**Design and implementation of novel multifunctional 3D bioprinter**

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<th>Journal:</th>
<th>3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript ID</td>
<td>3DP-2015-0040.R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript Type:</td>
<td>Brief Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Submitted by the Author:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Complete List of Authors:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keywords:</td>
<td>3D printers, bio-printing, medical applications, design</td>
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Design and implementation of novel multifunctional 3D bioprinter

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Abstract

3D bioprinting is a rapidly emerging biomedical variant of 3D printing technology. 3D bioprinter could be defined as a robotic device for layer by layer biofabrication of 3D human tissues and organs from living cells and hydrogels according to digital model. Development of commercial 3D bioprinters certifiable for clinical use will enable bioprinting 3D human tissues and organs suitable for implantation. The commercial multifunctional clinical 3D bioprinter of extrusion type suitable for robotic biofabrication of 3D human tissues and organs and potentially certifiable for clinical use is presented. The principle constructive feature of 3D bioprinter is a separation of cell printing process from hydrogel spraying which allow to use photo-sensitive hydrogel with ultraviolet-induced polymerization without cell damage. Some of its multiple potential functionalities have been tested and illustrated. Development of clinical 3D bioprinter is an important step toward practical implementation for highly desirable organ printing technology.

Keywords: 3D bioprinter, biofabrication, tissue spheroids, organ printing
Introduction

3D printing could be defined as layer by layer additive manufacturing of 3D constructions according to digital model. 3D bioprinting is a rapidly emerging biomedical variant of 3D printing technology. 3D bioprinter could be defined as a robotic device for layer by layer biofabrication of 3D human tissues and organs from living cells and hydrogels according to digital model. The framework of different variants of 3D bioprinting technologies have been outlined in several reviews and recently published textbooks. It have been demonstrated that there are three main emerging bioprinting technologies: ink-jet bioprinting, extrusion-based bioprinting and laser-based bioprinting. One of the main characteristics of 3D bioprinters is their multifunctionality or capacity to work in different modes for precised deposition of living cells and biomaterials. The production of bioprinted human organs suitable for implantation will require the development of several devices integrated into one organ biofabrication line. 3D bioprinter is the most important element of future organ biofabrication lines. The successful translation of organ printing technologies depends on development of commercial 3D bioprinter capable to print human tissue. There is a growing number of companies producing commercial bioprinters. However, according to our knowledge there are no any commercial multifunctional 3D bioprinter officially certified by regulatory agencies for using in clinics.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to present principal constructive features of novel commercial multifunctional 3D bioprinter suitable for bioprinting of human tissues and organs and potentially certifiable for clinical use and illustrate some of its multiple functionalities.
Materials and Methods

Polyurethane

Polyurethane was kindly provided by Dr Xuejun Wen ((EG-85A, Lubrizol, USA).

Human fibroblast cell culture

Normal human dermal fibroblasts were obtained from Lonza (USA). The cells were grown in DMEM (Gibco, USA) containing 10% FBS (Gibco, USA) supplemented with antibiotic/antimycotic mix (Gibco, USA) and 1 mM L-glutamine (Paneco, USA). The cells were cultivated at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere with 5% CO₂ and routinely passaged at 85-95% confluence.

Tissue spheroids biofabrication

The tissue spheroids were formed using the 3D Petri Dishes (Microtissues, USA) according to manufacturing protocol. Briefly, the 3D Petri Dishes were prepared from 2% agarose in PBS. The concentrations of the human fibroblast cells were 6.8x10⁶ cells per milliliter. 190 µl of cell suspension was seeded into the 3D Petri Dishes. In 40 minutes additional culture medium was added to the outside of the 3D Petri Dishes. Human fibroblasts were suspended in cell culture medium and cell suspension was seeded into the 3D Petri Dishes. The 3D Petri Dishes with tissue spheroids were incubated at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere with 5% CO₂.

Electrospinning of polyurethane

Electrospinning of microfibrous polyurethane matrix have been performed using commercial apparatus Professional Lab Device (Yflow, Spain). Polyurethane have been dissolved to concentration 17% in solvents containing 40% N,N-dimethylformamide (DMF) и 60% tetrahydrofuran (THF).

Preparation of collagen hydrogel
For collagen hydrogel 890ul of collagen type I in 0.2M acetic acid, 60ul of 1M NaOH, 250ul of 7.5% NaHCO₃, 300ul of PBS were mixed on ice. The mix is transferred to precooled syringe and used for printing. The loaded syringe was inserted into the Fabion’s cooling system (4 ºC) to keep the material in low temperature before deposition. Temperature of collagen inside the syringe before deposition was 4ºC. Printing speed was 1 drop each 4 seconds. The dimension of printed collagen hydrogel area in Figure 1 m was 2 cm x 2 cm = 4 cm². A petri dish was placed on top of a hot plate (30 ºC) where the printing process was conducted. The shape of object was designed in the proprietary software. A Nordson red tip gauge 25 (0.25mm internal diameter) was used for the prints.

**Bioprinting of tissue spheroids**

Original multifunctional 3D bioprinter (3D Bioprinting Solutions, Russia) have been used for dispersion and patterning of biofabricated tissue spheroids on the surface of electrospun matrices and bioprinted collagen hydrogel according to the digital model. The suspension of tissue spheroids have been regularly placed according to selected digital model (linear and hexagonal order) on the surface of electrospun polyurethane matrix using conus-like pipets. The maximum printing area is 50 cm². The maximum printing resolution depends on the diameter of the needle and could be 100 µm. The movement axes XY gauranteed a precision of 10µm.

**Video-recording**

Video recording of tissue spheroids dispensing and patterning have been performed using digital camera (model dmk41au02) company (Imaging Source, USA) with objective Optem Zoom Kit 70XL (Qioptiq, USA).

**Scanning electron microscopy**

The samples of tissue spheroids on electrospun polyurethane matrix were fixed with 2.5% glutaraldehyde/0.1M cacodylate buffer, dehydrated through ethanol series and then were dried in
a critical point dryer (HCP-2, Hitachi Koki Co. Ltd., Japan). The samples are mounted on a stub of metal with adhesive, coated with gold using ion coater (IB-3, EIKO, Japan) and then observed under the microscope JSM -6510 LV (JEOL, Japan).

Results

The multifunctional 3D bioprinter (Fig. 1a) includes cartesian style X-Y-Z axis robot, automated disposable syringes (Fishman, USA), sterilizable hydrogel sprayers (Nordson, USA) and operational control system. Bioprinter has 3 Fishman automated syringes on one side and 2 Nordson style spraying nozzles on another side (Fig. 1b-f). Multifunctionality of 3D bioprinter includes: i) capabilities to dispense and precisely place hydrogel filaments with living cells or without cells, cellular rod and separated tissue spheroids according digital design using Fishman automated syringes (Fig. 1b-d, h-j; ii) capabilities for spraying hydrogel with different principles of polymerization (Fig. 1 e-f, k-l); iii) heating system designed to print collagen hydrogel (Fig. 1g). For example, two Nordson nozzles allow to spray simultaneously thrombin and fibronogen solution which enables instant polymerization and formation of fibrin hydrogel similar to Duplojet system developed by Baxter (USA) (Fig. 1k). Incorporation of UV light source allows rapid polymerization of photo-sensitive bioprintable hydrogels (Fig. 1e-f,l). The 3D bioprinter also enables also layer by layer biofabrication of 3D tissue and organ constructs by spraying sequential layers of hydrogel intermitted with precision placing and patterning of tissue spheriods in every sequential layer (Fig. 1n-o). Polymerization of bioprinted collagen hydrogel using heating table is demonstrated on Fig. 1m. Patterning of tissue spheroids on the surface of electrospun matrix according desirable digital model using 3D bioprinter have been demonstrated (Fig. 1p). Finally, the employment of sterile disposable syringes in Fishman nozzles (Fig. 1b,d) and sterilizable
Nordson nozzles (Fig. 1c,f) is essential for planned clinical certification of 3D bioprinter and clinical translation of 3D bioprinting technology.

Discussion

Multifunctional 3D bioprinter have been developed and some of its essential functionalities have been tested. 3D Bioprinter Fabion includes cartesian type X-Y-Z axis robot, 5 nozzles (3 Fishman type dispensing nozzles and 2 Nordson type spraying nozzles) and integrated system of operational control. There are three most interesting characteristics of presented 3D bioprinter: (i) unparallel multifunctionality, (2) unique capability to separate bioprinting of living cells from spraying of hydrogel and (3) realistic potential for certification as a clinical 3D bioprinter. The multifunctionality of developed 3D bioprinter is manifested by built in capabilities to dispense hydrogel filaments, hydrogel filaments containing living cells, cellular rods and, finally, demonstrated in this report capacity to place tissue spheroids precisely on the surface of electrospun matrices or in thin layer of hydrogel according to digital model. The principal novelty of developed 3D bioprinter is a separation of printing of living cells from spraying of hydrogel, which enables the employment of practically any types of hydrogel including photo-sensitive printable hydrogel without any UV light induced damage for living cells. The possibility for sterilization is a most important characteristic for clinical 3D bioprinter in order to be certified by regulatory agencies for clinical use. It was implemented by using disposable syringes in Fishman types nozzles and sterilizable Nordson types hydrogel spraying nozzles.
Taken together three most essential characteristics of bioprinter in combination with high level of printing resolution and large printing area allow to consider presented multifunctional 3D bioprinter Fabion as one of most advanced commercial clinical 3D bioprinter.

Conclusion

Multifunctional commercial clinical 3D bioprinter Fabion of extrusion type have been designed and developed and some of its functionalities have been tested. 3D bioprinter enables extrusion and precision placing of hydrogel filaments with or without living cells, continuous cellular rods and separated tissue spheroids as well as independent spraying of biocompatible hydrogels with different principles of induced polymerization. The built in multifunctionality of presented 3D bioprinter will allow layer by layer additive biofabrication of complex 3D human organ constructs using tissue spheroids as building blocks. The employing of only disposable and sterilized components in multinozzle system made 3D bioprinter both suitable and certifiable for clinical use. The development of certifiable clinical multifunctional 3D bioprinter is an important step towards practical implementation of desirable organ printing technology.

Acknowledgement

This research have been supported by grant from Russian Research Fund (project № 15-15-00173)

Author Disclosure Statement

No competing financial interests exist.
References


Figures and Legends

Fig. 1. Constructive characteristics and multifunctionality of clinical 3D bioprinter Fabion developed by 3D Bioprinting Solutions, Russia:

a) Photo of multifunctional 3D bioprinter Fabion;

b) Graphic design of 3D bioprinter with three Fishman type nozzles (automated syringes) on one side;

c) Graphic design of 3D Bioprinter with Two Nordson types hydrogel spraying nozzles on another side;

d) Photo of 3D bioprinter with three Fishman type nozzles (automated syringes) on one side;

e) Scheme demonstrating UV light-induced polymerization of photo-sensitive polymer during their spraying from Nordson type nozzle;

f) Photo of 3D Bioprinter with two Nordson types hydrogel spraying nozzles on another side;

g) Photo of heating table incorporated in 3D bioprinter Fabion;

h) Dispensing of hydrogel filament containing living cells;

i) Dispensing of cellular rod;

j) Dispensing of isolated tissue spheroids;

k) Spraying of thrombin and fibrinogen with instant formation of fibrin hydrogel;

l) Spraying of photo-sensitive hydrogel with UV light induced instant hydrogel polymerization;

m) Polymerized bioprinted collagen hydrogel. The size of bioprinted collagen hydrogel was 2 cm x 2 cm = 4 cm$^2$;

n) Initial step of tissue spheroids dispensing using 3D bioprinter. Scale Bar = 500 µm;

o) Linear patterning of tissue spheroids using 3D bioprinter. Scale Bar = 500 µm;

p) Patterning of tissue spheroids on electrospun polyurethane matrix according to digital model. Scanning electron microscopy.
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