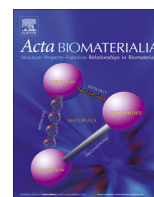




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Review

The use of physiological solutions or media in calcium phosphate synthesis and processing



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ABSTRACT

This review examined the literature to spot uses, if any, of physiological solutions/media for the in situ synthesis of calcium phosphates (CaP) under processing conditions (i.e. temperature, pH, concentration of inorganic ions present in media) mimicking those prevalent in the human hard tissue environments. There happens to be a variety of aqueous solutions or media developed for different purposes; sometimes they have been named as physiological saline, isotonic solution, cell culture solution, metastable CaP solution, supersaturated calcification solution, simulated body fluid or even dialysate solution (for dialysis patients). Most of the time such solutions were not used as the aqueous medium to perform the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates, and their use was usually limited to the in vitro testing of synthetic biomaterials. This review illustrates that only a limited number of research studies used physiological solutions or media such as Earle's balanced salt solution, Bachra et al. solutions or Tris-buffered simulated body fluid solution containing 27 mM HCO_3^- for synthesizing CaP, and these studies have consistently reported the formation of X-ray-amorphous CaP nanopowders instead of Ap-CaP or stoichiometric hydroxyapatite (HA, $\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$) at 37 °C and pH 7.4. By relying on the published articles, this review highlights the significance of the use of aqueous solutions containing 0.8–1.5 mM Mg^{2+} , 22–27 mM HCO_3^- , 142–145 mM Na^+ , 5–5.8 mM K^+ , 103–133 mM Cl^- , 1.8–3.75 mM Ca^{2+} , and 0.8–1.67 mM HPO_4^{2-} , which essentially mimic the composition and the overall ionic strength of the human extracellular fluid (ECF), in forming the nanospheres of X-ray-amorphous CaP.

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1. Extracellular fluid (ECF) of the human body

Water, being vital for all forms of life, covers approximately 70% of the earth's surface, but only 2.5% of this vast amount of water is fresh water. 98.8% of the global fresh water reservoir is contained in ice and groundwater [1]. Water is the main component of biomineralization media in which almost all biological reactions leading to hard tissue formation or ossification takes place [2–4]. Although fresh water is essential to animals and plants, the physiological fluids of animals, which take part in biomineralization events, are not high-purity water. Water in its purest form is an abstraction and is hard to find in earth's aquifers. In laboratory experiments and in most industrial-scale applications, researchers and technicians use distilled, deionized or critical laboratory reagent grade (CLRW) water. According to the definition of Barskov [5], biological mineralization is the coevolution of the biological and mineral worlds. Biological molecules resulting from the normal or pathological metabolism of organisms and the inorganic ions present in their operational environment forming the mineral

world interact to create the mineralized tissues of humans, animals and plants [5]. The inorganic ions, such as Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , Na^+ , K^+ , HPO_4^{2-} (monohydrogen phosphate), HCO_3^- (bicarbonate), Cl^- and SO_4^{2-} , present in biological fluids and cells play a crucial role in the formation of ion-substituted calcium phosphates of hard tissues at the nanoscale. As such, nanotechnology has been with us in its most sophisticated forms (e.g. in the tissues of living creatures) for billions of years much before the invention of this word in 1974 [6].

Physiological fluids of humans can be viewed in two major compartments: intracellular fluid (ICF, with a volume of 27 l for a 70 kg person) and extracellular fluid (ECF, 13 l). Extracellular fluid is then divided into two sub-compartments, interstitial fluid (ISF, 9.5 l) and the liquid component of blood (plasma, 3.5 l for a 70 kg person). ECF represents the fluid outside cells whereas ICF is the fluid within cells. ISF is the tissue fluid found between cells. Plasma contains significantly more protein than does ISF, and the plasma proteins are the only constituents of plasma that do not cross into ISF [7]. There is a striking difference between the compositions of intracellular and extracellular fluids, as shown in Table 1 [8]. The composition of blood plasma is similar to that of ECF [9]. In brief, the plasma membrane of cells is freely permeable to water and

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Table 1
Electrolyte composition of ICF and ECF compartments (in mM).

	Na ⁺	K ⁺	Mg ²⁺	Ca ²⁺	HPO ₄ ²⁻	HCO ₃ ⁻	Cl ⁻	SO ₄ ²⁻
ICF	10	140	29	0.01	37	10	4	1
ECF	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	27	103	0.5

impermeant to ions other than through ion channels. For instance, NaK-ATPase (the enzyme that splits adenosine triphosphate) is an ion channel, which actively moves K⁺ into the cell and removes Na⁺ out to maintain the ionic concentrations shown in Table 1 within narrow limits [8].

There is a significant difference between the Ca²⁺ concentrations of intracellular (0.01 mM) and extracellular fluids (2.5 mM). The calcium ion is, pharmacologically, one of the most disruptive substances for normal cell function, with the intracellular concentration of calcium ions carefully regulated [10] and the bones serving as the major storage sites for excess calcium. Based on the accurate elemental analysis of bone and tooth specimens recently given by Castro [11], human bones contain 24.5 wt.% Ca, 11.5% P, 5.8% CO₃, 0.7% Na, 0.55% Mg and 0.03% K, besides a number of trace elements at the ppm level, including Zn, Fe, Sr, Pb, Ba and Cu. Carbonate, sodium, magnesium and potassium ions are the major dopants of apatitic calcium phosphate (Ap-CaP) bone mineral, and the same ions are also present in ECF. The carbonated, ion-substituted, non-stoichiometric and cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP inorganic phase (i.e. biological apatite) of bones in fact stores 99 wt.% of the body's calcium, 80 wt.% of its phosphorus and 50 wt.% of its magnesium [12–14]. In other words, as a toxic ion that needs to be removed from most cells, calcium accumulates extracellularly and the occurrence of calcium deposits may therefore represent a form of detoxification [10,15]. Simkiss [15] briefly described biomimetalization as a cellular detoxification mechanism. This review searches the previous literature for solutions mimicking extracellular fluid and their use in synthesizing calcium phosphates.

2. Biomimetic synthesis

The phrase “biomimetic synthesis”, according to the Web of KnowledgeSM database, was first used in 1972 to describe specific synthesis protocols for nicotine [16], macralstonine [17] and villalstonine [18]. Biomimetic synthesis was, therefore, not historically coined for the production of synthetic biomaterials of tissue engineering. Tabushi and Imuta [19] mentioned the biomimetic synthesis of nucleotide phosphates in 1982. Nucleotides are biological molecules that form the building blocks of the nucleic acids DNA and RNA. Abe et al. [20] developed a biomimetic process to deposit a layer of cryptocrystalline apatitic calcium phosphate on ceramics, metals and polymers immersed, at 36.5–37 °C, in what they called the simulated body fluid (SBF). Mann [21] summarized the biomimetic approaches in inorganic materials chemistry until 1993. However, the examples provided in Mann's article [21] did not show any material synthesis procedures pursued in aqueous media with compositions similar to that of the ECF given in Table 1.

Extracellular fluid is supersaturated with respect to the formation of carbonated (6 wt.% of bones), ion-substituted, non-stoichiometric biological apatite, and the presence and action of biochemical inhibitors of nucleation/crystallization prevents our bodies from being mineralized all over [22]. Blood is circulated in the entire human body, by flowing through the total length of approximately 100,000 km (one hundred thousand kilometers) of veins and capillaries, just to make its inorganic and organic constituents instantly available to the hard and soft tissues, which need to undergo continuous renovation and renewal. This is an

outstanding example, given by the human metabolism, to explain the meaning of bioavailability. Calcium phosphate syntheses performed in non-replenished and constant volume batches of distilled/deionized water, which are prone to suffer from the depletion of the initial ions upon the start of precipitation, obviously contradict the scale of bioavailability (of ECF) exemplified by the human metabolism.

Sarikaya and Aksay [23,24] divided biomimetic technology into two categories, i.e. biomimicking (imitating the unique physico-chemical and structural design of biomaterials by using the currently available techniques) and bioduplication (mastering the molecular synthesis and processing mechanisms of biological materials to produce new and superior biomaterials), and thus helped to set the roadmap for future research initiatives at the junction of materials science and biology, albeit without mentioning the role of Na⁺, Mg²⁺, Sr²⁺, SO₄²⁻ and Cl⁻ present in sea water on mineralization when citing examples on biomineralization of sea urchins and seashells.

Going through the abundant literature related to the synthesis of calcium phosphates in distilled or deionized water has been kept outside the scope of the current review. However, readers may consult the review articles, just to name a few, of Dorozhkin [25,26], Boanini et al. [27], Bleek and Taubert [28], Omelon and Grynypas [29], Wang and Nancollas [30], Coelfen [31], Alves et al. [32], Boskey [33], Addadi and Weiner [34], Habibovic and Barralet [35], Bose and Tarafder [36], Sadat-Shojai et al. [37], and Gomez-Morales et al. [38] for that purpose.

The early, yet quite influential, work of the pioneering calcium phosphate (CaP) researchers, such as Hayek et al. [39,40], Posner et al. [41,42] and Jarcho et al. [43], used distilled water as the synthesis medium and added to it one of the soluble salts of calcium (such as anhydrous CaCl₂ (extremely hygroscopic), CaCl₂·2H₂O, CaCl₂·6H₂O, Ca(NO₃)₂·4H₂O or Ca(CH₃COO)₂·H₂O) and a water-soluble salt of phosphate (selected from one or more of (NH₄)₂HPO₄, NH₄H₂PO₄, Na₂HPO₄, NaH₂PO₄·H₂O, K₂HPO₄ or KH₂PO₄) to induce the precipitation of apatitic CaPs. Such early work, with the notable exception of that of LeGeros et al. [44], did not introduce HCO₃⁻ ions into the synthesis solutions despite the well-known carbonated nature of bone apatite (5.8 wt.% carbonate). Bone marrow and bones (and most human tissues except hairs and nails) are soaked in blood, not water. Similarly, the external surfaces (whether they are enamel or dentine) of teeth are continuously soaked in saliva but not water.

Early works [39–43] did not mention the possibility of contaminating the Ap-CaP precipitate surfaces with ammonium ions during syntheses, especially when using ammonium phosphate salts, which was shown to be possible much later by the work of Ivanova et al. [45]. Habelitz et al. [46] showed that it would be possible to incorporate nitrogen (even at the wt.% levels) into the lattice of calcium-deficient Ap-CaP at a temperature as low as 800 °C when the heat treatment is performed in an ammonia atmosphere. The earlier articles of the present author on the biomimetic synthesis of Ap-CaP in solutions similar to the ECF also falls in this category since the solutions contained ammonium and nitrate ions which are not present in the ECF [47–50]. The lattice of Ap-CaP is quite accommodating for a significant number of diverse ions (including heavy metals such as lead) present in aqueous solutions in which it was synthesized, as shown in the work of Bigi et al. [27,51,52] and Verbeeck et al. [53].

The majority of published articles related to the synthesis of Ap-CaP [25–38] did not use the main component of blood plasma, i.e. NaCl, in the synthesis solutions, despite Ringer's previous work to that effect [54–56]. On the other hand, when geologists, geochemists and micro- or marine biologists studied the *in vitro* biomineralization of CaCO₃ (calcite, aragonite or vaterite) or apatite, they usually took note of the “salinity” of their mineralization media

[57–62]. The introduction of biologically relevant ions, e.g. Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , SO_4^{2-} , HCO_3^- and Mg^{2+} , at levels close to those present in ECF for CaP synthesis alters the ionic strength of the synthesis solutions, which is explained below.

Biomimetic or biomimicking CaP synthesis processes require solutions similar to ECF. Such synthetic solutions similar in composition to ECF (as listed in Table 1) may also contain biomolecules present in ECF. Biomimetic CaP synthesis is performed at physiological temperature (37 °C) and pH (7.4). As such, the term biomimetic refers to the chemical similarity of the synthesized CaP to the biological CaP of the bone mineral.

In preparing a synthetic aqueous solution mimicking the ECF composition shown in Table 1, one uses the following inorganic chemicals of the highest possible purity: NaCl, KCl, $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ or $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, Na_2HPO_4 or $\text{Na}_2\text{HPO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, NaHCO₃ and Na₂SO₄. The pH of such a precipitate-free solution can be adjusted to physiological pH at physiological temperature by using small amounts of, for instance, the pair of Na-L-lactate powder and 1 M lactic acid solution [63,64]. Lactated Ringer's solution (RLS), which is used today in hospitals for intravenous or subcutaneous administration, will be briefly mentioned later in this review.

The ionic strength (I) of an ECF-mimicking solution is calculated as shown in Eq. (1), using the formula of Debye and Hückel [65]. One simply enters into this formula the concentrations of ions (in M, moles/L) and the valency of ions. The value of the ionic strength (expressed in molarity, M or mM) then serves as a reliable numerical index for exchange between researchers using and/or developing different biomineralization media based on their specific research needs.

$$I = 1/2[(2.50 \times 10^{-3})(2)^2 + (1.42 \times 10^{-1})(1)^2 + (1.0 \times 10^{-3})(2)^2 + (1.03 \times 10^{-1})(1)^2 + (2.7 \times 10^{-2})(1)^2 + (5 \times 10^{-3})(1)^2 + (1.5 \times 10^{-3})(2)^2 + (5 \times 10^{-4})(2)^2] = 0.1495 \text{ M} \quad (1)$$

Marques et al. [66] showed the release of CO₂ (g) from an aqueous solution containing bicarbonate ions (HCO₃⁻) would occur at a faster rate if the solution has a low ionic strength. If one increases the ionic strength of a metastable, supersaturated calcium phosphate solution to much higher values, such as 0.6 M [67] or 1.1 M [68], its rate of CO₂ release decreases further. The ionic strength of an ECF-like bicarbonate ion-containing solution (at 27 mM; see Table 1) is thus quite important for the biomimetic synthesis of carbonated Ap-CaP.

Habibovic et al. [69] noted that the presence of 1.5 mM Mg²⁺ in biomineralization media could be effective in suppressing the growth of well crystallized Ap-CaP, favoring instead the formation of nanocrystalline, carbonated, hydroxyl-deficient and large surface area Ap-CaP similar to the mineral phase of younger bones [14,70–76]. Alfrey et al. [77] have found that bone magnesium was falling with age, in a study performed with rats, and concluded that, since the plasma magnesium content was not different in the various age groups examined, the most likely reason for that fall was the growth of bone crystal size with age associated with a decrease in the surface area of crystals. Robinson and Watson [70] reported that the newly formed bone has a smaller crystal size and a larger surface area. Not only does the presence of Mg²⁺ have an inhibitory effect on the crystallization of apatite; the presence of 0.15 M NaCl (ECF contains an amount of NaCl roughly similar to this value) in an aqueous synthesis solution, such as the one used by Nancollas and Tomazic [78] in 1974, was also found to noticeably decrease the crystallization rate of Ap-CaP.

Bell et al. [79], in 1973, experimentally confirmed that when NaCl was used as a supporting electrolyte, some of the Ca²⁺ ions on the surfaces of Ap-CaP were exchanged by Na⁺ ions. The similarity of the ionic radii of Ca²⁺ (114 pm) and Na⁺ (116 pm) makes this exchange feasible. The Bell et al. [79] study underlined the influence of the salinity of the medium on biomimetic CaP synthesis. Drouet et al. [80] have shown that a similar exchange can take place between the surface Ca²⁺ ions of nanocrystalline apatite and Mg²⁺ (ionic radius of 86 pm) present in maturation solutions into which the apatite powders were immersed.

The separate work of LeGeros [44] on the influence of carbonate ions, those of Bell et al. [79] and Nancollas and Tomazic [78] on the influence of NaCl, and those of Habibovic et al. [69] and Drouet et al. [80] on the influence of magnesium ions in the synthesis media independently defined the outline of synthesizing carbonated, ion-substituted and biomimetic Ap-CaP. Therefore, CaP synthesis, for instance, by the routes of Ca(OH)₂-H₃PO₄ or Ca(NO₃)₂·4H₂O (or CaCl₂·2H₂O)-(NH₄)₂HPO₄ in deionized water, devoid of Na⁺, Mg²⁺ and HCO₃⁻ ions, represent deviations from the biomimetic approach, but these routes are able to produce apatite of relatively high purity [81]. On the other hand, biological bone apatite is not stoichiometric calcium hydroxyapatite (HA, Ca₁₀(PO₄)₆(OH)₂) [14].

CaO-P₂O₅-CO₂-H₂O system is one of the richest of all the inorganic material systems, and allows the synthesis of amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP), cryptocrystalline calcium phosphate (apatitic CaP of poor crystallinity) or well-crystallized calcium phosphate (e.g. brushite, CaHPO₄·2H₂O, dicalcium phosphate dihydrate) phases at temperatures well below 90 °C. ACP is denoted by the formula Ca_x(PO₄)_y·nH₂O, which indicates a phase of uncertain composition and non-crystalline structure [27], and its formation was correlated to the Posner's clusters of 0.85–0.95 nm diameter present in supersaturated and metastable calcium phosphate solutions [82–85]. The role played by Mg in stabilizing X-ray-amorphous calcium phosphate was previously explained by Posner et al. [86,87]. It is clear that studies focusing solely on stoichiometric HA will not be sufficient to understand the full complexity of biological calcium phosphates of bones, teeth, kidney stones, articular cartilage, mitral valves or dental calculi.

The synthesis of fully stoichiometric hydroxyapatite samples with no deficiency in the Ca²⁺ and OH⁻ sites, with a Ca/P molar ratio of 1.67 and with no HPO₄²⁻ or CO₃²⁻ ions in the lattice) were shown in the authoritative work of Fowler [88–90] to only be possible by heating a gravimetric mixture of 10CaO·3P₂O₅ in steam at 1.5 atm at temperatures from 900 to 1100 °C. Meyer and Fowler [90] were not able to synthesize fully stoichiometric HA even when they tried to produce stoichiometric HA by wet-chemical synthesis at pH 10: their samples were still OH-deficient. The possibility of forming stoichiometric HA in an ECF-like solution (having all ions of ECF at the concentrations stated in Table 1) at 37 °C and pH 7.4 is quite slim, if not impossible. The work of Fowler [88–90] indicates the borderline between the “ceramic synthesis” and “biomimetic synthesis”, i.e. if one has a high-temperature furnace and the ability to maintain water vapor in the furnace at above atmospheric pressure while heating the samples, then synthesizing stoichiometric HA is not a difficult task. Therefore, the term “hydroxyapatite” should be used with extreme caution, since bone apatite contains very small amounts of hydroxyl ions [14,22].

3. Collagen fibrils and biomimetic synthesis

The transmission electron microscope (TEM) with a total magnification of about ×17 was first developed in 1932 by Knoll and Ruska [91,92]. Hard tissues (bones and teeth) were among the first materials examined by transmission electron microscopy (TEM).

Bone and dentin are composite materials composed of water (6 (bone)–10 (dentin) wt.%), collagen fibrils (20 (dentin)–24 (bone)%) and biological nanoapatite (70%) [22]. Biological nanoapatite occupies about 50% of the volumes of bone and dentin [22]. Nanoapatitic crystals of bones were imaged in the 1950s by using TEM. Collagen fibrils were observed to have a width of approximately 80 nm [93,94]. Collagen fibrils displayed unusual bands with an almost constantly repeating period spacing of 67 nm, which was called a collagen banding (or cross-striated) pattern [93,94]. Rouiller et al. [95] studied the structure of dentin using an electron microscope in 1952. These quite exciting early discoveries revealed that bone, which is mechanically strong yet resilient, consists of delicately interwoven collagen fibrils embedded with biological nanoapatites. This brief section of this review will try to answer the following question: where does one stand now in terms of the biomimetic synthesis of collagen–calcium phosphate hybrids by using biomimetalization solutions or media similar in composition to the extracellular fluids?

It seems like most research adopted rapid approaches to produce collagen–calcium phosphate hybrids within short hours, rather than trying to:

- (i) understand how a 50 nm-large biological, significantly (5.8 wt.%) carbonated, ion-substituted (Na^+ , Mg^{2+} and K^+ summing up to 1.28 wt.%), hydrous, and hydroxyl-deficient apatitic particle (formed out of ECF) aligns itself along the inherent and constant period-spacing bands of collagen fibrils or
- (ii) explain how a collagen fibril accommodates and orients biological nanoapatite particles onto itself in ECF.

Modern research, with its easy access to powerful electron and atomic force microscopes, seems to have focused on rapid techniques, which precipitated significant quantities of aggregated apatitic calcium phosphate nano- or microparticles onto the collagen fibrils in a short period of time (produced in Mg^{2+} -, SO_4^{2-} -, and HCO_3^- -free water solutions). Martin and Brown [96] specifically studied the effect of Mg^{2+} on Ap-CaP formation in water at 37.4 °C. Eanes and Hailer [97] provided comprehensive evidence on how these ions affected the crystal size and shape of apatites. Most of the current collagen–apatite hybrid research, which is reviewed below, treated collagen fibrils only as mock templates (or as secondary heterogeneities that happen to be present in the solution) onto which the solid precipitates separating from the solution settled down.

The H_3PO_4 – $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ acid–base neutralization reaction, being a well-established technique to synthesize pure CaPs, is used in most research to produce collagen–CaP composites [98–106]. Another preferred approach to produce such composites was the addition of externally synthesized apatite powders to an aqueous suspension having solubilized collagen in it. This technique was adopted from the conventional ceramic processing method that has been used for producing ceramicware for over millennia [107–122]. A significant number of studies have employed precipitation techniques based on picking one of the high-solubility salts of calcium, such as Ca-chloride, Ca-nitrate, Ca-acetate or Ca-hydroxide, and reacting it with a Na-phosphate, K-phosphate or ammonium phosphate salt in a collagen-containing water solution, again free of Mg^{2+} , HCO_3^- and SO_4^{2-} ions [13,96,97]. In these approaches the pH of the solution is adjusted, when required, by adding aliquots of NaOH or NH_4OH in order to prevent the precipitation of brushite or octacalcium phosphate ($\text{Ca}_8(\text{HPO}_4)_2(\text{PO}_4)_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$) [123–133]. Some molecular simulation attempts have tried to visualize collagen–HA hybrid in pure water by using only Ca^{2+} , PO_4^{3-} and OH^- ions, without taking into account the roles of other biologically relevant ions present in the ECF in forming biological apatites [134,135]. A small number of studies experimented with the

presence of, for example, poly L-aspartic acid (which was used as an oversimplified model of acidic noncollagenous proteins) in processes to precipitate CaP onto collagen fibrils, although the influence of Mg^{2+} and HCO_3^- ions on the mineralization of biological apatites [136–140] was not given due consideration.

The technique of immersing collagen matrices into an SBF [20] solution at physiological temperature set itself apart from the above bulk precipitation techniques as the acellular SBF solutions try to imitate the inorganic ion concentrations of the ECF. SBF-based collagen-coating studies were able to generate CaP layers with physical chemical properties (i.e. carbonated, ion-substituted, non-stoichiometric and hydrous) more similar to those of biological apatites on the collagen fibrils [141–145]. One should note here that, while SBF solutions that are HCO_3^- -deficient (i.e. 4.2 mM [20]) deposited apatitic CaP globules $>1 \mu\text{m}$ in diameter and were not able to cover the entire surfaces of the collagen fibrils [141,143], an SBF solution achieving the physiological HCO_3^- concentration (i.e. 27 mM [47,48]) coated the collagen matrix surface entirely and the diameters of the apatitic CaP globules were smaller than $1 \mu\text{m}$ [142]. The role of HCO_3^- and Mg^{2+} concentrations in a biomimetic solution, such as SBF, in affecting the nature of CaP precipitation has been described by Barrere et al. [146] and confirms the above difference observed in collagen matrix/sponge immersion experiments performed by SBFs differing in their bicarbonate contents.

The technique of mineralization reported by Nudelman et al. [140] differs from the techniques of the majority of other studies cited in this section [98–145], particularly in its way of execution (perhaps due to the advantageous use of cryoTEM), in that amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP, $\text{Ca}_x(\text{PO}_4)_y \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$) was observed to form and enter into the collagen fibrils. Nudelman et al. [140] also claimed, with convincing experimental support coming from their high-resolution cryoTEM images, that mineralization occurred exclusively inside the fibrils, with Ap-CaP crystals then forming from that ACP precursor. Furthermore, the much earlier work of Hohling et al. [147,148] had already reported dot-like, amorphous-looking CaP nuclei with diameters in the vicinity of 3 nm (similar to those synthesized by Nudelman et al. [140]), mineralizing within human collagen fibrils.

The rest of the studies cited in this section were not able to detect and report the initial stage(s) of mineralization since they were mostly aimed at blending HA nanocrystals with collagen fibrils. The nucleation of crystalline Ap-CaP in aqueous solutions is preceded by the formation of ACP. Abbona and Baronnet [149], Brecevic et al. [150] and Christoffersen et al. [151] reported such early forming (i.e. within the first few minutes of synthesis) ACP nanoparticles by using TEM. If such early forming ACP nanoparticles were not intentionally stabilized by adding Mg^{2+} , pyrophosphate ($\text{P}_2\text{O}_7^{4-}$) [84,152] or carbonate (HCO_3^-) ions to the synthesis media, then they transformed into crystalline octacalcium phosphate and/or non-stoichiometric Ap-CaP with an increase in aging time, even in their native precipitation solutions [153–161]. Hohling et al.'s [147,148] studies from the 1970s, which detected very small ACP nuclei forming on collagen fibrils, are again of significant importance today thanks to the recent reminder given by Nudelman et al. [140].

A few procedures for the preparation of biomimicking solutions are provided in Table 2. These solutions [162] were named saline ionic essentials medium (SIEM), and can be prepared in two different versions: as SIEM-*n*, which is a solution of neutral pH (7–7.5), and as SIEM-*b*, which is a basic solution of pH 12. Both solutions, which are calcium- and phosphorus-free, are quite simple to prepare. If the strict prevention of bacterial growth (due to contamination from the ordinary laboratory environment) in the SIEM-*n* solution becomes an issue, then one may easily dissolve 100 mg l^{-1} NaN_3 (sodium azide) in the solution during its preparation. SIEM-*n*

Table 2

Examples of simple solutions partially mimicking the inorganic ion composition of ECF (ion concentrations are in mM) [162].

Solution	Na ⁺	K ⁺	Mg ²⁺	Ca ²⁺	HPO ₄ ²⁻	HCO ₃ ⁻	Cl ⁻	SO ₄ ²⁻	Chemical (g l ⁻¹)	SIEM- <i>n</i>	SIEM- <i>b</i>	Amor-CaP	Crypt-CaP
SIEM- <i>n</i>	123	5	1.5	–	–	27	103	0.5	NaCl	5.552	5.552	5.552	5.552
SIEM- <i>b</i>	142	5	1.5	–	–	–	103	0.5	KCl	0.373	0.373	0.373	0.373
Amor-CaP	133	5	1.5	12.5	5	27	103	0.5	MgCl ₂ ·6H ₂ O	0.305	0.305	0.305	0.305
Crypt-CaP	133	5	1.5	12.5	5	27	128	0.5	NaHCO ₃	2.268	–	2.268	2.268
									Na ₂ SO ₄	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071
									Na ₂ HPO ₄	–	–	0.710	0.710
									NaOH	–	1.840	–	–
									Ca metal	–	–	0.501	–
									CaCl ₂ ·2H ₂ O	–	–	–	1.838

contains HCO₃⁻ at the concentration identical to that of ECF, whereas the SIEM-*b* solution is carbonate-free but matches the ion concentrations of ECF perfectly.

SIEM-*n* and SIEM-*b* solutions (or volumetric mixtures thereof to further adjust their Na⁺ (i.e. 123 < Na⁺ < 142) and HCO₃⁻ (0 < HCO₃⁻ < 27) concentrations) can, for instance, be used for soaking (at 37 °C) the collagen matrices or fibrils prior to calcification/mineralization with the purpose of impregnating their surfaces with the biologically relevant ions the solutions contain. Such studies are absent in the relevant literature. Pre-boiled, 18.2 MΩ deionized water and chemicals of the highest possible purity should be used in preparing the SIEM-*n* and SIEM-*b* solutions. These solutions may help to inspire research using simple-to-prepare physiological media. SIEM-*n* and SIEM-*b* solutions can also be used, for instance, for the quantitative determination of the amounts of Ca²⁺ and/or HPO₄²⁻ ions leached out from soluble CaPs or bioglasses under biomimicking conditions.

SIEM-*n* and SIEM-*b* are not calcification solutions, though the solutions named as Amor-CaP and Crypt-CaP in Table 2 [162] are modified SIEM solutions with the power of calcification/mineralization of either amorphous CaP or cryptocrystalline CaP. In the case of 1 l of Amor-CaP solution (which contains 5 mM HPO₄²⁻), if one adds 0.501 g of Ca metal (12.5 mM) into the solution at the last step [162], followed by 30 min of mild stirring at 37 °C and pH 10, amorphous CaP nanoparticles form, as shown in the scanning electron microscopy (SEM) photomicrograph of Fig. 1a. On the other hand, if one adds 1.838 g (12.5 mM) of CaCl₂·2H₂O to 1 l of Crypt-CaP solution (which also contains 5 mM HPO₄²⁻) at the last step, followed by 30 min of mild stirring at 37 °C and pH 7 [162], nanoparticles of cryptocrystalline CaP form, as shown in Fig. 1b. Figs. 1a and 1b were recorded at the same magnification [162]. The pH values mentioned above were autogenous and did not involve any base/acid additions to the solutions during mineralization. These procedures can serve as simple examples for converting the SIEM-*n* solution into a mineralization/calcification solution(s).

In summary, the success of the biomimetic synthesis of load-bearing calcium phosphate–collagen hybrids presently seems to depend on (i) the hierarchical formation of ACP nanoparticles on or along the collagen fibrils (the work of Hohling et al. [147,148]) and (ii) the proper inhibition of the growth of nanoparticles and the minimization of nanoparticle aggregation (the work of Fleisch [152]). More studies like that of Reid et al. [163] will surely be needed to determine (and learn from) the role played, for instance, by sugars such as glycosaminoglycans in limiting the calcium phosphate biomineralization at the organic fibril–calcium phosphate interface on the nanoscale architecture of biological collagen fibrils, as originally observed in the 1950s.

4. Ringer's physiological saline and lactated Ringer's solution

The classical literature (from the 1880s to the 1960s) is rich in significant publications on the formulation or development of precipitate-free calcification or biomineralization solutions mimicking the compositions of physiological fluids, concurrent with advances in cell biology within the same timeframe. These solutions are reviewed in this and the following sections.

Most contemporary bioceramic research (from the 1960s to date) did not initially set its purpose to devise a bioceramic synthesis process that starts with a precipitate-free (to the naked eye) aqueous mother liquor which is supersaturated with respect to the precipitation of Na⁺, K⁺, Mg²⁺, Zn²⁺-doped, carbonated and, as a consequence, calcium- and OH⁻-deficient para- or cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP. Most contemporary research has refrained from using a simple saline, such as the Ringer's physiological saline [54–56], as its main synthesis medium. This review will, therefore, look at the gap between today's CaP research, which employs high-purity water in syntheses rather than biomineralization or physiological salines, developed almost 60 to 130 years ago.

Ringer experimented with the effects of various constituents of blood on the contractions of the frog's excised heart and conducted

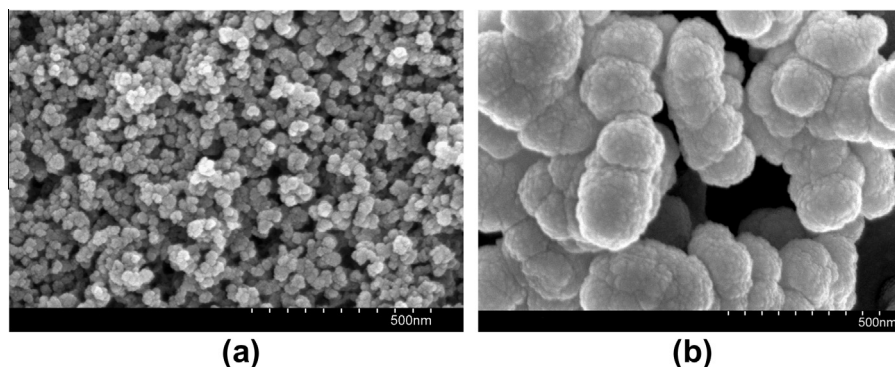


Fig. 1. SEM photomicrographs of samples synthesized in the (a) Amor-CaP and (b) Crypt-CaP solutions of Table 2.

Table 3a
Compositions of ECF vs. inorganic physiological/biomineralization media (ions in mM).

	Na ⁺	K ⁺	Mg ²⁺	Ca ²⁺	HPO ₄ ²⁻	HCO ₃	Cl ⁻	SO ₄ ²⁻
ECF [9]	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	27	103	0.5
Ringer [54–56]	113.6	1.88	–	1.08	–	2.38	115.3	–
Locke [168]	156.38	5.63	–	2.16	–	2.38	163.95	–
Ringer lactate [164]	130.66	4.02	–	1.4	–	–	109.48	–
Tyrode [198]	149.12	2.68	0.53	1.8	0.33	11.9	144.23	–
KHB [199]	143.4	5.88	1.25	2.52	1.18	25	128.2	1.25
EBSS [200]	143.6	5.37	0.83	1.8	1.04	26.2	125.3	0.83
HBSS [208]	141.6	5.81	0.81	1.26	0.78	4.065	144.8	0.81
Eagle's MEM [264]	140.9	5.4	1	1.8	1.1	23.8	126	–
DMEM [268]	127	5.33	0.81	1.8	0.906	44.05	90.8	–
ACP [270]	127	5.33	0.81	2.262	0.906	44.05	93.4	–
Bachra [292,294]	145	5	0–10	3.75	1.67	22–110	133	–
SBF [20]	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	4.2	147.8	0.5
SBF-T [47,48]	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	27	125	0.5
SBF-H [325]	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	27	103	0.5
SBF-L [64]	142	5	1.5	2.5	1	27	103	0.5
Synthetic urine [395]	111.09	42.04	3.2	4.43	20.58	–	134.12	16.19
Artificial saliva [400]	11.88	5.36	–	5.41	5	–	23.02	0.02

(1) RLS also contains 28 mM Na-l-lactate (NaCH₃CH(OH)COO); HBSS contains 0.42 mM Na₂HPO₄ and 0.44 mM KH₂PO₄; DMEM and Eagle's MEM solutions also contain amino acids, vitamins and glucose (not shown here); the synthetic urine recipe also contains 18.69 mM NH₄Cl, 416.3 mM urea, 1 g l⁻¹ creatinine and 10 g l⁻¹ tryptic soy broth; the artificial saliva formulation contains 0.02 mM Na₂S-9H₂O and 1 g l⁻¹ urea.

(2) KHB: Krebs–Henseleit buffer; EBSS: Earle's balanced salt solution; HBSS: Hanks' balanced salt solution; ACP: amorphous calcium phosphate solution; SBF: simulated/synthetic body fluid; SBF-T: SBF–50 mM Tris–27 mM HCO₃; SBF-H: SBF–50 mM HEPES–27 mM HCO₃; SBF-L: SBF–22 mM Na-l-lactate–27 mM HCO₃.

Table 3b
Preparation details of select inorganic physiological/biomineralization media (amounts in g l⁻¹).

	Ringer	Locke	RLS	Tyrode	KHB	EBSS	HBSS	Eagle	DMEM	ACP	Bachra	SBF	SBF-T	SBF-H	SBF-L
NaCl	6.5	9	6	8	6.92	6.8	8	6.8	4.79	4.79	6.993	8.036	6.546	5.4	5.26
KCl	0.14	0.42	0.3	0.2	0.35	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.397	0.397	0.373	0.225	0.373	0.225	0.373
CaCl ₂	0.12	0.24	0.155	0.2	0.28	0.2	0.14	0.2	0.2	–	0.416	0.292	–	0.292	–
CaCl ₂ ·2H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.332	–	–	0.368	–	0.368
MgCl ₂	–	–	–	0.05	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.095 to 0.95	–	–	–	–
MgCl ₂ ·6H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.2	–	0.1655	–	0.311	0.305	0.311	0.305
MgSO ₄	–	–	–	–	–	0.1	–	–	0.1	–	–	–	–	–	–
MgSO ₄ ·7H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	0.15	–	0.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Na ₂ SO ₄	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.071
NaHCO ₃	0.2	0.2	–	1	2.1	2.2	0.342	2	3.7	3.7	1.85 to 9.24	0.355	2.268	0.74	2.268
Na ₂ CO ₃	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.05	–
NaH ₂ PO ₄	–	–	–	0.04	–	0.125	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
NaH ₂ PO ₄ ·H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.125	0.125	–	–	–	–	–
NaH ₂ PO ₄ ·2H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
KH ₂ PO ₄	–	–	–	–	0.16	–	0.06	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Na ₂ HPO ₄	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.237	–	–	–	–
Na ₂ HPO ₄ ·2H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.06	–	–	–	–	–	0.178	–	0.178
K ₂ HPO ₄ ·3H ₂ O	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.23	–	0.23	–
Na-l-lactate	–	–	3.138	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.465
1 M lactic acid	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.5 ml
Tris	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6.06	6.06	–	–
HEPES	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.96	5.96	–	–	–	–	11.93	–
1 M HCl	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	40 ml	40 ml	–	–
1 M NaOH	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.8 ml	–

CaCl₂·2H₂O, CaCl₂·6H₂O, MgCl₂·6H₂O or NaH₂PO₄·H₂O can be used in place of the similar chemicals shown above, upon recalculating the specific amounts.

Lactated Ringer's solution (RLS) contains 28 mM Na-l-lactate (i.e. NaCH₃CH(OH)COO).

The inorganic compartment of DMEM solutions contains 1 × 10⁻⁴ mM Fe(NO₃)₃·9H₂O.

Eagle's MEM and DMEM solutions contain amino acids, vitamins and glucose (not shown here); they may or may not be buffered with HEPES.

The numbers in this table are taken from the articles cited in Table 3a for the same solutions shown in the top row.

a number of experiments in an attempt to isolate the individual constituents that were most crucial to sustaining the physiological activity of the heart muscle [56]. Ringer's papers read more like an experimental diary and explanation of experiments performed. His papers should inspire today's graduate students on how to write a laboratory notebook. Throughout his work [54–56], Ringer established the importance of aqueous sodium, potassium, calcium, chlorine and bicarbonate ions in preparing a synthetic saline solution which would eventually be able to maintain the normal heart-beat form [164,165]. A well-written synopsis of Ringer's

physiological work is given by Lockwood [166]: “An excised frog's heart ceased to beat and became insensitive to stimulation some 20–30 min after transfer to NaCl isotonic with the blood; but addition of CaCl₂ to the solution resulted in the resumption of a spontaneous, though abnormal, beat. The inclusion of KCl neutralized the excessive contracture in the NaCl–CaCl₂ mixture and the heartbeat was then normal for some hours. Buffering the medium with NaHCO₃ further prolonged the activity of the heart.”

Ringer's physiological saline is prepared by dissolving four simple inorganic salts in water: 6.5 g l⁻¹ NaCl, 0.14 g l⁻¹ KCl, 0.12 g l⁻¹

CaCl₂ (can be exchanged with less hygroscopic CaCl₂·2H₂O) and 0.2 g l⁻¹ NaHCO₃ [56,166]. Ringer's contemporary, Locke [167], was also developing saline solutions that could keep animal tissues alive. Today, Ringer's physiological saline can also be prepared in deionized water by purchasing ¼-strength tablets carrying his name.¹ In order to prepare full-strength Ringer's saline (with a final pH of 7), one adds eight ¼-strength tablets into 1 l of water. However, upon dissolving eight Ringer tablets in 1 l water, one actually gets the Locke's modification (to the Ringer's saline) [168], with the composition of 9.0 g l⁻¹ NaCl, 0.42 g l⁻¹ KCl, 0.24 g l⁻¹ CaCl₂ and 0.2 g l⁻¹ NaHCO₃, but not the original Ringer's physiological saline. This must be noted as an ambiguity. The compositions of Ringer's and Locke's solutions are given in Table 3.

By the early twentieth century, as knowledge of the fundamentals of diffusion and dissociation of ions developed, the physiological importance of electrolytes to cellular activity was recognized [164,169]. As intravenous crystalloid solutions were developed, Ringer's solution was adapted for this purpose [164]. There have been a number of modifications to the constituents of RLS (also called lactated Ringer's solution), most notably by Hartmann and Senn [170] and Darrow and Yannet [171]. The current composition of "lactated Ringer's injection" is 130 mM Na⁺, 4 mM K⁺, 1.4 mM Ca²⁺, 109 mM Cl⁻ and 28 mM Na-L-lactate, at pH 6.5 [164]. The use of RLS as an adjunct to the use of whole blood for the resuscitation of patients in hemorrhagic shock is well established, in addition to its use in soft tissue injuries, burns and operative trauma [172,173]. On the other hand, Ringer's solution encountered in the CaP-related literature has mostly been limited to its use as a physiological saline for testing the dissolution, stability or degradability (typically at 37 °C) of orthopedic cements [174–180], various CaP bioceramics [181–186] and CaP-coated metals [187–196].

It is not easy to answer the question why research (with the notable exception of MacConaill [197]) does not use Ringer's physiological saline in CaP synthesis as an aqueous synthesis medium in place of distilled or deionized water. There happened to be some confusion regarding the exact compositions of Ringer's saline and lactated Ringer's solution. For example, Jun et al. claimed to use Ringer's solution in both of their studies [182,183], but the solution tabulated did not have the composition of Ringer's solution. Alkhateeb and Virtanen [192], in their study, named a solution containing phosphate and magnesium ions as Ringer's solution, although Ringer's solution does not contain these ions. Rajeswari et al. [187,191] prepared a so-called Ringer's solution which lacked NaHCO₃ while having Na⁺, K⁺ and Ca²⁺ concentrations – rather resembling those of Locke's modification of Ringer's solution. Table 3 is provided to clarify these issues, and the author recommends the comprehensive paper of Lockwood [166] as a reference for the Ringer's physiological saline recipe and its successive derivatives, in case access to original articles of Ringer is a challenge.

5. Metastable calcium phosphate solutions

A summary of the partial history of the development of physiological salines and biomineralization media suitable for the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates and calcium carbonates is given in Tables 3a and 3b.

5.1. Tyrode's saline

The solution formulation developed by Tyrode [198] in 1910 accomplished two things simultaneously: (i) it introduced Mg²⁺ ions (0.53 mM) to saline solutions and (ii) it increased the HCO₃⁻

concentration to 11.9 mM (Table 3a). The HCO₃⁻ concentrations of the previous Ringer's and Locke's solutions were the same, i.e. 2.38 mM. This author was unable to find any studies which used Tyrode's saline as a medium for the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates.

5.2. Krebs–Henseleit buffer (KHB)

The physiological saline formulation published in 1932 by Krebs and Henseleit [199] increased the HCO₃⁻ concentration to 25 mM, the Mg²⁺ concentration to 1.25 mM, the Ca²⁺ concentration to 2.52 mM and the K⁺ concentration to 5.88 mM, and, more importantly, added phosphate ions at a concentration of 1.18 mM and SO₄²⁻ ions at a concentration of 1.25 mM (Table 3a). The composition of this physiological saline, KHB, represented an approximation to the composition of human blood plasma. KHB seems to be one of the earliest metastable, supersaturated (with respect to the precipitation of carbonated and ion-substituted apatitic CaP) calcium phosphate solutions. KHB has a Ca/P molar ratio of 2.136. It was not surprising at all to see precise numerical tables for the composition of human blood plasma and serum later (in 1950) contributed by Krebs [9], indicative of the immense knowledge Krebs had accrued in this field. The concentrations of the inorganic constituents and those of the amino acids of human blood plasma were tabulated by Krebs [9] in a review article.

KHB is commercially available today in powder form, which requires the further, separate additions of both CaCl₂·2H₂O and NaHCO₃ salts during the solution preparation using water. Krebs–Henseleit buffer should not be confused with Krebs–Ringer bicarbonate buffer, also available from a number of commercial vendors, which has reduced concentrations of Mg²⁺ and HCO₃⁻ and is Ca-free. Solutions such as KHB are also known as balanced salt solutions, and are used by medical researchers in tissue culture studies to maintain the tissue medium within the physiological pH range and supply essential inorganic ions. Most of the time, such balanced salt solutions are supplemented with glucose to provide energy to the cultured tissues. This is why the majority of media shown in Tables 3a and 3b were originally developed to have 1–2 g l⁻¹ glucose in their formulations [166].

Unfortunately, finding any studies which used KHB as the CaP synthesis/biomineralization medium is difficult, if not impossible. This may point to a gap present between medical research and materials science research.

5.3. Earle's balanced salt solution (EBSS)

The isotonic (i.e., having the same osmotic pressure as blood) saline solution published in 1943 by Earle [200] reduced the K⁺, Mg²⁺, Ca²⁺, HPO₄²⁻, Cl⁻ and SO₄²⁻ concentrations of the KHB solution and slightly increased the HCO₃⁻ concentration to 26.2 mM (from 25 mM of KHB). The reductions achieved in K⁺, HPO₄²⁻, Cl⁻ and SO₄²⁻ and the slight increase in HCO₃⁻ concentration rendered the composition of the EBSS much closer to that of ECF (Tables 1 and 3a). Nevertheless, the significant reductions in the Ca²⁺ (from 2.52 to 1.8 mM) and Mg²⁺ (from 1.25 to 0.83 mM) concentrations of EBSS, with respect to those of KHB, may be deemed as steps taken backwards to the Tyrode solution. Apparently, Earle did not report any intention, in his studies, of developing a solution to mimic the ion concentrations of ECF, even though he and his co-workers could easily have done so [201,202]. A number of different modifications or derivatives of the original EBSS formulation are also available today from commercial vendors of balanced salt solutions.

Termine and Eanes [203] used EBSS as the physiological medium for the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphate nanoparticles at physiological pH (7.4) and temperature (37 °C). This

¹ Ringer's solution tablets, ¼ strength. Available from: <http://www.sigmaaldrich.com>.

study is one of the most important works (since it contains TEM photomicrographs of synthesized CaPs) on the biomimetic synthesis of CaPs using a physiological solution. Most physiological fluids, with ion concentrations more or less similar to that of ECF, have the potential to form carbonated and ion-substituted apatitic or amorphous calcium phosphate *de novo* in the absence of any nucleating or inhibitory agent. Termine and Eanes [203] buffered the EBSS using 25 mM HEPES (2-(4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazinyl)ethane sulphonic acid, $C_8H_{18}N_2O_4S$) at pH 7.4 (and 37 °C), then added the salts of $CaCl_2$ and Na_2HPO_4 at the level of 2.1 mM^2 , in terms of $Ca \times P$ molar product, to initiate the synthesis. It should be noted that the $Ca \times P$ molar product of the original EBSS formulation was only 1.87 mM^2 (Table 3a). Termine and Eanes [203] reported that they formed quite small amounts (only 3–5% of the total calcium and phosphate ions being actually precipitated) of ACP spherules with diameters in the vicinity of 100 nm within the first 24 h of aging their solution at 37 °C. In a follow-up study published in 1976, Eanes [204], by pursuing the biomimetic synthesis using a HEPES-buffered EBSS-like medium, further elaborated on the experimental conditions which cause the transformation of ACP spherules into needle-like cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP crystals. The high-resolution TEM photomicrographs provided in both studies [203,204] should guide CaP research interested in the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates in the future. The hydrothermal transformation (or maturation) of ACP into cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP is beyond the scope of this review; a review of this topic may be found elsewhere [84].

Unfortunately, work using EBSS as the medium to synthesize calcium phosphates is not voluminous. Tuck et al. [205] investigated the dissolution and hydration of silicon-stabilized α -tricalcium phosphate (α -TCP, α - $Ca_3(PO_4)_2$) samples in a commercially available EBSS solution. Since α -TCP hydrolyzes readily in deionized water or 0.9% NaCl, 0.5–3.5% Na_2HPO_4 or SBF solutions, it would also hydrolyze and dissolve in the chosen EBSS solution by reprecipitating into Ca-deficient, ion-substituted and carbonated Ap-CaP [206]. Shadanbaz et al. [207] only used EBSS as a corrosion test medium for their uncoated or CaP-coated Mg metal samples and did not provide any chemical analysis results for the CaPs formed on the sample surfaces upon immersion in the EBSS.

5.4. Hanks' balanced salt solution (HBSS)

Hanks' balanced salt solution (HBSS) [208,209], in comparison to KHB, reduced the HCO_3^- concentration sharply to 4.065 mM, reduced the Ca^{2+} concentration to 1.26 mM, while significantly increasing that of Cl^- to 144.8 mM. Readers should be alert to the fact that commercial vendors offer dozens of variations of the HBSS solution, which may even come in calcium-, magnesium- or bicarbonate-free forms, while keeping the same name. The original HBSS solution was also not HEPES-buffered in contrast to what is occasionally sold nowadays. One may thus mention today of an inflation of physiological salines available through commercial vendors, and this may also make it quite difficult to compare the results obtained in various studies performed with different derivatives of the HBSS solution and its derivatives in the future.

If one compares, in chronological order, the four physiological salines reviewed so far in this chapter, namely Tyrode (1910), KHB (1932), EBSS (1943) and HBSS (1949), it can be seen that the Ca/P molar ratios of these solutions drop from 5.45 (Tyrode) to 2.136 (KHB) to 1.731 (EBSS) and finally to 1.615 (HBSS). Hanks and Wallace [208] article did not mention any aim of developing a saline that would mimic the composition of the inorganic ion concentrations of blood plasma.

The literature suffers from controversy about the actual HCO_3^- concentration of HBSS and, as exemplified in the literature review below, almost all researchers assumed its HCO_3^- concentration as

4.2 mM when preparing their own HBSS solutions. In order to resolve this issue, it is necessary here to quote directly from their 1949 article how Hanks and Wallace originally described the $NaHCO_3$ addition to their solution [208]: “The solution was autoclaved in 20 cc amounts in screw cap Pyrex bottles. One half cubic centimeter of autoclaved 1.4% (isotonic) $NaHCO_3$ was added to each bottle and the solution stored in the refrigerator for CO_2 equilibration to pH 7.6 before final tightening of the caps.”

The above-mentioned 1.4% $NaHCO_3$ solution contains 14 mg of $NaHCO_3$ in each milliliter, which corresponds to 7 mg in half of a cubic centimeter of the solution. Upon adding 0.5 ml of $NaHCO_3$ solution to 20 ml of $NaHCO_3$ -free HBSS, the total volume of the solution becomes 20.5 ml. The 7 mg of $NaHCO_3$ in the 20.5 ml corresponds to 0.342 $g\ l^{-1}$, which is then equal to 4.065 mM HCO_3^- . The HCO_3^- concentration of HBSS in Table 3a is indicated as 4.065 mM, since only the original articles of the inventors/developers of such solutions or media are reviewed herein. Quite a lot of research articles published, which refer to HBSS-like solutions with a bicarbonate concentration of 4.2 mM (or 0.35 $g\ l^{-1}$ of $NaHCO_3$ = 4.166 mM).

The use of HBSS (in conjunction with calcium phosphates) started in 1990, with the study of Huigen et al. [210], who used HBSS as an incubation medium for testing the adsorption-desorption of diphosphonate-Tc(Sn) complexes on β -TCP samples at 37 °C. Kummer and Jaffe [211] simultaneously compared 0.9% NaCl (154 mM NaCl) solution, Ringer's solution and HBSS in monitoring the dissolution-reprecipitation phenomena on plasma-sprayed (mostly with Ap-CaP) Ti-6Al-4V and Co-Cr-Mo alloy samples. HBSS was usually used as a testing/incubation medium for CaP-coated or chemically treated metallic implant materials [212–239], and most of these studies regarded HBSS as an alternative to the EBSS (Earle's balanced salt solution) or SBF (simulated body fluid) solutions in spite of its significant insufficiency in mimicking the composition of ECF. Just like Ringer's saline, the HBSS solution was also used to perform stability and dissolution tests on CaP bioceramics (brushite, apatite and TCP), CaP cements based on α -TCP or tetracalcium phosphate ($Ca_4(PO_4)_2O$) and bioglasses at room temperature or 37 °C [240–263]. This review could not find any research that used HBSS as a solution to synthesize calcium phosphate powders.

5.5. Eagle's minimum essential medium (Eagle's MEM)

The first physiological solution containing amino acids, vitamins, glucose and inorganic ions simultaneously (in contrast to amino acid-free Ringer's, Tyrode's, KHB, EBSS or HBSS solutions) was suggested in 1959 by Eagle [264–266]. Eagle called this saline as the minimum essential medium and since then it is abbreviated as MEM [264]. Eagle's MEM formulation contained 13 L-amino acids (i.e. arginine, cystine, glutamine, histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, tyrosine and valine), eight vitamins (i.e. choline, folic acid, inositol, nicotinamide, pantothenate, pyridoxal, riboflavin and thiamine) and glucose. The amino acids, vitamins and glucose were added to keep the cells alive in this physiological saline solution.

The inorganic ions compartment of Eagle's MEM solution is shown in Table 3a. The development of such solutions or media provided researchers with the ability to perform cell culture analyses in almost every laboratory around the globe. The inorganic electrolyte compartment of Eagle's MEM tried to remedy the deficiencies presented by the HBSS formulation, by increasing the HCO_3^- , Mg^{2+} , Ca^{2+} , and HPO_4^{2-} concentrations to the levels of the blood plasma, while slightly decreasing the K^+ and Cl^- concentrations to the level of EBSS and blood plasma. In a sense, as seen in Table 3a, Eagle's MEM solution resembled EBSS.

The essence of the matter here is that any researcher can immerse or soak any synthetic biometal, bioceramic or biopolymer

sample in any saline solution available for testing their physical properties [174–196,212–263] but, in order to keep the cells alive, spreading, proliferating or differentiating on the surfaces of the immersed biomaterials, all of the ion concentrations in the immersion medium must be quite close to the composition of ECF [267]. Alpha-MEM is a commercially available enriched cell culture medium version of Eagle's original MEM solution that contains 21 amino acids and a number of additional vitamins.²

5.6. Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM)

Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium [268,269] is another cell culture solution, with a much higher HCO_3^- concentration (44.05 mM) than Eagle's original MEM formulation, as shown in Table 3a. DMEM media are available today from commercial vendors (in either liquid or powder form) and there are quite a number of variants of DMEM available, mainly in forms containing high, low or no glucose at all, with or without glutamine, with or without Na-pyruvate, with or without phenol red, and with or without HEPES.² As a consequence, it may not be appropriate to assume that the findings of one study which used a specific DMEM solution containing glucose, glutamine, Na-pyruvate and HEPES will be the same as or similar to the findings of another study utilizing another DMEM solution without one or more of these additives. Therefore, it is important in any publication to include the catalog number assigned by the manufacturer to the specific DMEM used. Calcium phosphate researchers usually use one of the above media (i.e. α -MEM or DMEM) when they need to perform in vitro cell culture tests on their synthetic biomaterial samples.

The solution named ACP in Table 3a is a completely inorganic solution, free of amino acids, vitamins, glucose and HEPES, that was developed recently [270]. The ACP solution is somewhat similar to the inorganic ion compartment of a DMEM solution. The ACP solution has its Ca^{2+} concentration increased to 2.262 mM so that, without changing the DMEM's HPO_4^{2-} concentration (i.e. 0.905 mM), the Ca/P molar ratio of the new solution is adjusted to 2.50, with a Ca \times P molar product of 2.047 mM^2 and an ionic strength of 0.141 M.

This Ca \times P molar product, sometimes called ionic product (IP), can be related, by Eq. (2), to the relative supersaturation (σ) that the synthesis solution possesses, where K_s° is the solubility product of the solid phase separating from the mother liquor and ν is the total number of ions in its chemical formula [271]. Using such a simplified formula as

$$\sigma = (\text{IP}/K_s^\circ)^{1/\nu} - 1 \quad (2)$$

could be risky, especially when the solid separating from the mother liquor is non-stoichiometric and ion-substituted, and when its solubility product (K_s°) as well as its chemical formula (therefore ν) have not yet been determined experimentally. The literature using such simple formulas, which assume that the precipitating phase is stoichiometric HA ($\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$), is abundant. Moreover, IP and K_s° values imply that each ion is free and behaves individually, with no interactions whatsoever with other ions present in the solution. It is theoretically impossible to precipitate stoichiometric HA if the mother liquor is a physiological solution or a biomineralization medium containing several biologically relevant ions simultaneously. The solution of Termine and Eanes [203], mentioned in Section 5.3 above, was 25 mM HEPES-buffered, had a Ca \times P molar product of 2.1 mM^2 and needed subsequent CaCl_2 and Na_2HPO_4 additions to precipitate small quantities of ACP nanospheres. The ACP solution with a Ca \times P molar product (2.047 mM^2) similar to that of Termine and Eanes [203], on the

other hand, needs no salt additions to start the synthesis of ACP, and its pH buffering ability comes from the use of 44.05 mM HCO_3^- , identical to that of DMEM solutions. This precipitate-free (to the naked eye) solution has the ability of in situ precipitating X-ray-amorphous, monodisperse nanospheres (105–170 nm diameter) of ACP when simply heated and stirred at 65 °C for 1 h (Fig. 2a). The synthesis of X-ray-amorphous CaP precipitates in the ACP solution at 37 °C takes a little over 1 h and the ACP solution is prepared by dissolving NaCl, KCl, $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{NaH}_2\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ and NaHCO_3 salts at room temperature, in the order given, in pre-boiled deionized water to a total volume of 1 l (Table 3b) [270]. Fig. 2b depicts the X-ray diffraction (XRD) and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) data of the hydrated ACP spherules, which were also found to be magnesium- and carbonate-doped. These Mg-stabilized ACP nanospheres synthesized using the ACP solution (Tables 3a and 3b) did not transform into cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP even after 1 week of soaking in their mother liquors at 37 °C, in contrast to what was reported by Greenfield et al. [272]. The use of EBSS by Termine and Eanes [203] and the ACP solution of Table 3a [270] are examples of the synthesis of calcium phosphates in physiological solutions or media.

DMEM solutions, which contain amino acids and vitamins, were tested as media of mineralization for a number of synthetic biomaterials. Cisar et al. [273] increased the calcium and phosphate ion concentration in their DMEM solution to 10 mM (i.e. a 5.5X increase in the Ca^{2+} concentration of the original DMEM) by adding calcium chloride and sodium phosphate salts, then immersed apatite powders in this solution for up to about 1 month (at 37 °C); they reported the formation of nanospheres of CaP (confirmed by their infrared spectroscopy data). More recently, Rao et al. [274], following the previously published procedure of Cisar et al. [273], increased the calcium ion concentration of DMEM up to 10 mM; soaked collagen–chitosan hybrids (hydrogels) in the resultant solutions and only reported calcium deposition. Rao et al. [274] study did not report any infrared or XRD data to identify the CaP phase(s) forming on the hydrogels.

Gomes et al. [275], Mandel and Tas [276] and Lee et al. [277] suggested using DMEM as an alternative to the SBF solutions in the biomimetic processing of CaP specimens at 37 °C and pH 7.4. Lutusanova et al. [278,279] soaked bioglass and glass–ceramics in DMEM solution at 37 °C, followed by the microscopic examination of the spherulites (or globules) forming on the sample surfaces. By only reporting energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDXS) data, these studies [277–279] proved that the DMEM solution used was able to cover the bioglass, glass–ceramic or CaP sample surfaces with spherulites of a CaP phase. Nevertheless, none of these reports [277–279] provided any XRD data to ascertain whether the CaP formed on the sample surfaces upon immersion in DMEM was amorphous, cryptocrystalline (i.e. yielding poor-crystallinity XRD patterns incapable of resolving the crystalline HA's quartet of peaks, namely (211), (112), (300) and (202) reflections, over the Cu K_α radiation 2θ range of 30–35°) or crystalline, as well as whether the CaP phase contained any octacalcium phosphate and/or brushite or not. Declercq et al. [280], on the other hand, had previously given quite a proficient example of how to use experimental XRD and FTIR techniques to monitor the extent of biomineralization (or calcification) on rat osteoblast cells (without any soaked biomaterial) kept in a cell culture medium.

Immersion tests which used HEPES-free DMEM solutions containing phenol red instead of SBF have been performed only on Ti6Al4V alloy substrates, not on pure Ti samples. Faure et al. [281] soaked NaOH-treated (10 M NaOH solution, 60 °C for 24 h) Ti6Al4V substrates in a DMEM solution (free of HEPES buffer, but containing phenol red and Na-pyruvate) at 37 °C, and reported, using XRD data, that well-crystallized Ap-CaP formed on the substrates. However, the low-magnification SEM photomicrographs provided by Faure

² Available from different commercial vendors specializing in the production of cell culture media. The author abstains from naming any one specific vendor here.

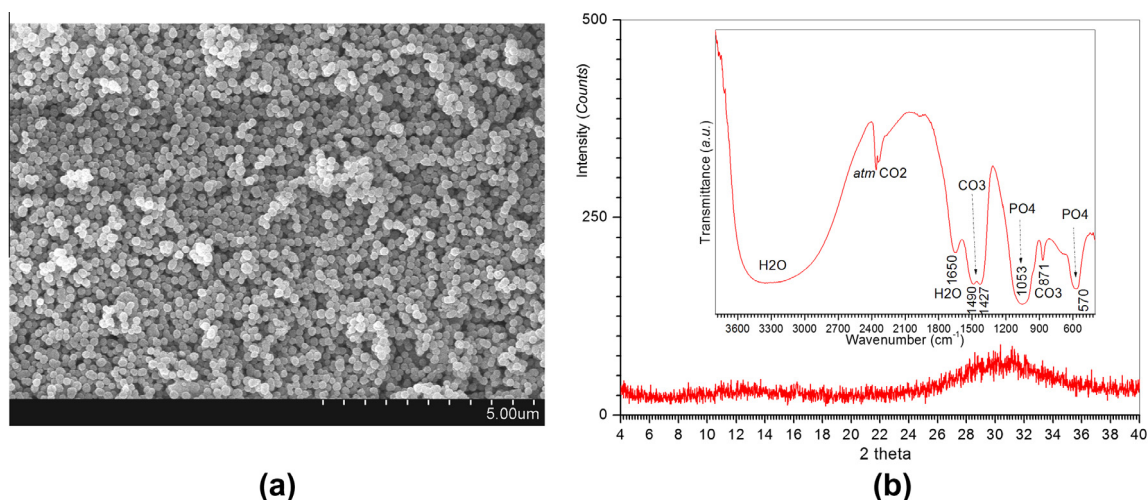


Fig. 2. (a) SEM and (b) XRD–FTIR data of X-ray amorphous CaP powders synthesized in solution ACP of Tables 3a and 3b.

et al. [281] made the detection and differentiation of the morphology of the formed Ap-CaP particles from the texture of the underlying NaOH-treatment layer somewhat difficult. Benhayoune et al. [282,283] soaked Ti6Al4V samples coated with an electrodeposited CaP layer in a DMEM solution (again HEPES-free, but containing Na-pyruvate and phenol red) at 37 °C and observed the formation of new Ap-CaP nuclei on the sample surfaces. HEPES-buffered and phenol red-free DMEM solutions have not yet been used to specifically test pure titanium surfaces.

Fetal bovine serum (FBS) is usually added to DMEM solutions when performing cell culture studies. FBS itself contains amino acids, glucose, proteins, polypeptides and hormones. Liu et al. [284] reported that a HEPES-free physiological medium, namely RPMI-1640 (similar in composition to DMEM solutions but with a significantly lower HCO_3^- concentration of 23.81 mM), was able to form micron-size cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP particles (but not ACP) when heated at 37 °C for 24 h. However, upon adding 10 vol.% FBS to RPMI-1640, the CaP precipitates forming were less than 100 nm in diameter and X-ray-amorphous. The significance of the data of Liu et al. [284] is that it shows the cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP forming tendency of a cell culture medium that is HEPES-free, low in HCO_3^- concentration (with respect to DMEM) and containing amino acids, vitamins and glucose, essentially similar to the DMEM solutions previous research used, in coating Ti alloy substrates [281–283].

In any discussion related to the DMEM solutions, one should note, using the findings of Chaudhary et al. [285], that bone marrow stromal cells cultured in a DMEM or α -MEM solution together with BMP-7 (a bone morphogenetic protein) in situ produces Ap-CaP. This review found that DMEM (or α -MEM), a medium of choice in cell culture studies, has a strong potential for the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates at 37 °C and pH 7.4. This potential of DMEM (or α -MEM) has not yet been fully exploited.

5.7. CaP synthesis in solutions mimicking the composition of ECF

It was reported in 1945 by Greenwald [286] that the solubility of calcium phosphate is measurably increased by the presence of carbonate in its lattice. This explains why non-stoichiometric yet apatitic CaP bioceramics, which undergo resorption under the action of osteoclast cells, are usually carbonated apatites but not carbonate-free, stoichiometric HA [287–289]. The carbonate present as a component could either be exchanged with phosphate

(or hydroxyl) on already formed Ap-CaP crystals or co-precipitated with Ca^{2+} and HPO_4^{2-} from carbonated metastable solutions at or close to the physiological pH of 7.4 [14,44,72]. Gron et al. [287] provided experimental evidence that the solid precipitates formed from metastable aqueous solutions of Ca^{2+} and HPO_4^{2-} (with ionic strengths, i.e. 0.15–0.16 M, close to that of ECF) contained carbonate in proportion to the concentration of HCO_3^- in the solution. It has also been known since 1938 that the solubility of biological or synthetic HA is higher in blood serum (having a 27 mM carbonate ion concentration) than in CO_2 -free aqueous solutions of comparable ionic strength [290]. In the light of the above early knowledge, it is not easy to explain the reasons for the choice of carbonate-deficient Ringer's saline (2.38 mM HCO_3^-) or Hanks' (4.065 mM) solutions in testing the dissolution/stability of HA samples [174–196,212–263].

Bachra et al. [291–293] published, in 1962 and 1963, the synthesis of calcium phosphates at 37 °C and pH 7.3 in solutions partially mimicking (i.e. Mg-free) the inorganic ion concentrations of ECF. Their solutions contained 145 mM Na^+ , 133 mM Cl^- , 5 mM K^+ , 3.75 mM Ca^{2+} , 1.67 mM P and 22 mM HCO_3^- , with an ionic strength of 0.16 M. These solutions were aged statically (i.e. without stirring) in glass flasks at 37 °C for 5–72 h. They noted that the amount of precipitates collected rarely exceeded 10 mg. Bachra et al. [291–293] also repeated the same experiments with solutions containing 110 mM HCO_3^- . ACP was obtained in all of these high $[\text{HCO}_3^-]$ experiments, and the ACP precipitates transformed into cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP when they were kept in contact with their mother solution for several days at 37 °C. This transformation to cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP was probably due to the absence of Mg^{2+} ions in the synthesis solutions. Bachra et al. [291–293] made the important experimental observation that by raising the carbonate level sufficiently (i.e. to 110 mM) they were able to slow down the ACP-to-cryptocrystalline apatite transformation and obtain stable amorphous precipitates. In their follow-up study in 1965, Bachra et al. [294] reported the influence of the presence of Mg^{2+} in such solutions at concentrations of 1, 3 and 10 mM. Bachra et al. [294] also observed a significant decrease in the crystallinity of precipitates upon adding 1 mM Mg^{2+} to the biomimetic solutions, and reported the formation of only ACP precipitates when they increased the concentration of Mg^{2+} to 3 mM and above, while studying the HCO_3^- concentrations of 22 and 110 mM at the increased Mg levels. These were quite important early studies conducted with solutions mimicking the ECF at 37 °C and pH 7.4. Posner et al. [87,295,296] did not perform their

ACP syntheses in solutions simultaneously containing Na^+ , Mg^{2+} , K^+ , Cl^- and HCO_3^- at concentration levels similar to those of bone tissue fluids.

Besides the above significant contributions to the calcium phosphate field, Bachra and his co-workers had published two interesting articles in 1959 on the mineralization of collagen fibrils [297,298]. In comparison to the more recent collagen fiber mineralization research [98–144] cited in above in Section 3, Bachra et al. [297,298] used a calcification solution containing Na^+ , K^+ , Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , HPO_4^{2-} , Cl^- and HCO_3^- (at 22 mM) which tried to mimic the bone tissue fluid (or ECF). They studied the mineralization of collagen fibers (complete with post-treatment chemical analyses) in this solution at 37 °C and pH 7.3, which was previously developed by Goldenberg and Sobel [299] in 1952. Bachra et al. [297,298] reported that the rat-tail tendon and skin acid-soluble collagen fibrils they tested mineralized only poorly, and that the first nuclei forming on collagen could be ACP rather than apatite.

More recently, Nudelman et al. [140] observed, using a powerful transmission electron microscope, the initial formation of ACP on collagen fibrils soaked in polyaspartic acid-containing aqueous but HCO_3^- and Mg-free calcification solutions. Apparently, with today's powerful electron microscopes and their chemical and structural analysis attachments (such as wavelength-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy, EDXS and electron-backscatter diffraction), it would be timely to study the mineralization of collagen fibers soaked at 37 °C and pH 7.4 in metastable calcium phosphate solutions (free of any organic molecules), which simply mimic all the inorganic ion concentrations of the ECF. The resulting phase of ACP, instead of apatite, should not be a surprise in more recent research, since it was reported as long as 54 years ago, though was apparently overlooked. To summarize, the contributions of Bachra et al. [291–294,297,298] to both collagen–CaP biomimetic hybrid processing (1959) and biomimetic CaP synthesis (1962 and 1963) are still of significance today.

Okazaki et al.'s 1982 contribution [300] brought an entirely different physiological saline to the biomimetic CaP processing field, i.e. the dialysate solutions that are produced commercially³ for the artificial kidney systems of dialysis patients. Okazaki et al. [300] prepared metastable physiological solutions based on artificial kidney dialysates and the reported solutions of pH 7.3 closely mimicked the Na^+ , K^+ , Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , Cl^- , HCO_3^- and HPO_4^{2-} concentrations of ECF, without any deficiency in the concentrations of the ions. They used these solutions as an incubation medium (at 37 °C for 1 month) for the carbonated apatite powder samples (250 mg of powder in 100 ml of solution) that they synthesized, and compared the performance of the dialysate solutions with that of distilled water. Okazaki et al. [300] observed and reported a slight yet detectable decrease in the crystallinity (measured by XRD) of carbonated apatite samples soaked at 37 °C in the metastable dialysate solutions for 1 month vs. those soaked in distilled water.

This section may be concluded by the words of Termine et al. [301], published in 1980: “when the *de novo* calcium phosphate synthesis was performed at 37 °C and pH 7.4 in synthetic extracellular fluids (such as EBSS), apatitic crystal formation proceeds from an amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP) precursor at ionic Ca^{2+} and HPO_4^{2-} concentrations close to those found in physiological fluids”.

5.8. CaP processing via simulated body fluids

Kokubo et al. formulated the simulated body fluid (SBF) solution in 1987 [302]. This early version did not contain any SO_4^{2-} ions and was buffered using Tris–HCl pair (50 mM Tris) at the pH 7.25

(36.5 °C). The solution was developed as a medium to test the in situ three-point bending strength of glass–ceramics and was prepared by dissolving NaCl, NaHCO_3 , KCl, $\text{K}_2\text{HPO}_4 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and CaCl_2 in water. Tris is the abbreviation for the organic chemical tris-hydroxymethyl-aminomethane, $(\text{HOCH}_2)_3\text{CNH}_2$, which is not present in human metabolism. Kokubo et al. then added Na_2SO_4 to the preparation recipe without changing the other salts, and obtained the formulation labeled SBF in Table 3a [20]. The Na_2SO_4 -added SBF solution was buffered at pH 7.4 instead of 7.25 [302], again by using 50 mM Tris.

Interestingly, the HCO_3^- and Cl^- concentrations of the SBF formulation, of 4.2 (too low) and 148 (too high) mM, respectively [20], were identical with those of HBSS [208]. Kokubo's SBF solution deposited on the substrates (metallic, ceramic, glass or polymer), immersed in it for up to four weeks, poorly crystallized (cryptocrystalline) apatitic calcium phosphate, but not amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP). Kokubo group has published prolifically, since 1990, over 256 articles [303] on their SBF solution. As a result, the 50 mM Tris–HCl-buffered SBF solution with 4.2 mM HCO_3^- and 148 mM Cl^- is currently used in a significant number of research studies as a tool to predict the so-called in vivo bone bioactivity of synthetic biomaterials [304,305]. The SBF solution does not seem to be the most suitable in vitro test medium for the evaluation of in vivo bone bioactivity; for reasons explained by Pan et al. [306] and by Bohner and Lemaître [307].

Tas and Bayraktar [47–49] noted that if one only changes the salt of $\text{K}_2\text{HPO}_4 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ used in preparing the solution of the Kokubo formulation to Na_2HPO_4 or $\text{Na}_2\text{HPO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, the deficiency in HCO_3^- can be totally eliminated (with a final HCO_3^- of 27 mM being possible to attain in the new SBF solution) and the Cl^- concentration can be decreased to 125 mM (similar to those of the KHB [199] and EBSS [200] media) while still using the Tris–HCl pair for pH adjustment at 7.4 (37 °C). This 50 mM Tris-buffered solution with an HCO_3^- concentration of 27 mM is indicated in Tables 3a and 3b as SBF-T [47,48]. It is important to note here that the 40 ml of 1 M HCl added to the solution during preparation (Table 3b) is not reflected in the Cl^- concentrations of the SBF (148 mM) and SBF-T (125 mM) solutions, and that this inevitable HCl addition further increases the Cl^- concentration of the resultant solutions.

During the preparation of Tris-buffered SBF, the addition of Tris (6.06 g l^{-1} or 50 mM), in powder form, instantly increases the solution pH to slightly above 8.5, with an associated onset of solution turbidity. This value is then decreased to 7.4 at 37 °C by slowly adding small aliquots of 1 M HCl (which sum to about 40 ml) to finally obtain a solution that is transparent to the naked eye.

Do such freshly prepared transparent solutions still contain colloidal particles? Oyane et al. [308] found that colloidal particles with diameters in the vicinity of 1 nm were present in Tris–HCl-buffered SBF solutions by using dynamic light scattering. Yin and Stott [309] later elaborated on these experimental findings only by theoretical modeling of those colloidal particles (or Posner's clusters). One weakness of the model of Posner clusters [82,83,308–310], though, is that it does not account for the major dopants Mg^{2+} , Na^+ and HCO_3^- . It is quite difficult, if not impossible, to synthesize Mg^{2+} - and HCO_3^- -free CaP in an SBF-T solution at 37 °C and pH 7.4. Tsuru et al. [311] studied the biomimetic apatite-inducing ability of silica gel samples immersed in 4.2 mM HCO_3^- -containing Tris-buffered SBF solutions, of pH 7.25 [302], with different Ca^{2+} (2.5 and 3.7 mM) and HPO_4^{2-} (1.0 and 1.9 mM) concentrations, and found that increases in both concentrations accelerated the Ap–CaP nucleation rate from the precursor phase of amorphous CaP.

Upon heating 1 l of a freshly prepared Tris–HCl-buffered SBF solution at 37 °C in either a previously unused glass or polycarbonate plastic screw-cap bottle, small amounts of X-ray-amorphous CaP precipitates autogenously form and the amount of precipitates

³ Kindaly I dialysate solution, Fuso Pharmaceutical Industries, Osaka, Japan (based on a private communication with Prof. Emeritus Masayuki Okazaki, Kyoto, Japan, July 2013).

observed increases with ageing time at that temperature [47–49]. This is due to the in situ aggregation and eventual sedimentation of those colloidal particles [308–310,312] that are initially present in the fresh SBF solution with increasing ageing time (at 37 °C), from several days to 1 month. Hashizume et al. [313] recently studied the autogenously formed precipitates of an SBF solution heated to 37 °C and reported that they are ACP at the moment they are formed, in support of the earlier report by Tas [48].

The buffer Tris present in the SBF solution has also been the subject of research since it is able to exert a strong influence on the extent of mineralization. Tris is known to form complexes with various cations, including Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} [314]. Marques et al. [244] and Serro and Saramago [315] reported that in Tris-buffered SBF solutions, unlike in those which were Tris-free, a fraction of the Ca^{2+} ions was bound into a stable solution complex and, consequently, fewer Ca^{2+} ions were available to deposit CaP on the immersed substrates. Moreover, a study by Rohanova et al. [316] stated that the Tris in their SBF solutions was causing increased dissolution of the surface constituents of bioglass and glass–ceramic samples soaked in it, thus leading to the premature crystallization of apatite on sample surfaces, tarnishing the reliability of in vitro bioactivity tests performed with such Tris-buffered SBF solutions. The amount of Tris used in preparing 1 l of an SBF solution is 6.06 g l^{-1} or 50 mM (see Table 3b). This is not a negligible amount, Tris becomes the third most abundant constituent of the SBF solution [20], after 142 mM Na^+ and 148 mM Cl^- . In response to the concerns about the presence of Tris in SBF, $5\times$ [69,146,317–322] and $10\times$ [68,323,324] SBF solutions (free of Tris) were developed, which also possessed an amplified ability to precipitate Ap-CaP on the surfaces of synthetic biomaterials immersed in them either at room temperature (RT) [68] or at 37 °C.

Kokubo group responded to the above-mentioned limitations of the SBF [20,302], which resembled the HBSS, by developing a revised-SBF solution and buffering it by using HEPES ($\text{C}_8\text{H}_{18}\text{N}_2\text{O}_4\text{S}$) in place of Tris. This new solution is labeled as SBF-H in Tables 3a and 3b, and it is able to match the ion concentrations of ECF perfectly [325–327]. However, the SBF-H solution used 11.93 g l^{-1} of HEPES in preparing the new solution, this amount again corresponding to 50 mM. It is important to note that when Termine and Eanes [203] used EBSS as a physiological medium for the biomimetic synthesis of CaPs, they buffered their solution by using 25 mM HEPES. Commercially available DMEM solutions are also buffered using only 25 mM HEPES [276]. Therefore, HEPES in the SBF-H solution (at 50 mM) is again the third most abundant constituent following 142 mM Na^+ and 103 mM Cl^- . In other words, in the SBF, SBF-T and SBF-H solutions the molar ratio of Tris/ Ca^{2+} or HEPES/ Ca^{2+} was set equal to 20, which is a significantly high number. Moreover, Tris and HEPES are not present at all in biological hard tissue fluids. The precipitates forming in SBF, SBF-T and SBF-H solutions (Tables 3a and 3b) at 37 °C and pH 7.4 were directly compared with one another by Jalota et al. [328]. Tris and HEPES are not readily or randomly interchangeable (with one another) buffers in physiological solutions or media in that their ability to keep the HCO_3^- in solution and to form complexes with biologically important ions such as Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} are different [314,329,330].

Attempts to use an SBF solution as the physiological medium to synthesize CaP powders in bulk quantities, at 37 °C and pH 7.4, have been relatively scarce, with the exception of the work of Tas and Bayraktar [47–49] and Landi et al. [50]. The Tris-buffered SBF used in these studies, with a HCO_3^- concentration of 27 mM, was the SBF-T solution shown in Tables 3a and 3b. SBF-T solutions produced amorphous CaP powders with an average particle diameter of 30 nm and were ion-substituted [48]. The SBF-synthesized ACP powders transformed into apatite when heated at 700–900 °C in air and they also possessed the unique ability of

being stable to high-temperature calcinations performed at temperatures in excess of 1300 °C [48]. This is not a peculiar finding since the bones of cadavers recovered from high flame-temperature (1200 °C) and long-burning fires still showed apatite, but not β -TCP, in their XRD patterns [331,332]. Biological apatites are also of interest to forensic science researchers. Tas and Bayraktar [47] experimented with the use of urea in SBF-based biomimetic synthesis of CaPs. Dissolved urea partially decomposed in SBF-T solutions to produce HCO_3^- when the solution temperature reached 37 °C. In another study, Tas and Bayraktar [49] used urea together with its enzyme urease in SBF-T solutions at 37 °C to synthesize Ap-CaP nanoparticles. Enzyme urease catalyzed the decomposition of urea in the SBF-T solution at 37 °C. As a follow-up to the above, Landi et al. [50] independently tested the approach of using SBF-T solutions at 37 °C and pH 7.4 to produce CaP powders, and reported that the carbonated CaP powders (dried at 80 °C for 15 h) possessed a Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) surface area of $160 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$. CaPs synthesized at 37 °C and pH 7.4 in a Tris–HCl-buffered SBF solution were also resistant to thermal decomposition into β -TCP ($\beta\text{-Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$) when heated above 1300 °C [48,50].

Ringer's lactated solution (RLS), also called as lactated Ringer injection, is currently used in hospitals in cases of trauma and resuscitation, as reviewed in Section 4. The composition and constituents of this solution are given in Tables 3a and 3b, respectively. It contains 28 mM Na-L-lactate, but does not contain any Tris or HEPES. There are two isomers of lactate (L and D) [173,333]. L-lactate is a part of normal human metabolism; it is oxidized to pyruvate by the enzyme lactate dehydrogenase and does not activate neutrophils. Neutrophils, being the predominant cells in pus, are recruited to the site of injury within minutes following trauma and are the trademark of acute inflammation [7]. In contrast, D-lactate is not part of normal human metabolism and is not oxidized by lactate dehydrogenase; therefore it accumulates and activates neutrophils. This is why RLS contains Na-L-lactate. This was also why Pasinli et al. [63] and Miller et al. [64] developed a new solution, which had the same inorganic ion concentrations as ECF, by using the Na-L-lactate and lactic acid pair to buffer the SBF-L solution (Tables 3a and 3b) at pH 7.4 and 37 °C. The SBF-L solution contains 22 mM Na-L-lactate, i.e. even less L-lactate than the 28 mM RLS [64,333]. Having physiological solutions or media with an inorganic ion composition mimicking that of ECF (which does not contain 50 mM Tris or 50 mM HEPES) is essential for biomimetic synthesis [334].

It might be appropriate in this section to briefly name and cite select examples of diverse materials the surfaces of which have been altered by using one or the other of SBF solutions given in Tables 3a and 3b: Teflon® [335], cotton [336], cellulose [337,338], CaP-containing calcium sulphate [142], whiskers of β -tricalcium phosphate (TCP), whiskers of biphasic HA/TCP or whiskers of HA [339,340], hydroxyethylmethacrylate (HEMA) [341,342], sodium silicate glasses [343], polyetheretherketone (PEEK) [344], quartz [345], silicon [346,347], chitosan [348], carboxylated polyphosphazene [349], polyethylene glycol [350], zirconium dioxide and aluminum oxide [351], polyethyleneterephthalate (PET) [352], dentin of human tooth [353], Fe_3O_4 (magnetite) [354], polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) [355], silicon carbide [356], titanium oxide [357,358], Ni–Ti alloy [359], silk [360], calcium silicate [361], magnesium silicate [362], calcium titanate [363], carbon nanotubes [364], 45S5 bioglass [365,366], magnesium alloys [367], pure magnesium [368], pectin [369], ethylene–vinyl alcohol (EVOH) with proteins [370] and chitosan/polyethylene glycol (PEG) hydrogels [371].

The SBF solutions proved useful in changing the physicochemical properties of their surfaces upon soaking at 37 °C and pH 7.4. Such alterations in the surface properties do not mean that the above materials (if they are not calcium phosphates at the beginning) then acquired some sort of bioactivity, biocompatibility

or non-cytotoxicity; rather, they gained a new surface simply through a process of carbonated, ion-substituted, non-stoichiometric and cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP deposition (only a few microns thick), which would probably be benign to the initial action of mammalian cells. The biological performance of the above materials can only be assessed after *in vivo* tests. Nevertheless, the only biocompatible and non-cytotoxic mineral the human body uses in non-pathologic formations is carbonated, ion-substituted and Ap-CaP.

Most of the above-mentioned SBF treatments were performed with the intention of coating the surface of a potential synthetic biomaterial with HA. Hydroxyapatite remains a popular term among many, although the hydroxyl ion deficiency in biological apatites and Ap-CaP synthesized in aqueous solutions have been well documented [14,73,74,76,88–90]. Biomimetic coating processes in SBF solutions are not able to coat stoichiometric HA on the surfaces of the immersed materials. Moreover, to obtain stoichiometric HA using any co-precipitation method at 37 °C and pH 7.4 is difficult, if not impossible. At pH 7.4 there would be no PO_4^{3-} ions in the aqueous solution; at this pH one can only have a mixture of HPO_4^{2-} (major) and H_2PO_4^- (minor) ions [372]. The deviation from the stoichiometry reflects itself in the lattice distortions present in the precipitated apatites, even leading to the appearance of ACP [373]; and it is no surprise that Posner et al. [295] named such substances pseudoapatites as early as 1954. As Wheeler and Lewis [374] observed, mature cortical bovine bone, for instance, has only a paracrystalline (i.e. no long-range order) structure. The term hydroxyapatite, since it should only refer to the stoichiometric compound, is far from accurate in describing biological apatites having a paracrystalline, carbonated and non-stoichiometric nature [372,374]. Wheeler and Lewis [374] also noted that only upon heating cortical bovine bones to 600–800 °C, the lattice stresses present in the pre-heated bones were relieved, its paracrystalline nature disappeared and the material became further hydroxylated, especially when firing the samples to the mentioned temperatures in a typically humid laboratory air atmosphere. The above observations matched the experimental FTIR data obtained during the incremental calcination of SBF-synthesized ACP powders well [48]. Wheeler and Lewis [374] pointed out a very important distinction between the XRD crystallite size and the TEM particle size (observed in the bright-field mode), and eloquently stated that the XRD crystallite size should always be less than the TEM particle size for biological apatites due to their paracrystalline nature. In the majority of articles the Scherrer equation [375] is used only on the (002) reflection obtained from the SBF-deposited Ap-CaP, and since the (211), (112), (300) and (202) quartet of reflections of the so-called “hydroxyapatite” cannot be resolved into separate peaks in the cryptocrystalline SBF-deposits or powders, the XRD crystallite size measurements reported tend to be inaccurate, and research has preferred to report the bright-field TEM particle sizes instead. Especially in the case of SBF-deposited pseudoapatites, the XRD crystallite size distribution should have been reported by using the multiple reflections-based Warren–Averbach and/or Williamson–Hall methods [81,376,377]. Rietveld analysis could also be satisfactorily used when the XRD data can present the above-mentioned quartet of reflections as individual peaks [378].

The literature on the SBF solutions is quite abundant, with some research reporting modified solutions by (i) separating calcium and phosphate ions into two separate solutions which are later mixed with one another or (ii) by eliminating some key constituents of the ECF, such as Mg^{2+} or HCO_3^- . Such solutions are not included in Tables 3a and 3b, as this review has focused only on single, homogeneous, optically transparent solutions, which try to mimic the ECF composition upon being buffered at a pH close to the physiological value. However, one special Tris–HCl-buffered (at pH 7.4

and RT) solution which does not contain Mg^{2+} , HCO_3^- and SO_4^{2-} ions can be given as an example to such solutions which are not included in Table 3a. This solution was published in articles in the late 1990s by Wen et al. [218,379,380] and was named supersaturated calcification solution (SCS). SCS contained 144.5 mM Cl^- , 136.8 mM Na^+ , 4.64 mM K^+ , 3.1 mM Ca^{2+} and 1.86 mM HPO_4^{2-} . It has higher Ca^{2+} and HPO_4^{2-} concentrations than physiological solutions or media, and its Ca/P molar ratio is adjusted to a lower value (1.667). It is possible to prepare this solution by using approximately 133.7 mM NaCl, 4.64 mM KCl, 3.1 mM $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 1.86 mM Na_2HPO_4 . Wen et al. [379,380] studied this solution at 37 °C as a function of the immersion time of Ti and/or Ti6Al4V substrates, and reported that the CaP deposition consisted of three stages: (i) precipitation of ACP within the first 2 h; (ii) transformation of ACP into apatite between 4 and 6 h; and (iii) the subsequent crystallization of OCP (octacalcium phosphate, $\text{Ca}_8(\text{HPO}_4)_2(\text{PO}_4)_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$) on the apatite layer. The *in vitro* solubility of OCP is higher than that of apatite [381] and, in most cases, this makes OCP a more favorable bone-substitute material than apatite [382]. The absence of Mg^{2+} and HCO_3^- , together with the slightly increased Ca^{2+} and HPO_4^{2-} concentrations, enabled this fast solution to deposit OCP in less than a day. Tas [383] found that the same SCS solution is quite effective in transforming single-phase brushite into single-phase OCP at 37 °C even without stirring.

The name SCS [218,380,381] should not be confused with the SPS (simulated physiologic solution) of Radin and Ducheyne [384], which is a Tris–HCl-buffered solution that did not have matching concentrations of the Ca^{2+} , Na^+ and Cl^- to those of the ECF. Speaking of name confusion(s), it may be of interest to note that the abbreviation SBF is also used by physiologists to denote either skeletal blood flow [385] or skin blood flow [386].

6. Role of proteins in calcium phosphate formation

The role of proteins in regulating and templating the calcium phosphate formation has been recently reviewed by Bleek and Taubert [28]. The current review, on the other hand, tabulated the ion concentrations of ECF. With such significant Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , HPO_4^{2-} and HCO_3^- concentrations in the ECF (Table 1), carbonated, ion-substituted and non-stoichiometric CaP would have precipitated all over the body, but fortunately it does not [22]. According to Rochette et al. [387], the serum glycoprotein fetuin-A, besides others, prevents pathological mineralization in ECF and in soft tissues, and such an inhibition was found to be related to the formation of calciprotein particles (of 25–150 nm in diameter). Rochette et al. [387] reported that those calciprotein particles consisted of amorphous CaP (ACP) and fetuin-A.

Poly(aspartic acid), (PAsp), like fetuin, has the potential of inhibiting CaP mineralization. Cantaert et al. [388] recently showed that ACP formed within 6 days in the presence of 50 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ PAsp, in stark contrast to the formation of crystalline Ap-CaP (only after 3 h) in the absence of it, in experiments performed in a Tris–saline buffer solution at pH 7.4 (and 37 °C), having 4.5 mM $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 2.1 mM $\text{K}_2\text{HPO}_4 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

He et al. [389] revealed the role of dentin matrix protein (DMP1) in first binding calcium ions, secondly initiating the nucleation of amorphous CaP, and then expanding and coalescing into microscale apatitic CaP crystals elongated along the *c*-axis. If proteins were added to the physiological solutions or media reviewed here, it would be inevitable that the protein molecules would bind to the Ca^{2+} ions, possibly forming calciprotein nanoparticles in solution. Tsuji et al. [390], on the other hand, showed that, in the presence of DMP1 protein, ACP particles increased in size and the protein facilitated the reorganization of the internal structure of amorphous particles into ordered crystalline states, i.e. the direct

transformation of ACP to HA, thereby acting as a nucleus for precipitation of crystalline calcium phosphate. Tsuji et al. [390] also showed, with support from their TEM and XRD data, that ACP was the first phase to form in the absence of the protein.

The organic matrix of developing enamel consists of amelogenins, and Kwak et al. [391] found that native phosphorylated amelogenins can stabilize amorphous CaP for long periods of time (>1 day) in vitro. Kwak et al. [391] also noted that the recombinant non-phosphorylated amelogenin only transiently stabilized ACP and guided its transformation into ordered bundles of apatitic microcrystals of the enamel layer.

7. Synthetic urine and artificial saliva solutions

Urinary tract stones or calculi affect about 20% of the population and the mineral of those stones usually consists of single-phase or mixed calcium oxalate, calcium phosphate or uric acid. Struvite ($\text{MgNH}_4\text{PO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$) stones, on the other hand, are more frequently seen in cats and dogs [392,393]. The understanding of the underlying mechanisms of pathological calcification processes may, therefore, be of interest to calcium phosphate research [394]. The composition of synthetic urine given in Table 3b corresponds to mean concentrations found in a 24 h period in normal human urine [395–397]. Research at the junction of urology and materials science, which uses synthetic urine formulations as the synthesis medium for calcium oxalates, struvite and calcium phosphates, seems to be quite rare [397].

Although human saliva is known to possess proteins, such as tyrosine-rich acidic peptide [398] or statherin [399], which inhibit calcium phosphate precipitation onto enamel surfaces, the artificial saliva formulation [400,401] given in Table 3a, which is supersaturated with respect to brushite formation, may prove helpful to calcium phosphate research. Brushite is one of the major phases of dental calculus [402]. Moreover, synthetic biomaterials that have a potential for use in the oral cavity need to be tested in artificial saliva solutions rather than, for instance, HEPES-buffered saline [403–405]. Leung and Darvell [406] provided 27 artificial saliva recipes in their comprehensive article.

Marques et al. [407] also reported a simulated saliva formulation, besides giving a number of useful formulations on how to prepare simulated synovial fluid, gastric fluid, intestinal and colonic fluids, lung fluid, vaginal fluid, semen, sweat and tears. The literature lacks any studies on the biomimetic synthesis of dental CaP materials in artificial saliva solutions, which could be crucial, especially for materials designed for root canal repair and pulp capping applications. Apparently, the artificial saliva solutions have only been used as post-synthesis test media for dental materials.

8. Summary and future directions

According to the present literature review, the use of physiological media or physiological salines, with compositions approximating that of ECF, in the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphate-based hard tissue substitutes at 37 °C and pH 7.4 have not gained much popularity, but quite competent examples have been uncovered and mentioned above in detail. The studies of Bachra et al. [291–294,297,298], Termine and Eanes [203], Eanes [204], Tas et al. [47–49] and Landi et al. [50] on the synthesis of CaPs at 37 °C and pH 7.4 directly in supersaturated or balanced salt solutions mimicking ECF were identified. These articles, published between 1959 and 2005, described the biomimetic synthesis of calcium phosphates, as well as the biomimetic processing of collagen–CaP hybrids or composites at the physiological pH and temperature. The Termine and Eanes [203] article, which described the formation of ACP nanospheres in an EBSS solution at 37 °C

and pH 7.4, has received a relatively small number of citations since its publication in 1974.

There have been a couple of physiological solutions or media which have remained unnoticed for a number of decades, such as the Krebs–Henseleit buffer (formulated in 1932) [199] and Earle's balanced salt solution (1943) [200]. KHB and EBSS are physiological media that successfully mimic the composition of ECF. KHB and EBSS solutions set the HCO_3^- concentration in the supersaturated solutions at 25–26.2 mM, which is very close to that of ECF (i.e. 27 mM). Bachra's work from 1959 to 1965 showed that ACP precipitated either in supersaturated solutions with HCO_3^- concentrations close to that of ECF or when such solutions were used to mineralize collagen fibers. The work of Termine and Eanes in 1974 and 1976 showed again that ACP formed when EBSS at 37 °C and pH 7.4 was used as the synthesis medium instead of distilled water.

The KHB solution of 1932, with ion concentrations very similar to those of ECF, cannot produce “hydroxyapatite” when it is warmed up to 37 °C; it will only produce ACP. The same applies to EBSS, and to the SBF-T, SBH-H and SBF-L solutions described in this review. Mg^{2+} and HCO_3^- ions (which are well-known ACP stabilizers) and their concentrations available in KHB and EBSS, as well as in ECF, are responsible for the formation of ACP instead of HA in such solutions. In summary, any lactate-buffered (22 mM) aqueous solution having 95 mM NaCl, 5 mM KCl, 1.5 mM $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 25–27 mM NaHCO_3 and 2–2.5 mM $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ would not precipitate stoichiometric or crystalline HA; rather, when 1 mM Na_2HPO_4 is introduced to this solution it will precipitate Mg- and HCO_3^- -stabilized nanospheres of ACP. The articles of Bachra et al. [291–294,297,298], Termine and Eanes [203] and Eanes [204] all showed that precipitates obtained from physiological solutions or media at pH 7.4 (at 37 °C) were ACP stable in their mother solutions, but not HA or cryptocrystalline Ap-CaP.

On the other hand, if one reacts a certain volume of an aqueous solution, free of any initial NaCl but having 1.67 mM $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, with an equal volume of another solution which contains 1 mM Na_2HPO_4 (or K_2HPO_4) dissolved in it, where both solutions are strictly free of HCO_3^- and Mg^{2+} ions, one obtains cryptocrystalline or paracrystalline Ap-CaP phase exhibiting the weak and rather broad (002) reflection (at $25.89^\circ 2\theta$, $\text{Cu K}\alpha$) in its XRD chart. During the first few minutes of mixing of these two solutions, ACP nanospheres are actually formed in the solution, but since the nanospheres are not stabilized by Mg^{2+} and HCO_3^- , they readily transform into Ap-CaP even before they are separated from their mother liquors [149–151,296].

The ossification in the fetus starts only by the end of the second month, close to the third month. Prior to the start of ossification in the fetus, there are only amniotic membranes in places of future bones. These soft and flexible membranes consist of stacked collagen fibrils, which are prone to the formation of layers of ACP on them. These start to transform into a cartilage-like tissue (as soft as the ears) at the turn of the third month, which then ossify in the following months under the action of the osteoblasts into bones until the day of delivery. An 8-week-old fetus is surrounded by the amniotic fluid within the amniotic sac. Although the electrolyte composition of the amniotic fluid is more or less similar to that of the ECF, its mean HCO_3^- concentration is 34 mM [408] and it contains 0.63 mM Mg^{2+} [409]. The relatively high bicarbonate ion concentration of 34 mM helps the formation of ACP on the membranes of the fetus. The fontanelles seen on the skull of a newborn baby, which are highly hydrated, soft and flexible substances like a piece of canvas [410,411], still possess a fraction of ACP.

The introduction of Hanks' balanced salt solution in 1949 [208], which had quite a low HCO_3^- concentration of only 4.065 mM and was developed for the stated purpose of preserving tissues under refrigeration at temperatures from 0° to 7°, may actually have helped the forthcoming research that was undertaken for the

purpose of synthesizing “hydroxyapatite” but not ACP. The review of the research shows that the well-known SBF solution [20] has a low HCO_3^- of 4.2 mM, and at this low concentration of the ACP stabilizer (i.e. HCO_3^-) Ap-CaP of poor crystallinity would readily precipitate on any surface by using a biomimetic coating process over a soaking period of up to 4 weeks [305]. Surely, upon soaking samples in the 4.2 mM HCO_3^- solution for 4 weeks, the initially precipitating ACP layers on samples would not be easily detectable, but Ap-CaP formed as a result of the maturation of ACP would be observed at the end of the long soaking period of 1 month [305]. This is possibly why a majority of research cites these observations as HA instead of Ap-CaP, even if the infrared data of such samples lack the OH^- stretching vibration at 3571 cm^{-1} . The literature indicates that the carbonate contents of such SBF-deposited Ap-CaP were only rarely determined [412].

Another interesting observation is related to testing the in vitro bioactivity of samples by immersion in a 4.2 mM HCO_3^- solution (SBF) first, complemented with the reporting of XRD charts showing the (002) crystallographic reflection of Ap-CaP and SEM images of SBF-precipitated Ap-CaP globules, followed by testing of samples by soaking them with various cells in a DMEM cell culture medium, which has a HCO_3^- concentration of 44.05 mM [413–415]. The use of two different solutions which differ 10.5-fold in their HCO_3^- concentrations presents a genuine difficulty in interpreting the results obtained from these two solutions for the same synthetic biomaterial in the same article. Some research seems to have overcome this difficulty by not providing results for samples recovered from the cell culture medium using XRD and FTIR, although Declercq et al. [280] have shown how to perform such analyses on cell culture samples. At this point, it is helpful to revisit the conclusions of Liu et al. [284], who stated that, especially in an FBS-supplemented cell culture medium, the CaPs formed will be less than 100 nm in diameter and X-ray-amorphous.

The concentration of the ACP stabilizer HCO_3^- is important, especially when both solutions contain the second stabilizer, Mg^{2+} . In order to prevent such complexities originating from the use of two different solutions for a given synthetic biomaterial, some researchers opted to use the same commercially available, sterile and amino acid-containing DMEM (or α -MEM) solution first as a physical stability/coherency test medium (in place of SBF) and then as the cell viability/proliferation/attachment test medium (see Section 5.6).

The current literature review on the use of physiological solutions, salines or media in calcium phosphate synthesis and processing suggests the following as future directions.

- (1) The use of physiological solutions (such as EBSS, Bachra et al. solutions, ACP and SBF-T solutions of Table 3), in the place of distilled/deionized water, for CaP synthesis at $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ and pH 7.4 resulted in the production of ACP. Non-cytotoxic and biocompatible CaP biomaterials with large surface areas are needed especially in drug delivery applications of oncological and pharmaceutical research. The adsorption of blood proteins on a synthetic biomaterial requires a large BET surface area. Enriching the CaP-related research projects by collecting the BET surface area data seems to be crucial, especially when an assessment of the blood compatibility [416] of the biomaterial under question is required.
- (2) Bulk synthesis of Mg- and CO_3 -doped, monodisperse CaP nanospheres in physiological solutions or media, such as the Tris- and HEPES-free SBF-L and ACP solutions of Table 3, at $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ and pH 7.4 need to be further pursued. The synthesis of perfectly monodisperse, non-cytotoxic CaP nanospheres (which should not cross the blood–brain barrier (BBB) [417]) by using benign and biomimetic processes represents an interesting research field.

- (3) The synthesis of submicron aragonite, calcite or vaterite (CaCO_3) particles in phosphate-free physiological solutions, such as KHB, EBSS, SBF-T, SBF-H, SBF-L or ACP (Table 3), has never been attempted. Such research may also shed light on the cause(s) of pathological CaCO_3 calcifications observed in humans [418–421].
- (4) ACP has the ability of transforming into Ap-CaP (cryptocrystalline or paracrystalline), depending on its degree of stabilization by the biologically relevant ions Mg^{2+} and HCO_3^- . The same physiological solution (such as KHB, EBSS, ACP or SBF-L) in which the ACP nanospheres were formed can then be used to transform them into Ap-CaP in a controlled manner. Studies on the transformation kinetics of ACP in physiological solutions or media (at pH 7.4 and $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$) are seemingly scarce.
- (5) The use of a common cell culture solution, such as DMEM or α -MEM, as a medium of CaP synthesis at $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ and pH 7.4 should be pursued. Moreover, the simultaneous adsorption of all of the amino acids present in a common cell culture medium onto the CaP nanoparticles nucleating within such solutions has never been studied.
- (6) The addition of proteins to the physiological solutions reviewed here may present a fertile basic research field to learn more about the roles of Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , K^+ , Na^+ , HPO_4^{2-} , Cl^- and HCO_3^- ions coexisting at their physiological concentrations; literature on protein-containing KHB or EBSS solutions (which are commercially available) has been difficult to find. The influence of all blood proteins, such as albumins (ALB), immunoglobulin (IgG) antibodies, fibronectin (FNT), fibrinogen (FGN) and high molecular weight kininogen (HMK) [416], as well as osteopontin and bone morphogenetic proteins/growth factors, on biomimetic CaP synthesis (at $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ and pH 7.4) in physiological solutions or salines (Table 3) should be systematically studied with the aim of arriving at a comprehensive portrayal of the ECF–CaP duality or dichotomy.
- (7) Nucleation studies (in relation to the synthesis of calcium phosphates, magnesium phosphates and calcium oxalates) to be performed in synthetic urine solutions at $37\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ may serve as a strong bridge between urology and biomaterials science.
- (8) Biomimetic synthesis of novel dental materials (e.g. for pulp-capping or root canal infection cases) in artificial saliva solutions may also serve as a bridge between dentistry and biomaterials science.

Appendix Figures. with essential colour discrimination

Certain figures in this article, particularly Fig. 2, was difficult to interpret in black and white. The full color images can be found in the on-line version, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.actbio.2013.12.047>.

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