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Phagocytosis of Fullerene Nanowhiskers by PMA-treated THP-1 Cells

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Abstract. We observed phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA)-treated THP-1 cells (macrophage-like cells) exposed to 10 μg/mL of short (< 20 μm) C_{60} fullerene nanowhiskers (C_{60}NWs) with a differential interference contrast and confocal laser microscope to locate the position of C_{60}NWs among cells three-dimensionally. The number of macrophage-like cells internalising C_{60}NWs increased with time and more than 70% of the cells internalised the C_{60}NWs after 48 h of the C_{60}NWs' exposure.

1. Introduction

Fullerene nanowhiskers (FNWs) are one of the most promising nanomaterials for low dimentional semiconductors, field emission tips, nanoprobes for microdevices, fiber-reinforced nanocomposites, composite elements for lubrication, and so on [1]. FNWs are needle-like crystals and composed of the fullerene molecules that are usually bonded via van der Waals forces and synthesized by the liquid-liquid interfacial precipitation method.

But the nanosized needle-like crystals resembling asbestos may be hazardous to human lungs because the needle-like morphology has been suspected to induce the asbestosis. In the case of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) that have also the needle-like structure, some papers report the asbestos-like pathogenic behavior of CNTs depending on their length [2]. For these reasons, it is imperative to evaluate the biological impact of FNWs before the practical use of them.

Macrophages are one of the immune system cells and defend the host against the foreign substances by uptake and digest them in a nonspecific manner during the early phase of infection. In our previous pilot study, we observed the macrophage-like cells exposed to 0.1, 1 and 10 μg/mL of the C_{60}NWs with the average length of 6.0 μm and the average diameter of 660 nm by use of an inverted optical microscope for 48 h [3]. The macrophage-like cells were observed to internalise the C_{60}NWs gradually. But the exposed C_{60}NWs didn't affect the morphology of the cells.

According to some previous studies, C_{60} may be non-toxic against mammalian cells [4, 5, 6] and C_{60} can be dissolved inside the lipid droplets in liver of rats [7]. Because C_{60}NWs are composed of C_{60} molecules via the weak van der Waals bonding forces, macrophages or other organisms may decompose C_{60}NWs into individual C_{60} molecule. On the basis of this assumption, the decomposed C_{60}NWs may exert the effect similar to C_{60} molecules on organisms. However, no such data that support the decomposition of C_{60}NWs in organisms have been reported. Hence, as the first step, this study aims to investigate whether or not the C_{60}NWs are decomposed by the macrophage-like cells and how the C_{60}NWs would be decomposed in the cells if they could be decomposed by the cells.

2. Experimental Methods

The same C_{60}NWs were used as shown in the previous study [3]. The C_{60}NWs were prepared by the liquid-liquid-interfacial precipitation method using a C_{60}-saturated toluene solution and isopropyl alcohol [1]. The size

distribution of the synthesized C_{60}NWs was measured to be 1 to 17 μm in length (average: 6.0 μm) and 300 to 1340 in diameter (average: 660 nm) by optical microscopy and scanning electron microscopy.

The C_{60}NWs were dispersed in a culture solution (10% heat inactivated fetal bovine serum, 100 units/mL penicillin and 100 μg/mL streptomycin in RPMI1640) and the macrophage-like cells were exposed to the suspensions containing C_{60}NWs, where the concentration of C_{60}NWs was 10 μg/mL as described in the previous study [3]. After 1, 3, 6, 12, 24 and 48 h of co-culturing the macrophage-like cells and C_{60}NWs, the cells were fixed, stained with Hoeschst 33342 and rhodamine-phalloidin and observed with a differential interference contrast and confocal laser microscope in order to locate three-dimensionally the position of C_{60}NWs among the cells.

3. Results and Discussion

Macrophages recognize, internalise and digest foreign materials. The uptake process of foreign materials by macrophages depends on their size and surface properties [8]. C_{60} is also phagocytized by macrophages [9] and the uptake rate of C_{60} is lower than that of graphite particles [4]. We observed that the macrophage-like cells internalise the C_{60}NWs as well by use of the differential interference contrast and confocal laser microscope. The macrophage-like cells were observed to internalise C_{60}NWs with time and more than 70% of the cells internalised the C_{60}NWs after 48-h exposure to the 10 μg/mL suspension of C_{60}NWs.

However, although many macrophage-like cells internalised the C_{60}NWs, no alteration of the cellular morphology was observed. The C_{60}NWs also generated a primary immune response as well as the other foreign substances without an adverse effect on the cellular morphology. The needle-like structure of C_{60}NWs may not affect immune systems if the C_{60}NWs are decomposed into C_{60} molecules by macrophages as the primary immune response.

4. Conclusion

The macrophage-like cells were observed to internalise short (< 20 μm in length) C_{60}NWs with time and more than 70% of the cells internalised the C_{60}NWs after 48-h exposure to the 10 μg/mL suspension of C_{60}NWs. But no adverse effect of the C_{60}NWs on the macrophage-like cells was observed in this study.

Acknowledgment

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Dispersion of carbon nanotubes and fullerene nanowhiskers by the liquid-jet cavitation method

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Abstract. A few papers suggesting the carcinogenicity of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) have been published recently. However, the CNTs are in general agglomerated and not always suited for their assessment of biological impact. In the present study, the liquid-jet cavitation method is examined for the dispersion of MWCNTs. It is shown that the liquid-jet cavitation method is useful to prepare isolated and well-dispersed MWCNTs. Further, it is also shown that the liquid-jet cavitation method is efficiently used to pulverize fullerene nanowhiskers into short and uniform pieces.

1. Introduction

Takagi et al. recently published a paper reporting that MWCNTs induce mesothelioma in P53 heterozygous mice [1]. Further, Poland et al. reported that exposing the mesothelial lining of the body cavity of mice to long multiwalled carbon nanotubes results in asbestos-like, length dependent, pathogenic behavior [2]. Although the above papers highlight the hazardous aspect of MWCNTs, no sufficient detailed structural characterizations for the used MWCNTs are shown. Though the MWCNTs might induce cancer as described in the above papers, it will be illogical to connect directly the carcinogenicity and MWCNTs unless well-characterized, isolated and finely dispersed MWCNTs are used for the carcinogenicity evaluation. It is considered that the agglomerated MWCNTs do not reflect the biological influence of monodispersed MWCNTs. On the other hand, the liquid-jet cavitation method is known to be a powerful technique to pulverize various materials [3]. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to investigate whether the liquid-jet cavitation method is effectively used for the pulverization and dispersion of MWCNTs. The method is also applied for the C_{60} fullerene nanowhiskers that are composed of C_{60} molecules that are connected via weak van der Waals bonding forces. This result is also shown and compared with the result of MWCNTs.

2. Experimental Methods

The MWCNTs (MWNT-7, Lot. 061220-02, Nano Carbon Technologies Co., Ltd, Japan) similar to those in the paper [1] were used in this experiment. The thermal stability of the as-received sample was examined by use of TG-DTA. The dispersed morphology of MWCNTs by the liquid-jet cavitation method using ethanol was observed by transmission electron microscopy (JEOL JEM-4010, LEO 922 Omega). Raman spectroscopy (JASCO, NRS-3100) was also used to investigate the structure of MWCNTs. The impurity iron contained in the as-received MWCNTs was measured by the atomic absorption spectrometry (AAS) and ICP - Atomic Emission Spectrometry (ICP-AES).

Short C_{60} nanowhiskers were synthesized by use of a C_{60}-saturated toluene and isopropyl alcohol [4]. These C_{60}NWs were pulverized by the liquid-jet cavitation method in the same condition with the MWCNTs.

3. Results and Discussion

The impurity iron contained in the as-received MWCNTs was measured to be 3600 ppm which is very close to 3500 ppm of MITSUI MWCNT-7 (Lot No.060125-01k) shown in ref. 1. A Raman spectroscopy profile of the as-received MWCNTs showed a high intensity of G band, suggesting that the MWCNTs are composed of well-

developed graphitic layers. The thermal decomposition temperature of the MWCNTs in air was measured to be 744 °C. This high temperature also indicates that the MWCNTs are composed of well-developed graphitic layers as suggested above.

A typical TEM image of the MWCNTs dispersed by use of an normal ultrasonic bath is shown in Figure 1. However, as shown in Figure 2, granular carbon particles composed of well-developed graphitic layers were also frequently observed among the MWCNTs. This example shows that the sample of MWCNTs contain impurity carbons that cannot be distinguished only by the Raman spectroscopy. The dispersion method using the ultrasonic bath was not successful to prepare isolated MWCNTs owing to many nodes that combine the MWCNTs as shown in Figure 3. However, the well-isolated MWCNTs were successfully obtained by use of the luquid-jet cavitation method as shown in Figure 4. The length and diameter distribution of the pulverized MWCNTs are shown in Figure 5. The length of MWCNTs ranges from ~ 1 μm to ~13 μm, while their diameter ranges from ~ 30 nm to ~ 350 nm.

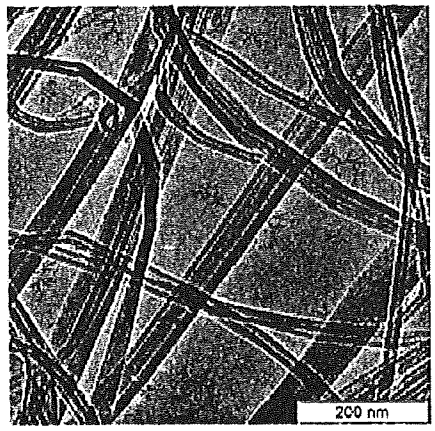


Figure 1 : TEM image of MWCNTs dispersed by use of an ultrasonic bath.

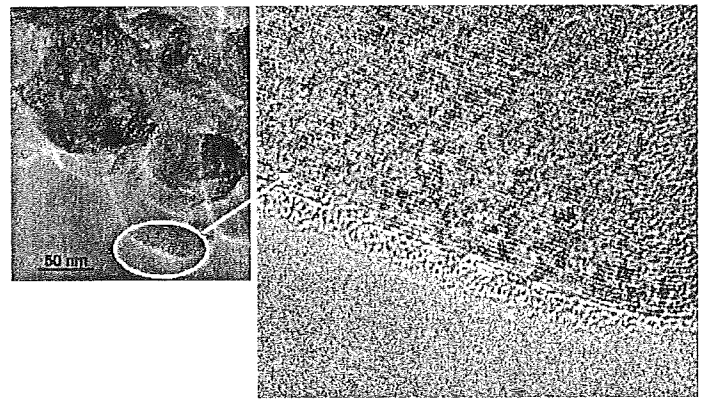


Figure 2 : HRTEM images for a part of the MWCNTs' sample.

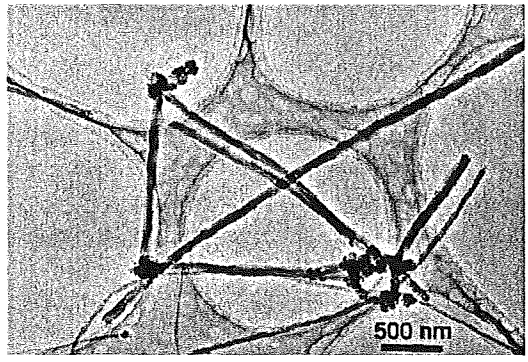


Figure 3 : TEM image of the nodes combining the MWCNTs.

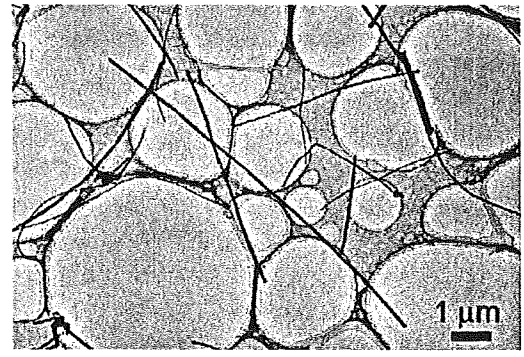
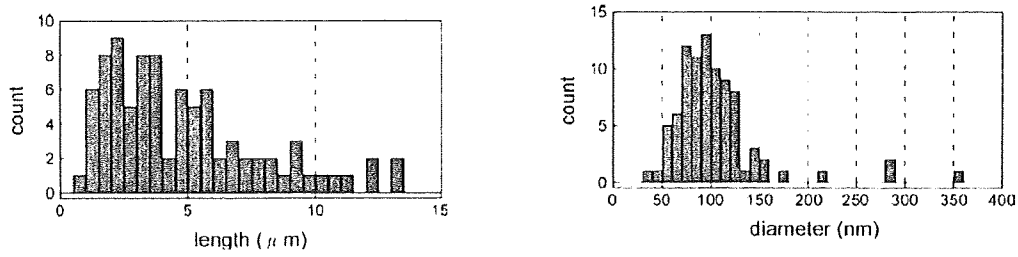


Figure 4 : TEM image of the MWCNTs dispersed by the liquid-jet cavitation method.

Figure 6 (a) shows a typical image of MWCNT with a closed end. On the other hand, Figure 6 (b) shows an example of MWCNT which was fractured by the liquid-jet cavitation method and exhibits a morphology of open end with the stepped structure, reflecting the stacked graphene layers. This image suggests that the liquid-

jet cavitation method can be effectively used to prepare such open-ended structure which will be useful for the application of field emission tips, for example.



(a) (b)

Figure 5: (a) length and (b) diameter distribution of the MWCNTs pulverized by the liquid-jet cavitation method. The mean value is (a) 4.8 ± 3.1 μm in length and (b) 104 ± 49 nm in diameter, respectively.

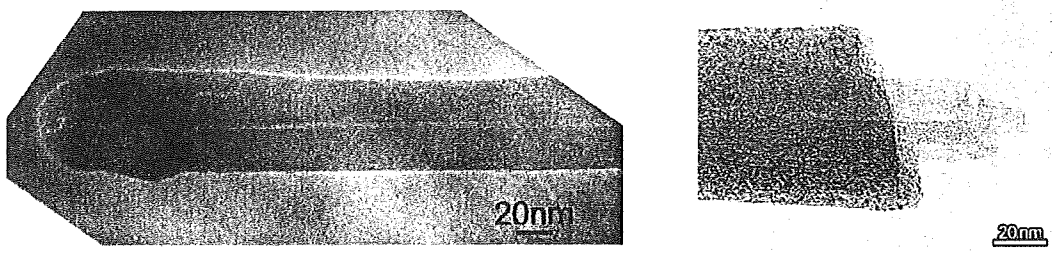
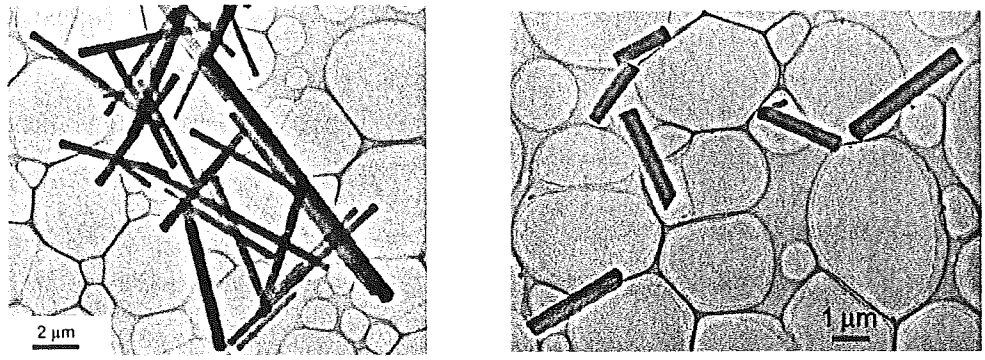


Figure 6 : TEM images of (a) MWCNT with a closed end and (b) fractured MWCNT with an open end.

Examples for the as-grown C_{60} nanowhiskers and the C_{60} nanowhiskers pulverized by the liquid-jet cavitation method which was repeatedly performed for ten cycles are shown in Figure 7. The C_{60} nanowhiskers are observed to be brittlely fractured. However, it is to be noticed that the fractured C_{60} nanowhiskers exhibit more uniformity in the length comparing with the as-grown C_{60} nanowhiskers and the above pulverized MWCNTs. As shown in Figure 8, the length of C_{60} nanowhiskers pulverized by the liquid-jet cavitation method is found to decrease with increasing the cycle number of pulverization. The standard deviation of length is also shown to decreases. This result shows that the liquid-jet cavitation method is very efficiently used in preparing the short and uniform pieces of C_{60} nanowhiskers. It is noted that the as-grown sample of C_{60} nanowhiskers have the similar length distribution with the MWCNTs of Figure 5(a).



(a) (b)

Figure 7 : TEM images of (a) the as-grown C_{60} nanowhiskers and (b) the C_{60} nanowhiskers pulverized by the liquid-jet cavitation method repeated for ten cycles.

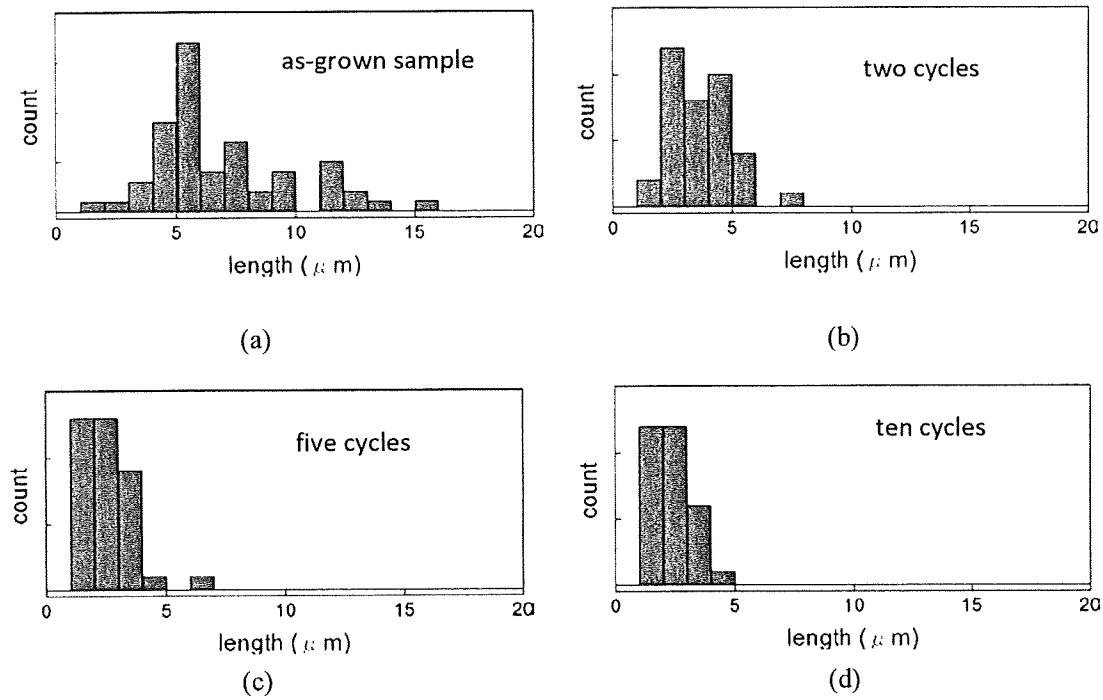


Figure 8 : Change of the length of C_{60} nanowhiskers as a function of the number of cycles in the liquid-jet cavitation method. The mean length of C_{60} nanowhiskers is (a) 6.9 ± 3.0 μm (as-grown), (b) 3.6 ± 1.3 μm (pulverized), (c) 2.6 ± 1.0 μm (pulverized) and (d) 2.4 ± 0.7 μm (pulverized) , respectively.

4. Conclusion

It has been proved that the liquid-jet cavitation method is very efficient in preparing the isolated MWCNTs for their biological impact assessment. The nodes that bind the MWCNTs can be removed by the liquid-jet cavitation method. It has been also shown that this method is also applicable to pulverize the C_{60} nanowhiskers into short and uniform pieces. As shown in the above, the liquid-jet cavitation method will be widely used in the field of biological impact assessment of dispersed nanomaterials including carbon nanotubes and fullerene nanowhiskers.

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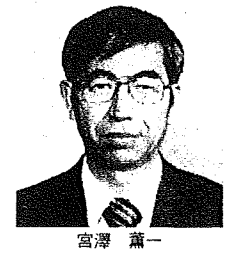
技術解説

フラーレンナノファイバの合成と成長機構

物質・材料研究機構
宮澤　薫一


宮澤　薫一

アブストラクト：

フラーレンナノファイバとは，フラーレン誘導体や原子内包フラーレンを含むあらゆるフラーレン分子からなる細い繊維状物質であり，それらの直径が1 000 nm未満のものを指す．フラーレンナノファイバは，中空でないフラーレンナノウィスカと中空なフラーレンナノチューブの2種類に大別される．フラーレンナノウィスカは，通常，単結晶の構造をもっている．2001年のC_{60}ナノウィスカの発見以来，フラーレンナノファイバの研究が世界的に展開されるようになり，フラーレンナノファイバは，フラーレンナノロッドやフラーレンナノワイヤなどとも呼ばれるようになった．中でもC_{60}ナノファイバが，物性と応用において最もよく研究されている．本稿では，主としてC_{60}ナノウィスカの合成と，その成長機構について述べる．

1．はじめに

ファイバとは，文献1）によると長さに対する直径の比が3以上の粒子として定義される．ファイバのアスペクト比は，機械的性質に影響を及ぼす複合材料フィラーにとって重要なパラメータである．一方，ここで紹介するフラーレンナノファイバ（fullerene nanofiber）とは，C_{60}，C_{70}，金属内包フラーレン，フラーレン誘導体などのあらゆるフラーレン分子からなる細いファイバであり，それらの直径は1 000 nm未満である[2]．さまざまなフラーレンナノファイバの中でも，C_{60}ナノファイバが，構造，機械的性質，熱的性質，化学的性質において，また，電界効果トランジスタ（FET），太陽電池，マイクロ燃料電池などの応用において，今日まで最もよく研究されている[2) 3)]．

フラーレンナノファイバは，中空なもの，中空でないものの二つの形状が可能である．中空でないものは，フラーレンナノウィスカ（fullerene nanowhisker）といい，単結晶の構造をもっている．中空なフラーレンナノファイバは，フラーレンナノチューブと呼ばれている．

2001年のC_{60}ナノウィスカの発見以来[4]，フラーレンナノファイバの研究が世界的に拡大しつつあり，最近では，フラーレンナノファイバを，フラーレンナノロッド（fullerene nanorod），フラーレンナノワイヤ（fullerene nanowire），フラーレンナノベルト（fullerene nanobelt）と呼ぶ論文も出版されている[2]．

ここでは，主としてC_{60}ナノウィスカの合成と，その成長機構について得られた知見を述べる．

2．液 - 液界面析出法

C_{60}ナノウィスカが，2002年に液 - 液界面析出法（液 - 液界面法，液 - 液法，liquid-liquid interfacial precipitation method: LLIP法）によって初めて合成された[5]．近年，液 - 液法は著しく発展し，フラーレンナノファイバだけでなく，フラーレンナノシート（fullerene nanosheet）の合成も可能とした[6) 7)]．液 - 液法は，フラーレンナノファイバやフラーレンナノシートを，大気中で合成することができること，多様な元素を添加することができること，複数のフラーレン分子からなる複合組成

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のものが合成できること，それらの大きさや形状を，温度，溶媒，濃度，光環境を変化させて変えることができることなどの優れた特長をもっている．また，合成に用いる道具は，ガラス器具と冷蔵庫があれば可能であり，特殊な装置を用いなくてよいこともメリットである．

液 - 液法を用いると多様な形状のフラーレンナノ物質を合成することができる．例えば，C_{60} を飽和させたトルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの組合せによって C_{60} ナノウィスカを合成することができる[2) 5)]．一方，C_{70} 分子からなる中空な単結晶ナノファイバである C_{70} ナノチューブは，C_{70} 飽和ピリジン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの組合せによって合成することができる[8)]．また，C_{60} ナノシートは，C_{60} を飽和させた四塩化炭素とイソプロピルアルコールの組合せや，フェロセンを添加した C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの組合せにより合成することができる[6) 7)]．

以上のように，液 - 液法は，フラーレンの良溶媒（トルエン，四塩化炭素，ベンゼンほか）と貧溶媒（イソプロピルアルコール，イソブチルアルコール[9)] ほか）の組合せを用いている．フラーレンの良溶媒飽和溶液と貧溶媒がつくる液 - 液界面においては，良溶媒と貧溶媒とが混和することによって，フラーレンの過飽和状態*が実現し，フラーレンの結晶核が形成され，それらの結晶核からフラーレンナノファイバが成長する．

3. C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長制御

液 - 液界面析出法による C_{60} ナノウィスカの合成は，図1に示すように，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液をガラスビンに入れ，イソプロピルアルコールを重層し，液 - 液界面にて C_{60} 結晶核を生成させることから始まる．このガラスビンを，室温以下の温度に設定した恒温槽に置くことにより自己組織的に C_{60} ナノウィスカが成長する．図2に，長く成長した C_{60} ナノウィスカの走査電子顕微鏡（SEM）像を示す．

液 - 液界面を形成した後で，ガラスビンを意図的に振って一様な懸濁液をつくり恒温槽にセットすることで，短いが均一な長さの C_{60} ナノウィスカを合成することも可能である．フラーレンナノファイバの高度利用のためには，アスペクト比や直径を自由に制御する技術を確立することが必要である．例えば，フラーレンナノファイバを導電ファイバとして用いるときは，できるだけ長く成長させることが必要であり，太陽電池に使用する場合は，短いフラーレンナノファイバが必要となる[10)]．

図1　C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液にイソプロピルアルコールを重層して生じた液 - 液界面で，C_{60} 結晶核の析出が生じている様子

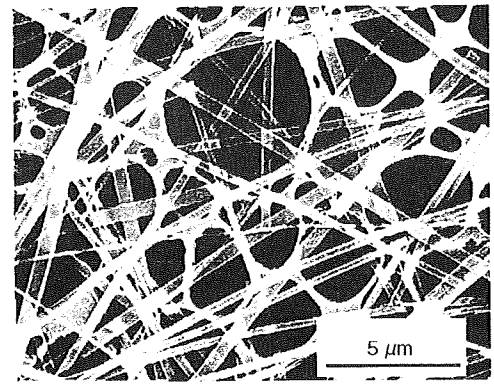

図2　C_{60} ナノウィスカの SEM 像

橘らによって，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長が，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系において，光によって促進されることが発見された[11)]．また，C_{60} 飽和ピリジン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系においては，C_{60} ナノチューブの収量が，液 - 液界面を形成する前の C_{60} 飽和ピリジン溶液に照射される光の波長に依存して変わることが明らかになった．この理由は不明であるが，光励起一重項 C_{60} から遷移して生じる三重項 C_{60} による波長 740 nm 付近の光吸収と関係していると考察されている[12) 13)]．

一般に，フラーレンナノファイバの成長が光の波長に依存して変化することは，ガラスビンの色を変えた場合にも，その収量の変化として観察されることが期待される．このことを確かめるために，褐色ガラスビンと透明ガラスビンの二つを用いた実験を，C_{60} のトルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系で行うことを

＊ 過飽和状態：溶媒中に溶質が溶けている均一な混合液を溶液と呼ぶ．溶解度とは，平衡状態で溶媒中に溶けている溶質の飽和濃度のことである．溶液が過飽和状態になると，結晶が析出し成長する．過飽和溶液の濃度を x，同じ温度での飽和濃度を y とすると，過飽和度は，$(x-y)$ により定義される．

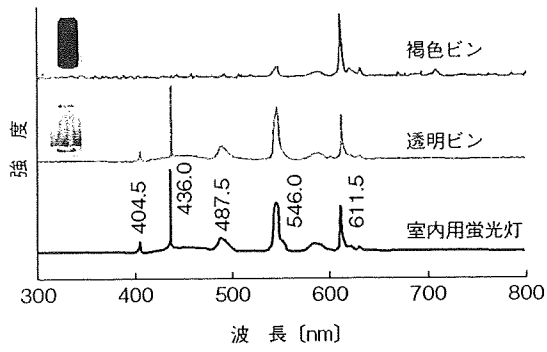

図3 褐色ビンと透明ビンを透過する光（室内蛍光灯）のスペクトル

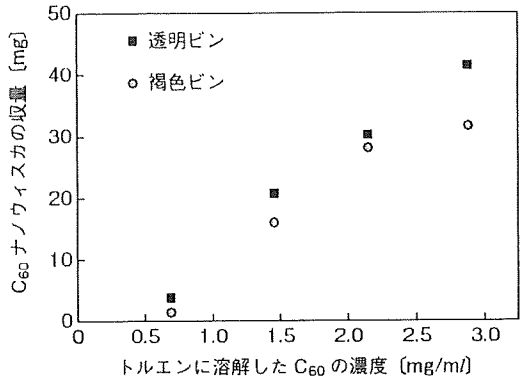

図4 褐色ガラスビンと透明ガラスビンにおける C_{60} ナノウィスカの収量の比較

試みた．図3は，室内蛍光灯を光源とした場合の褐色ビンと透明ビンを透過する光のスペクトルを比較したものである．褐色ビンは，600 nm 以下の波長の光を効果的にカットしており，特に，約 500 nm 以下の波長の光を完全にカットしている．図4は，5°C の液温において，褐色ビンと透明ビンのそれぞれにおける C_{60} ナノウィスカの収量を，さまざまな濃度の C_{60} トルエン溶液について示したものである．C_{60} トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールを等容（各 20 ml）とした場合の結果である．

C_{60} ナノウィスカの収量が，褐色ビンに比べて透明ビンのほうが高くなっているように，ガラスビンの色に応じて，収量が変化することがわかった．今後は，C_{60} ナノウィスカの収量が，光量と光の波長の関数として，どのように変化するのかを調べることが必要である．

図5に示すように，C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径にも違いが見られており，透明ビンでは，平均直径が 382 ± 121 nm，褐色ビンでは，平均直径が 441 ± 185 nm の C_{60} ナノウィスカが合成されている．透明ビンで合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカのほうが，褐色ビンの場合よりも平均直径がより小さくなっているが，これは，光照射によって，より小さな核からの成長が促進されること

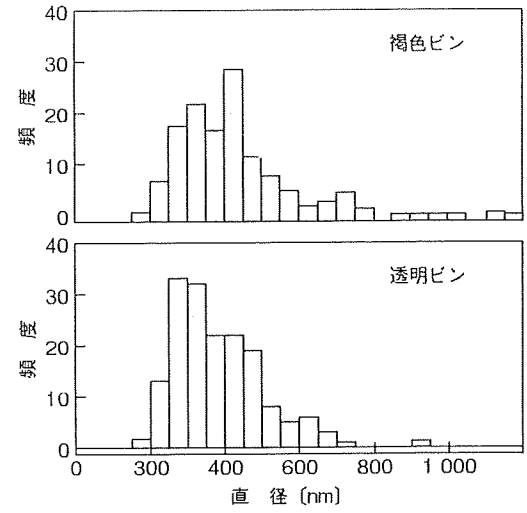

図5 透明ガラスビンと褐色ガラスビンにおける C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径の頻度分布

を示している．このことから，細い C_{60} ナノウィスカを得るためには，より短い波長の光をより多く照射することが効果的であると推察される．

上記のように，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長には光の波長のほかに，光量が寄与していると推察されるが，温度も重要な成長因子であり，液温を高くすると成長が促進されることが明らかになっている．C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系における C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長速度の温度依存性の測定から，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長の活性化エネルギーが 52.8 kJ/mol と求められた[14]．この値は，文献 15）で報告されている溶液中（トルエン：アセトニトリル＝4：1，0.1 M $(n\text{-}Bu_4N)PF_6$ 添加）における C_{60} の拡散の活性化エネルギー 13.1 kJ/mol に比べて非常に大きく，表面集積過程において，C_{60} 分子からの溶媒分子の脱離エネルギー（脱溶媒和エネルギー）が大きいことを示している．C_{60} 分子は溶媒和結晶をつくりやすく，C_{60} ナノウィスカは溶液中では六方晶であり，大気中では溶媒を失って面心立方晶に変化することが知られている[2]．

さらに，C_{60} 飽和トルエン - イソプロピルアルコールの系において，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長が，イソプロピルアルコールに添加された少量の水によって大きく影響されることがわかった．図6は，イソプロピルアルコールに水を添加した場合において，液 - 液界面を形成後，24 時間経過後の C_{60} ナノウィスカの生成の様子を示す．

図7は，図6の各ガラスビンから採取された C_{60} ナノウィスカのアスペクト比が，イソプロピルアルコール中に含まれる水の量が増加するにつれて，増加することを示している．つまり，図7は，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長に水が触媒として作用していることを示してい

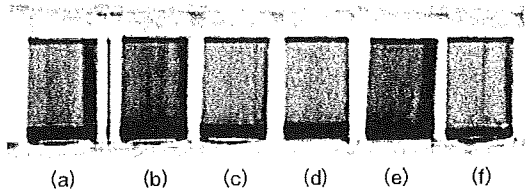

図6 C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液（4 ml）と水を添加したイソプロピルアルコール（4 ml）の系において，液-液界面形成後24時間後の C_{60} ナノウィスカの生成（沈殿）の様子を示す．
水のイソプロピルアルコールへの添加量（質量%）は，(a) 0%，(b) 0.4%，(c) 0.6%，(d) 0.9%，(e) 1.3%，(f) 2.5%，合成温度は20℃である

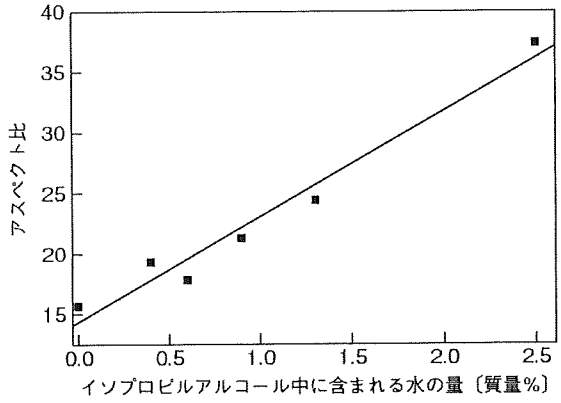

図7 C_{60} 飽和トルエン（4 ml）-イソプロピルアルコール（4 ml）の系においての，イソプロピルアルコールに添加された水分量と C_{60} ナノウィスカのアスペクト比の関係．合成温度 20°C

る．水が，アルコール分子のつくるクラスタの構造を大きく変化させることが知られていることを考慮すると[16]，水の添加がイソプロピルアルコール分子のクラスタの構造を変化させて成長機構を変えることや，水が脱溶媒和エネルギーを低下させる働きをすることが考えられる．

水の添加による C_{60} ナノウィスカ側面の表面-溶媒界面エネルギーの低下や溶液中におけるプロトン濃度の変化も，成長に影響する因子として検討すべき課題である．以上の結果は，環境中の水分も C_{60} ナノファイバの成長に影響を与えることを示唆している．

水だけではなく，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの量比によっても C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長が大きく変化することがわかった．C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの量比（体積比）を，1：9～9：1の間で変化させたところ，1：1組成において C_{60} ナノウィスカが最も高い収率で得られること，また，イソプロピルアルコールが少なすぎると，塊状の C_{60} 結晶が生じて，C_{60} ナノウィスカが合成されないことがわかった．これらのことから，C_{60} ナノウィスカの異方性成長においては，イソプロピルアルコールが

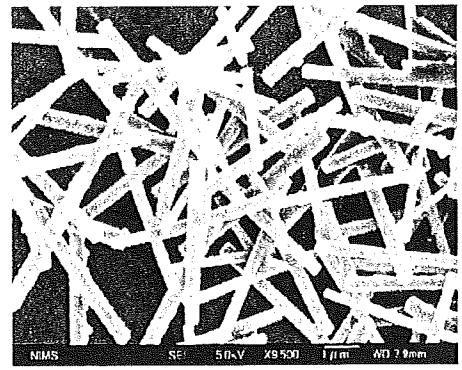

図8 C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの体積比を1：1としたときに合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカの様子（SEM像）．合成温度 20°C

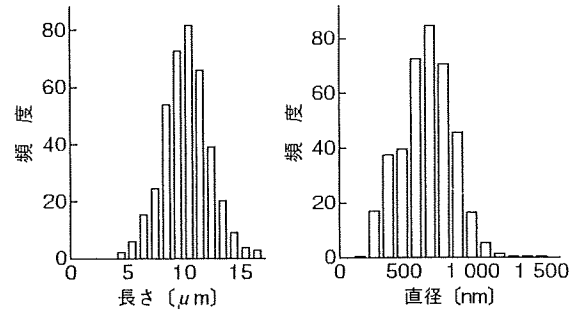

図9 C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系で合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径と長さの測定例

C_{60} 結晶核の過飽和析出現象を支配するだけではなく，界面エネルギーをもコントロールする役目をも担っていることがわかる．

図8に，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの体積比を1：1としたときに合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカの様子を示す．これは，液-液界面を形成してから24時間経過後の C_{60} ナノウィスカの例である．ほぼ均一な長さの C_{60} ナノウィスカが合成されている．図9に，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系で合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径と長さの測定例を示す．この例では，C_{60} ナノウィスカの平均長さが10.3 ± 2.1 μm，平均直径が632 ± 194 nmとなっており，均一な長さの短いフラーレンナノウィスカが合成されている．

図10には，平均長さが1.7 ± 0.8 μm，平均直径が323 ± 103 nmの C_{60} ナノウィスカの合成例を示す．このような短いフラーレンナノウィスカは，フラーレンナノウィスカを用いた厚膜太陽電池の作製において有用であろう[10]．

C_{60} ナノウィスカの長さと直径に関して，さらに，詳細な研究を進めた．その結果を図11に示す．図11は，C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの量比（体積比）を変えた場合の C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径と長

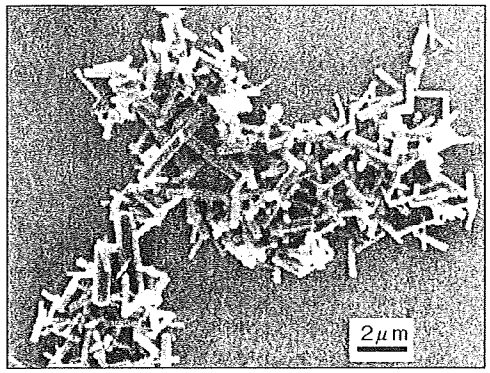

図 10　短い C_{60} ナノウィスカの合成例（SEM 像）

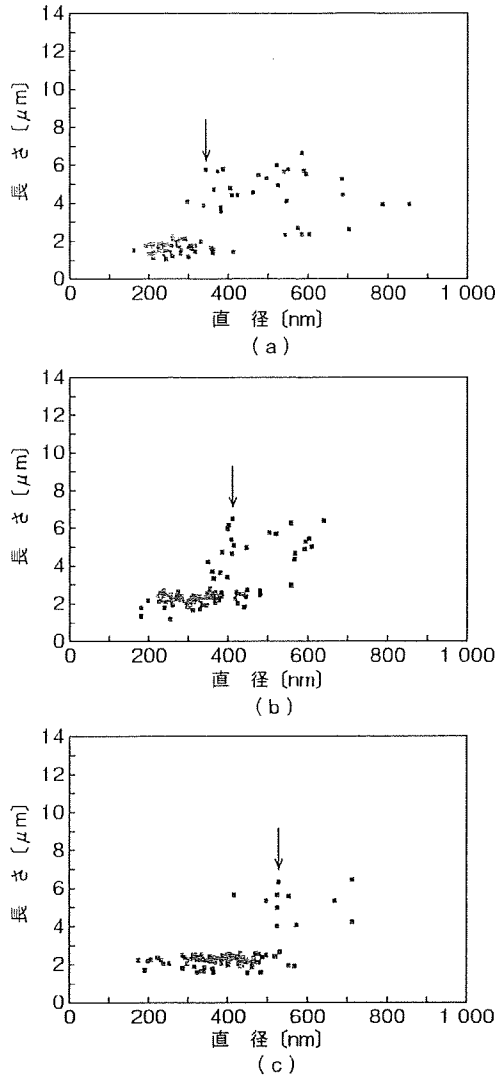

図 11　C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液とイソプロピルアルコールの系で合成された C_{60} ナノウィスカの直径と長さの関係.
C_{60} 飽和トルエンとイソプロピルアルコールの量比（体積比）は，(a) 1：7，(b) 1：5，(c) 1：3 である

さの関係を示している．矢印で示した場所から，突然，直径と長さの分布が変化していることがわかる．

矢印で示した直径を臨界直径（d_c）と定義すると，d_c は，(a) 約 340 nm，(b) 約 400 nm，(c) 約 530 nm と

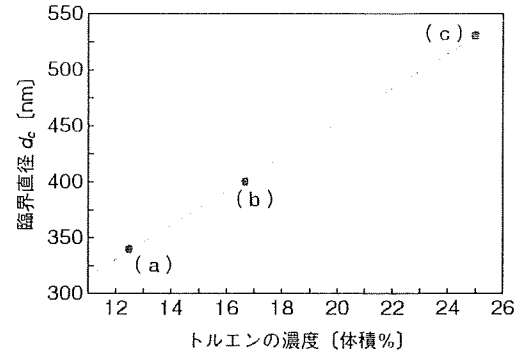

図 12　混合溶媒中におけるトルエンの濃度と臨界直径との関係

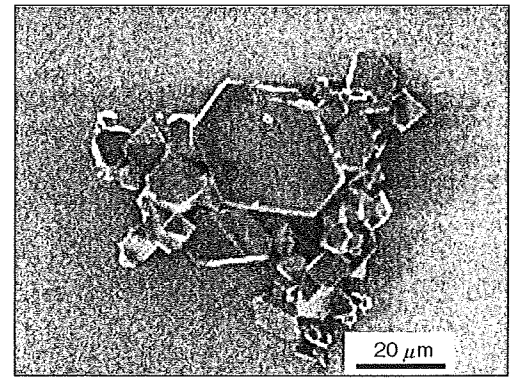

図13　C_{60} 飽和トルエン溶液：イソプロピルアルコール =3:1（体積比）の系で生じたバルク状 C_{60} 結晶

なる．イソプロピルアルコールの添加量が小さくなるほど，すなわちトルエンの濃度が高くなるほど，d_c が大きくなることがわかる（図 12）．臨界直径とトルエン濃度は直線関係にある．このことは，過飽和な状態をもたらす貧溶媒の添加量が少なくなると等方的に成長すること（図 13 に例示），逆に，過飽和度が高くなると等方的成長から，異方性成長に移行することを示している．

C_{60} ナノウィスカの長さは，その直径 d が d_c に到達するまで大きくならないことは，$d < d_c$ においては C_{60} 結晶核が等方的に成長し，$d > d_c$ においては C_{60} 結晶核が異方的に成長すること，すなわちファイバ状に成長することを示している．この異方性成長は，C_{60} ナノウィスカと溶液との間の全界面エネルギーが小さくなるように生じること，すなわち成長軸に平行な晶帯軸に属する結晶面が発達するように成長が進んで，ファイバ状に成長すると考えられる．しかし，溶媒の組合せによっては，シート状に成長したほうが安定な場合があり，表面とバルクの両方に関するエネルギーを考察しないと，なぜ，異方性成長が生じるのかについて明瞭な答えを得ることは難しく，今後の課題である．

4. まとめ

液-液界面析出法により，短い針状結晶状，長いファイバ状，平面シート状などの多様なフラーレンナノ物質を合成することができる．フラーレンナノウィスカとフラーレンナノチューブの総称であるフラーレンナノファイバの結晶成長メカニズムが，速度論的方法によってしだいに明らかになりつつある．筆者らは，温度，光，濃度のほかに，新たに，C_{60} ナノウィスカの成長に及ぼす水の触媒効果と，C_{60} 結晶核生成直後の等方性成長からファイバ状への異方性成長に変化する際の臨界直径の存在を発見した．しかも，臨界直径は，混合溶媒中における C_{60} の溶媒濃度と直線的な関係があることも明らかになった．

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Observation of phagocytosis of fullerene nanowhiskers by PMA-treated THP-1 cells

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Abstract. Phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA)-treated THP-1 cells (macrophage-like cells) were exposed to the C_{60} fullerene nanowhiskers (C_{60}NWs) with an average length of about 6.0 μm and an average diameter of about 660 nm and observed with an inverted optical phase-contrast microscope for 48 h. The C_{60}NWs were well and stably dispersed onto the dishes of culture medium during the observation. The number of cells that internalised C_{60}NWs gradually increased after the exposure to C_{60}NWs. But no alteration of cellular morphology was observed compared to the control group without exposure to C_{60}NWs during this period in this pilot study.

1. Introduction

Nanomaterials possess enormous potentials to wide applications in various fields owing to their distinctive unique properties. But potential risks caused by exposure to nanomaterials have not been cleared. With the release of industrial products of nanomaterials into environment, public concerns have raised their potential side effects. Carbon nanotubes (CNTs), one of the most promising nanomaterials, may be hazardous to health and environment owing to their needle-like morphology and strong mechanical properties like asbestos. Recently, an asbestos-like pathogenic behavior associated with CNTs indicated a structure-activity relationship based on length, to which asbestos and other pathogenic fibers conform [1].

Fullerene nanowhiskers (FNWs) are composed of the fullerene molecules that are usually bonded via van der Waals forces [2]. FNWs are expected to have various application fields such as low-dimensional semiconductors, field emission tips, nanoprobes for microdevices, fiber-reinforced nanocomposites, composite elements for lubrication, and so on. But FNWs also have the needle-like morphology like asbestos. Hence, it is of great importance to evaluate the biological impacts of FNWs for their sound application in advance.

Macrophages are one of the immune system cells and defend the host against the foreign substances in a non-specific manner during the initial phase of infection. Macrophages recognize, internalise and digest them. THP-1 is a human acute monocytic leukemia cell line and THP-1 cells have been isolated by Tsuchiya et al [3]. It is well known that THP-1 cells are induced to differentiate into macrophage-like cells by the addition of PMA [4].

In this paper, the interaction of C_{60}NWs with macrophage-like cells is investigated as a pilot study for evaluating the biological impacts of C_{60}NWs by use of an inverted optical phase-contrast microscope.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Preparation and characterization of C_{60}NWs

C_{60}NWs were prepared by the liquid-liquid interfacial precipitation method using a C_{60}-saturated toluene solution and isopropyl alcohol (Fig.1) [2]. 20 mL of isopropyl alcohol was gently added to 20 mL of C_{60}-saturated toluene solution in a glass bottle at room temperature. After manual mixing, the solution was kept at 15°C for 15 minutes and 60 mL of isopropyl alcohol was poured into the solution to stop the crystal growth. The C_{60}NWs were separated by filtration using a GFP filter (0.8 μm, Kiriyama glass, Japan) from the solvents. The characterization was carried out by measuring the length and diameter of C_{60}NWs using an optical microscope (ECLIPSE ME600, Nikon, Japan) and a scanning electron microscope (JSM-6700, JEOL, Japan). C_{60} (99.5%) was purchased from MTR (OH). Toluene (99.5%) and 2-propanol (99.7%) were purchased from Wako Pure Chemical Industries (Japan).

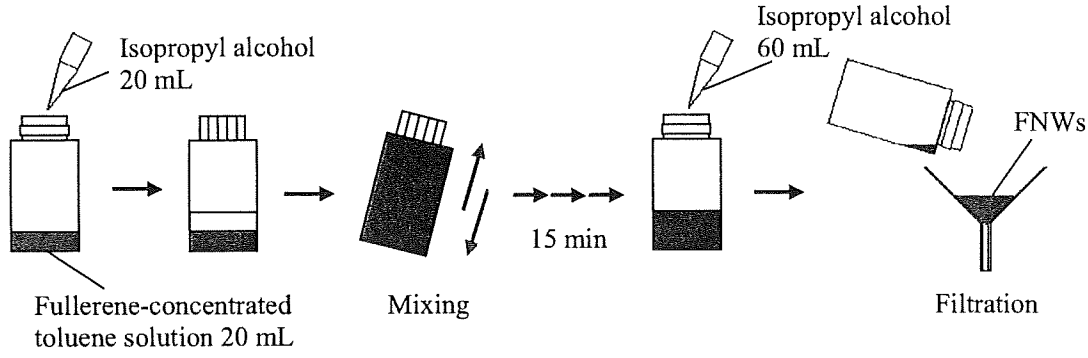

Figure 1. Preparation of C_{60}NWs

2.2. Cell culture

THP-1 cells were purchased from American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, VA). THP-1 cells were cultured in RPMI 1640 medium (Invitrogen, CA) supplemented with 10% heat inactivated fetal bovine serum (JRH Biosciences, KS), 100 units/mL penicillin and 100 μg/mL streptomycin (Nacalai Tesque, Japan)(culture solution) at 37°C in an atmosphere of 5% CO_2 and saturated humidity. Cells were subcultured every three or four days, where the number of cells in culture were maintained by centrifugation (at 1000 rpm for 3 min) and subsequent resuspension at 2 x 10^5 viable cells/mL.

2.3. Differentiation of THP-1 cells into macrophage-like cells

2 x 10^5 cells were incubated in 2 mL of culture solution on a 35 mm polystyrene culture dish (Greiner Bio-One, Germany). PMA (Wako pure chemicals, Japan) was dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide at a concentration of 1 mM and diluted by a culture solution to be 50, 500 and 5000 nM. And 40 μL of each PMA solution was added to the cellular medium to be the final concentrations of 1, 10 and 100 nM. The cells were induced to differentiate into macrophage-like cells for 1, 3, 6, 24, 48 and 72 h at 37°C in an atmosphere of 5% CO_2 and saturated humidity. To estimate the degree of differentiation, the number of suspended living cells (undifferentiated cells) was measured using 0.4% trypan blue stain (Invitrogen, CA) and the morphological changes of cells were observed by an inverted optical phase-contrast microscope (DMIL-HC, Leica Microsystems, Germany).

2.4. C_{60}NWs' exposure

C_{60}NWs were dispersed in the culture solution at a concentration of 1 mg/mL and diluted by the culture solution to be 0.1 and 0.01 mg/mL. Macrophage-like cells were exposed to 20 μL of each concentration of C_{60}NWs suspension agitated by ultrasonication to be the final concentrations of 0.1, 1

and 10 μg/mL and incubated for 1, 3, 6, 24 and 48 h at 37°C in an atmosphere of 5% CO_2 and saturated humidity. Cells were observed with the inverted optical phase-contrast microscope to evaluate the effect of C_{60}NWs on the cell morphology.

3. Results and disucussion

3.1. C_{60}NWs

3.1.1. *Characterization of C_{60}NWs*

C_{60}NWs were synthesized by the liquid-liquid interfacial precipitation method (Fig.2)[2]. The length of C_{60}NWs ranged from 1 to 17 μm approximately and the average length was about 6.0 μm (Fig.3). The diameter of C_{60}NWs ranged from 300 to 1340 nm and the average diameter was about 660 nm (Fig.4).

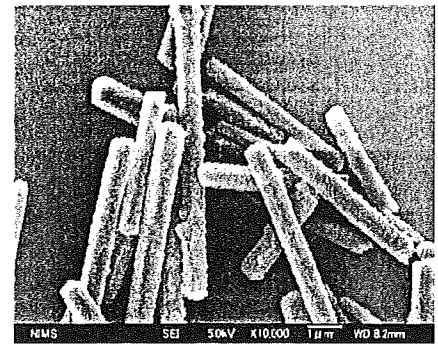

Figure 2. SEM image of C_{60}NWs.

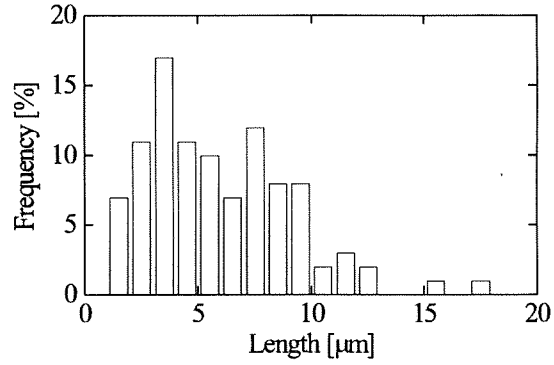

Figure 3. Histogram of C_{60}NWs' length.

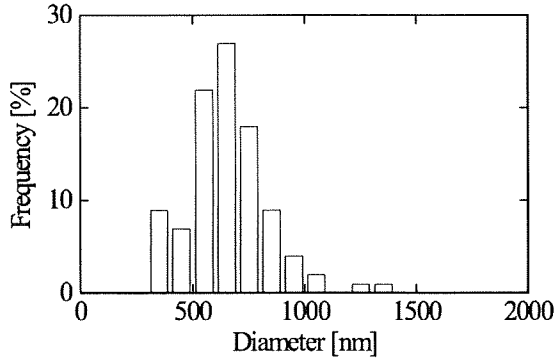

Figure 4. Histogram of C_{60}NWs' diameter.

3.1.2. *Dispersion of C_{60}NWs in culture*

Before exposuring cells to C_{60}NWs, the dispersion of C_{60}NWs in culture was examined visually by the inverted optical phase-contrast microscope for the same period. The suspensions of C_{60}NWs were poured into the cell-free medium by the same method as the exposure examination. The C_{60}NWs were well and stably dispersed onto the dishes of culture medium during observation (Fig.5).

3.2. Effect of PMA concentration and induction period on differentiation of THP-1 cells into macrophage-like cells

Optimal PMA concentration and induction period for the differentiation of THP-1 cells into macrophage-like cells were estimated under the condition of this study. In the case of 10 nM and 100 nM, cells adhered to the dish surface gradually (decrease of suspended cells) and about 90% of seeded cells adhered after 24 h of the PMA treatment (Fig.6). By contrast, the suspended cells grew by a factor of 5 in comparison with the seeded cells during 72 h in control culture (without PMA treatment). At the concentration of 1 nM, a few cells adhered the dish surface (data not shown), but the number of suspended cells increased about by a factor of 2 during 72 h. We observed that some of the cells showed elongation and pseudopodia formation after a few hours of the treatment by 10 nM and 100 nM (data not shown) of PMA, and most of the cells were observed to change their morphology by the PMA treatment of 24 h with the inverted optical phase-contrast microscope (Fig.7).

Because no significant difference was observed in the cellular morphology and the number of adherent cells between 10 nM and 100 nM of PMA treatment, the cells differentiated by 10 nM PMA treatment for 24 h were used for the exposure experiment of C_{60}NWs.

3.3. Exposure experiments of C_{60}NWs

3.3.1. *Phagocytosis of C_{60}NWs*

Macrophages recognize, internalise and digest foreign materials. The uptake of them depends on their size and surface properties [5]. C_{60} is also phagocytized by macrophages [6] and the uptake rate of C_{60} is lower than that of graphite particles [7]. We observed that the macrophage-like cells gradually internalised C_{60}NWs after the exposure to C_{60}NWs with an inverted optical phase-contrast microscope (Fig.8). We will three-dimensionally locate the position of C_{60}NWs among the cells and study the phagocytosis of C_{60}NWs in more detail.

3.3.2. *Effect of C_{60}NWs' concentration and exposure period on the cell morphology.*

No alteration of cellular morphology was observed in the macrophage-like cells compared to the control group without exposure to C_{60}NWs after the exposure of 48 h for any concentration of C_{60}NWs in the observations by the inverted optical phase-contrast microscope (Fig.9). However, we are going to investigate the endpoints such as cell viability, cytokines, LDH and active oxygen generation in the next follow-up study using positive controls.

We cannot explain the fiber paradigm that a hazardous fibre is thinner than 3 μm in diameter, longer than 20 μm and biopersistent in the lungs [1] in the present paper dealing with only short (< 20 μm) C_{60}NWs. But some previous studies have reported that C_{60} (aggregate size was not described or larger than 1 μm) were nontoxic against mammalian cells [7, 8, 9] and dissolved inside lipid droplets in liver rats [10]. Owing to the weak van der Waals bonding forces acting between C_{60} molecules, C_{60}NWs may decompose into individual C_{60} molecules in living organisms. And on the basis of this assumption, C_{60}NWs may exhibit a biological effect like C_{60}. But these discussions are unclear now. We will carry out further researches on the digestion and dilution of C_{60}NWs using short and long C_{60}NWs.

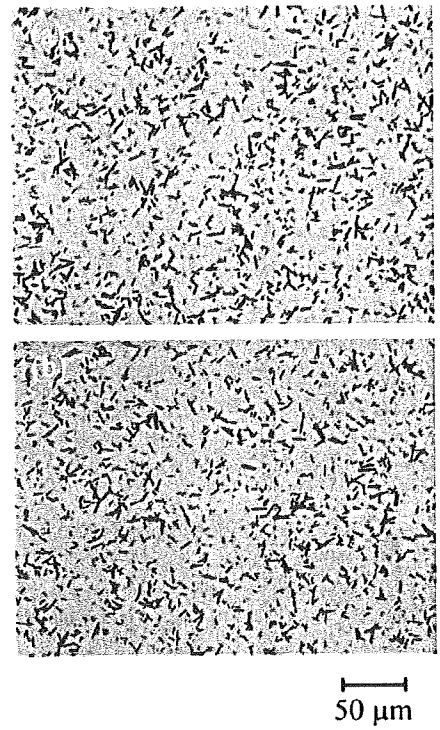

Figure 5. C_{60}NWs' dispersion in culture at a concentration of 10 μg/mL. (a) 1h and (b) 48 h after pouring the suspension of C_{60}NWs into the cell-free medium.

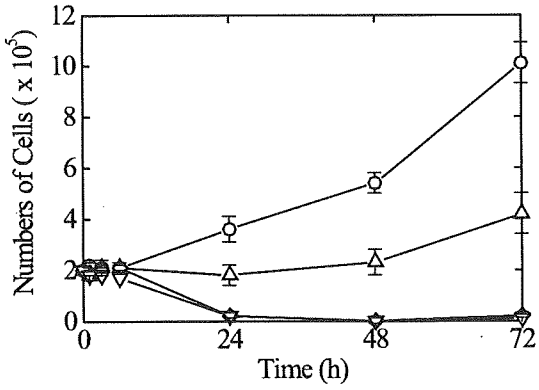

Figure 6. Suspended living cells after the PMA treatment. Circle, control (untreated); triangle, 1 nM PMA; diamond, 10 nM PMA; inverted triangle, 100 nM PMA. The results are expressed as the mean values for triplicate cultures with standard deviations.

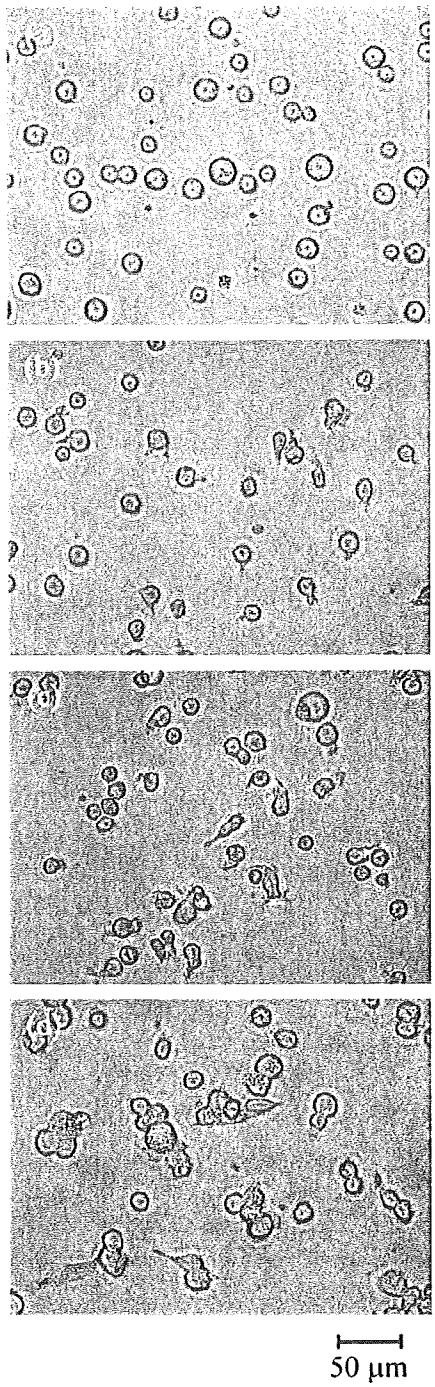

Figure 7. Morphological changes of THP-1 cells after (a) 1 h, (b) 3 h, (c) 6 h and (d) 24 h of 10 nM PMA treatment.

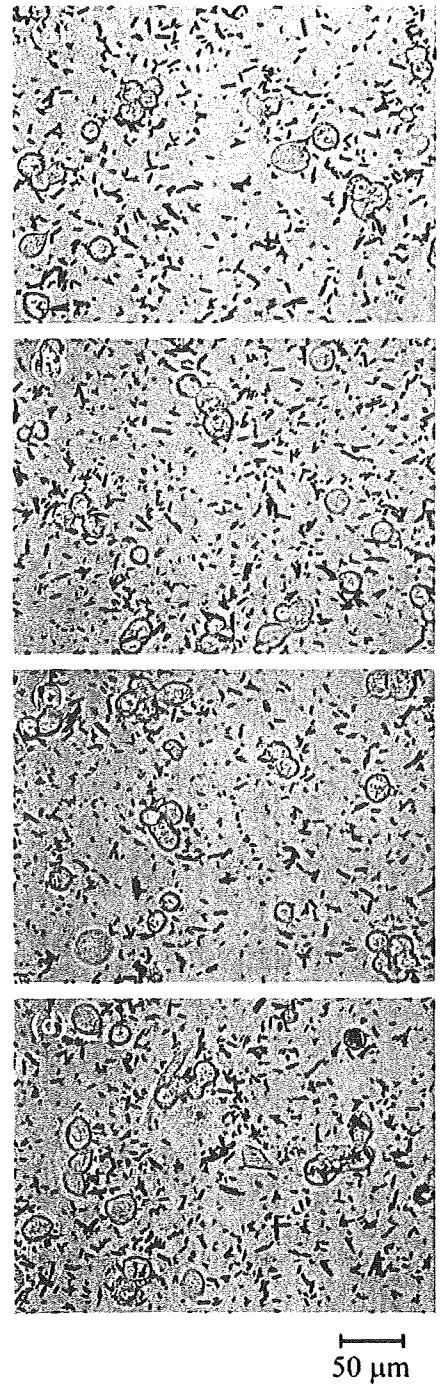

Figure 8. Macrophage-like cells exposed to C_{60}NWs for (a) 1 h, (b) 3 h, (c) 6 h and (d) 24 h at a concentration of 10 μg/mL.

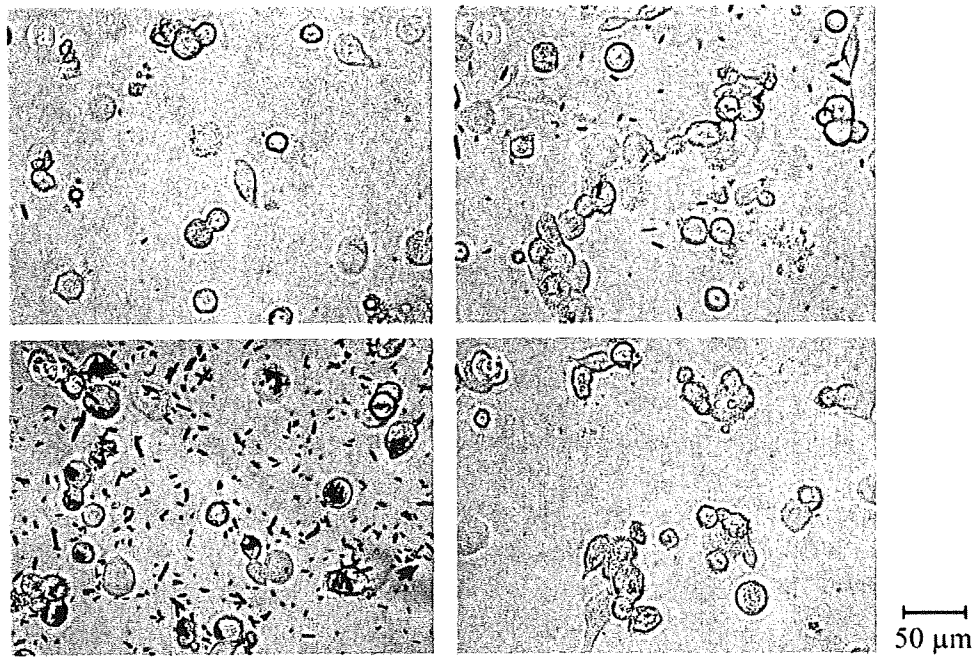

Figure 9. Macrophage-like cells exposed to C_{60}NWs for 48 h at concentrations of (a) 0.1 μg/mL, (b) 1 μg/mL and (c) 10 μg/mL. (d) Control culture cultivated without C_{60}NWs.

4. Conclusions

C_{60}NWs with an average length of about 6.0 μm and an average diameter of about 660 nm were well and stably dispersed onto the dishes of culture medium. Macrophage-like cells internalised the C_{60}NWs gradually, but no alteration of cellular morphology was observed in the macrophage-like cells for any concentration of C_{60}NWs (0.1, 1 and 10 μg/mL) compared to the control group without the exposure to C_{60}NWs for 48 h. We will complete this research for the biological impacts of C_{60}NWs in the next follow-up study using asbestos as a positive control and different sizes of C_{60}NWs and CNTs.

Acknowledgment

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Biodegradation of C_{60} Fullerene Nanowhiskers by Macrophage-like Cells

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Abstract: To evaluate the biological impact of C_{60} fullerene nanowhiskers (C_{60}NWs), an interaction between phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA)-treated THP-1 cells (macrophage-like cells) and the C_{60}NWs was investigated in this study. The macrophage-like cells were exposed to 10 μg/mL of C_{60}NWs with an average length of about 6.0 μm and an average diameter of 660 nm. After 1, 3, 6, 12, 24 and 48 h of the exposure, the cells were fixed, stained with Hoechst 33342 and rhodamine-phalloidin and were observed by a differential interference contrast and confocal laser scanning microscope to estimate an uptake rate of C_{60}NWs into cells. To assess the biodegradability of C_{60}NWs by the macrophage-like cells, the cells and the exposed C_{60}NWs were observed by an inverted optical phase-contrast microscope for 28 days after the exposure. After the long-term co-culture of cells and C_{60}NWs, the cells were decomposed by proteinase K and the exposed C_{60}NWs were observed with an optical microscope and a scanning electron microscope to examine the change of C_{60}NWs by the cells. The macrophage-like cells internalized the C_{60}NWs with time and more than 70% of the cells internalized the C_{60}NWs after 48-h exposure. After the long-term co-culture, decomposed C_{60}NWs were observed in the cells and the number of short (less than 3.0 μm in length) C_{60}NWs increased after the exposure. These results suggest that macrophages may be able to decompose C_{60}NWs into C_{60} molecules as the primary immune response.

Key-Words:Fullerene nanowhisker, Needle-like crystal, Biodegradation, Macrophage, Biological assessment, In vitro

1 Introduction

Nanomaterials possess enormous potential for wide application in various fields owing to their unique properties and some of them have already been used in daily life. Fullerene nanowhiskers (FNWs), one of the most promising nanomaterials, have needle-like structures, and are composed of the fullerene molecules that are usually bonded via van der Waals forces and are synthesized by the liquid-liquid interfacial precipitation method [1]. The FNWs are expected for various applications such as low-dimensional semiconductors, field emission tips, nanoprobes for microdevices, fiber-reinforced nanocomposites, composite elements for lubrication, and so on. But the biological impact of FNWs is not clear and should be studied before their practical use.

Carbon nanotubes (CNTs), one of the most promising nanomaterials, have also the needle-like structure like FNWs. Long CNTs may be hazardous to health and environment owing to their needle-like morphology and biopersistence like asbestos [2, 3]. The nanosized needle-like structure resembling asbestos has been suspected to induce the asbestosis via inhalation. Recent studies demonstrated that multiwalled carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs) reached the subpleura in mice after the inhalation administration of MWCNTs [4]. By the exposure of mesothelioma lining of the body cavity of mice to MWCNTs, an asbestos-like pathogenic behavior associated with CNTs was observed, indicating a structure-activity relationship based on the length, to which asbestos and other pathogenic fibers show [2].

It is important to know whether the needle-like nanomaterials are decomposed in organisms or not,