the other hand, the contents of carbon and oxygen of CLPE-g-MPC slightly increased and decreased (as a trade-off), respectively, with an increase in the gamma-ray irradiation dose. It was assumed that the energy by gamma-ray irradiation would be used in the scission of C=O in the MPC structure by the degassing of O₂ and subsequently produce cross-links of poly(MPC) with chemical bonding involving C—C.^{31,32} The extra energy supplied by gamma-ray sterilization of 25–50 kGy is clearly responsible for producing more cross-links.

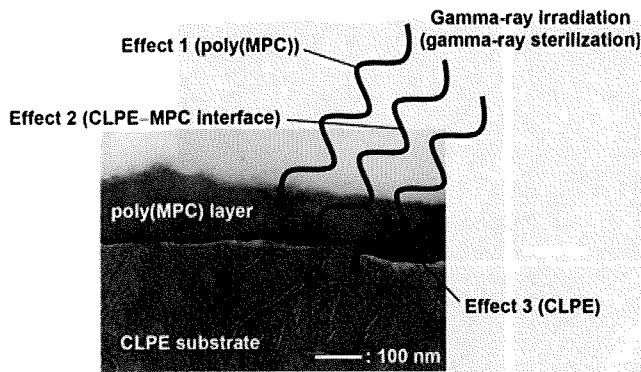


Figure 7. Schematic diagram of the effects of gamma-ray irradiation on CLPE-g-MPC.

The dose of gamma-ray sterilization influences the friction response since the dynamic coefficient of friction of CLPE-g-MPC slightly increased from 0.007 to 0.021 within the low friction region with an increase in the gamma-ray sterilization dose. It was previously reported that as the polymer concentration (viscosity) increases with the increase in the friction coefficient in the mixed lubrication regime.³³ It was therefore assumed that an ultra-low friction of CLPE-g-MPC that appeared during sliding is related to the effective viscosity of poly(MPC) in the mixed lubrication of the intermediate hydrated layer. The viscosity of poly(MPC) reflects the mobility of the free end groups of the MPC polymer or MPC polymer chains themselves; this mobility was limited by the cross-linking of poly(MPC) layer.^{34,35} These results seem to suggest that the cross-link corresponds to the viscosity of the poly(MPC) in the bearing interface, the viscosity of the poly(MPC) increases by gamma-ray irradiation, and the poly(MPC) would act as a boundary lubricant in mixed lubrication. These effects are represented as “Effect 1” in Figure 7.

After 5.0×10^6 cycles of the simulator test, the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups showed low and stable wear (Figure 5). On the contrary, with the nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups, the weight change varied in each cup. In the previous study, when a high energy beam was irradiated onto a polymer with a grafted layer, strong bindings were formed between the grafted layer and polymer substrate.³⁶ Lewis et al. reported that the force required to remove the coating with cross-linking was greater than that without cross-linking.³⁷ In addition, much more cross-linking and perhaps adhesion to the substrate was induced by the gamma-ray irradiation (gamma-ray sterilization) when compared with the nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC. It is therefore assumed that the higher energy radiation in gamma-ray sterilization induced cross-links not only within the grafting MPC polymer but also between the grafting MPC polymer and CLPE substrate. Then, a much stronger and stable MPC polymer grafted layer was produced on the bearing surface (“Effect 2” in Figure 7).

McKellop et al. reported on the wear performance of UHMWPE in a contemporary hip simulator following gamma-ray irradiation in air as well as in an inert gas and ethylene oxide gas sterilization or gas plasma sterilization.²¹ Between 2 and 5×10^6 cycles, the wear rate of the gamma-ray sterilized UHMWPE was significantly lower than that of the UHMWPE sterilized either by gas plasma or ethylene oxide. A similar trend has been reported by Wang et al. who observed more than 50% drop in the hip simulator wear rate after single 25 kGy doses of gamma-ray sterilization.²² These studies have reported that the wear resistance is better in gamma-ray sterilized UHMWPE than in ethylene oxide sterilized UHMWPE.^{21–24} It is therefore assumed that gamma-ray irradiation improved the wear resistance of the CLPE substrate (“Effect 3” in Figure 7).

In the cross-link process of this study, the UHMWPE bar stock was irradiated with a dose of 50 kGy, and then CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC were gamma-ray sterilized with a nominal dose of 25 kGy. Thus, the total dosage for the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE and CLPE-g-MPC was 75 kGy. The nonsterilized CLPE-g-MPC received a total dose of 50 kGy only; this would be a disadvantage for the anti-wear property.^{38–40} However, as shown in Figure 6, clear machining marks with regular circles remained on the surfaces of the nonsterilized as well as gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC cups even after the simulator test. The observed CLPE-g-MPC cups were virtually unworn, which is consistent with the relatively low wear in the hip joint simulator tests, as shown in Figure 5. In contrast, the machining marks disappeared from the surface of the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE cups [Figure 6(b)]. In other words, the presence of poly(MPC) on the CLPE surface by MPC grafting would have a greater effect on the wear resistance than the additional cross-links of the CLPE substrate by the gamma-ray irradiation of 25 kGy. The CLPE surface with the poly(MPC) exhibited considerably higher lubricity than that without the poly(MPC) (Figures 2–4). The significant reduction in the coefficient of friction of the grafted poly(MPC) resulted in a substantial improvement in wear resistance. The bearing surface of the artificial hip joint combined with poly(MPC) might exhibit the fluid film lubrication (or mixed lubrication) of the intermediate hydrated layer. This means that artificial hip joints utilizing CLPE-g-MPC mimic the natural joint cartilage.^{41,42}

The concern about the degradation of polyethylene during shelf aging prompted several orthopedic manufacturers to adopt the sterilization method using gas plasma or ethylene oxide gas for conventional UHMWPE.^{43,44} These sterilization methods admittedly generate no free radicals that could be subsequently oxidized during shelf storage. However, UHMWPE sterilized using these methods did not receive the tribological benefit associated with radiation-induced cross-linking. Moreover, the oxidation index of the degraded polyethylene was lower *in vivo* than *in vitro*.^{21,45} It has also been reported that the oxygen content might be almost zero in the body.^{44,46} Thus, although the oxidation

degradation of polyethylene *in vivo* is related to the surrounding oxygen concentration, that is, that of the body fluid, it is not a main factor of the degradation as a whole. However, recent studies reported that conventional or cross-linked gamma-ray sterilized polyethylene liners undergo *in vivo* oxidation, especially in unworn bearing surface regions and the rim. In contrast, the oxidation of a worn bearing surface was not observed.⁴⁷ On the basis of these studies, we assumed that when oxygen is excluded from the package during sterilization, further cross-linking, and additional improvement in the wear performance are attained. However, we must pay attention to the rim fracture in CLPE-g-MPC cup by the possible impingements based on the abovementioned studies.⁴⁷ In the previous study, for gamma-ray irradiation, the lower molecular weight cross-linked GUR1020 materials had higher mechanical properties (tensile and impact properties) for all doses as compared to the higher molecular weight cross-linked GUR1050 materials.⁴⁸ Therefore, we selected a GUR1020 compression-molded bar stock as the CLPE substrate. Nevertheless, the cross-linked GUR1020 materials showed the same wear rate as the cross-linked GUR1050 materials.

Gamma-ray sterilization has had a long history and it has been one of the most popular sterilization methods for various medical products to date. A barrier package has been widely adopted to satisfactorily address the historical problem of the oxidation of gamma-ray sterilized products during shelf storage. In this study, we confirmed that the extra energy supplied by gamma-ray irradiation produced cross-linking in the three regions of the CLPE-g-MPC: poly(MPC) layer, CLPE-MPC interface, and CLPE substrate. When the CLPE surface is modified by poly(MPC) grafting, the MPC graft polymer leads to a significant reduction in the sliding friction between the surfaces which are grafted because water thin films formed can act as extremely efficient lubricants. Gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC showed a slightly higher friction than the nonsterilized one. However, the wear resistance is more stable in the former than in the latter. The cross-links formed by gamma-ray irradiation would give further longevity to CLPE-g-MPC cups. Based on the mechanical,¹⁹ biological,^{5,49,50} and tribological advantages of MPC polymers, CLPE-g-MPC is believed to be promising for use in the next-generation artificial hip joint systems.

The authors also express special thanks to Dr. Masaru Ueno, Mr. Takatoshi Miyashita, and Mr. Noboru Yamawaki (Japan Medical Materials Corp.) for their excellent technical assistance.

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Erratum

Enhanced Wear Resistance of Orthopaedic Bearing Due to the Cross-Linking of Poly(MPC) Graft Chains Induced by Gamma-Ray Irradiation

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Received 17 January 2007; revised 31 March 2007; accepted 30 April 2007

Published online 22 June 2007 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/jbm.b.30874

Erratum published online 20 February 2008 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/jbm.b.31079

The authors have requested the following revisions for the article listed above, published in J Biomed Mater Res B Appl Biomater 2008; 84B: 320–327. The updated Figures 3 and 4 appear below. The authors regret any confusion caused by these errors.

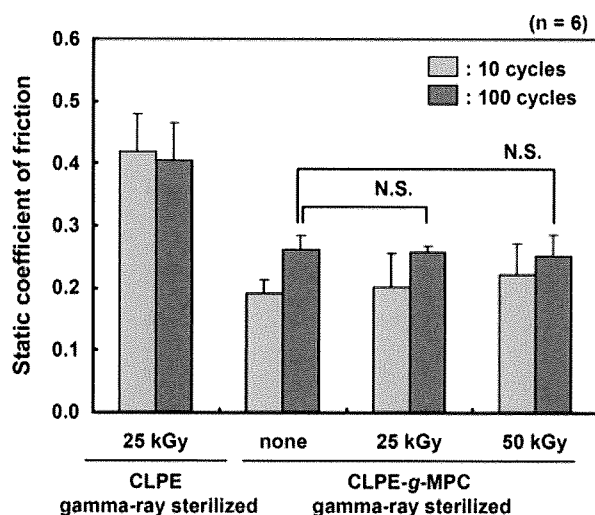


Figure 3. Static coefficients of friction of the gamma-ray sterilized CLPE surfaces and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Bar, Standard deviations.

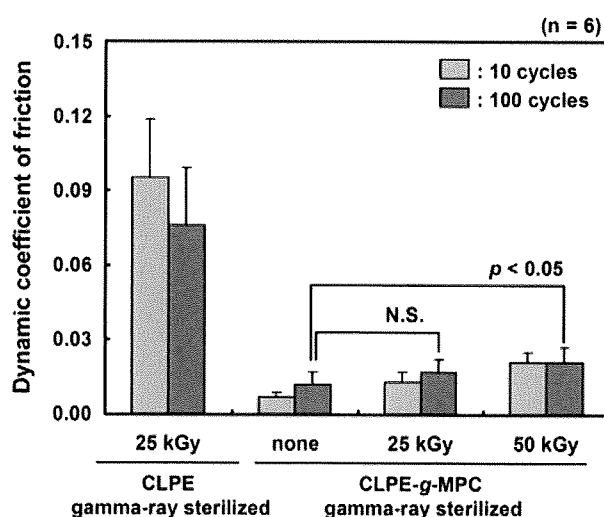


Figure 4. Dynamic coefficients of friction of gamma-ray sterilized CLPE surfaces and nonsterilized and gamma-ray sterilized CLPE-g-MPC surfaces. Bar, Standard deviations.