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(54) Title: METHOD OF CROSSLINKING GLYCOSAMINOGLYCANS

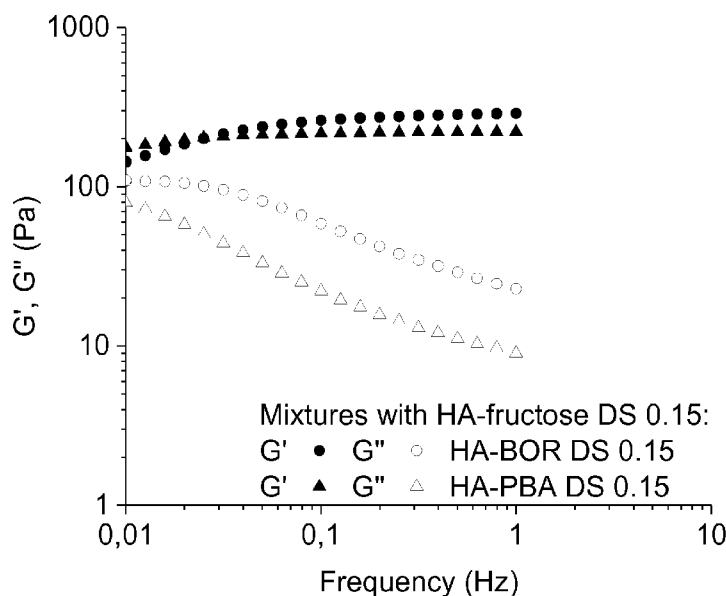


Figure 1A

(57) Abstract: A new hydrogel made of crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, particularly crosslinked hyaluronic acid, chondroitin or chondroitin sulfate, having reversible linkages using boronic acid or boroxole derivatives leading to new benefits. Glycosaminoglycans that are crosslinked via an alkoxyboronate ester anion formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan.



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METHOD OF CROSSLINKING GLYCOSAMINOGLYCANS

Technical field of the invention

The present invention relates to the field of hydrogels containing crosslinked
5 polysaccharides and the use of such hydrogels in medical and/or cosmetic
applications. More specifically, the present invention is concerned with
hydrogels made of crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, particularly crosslinked
hyaluronic acid, chondroitin or chondroitin sulfate, having reversible linkages,
preferably boronate ester bonds, leading to new benefits.

10

Background of the invention

Water-absorbing gels, or hydrogels, are widely used in the biomedical field.
They are generally prepared by chemical crosslinking of polymers to infinite
15 networks. While many polysaccharides absorb water until they are completely
dissolved, crosslinked gels of the same polysaccharides can typically absorb
a certain amount of water until they are saturated, i.e. they have a finite liquid
retention capacity, or swelling degree.

20 Hyaluronic acid, chondroitin and chondroitin sulfate are well-known
biocompatible polymers. They are naturally occurring polysaccharides
belonging to the group of glycosaminoglycans (GAGs). All
glycosaminoglycans are negatively charged heteropolysaccharide chains
which have a capacity to absorb large amounts of water.

25

Chondroitin sulfate (CS) is a highly abundant glycosaminoglycan found in the
connective tissues of mammals where it, together with other sulfated
glycosaminoglycans, is bound to proteins as part proteoglycans. It has
previously been shown that hydrogels containing CS successfully can be
30 used in biomedical applications due to their resemblance to the natural extra
cellular matrix (Lauder, R.M., Complement Ther Med 17: 56-62, 2009).

Chondroitin sulfate is also used in the treatment of osteoarthritis, e.g. as a dietary supplement.

Crosslinking of the glycosaminoglycans prolongs the duration of the
5 degradable polymers that make up the network, which is useful in many applications.

However, one of the main drawbacks of a large majority of the glycosaminoglycans-based gels, such as when used for treating wrinkles lies
10 in the difficulty of injecting the hydrogel due to the high crosslinking density of the polysaccharide.

Hyaluronic acid is one of the most widely used biocompatible polymers for medical use. Hyaluronic acid and the other glycosaminoglycans are
15 negatively charged heteropolysaccharide chains which have a capacity to absorb large amounts of water. Hyaluronic acid and products derived from hyaluronic acid are widely used in the biomedical and cosmetic fields, for instance during viscosurgery and as a dermal filler.

20 Since hyaluronic acid is present with identical chemical structure except for its molecular mass in most living organisms, it gives a minimum of foreign body reactions and allows for advanced medical uses. Crosslinking and/or other modifications of the hyaluronic acid molecule is typically necessary to improve its duration *in vivo*. Furthermore, such modifications affect the liquid retention
25 capacity of the hyaluronic acid molecule. As a consequence thereof, hyaluronic acid has been the subject of many modification attempts.

In the prior art, the hydrogels are prepared by reacting hyaluronic acid, for example, with BDDE (butanediol diglycidyl ether) in a basic aqueous medium
30 resulting in the formation of covalent linkages (WO 97/04012). This is not a reversible process. WO 2014/072330 discloses a polymer composition comprising a mixture of phenylboronic acid modified hyaluronic acid polymer grafted on at least a hydroxyl with a group comprising phenylboronic acid and

a cis-diol modified HA polymer grafted on at least a hydroxyl with a group comprising a cis-diol. US 2014/0155305 discloses an aqueous solution comprising a thickening polymer with diol groups distributed along it, such as guar or other polysaccharide, which is cross linked with a cross-linker which
5 contains a plurality of boroxole groups. US 2013/0129797 A1 discloses polymeric compositions that comprise at least one polymer residue and at least one crosslinking moiety, wherein the polymer residue is crosslinked by the crosslinking moiety and wherein the crosslinking moiety is formed from a reaction between a boronic acid moiety and a hydroxamic acid moiety.

10

Description of the invention

It is an object of the present invention to provide a hydrogel having a glycosaminoglycan (GAG) as the swellable polymer, having reversible
15 linkages.

15

It is also an object of the present invention to provide a method for preparing hydrogels of glycosaminoglycan molecules by mild and efficient routes. It is also an object of the invention to provide a more facile and convenient
20 method for manufacturing crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, with gel properties when dissolved in an aqueous liquid.

20

One object of the invention is to provide crosslinked glycosaminoglycans with less chemical modifications and/or a simpler structure.

25

Yet another object of the invention is to mitigate, alleviate or eliminate one or more of the drawbacks of the prior art.

The present invention concerns new hydrogel which show the following
30 benefits:

30

- Easier to inject,
- More malleable,
- can self-repair.

The invention concern also the use of such gels, of particular interest to fill wrinkles and / or shape the face more accurately and with fewer traumas for (the) patient.

5

In one aspect of the invention, there is provided, crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, wherein said glycosaminoglycans are crosslinked via an alkoxyboronate ester anion formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to the invention forms gel with higher storage (elastic) modulus compared to using phenylboronic acid as a crosslinker due to additional cross-links formed between the boronate hemiester and the glycosaminoglycan hydroxyl groups (see example 10). Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to the invention further provide self-healing properties to the obtained gel (see e.g. Figure 5, Example 30). The obtained gel is also easy to inject as the reversible bonds break when pushed through the syringe, and then quickly reform inside the body. The gels can be injected as preformed solids, because the solid gel can manage external damages and repair itself under a proper shear stress. Due to fast gelation kinetics after extrusion/injection, they recover their solid form almost immediately. Thus, before the gel reforms inside the body, the gel is malleable, until the reversible bonds reform. Thus, in one embodiment, the method provides a self-healing gel. The crosslinked glycosaminoglycans may optionally be further crosslinked.

25

A diol portion according to the invention may be any group comprising a diol, such as a 1,2-diol or a 1,3-diol. In certain embodiments of the invention, the diol portion is a vicinal diol. In other embodiments of the invention, the diol portion is not a vicinal diol.

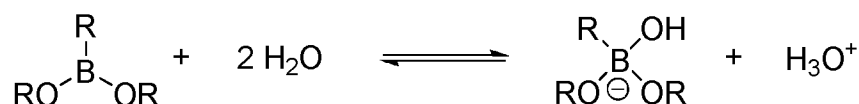
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Typically, the diol portion is a sugar moiety or a derivative thereof. Suitable sugar derivatives are derivatives suitable for binding to a glycosaminoglycan.

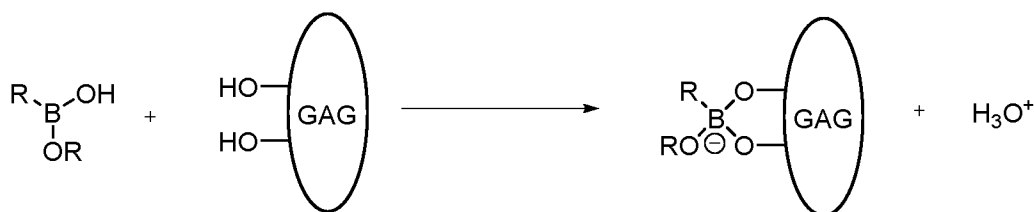
Such derivatives may be a mono- or di-saccharide-disulfide or an aminosugar.

As used herein, the term “boronate hemiester” is to be interpreted as a compound of general formula $\text{BR}(\text{OR})(\text{OH})$, as opposed to a boronic acid, which has a general formula $\text{BR}(\text{OH})_2$, or a boronate ester which has a general formula $\text{BR}(\text{OR})_2$. Each R, in this context, may independently represent any organic moiety since the purpose of these formulae relates to different boron functional groups.

A boronate ester is in equilibrium with its tetrahedral anionic form in water (below). The anionic form is an hydroxyboronate ester anion (Hall, D.G., 2011, Boronic Acids: Preparation and Applications in Organic Synthesis, Medicine and Materials, Second Edition, Wiley-VCH Verlag GmbH & Co.).



Thus, in general terms, an “alkoxyboronate ester anion” is to be understood as an anionic tetrahedral form, formed between a boronate ester and any alkoxy group, substituted or unsubstituted. An “alkoxyboronate ester anion” according to the invention, is an “alkoxyboronate ester anion” formed between a boronate hemiester and a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to glycosaminoglycan (below).

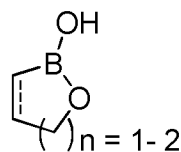


In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention the boronate hemiester is a compound comprising a 5-6-membered cyclic boronate hemiester moiety, sometimes referred to as a boroxole (Kotsubayashi et al. ACS Macro Lett.

2013, 2, 260–264). A five-membered boroxole is referred to as an oxaborole and a six-membered, an oxaborinine, see below. Thus, in one embodiment of this aspect of the invention the boronate hemiester is a compound comprising an oxaborole or an oxaborinine moiety. Glycosaminoglycans crosslinked by

5 mixing a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a boroxole with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol functional moiety is shown in the appended examples (e.g. Example 29) to give rise to a self-healing gel with improved pH stability as compared to the prior art. This provides for facilitated, more versatile and improved injection properties.

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The present invention proposes new hydrogels:

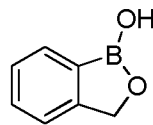
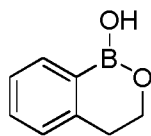
- in which the glycosaminoglycan chains are only connected with reversible
- 15 crosslinks and which are based on mixtures of GAG-boroxole and a GAG-polyol derivative.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention the boronate hemiester is an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine. Benzoxaborole

20 is sometimes referred to as benzoboroxole and the names may be used interchangeably (US 2014/0155305) The benzylic position of the boron atom in an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine stabilizes the empty p-orbital on the boron atom. Typically, the benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine may be substituted with one or more of H, F, Cl, NO₂, C₁-

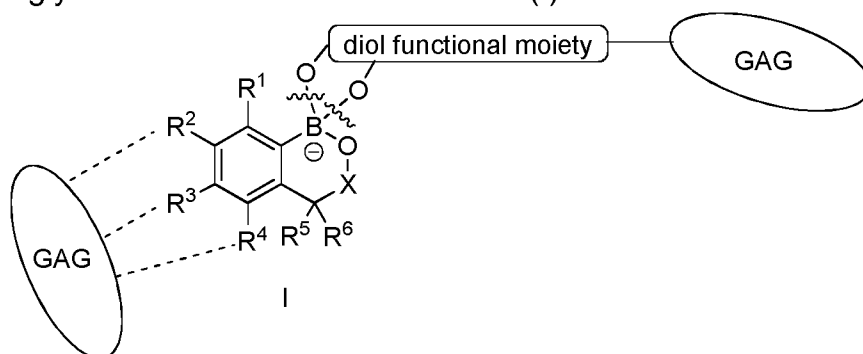
25 C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, C₁-C₃alkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S.

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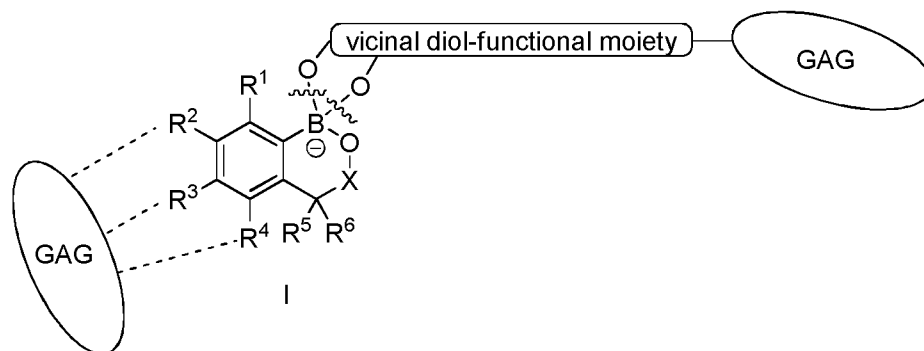
benzoxaborinine benzoxaborole

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said crosslinked glycosaminoglycans has a structure of Formula (I)



5

such as



wherein

- 10 R^1 is selected from H, F, Cl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy;
 R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and a linker, said linker binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;
 X is selected from CHR^7 and a bond;
 15 R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from H, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ alkyl, $\text{C}_3\text{-C}_6$ cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S; and

wherein one of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is a linker. Using different substitution patterns on the boronate hemiester tune the characteristics of a gel formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan. Such

5 characteristics may include improved stability, altered texture specifically advantageous for certain applications, or stability towards autoclavation. The benzylic carbon is a position where different substituents may give slightly different properties of the gel formed by compound of Formula (I). Thus, this gives an opportunity to finely tune the properties of the gel for different

10 applications such as for imitating different tissues.

In certain embodiments of this aspect of the invention, the diol portion is a vicinal diol. In other embodiments of this aspect of the invention, the diol portion is not a vicinal diol.

15

As used herein, the term "C₁-C₃haloalkyl" means both linear and branched chain saturated hydrocarbon groups, with 1 to 3 carbon atoms and with 1 to all hydrogens substituted by a halogen of different or same type. Examples of C₁-C₃haloalkyl groups include methyl substituted with 1 to 3 halogen atoms,

20 ethyl substituted with 1 to 5 halogen atoms, and n-propyl or iso-propyl substituted with 1 to 7 halogen atoms.

As used herein, the term "C₁-C₃fluoroalkyl" means both linear and branched chain saturated hydrocarbon groups, with 1 to 3 carbon atoms and with 1 to

25 all hydrogen atoms substituted by a fluorine atom. Examples of C₁-C₃fluoroalkyl groups include methyl substituted with 1 to 3 fluorine atoms, ethyl substituted with 1 to 5 fluorine atoms, and n-propyl or iso-propyl substituted with 1 to 7 fluorine atoms.

30 The present disclosure provides new hydrogel products and related advantageous processes for preparing hydrogels made of crosslinked glycosaminoglycan (GAG) molecules having reversible linkages, and uses thereof. Glycosaminoglycans are negatively charged heteropolysaccharide

chains which have a capacity to absorb large amounts of water. In the hydrogel products according to the disclosure, the crosslinked glycosaminoglycan molecule is the swellable polymer which provides the gel properties.

5

According to some embodiments, the glycosaminoglycan is selected from the group consisting of sulfated or non-sulfated glycosaminoglycans such as hyaluronan, chondroitin, chondroitin sulphate, heparan sulphate, heparosan, heparin, dermatan sulphate and keratan sulphate. According to some

10 embodiments, the glycosaminoglycan is selected from the group consisting of hyaluronic acid, chondroitin and chondroitin sulfate, and mixtures thereof.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said glycosaminoglycans are hyaluronic acid. Hyaluronic acid (HA) is one of the most widely used

15 biocompatible polymers for medical and cosmetic use. HA is a naturally occurring polysaccharide belonging to the group of glycosaminoglycans (GAGs). Hyaluronic acid consists of two alternating monosaccharides units, *N*-acetyl-D-glucosamine (GlcNAc) and D-glucuronic acid (GlcA), assembled by $\beta(1\rightarrow3)$ and $\beta(1\rightarrow4)$ glycosidic bonds, respectively. Hyaluronic acid and

20 products derived from hyaluronic acid are widely used in the biomedical and cosmetic fields, for instance during viscosurgery and as a dermal filler.

Crosslinking of hyaluronic acid may be achieved by modification with a boroxole derivative and a polyol derivative to form linear HA-BOR and HA-

25 polyol derivatives. The degree of substitution (DS) of these HA-conjugates can be varied in a range from 0.05 to 0.70 in order to tune the rheological behavior of the gels.

Unless otherwise specified, the term "hyaluronic acid" encompasses all

30 variants and combinations of variants of hyaluronic acid, hyaluronate or hyaluronan, of various chain lengths and charge states, as well as with various chemical modifications. That is, the term also encompasses the various hyaluronate salts of hyaluronic acid with various counter ions, such as

sodium hyaluronate. The hyaluronic acid can be obtained from various sources of animal and non-animal origin. Sources of non-animal origin include yeast and preferably bacteria. The molecular weight of a single hyaluronic acid molecule is typically in the range of 0.1-10 kg/mol, but other molecular weights are possible. According to the invention, preferred molecular weights are in the range 50-3000 kg/mol, more preferably in the range 70-1000 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the glycosaminoglycan is between 200-1500 kg/mol, preferably in the range 400-1100 kg/mol, more preferably 500-1000 kg/mol, more preferably 600-800 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the glycosaminoglycan is between 50-1000 kg/mol, such as 50-500 kg/mol, such as 50-200 kg/mol, such as around 100 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the degree of substitution of the glycosaminoglycans is 0.05-0.3, preferably 0.1-0.2.

20

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the degree of substitution of the glycosaminoglycans is 0.05-0.7, preferably 0.1-0.6, more preferably 0.15-0.5. It has been experimentally observed that these ranges of degree of substitution of the hyaluronic acid with a boronate hemiester and subsequently mixed with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol functional moiety exhibit improved gel properties (e.g. G' and G''). The degree of substitution may be measured on the substituted polymer glycosaminoglycans by NMR.

30 The term "chondroitin" refers to glycosaminoglycans having a disaccharide repeating unit consisting of alternating non-sulfated D-glucuronic acid and *N*-acetyl-D-galactosamine moieties. For avoidance of doubt, the term "chondroitin" does not encompass any form of chondroitin sulfate.

The term "chondroitin sulfate" refers to glycosaminoglycans having a disaccharide repeating unit consisting of alternating D-glucuronic acid and *N*-acetyl-D-galactosamine moieties. The sulfate moiety can be present in various different positions. Preferred chondroitin sulfate molecules are chondroitin-4-sulfate and chondroitin-6-sulfate.

The chondroitin molecules can be obtained from various sources of animal and non-animal origin. Sources of non-animal origin include yeast and preferably bacteria. The molecular weight of a single chondroitin molecule is typically in the range of 1-500 kg/mol, but other molecular weights are possible.

The term "crosslinked glycosaminoglycans" or "crosslinked glycosaminoglycan molecules" refers herein to glycosaminoglycans comprising, typically covalent, crosslinks between the glycosaminoglycan molecule chains, which creates a continuous network of glycosaminoglycan molecules held together by the crosslinks.

The crosslinked glycosaminoglycan product is preferably biocompatible. This implies that no, or only very mild, immune response occurs in the treated individual. That is, no or only very mild undesirable local or systemic effects occur in the treated individual.

The crosslinked product according to the disclosure is a gel, or a hydrogel. That is, it can be regarded as a water-insoluble, but substantially dilute crosslinked system of glycosaminoglycan molecules when subjected to a liquid, typically an aqueous liquid.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond with said second glycosaminoglycan; According to this embodiment, the linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond, respectively, with the backbone of said second glycosaminoglycan.

- Thus self-healing crosslinked glycosaminoglycans are achieved with less modified glycosaminoglycans. By having the linker of the boronate hemiester bound by an amide bond or an ether bond provides for stable gel as ethers and amides are both stable to physiological conditions. The grafting of a compound of Formula I to said second glycosaminoglycan may be done for example via an ether bond by reacting for example a hydroxy group of the backbone of the glycosaminoglycan with an epoxy functionality of said linker. The grafting of the compound of Formula I to said second glycosaminoglycan may also be done by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on said second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting species with an amine function of said linker to form a stable amide. Thus, a self-healing gel with a less modified glycosaminoglycan is obtained.
- 15 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $\text{-NR}^9\text{-Y-}$ or -O-Y- and forms an amide bond or an ether bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ fluoroalkyl;
- Y is selected from a bond and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene in which one or two CH_2 are optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and phenylene, said $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to 12 R^8 ; and
- 20 R^8 is selected from F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ hydroxyalkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, NH_2 , $\text{N-C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylamino, $\text{N,N-C}_1\text{-C}_4$ dialkylamino.
- 25 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^2 is a linker. As used herein, a linker is a moiety of a molecule that links it to another molecule. Thus, inherent in the term "linker" is that a linker has a portion which is capable of binding to another molecule, preferably directly to the other molecule. Such binding portion may be for example an amine group, a hydroxy group, or an alkene. A linker in the sense of the invention is the portion of the boronate hemiester that links it to a glycosaminoglycan. Thus, the linker preferably leads to a stable binding to the glycosaminoglycan.
- 30

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $-NR^9-Y-$ and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, C_1-C_3 alkyl and C_1-C_3 fluoroalkyl; and

5 wherein Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkylene. By having the linker of the boronate hemiester bound by an amide bond provides for stable gel as amides are stable to physiological conditions. In known crosslinked glycosaminoglycans using boron chemistry, aminophenylboronic acid was bound to hyaluronic acid via a 5-(3-amino-3-oxo-propyl)sulfanylpentanoate

10 moiety. According to the invention, the amine (or aniline) of the compound of Formula I may be bound directly to the backbone of said second glycosaminoglycan, for example by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on said second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting species with an amine

15 function of said linker to form a stable amide. Thus, a self-healing gel with a less modified glycosaminoglycan is obtained.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the boronate hemiester is



wherein A is selected from H, F, CF_3 , NO_2 , OCH_3 and CH_3 ;

n is selected from 0, 1, 2 and 3; and

X is selected from CH_2 , CH_2-CH_2 , $CH-NC_5H_{11}$ (CH-piperidine) and $C(CH_3)_2$.

25 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^1 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, OCH_3 , CF_3 and CH_3 ;

R^2 is a linker;

said linker is $-HN-Y-$ and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

30 Y is a bond or unsubstituted C_1-C_3 alkylene;

X is a bond or CH_2 ; and

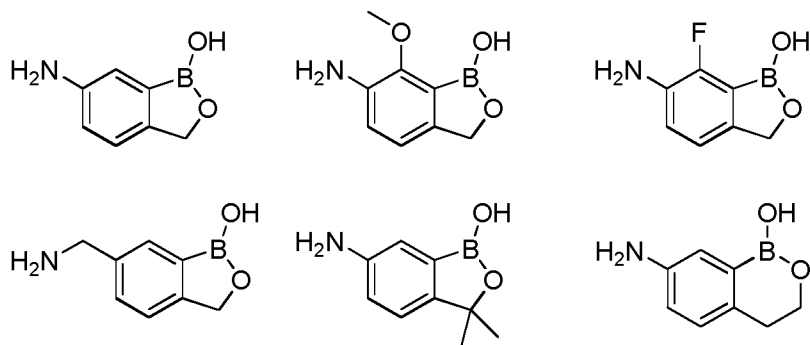
R⁵ and R⁶ are independently selected from H and C₁-C₃alkyl. X has two connections and the term CH₂ thus means methylene or -CH₂-.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention,

- 5 R¹ is selected from H, F and OCH₃;
R² is a linker;
R³ and R⁴ are hydrogen;
said linker is -HN- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;
- 10 Y is a bond or an unsubstituted methylene;
X is a bond or CH₂; and
R⁵ and R⁶ are independently selected from H and C₁-C₃alkyl.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is

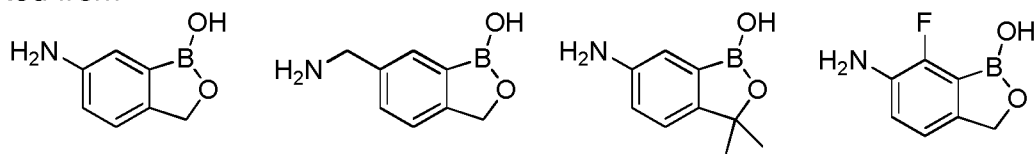
- 15 selected from



wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH₂ group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

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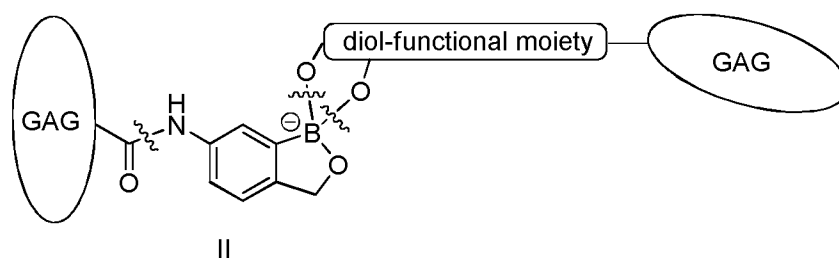
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is selected from



wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH_2 group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

- 5 In certain embodiments of the invention the crosslinked glycosaminoglycans provide a gel that is stable to autoclavation, which gives a safer gel when used inside the body, such as for injection or when used in implants.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the crosslinked
10 glycosaminoglycans having a structure of Formula (II)



By crosslinking via an alkoxyboronate ester anion with a structure of Formula
15 II, a more stable gel is obtained, particularly a more pH stable gel as is shown in example 29.

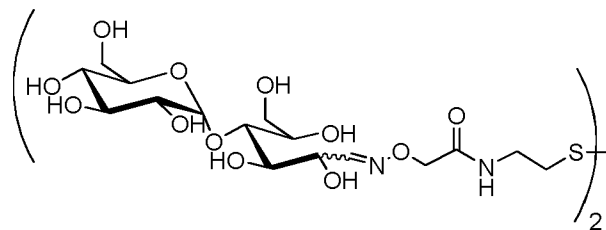
In certain embodiments of this aspect of the invention, the diol portion is a vicinal diol. In other embodiments of this aspect of the invention, the diol portion is not a vicinal diol.

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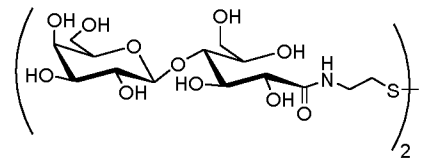
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof. Typically, such diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C₆alditol or a derivative thereof. Such derivatives are derivatives which enable
25 grafting to the glycosaminoglycan to which the diol portion is to be grafted. Such derivatives may be for example an aminosugar, a mono- or di-saccharide-sulfide or a sugar acid. Thus, the diol-functional moiety consists of a diol portion and a linking portion. Methods for linking a diol portion, such as

a sugar derivative, to a glycosaminoglycan are known to a person skilled in the art.

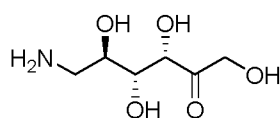
- In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or a derivative thereof. Suitable derivatives for are maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol derivatives suitable for binding to a glycosaminoglycan. Such derivatives may be a mono- or disaccharide-disulfide or an aminosugar.
- 10 In one embodiment of the invention said diol portion is selected from Maltose-disulfide, Lactobionic-disulfide, 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-fructose and 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-sorbitol.



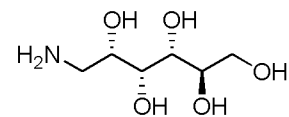
Maltose-disulfide



Lactobionic-disulfide



1-amino-1-deoxy-D-fructose



1-amino-1-deoxy-D-sorbitol

15

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is a ketose or a derivative thereof.

- In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is fructose or a derivative thereof.
- 20

In one aspect of the invention, there is provided, a method of crosslinking a first glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol-functional moiety having a diol

portion and a second glycosaminoglycan grafted with a boronate hemiester, comprising

- 5 crosslinking said first glycosaminoglycan with said second glycosaminoglycan by forming an alkoxyboronate ester anion linkage between the boronate hemiester of said second glycosaminoglycan and the diol portion of said diol-functional moiety of said first glycosaminoglycan.

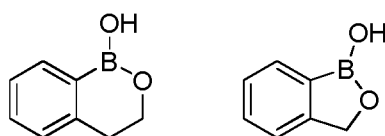
The method does not exclude additional crosslinking. A boronate hemiester has higher affinity towards diols than for example phenylboronic acid.

- 10 Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans produced with a method according to the invention can form gels with higher storage (elastic) modulus compared to using phenylboronic acid as a crosslinker due to additional cross-links formed between the boronate hemiester and the glycosaminoglycan hydroxyl groups, as shown in example 10. In other words, a glycosaminoglycan can be grafted
- 15 to a higher degree of substitution with a boronate hemiester than a corresponding glycosaminoglycan grafted with a phenylboronic acid. This is useful when forming a gel together with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol-functional moiety, particularly a self-healing gel. The method according to the invention further provide self-healing properties to the obtained gel (see
- 20 e.g. Figure 5, Example 30). A gel produced by the method according to the invention is also easy to inject as the reversible bonds break when pushed through the syringe, and then quickly reform inside the body. The gels can be injected as preformed solids, because the solid gel can manage external damages and repair itself under a proper shear stress. Due to fast gelation
- 25 kinetics after extrusion/injection, they recover their solid form almost immediately. Thus, before the gel reforms inside the body, the gel is malleable, until the reversible bonds reform. Thus, in one embodiment, the method provides a self-healing gel.

- 30 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention the boronate hemiester is an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine. The benzylic position of the boron atom in an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine stabilizes the empty p-orbital on the boron atom. Typically,

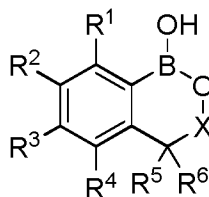
the benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine may be substituted with one or more of H, F, Cl, NO₂, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, C₁-C₃alkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S. A benzoxaborole has higher affinity
 5 towards diols than for example phenylboronic acid. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans produced with a method according to the invention can form gels with higher storage (elastic) modulus compared to using phenylboronic acid as a crosslinker due to additional cross-links formed between the boronate hemiester and the glycosaminoglycan hydroxyl groups,
 10 as shown in example 10. In other words, a glycosaminoglycan can be grafted to a higher degree of substitution with a benzoxaborole than a corresponding glycosaminoglycan grafted with a phenylboronic acid. This is useful when forming a gel together with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol-functional moiety, particularly a self-healing gel.

15



benzoxaborinine benzoxaborole

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the method further
 20 comprises, prior to the crosslinking step grafting said second glycosaminoglycan with said boronate hemiester, said boronate hemiester being a compound of Formula (III),



III

wherein

25 R¹ is selected from H, F, Cl, NO₂, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl and C₁-C₃alkoxy;

R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, Cl, C_1 - C_3 haloalkyl, NO_2 , C_1 - C_3 alkoxy, C_1 - C_3 alkyl and a linker binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;

X is selected from CHR^7 and a bond; and

- 5 R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from H, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_3 - C_6 cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S, wherein one of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is a linker.

- 10 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said first and said second glycosaminoglycans are hyaluronic acid.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the glycosaminoglycan is between 200-1500 kg/mol, preferably in the range 400-

- 15 1100 kg/mol, more preferably 500-1000 kg/mol, more preferably 600-800 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the glycosaminoglycan is between 50-1000 kg/mol, such as 50-500 kg/mol, such

- 20 as 50-200 kg/mol, such as around 100 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the degree of substitution of the glycosaminoglycans is 0.05-0.3, preferable 0.1-0.2.

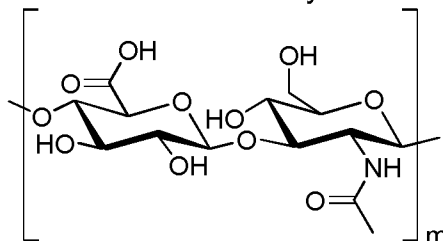
- 25 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the degree of substitution of the glycosaminoglycans is 0.05-0.7, preferably 0.1-0.6, more preferably 0.15-0.5. It has been experimentally observed that these ranges of degree of substitution of the hyaluronic acid with a boronate hemiester and subsequently mixed with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol functional moiety exhibit improved gel properties (e.g. G' and G''). The degree of
- 30 substitution may be measured on the substituted polymer glycosaminoglycans by NMR.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond to said second glycosaminoglycan.

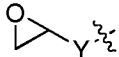
The grafting of the compound of Formula I to said second glycosaminoglycan may be done for example via an ether bond by reacting for example a

- 5 hydroxy group of the backbone of the glycosaminoglycan with an epoxy functionality of said linker. The grafting of the compound of Formula I to said second glycosaminoglycan may also be done by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on said second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting
- 10 species with an amine function of said linker to form a stable amide.

As used herein, the term “backbone” refers to the polysaccharide chain in its native form i.e. groups grafted to the backbone are not part of the backbone. As an example, below the backbone of hyaluronic acid is shown.



15

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $\text{H}_2\text{N}-\text{Y}-$ or  and forms an amide bond or an ether bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

- Y is selected from a bond and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene in which one or two CH_2 are
- 20 optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and phenylene, said $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to 12 R^8 ; and
- R^8 is selected from F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ hydroxyalkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, NH_2 , N- $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylamino, N,N- $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ dialkylamino.

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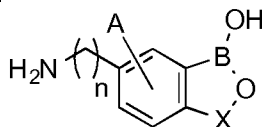
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^2 is a linker.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$ and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ fluoroalkyl; and Y is a bond or an unsubstituted $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene. The grafting of the compound of Formula I to said second glycosaminoglycan may also be done by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on said second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting species with an amine function ($\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$) of said linker to form a stable amide.

10

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^9 is hydrogen.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the boronate hemiester is

15 wherein A is selected from H, F, CF_3 , NO_2 , OCH_3 and CH_3 ;

n is selected from 0, 1, 2 and 3; and

X is selected from CH_2 , $\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2$, $\text{CH-NC}_5\text{H}_{11}$ (CH-piperidine) and $\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_2$.

20 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^1 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, OCH_3 , CF_3 and CH_3 ;

R^2 is a linker;

said linker is $\text{H}_2\text{N-Y-}$ and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

Y is a bond or an unsubstituted $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylene;

25 X is a bond or CH_2 ; and

R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from H and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention,

R^1 is selected from H, F and OCH_3 ;

30 R^2 is a linker;

R^3 and R^4 are hydrogen;

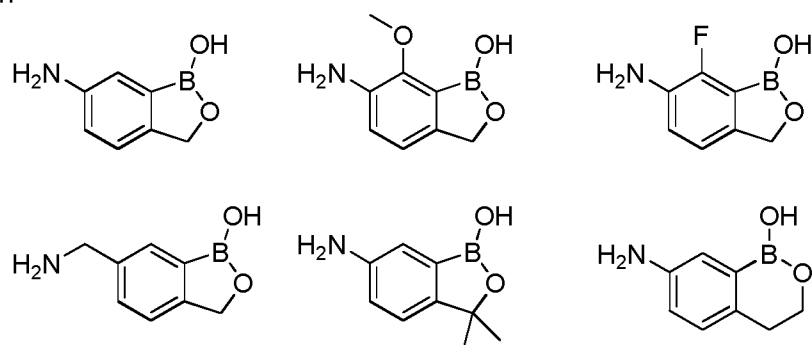
said linker is -HN- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

Y is a bond or an unsubstituted methylene;

X is a bond or CH₂; and

- 5 R⁵ and R⁶ are independently selected from H and C₁-C₃alkyl.

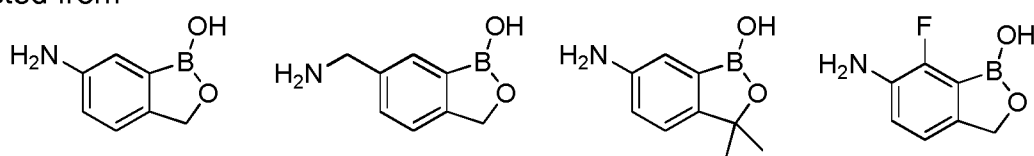
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is selected from



- 10 wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH₂ group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is

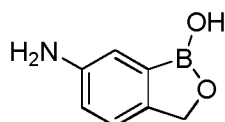
- 15 selected from



wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH₂ group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

20

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester being



The compound above may be called 5-amino-2-hydroxymethylphenylboronic acid. According to the generated IUPAC name in Biovia DRAW 4.2, it should be named 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine.

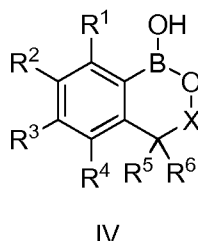
- 5 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof. Typically, such diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C₆alditol or a derivative thereof.
- 10 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or a derivative thereof. Suitable derivatives are maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol derivatives suitable for binding to a glycosaminoglycan. Such derivatives may be a mono- or di-saccharide-disulfide or an aminosugar.
- 15 In one embodiment of the invention said diol portion is selected from Maltose-disulfide, Lactobionic-disulfide, 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-fructose and 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-sorbitol.
- 20 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is fructose or a derivative thereof.
- In one aspect of the invention, there is provided, use of a boronate hemiester in the manufacture of crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, the crosslinkage being
- 25 via an alkoxyboronate ester anion formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan. The use of a boronate hemiester to crosslink glycosaminoglycans, does not exclude that the glycosaminoglycans are further crosslinked. A boronate hemiester has higher
- 30 affinity towards diols than for example phenylboronic acid. A boronate hemiester can form gels with higher storage (elastic) modulus compared to using phenylboronic acid as a crosslinker due to additional cross-links formed between the boronate hemiester and the glycosaminoglycan hydroxyl groups,

as shown in example 10. In other words, a glycosaminoglycan can be grafted to a higher degree of substitution with a boronate hemiester than a corresponding glycosaminoglycan grafted with a phenylboronic acid. This is useful when forming a gel together with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol-functional moiety, particularly a self-healing gel. Thus, a boronate hemiester is a stronger reversible crosslinker. The use of a boronate hemiester in the manufacture of crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to the invention further provide self-healing properties to the obtained gel (see e.g. Figure 5, Example 30). The obtained gel is also easy to inject as the reversible bonds break when pushed through the syringe, and then quickly reform inside the body. The gels can be injected as preformed solids, because the solid gel can manage external damages and repair itself under a proper shear stress. Due to fast gelation kinetics after extrusion/injection, they recover their solid form almost immediately. Thus, before the gel reforms inside the body, the gel is malleable, until the reversible bonds reform. Thus, in one embodiment, the method provides a self-healing gel. The crosslinked glycosaminoglycans may optionally be further crosslinked.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention the boronate hemiester is an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine. The benzylic position of the boron atom in an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine stabilizes the empty p-orbital on the boron atom. Typically, the benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine may be substituted with one or more of H, F, Cl, NO₂, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, C₁-C₃alkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S. A benzoxaborole has higher affinity towards diols than for example phenylboronic acid. Benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine can form gels with higher storage (elastic) modulus compared to using phenylboronic acid as a crosslinker due to additional cross-links formed between the boronate hemiester and the glycosaminoglycan hydroxyl groups, as shown in example 10. In other words, glycosaminoglycan can be grafted to a higher degree of substitution with a

benzoxaborole than a corresponding glycosaminoglycan grafted with a phenylboronic acid, particularly a self-healing gel.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is
 5 a compound of Formula (IV)



wherein

- R¹ is selected from H, F, Cl, NO₂, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl and C₁-C₃alkoxy;
 10 R², R³ and R⁴ are independently selected from H, F, Cl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, NO₂, C₁-C₃alkoxy, C₁-C₃alkyl and a linker capable of binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;
 X is selected from CHR⁷ and a bond; and
 R⁵, R⁶ and R⁷ are independently selected from H, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl,
 15 phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S, wherein one of R², R³ and R⁴ is a linker. The benzylic position of the boron atom in a compound of Formula (IV) or in an optionally substituted benzoxaborole or benzoxaborinine stabilizes the empty p-orbital on the boron atom. The linker in position R², R³ or R⁴ is
 20 the group binding a compound of Formula (IV) to said second glycosaminoglycan and thus enables the grafting of said compound to said second glycosaminoglycan.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said glycosaminoglycans
 25 are hyaluronic acid.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the glycosaminoglycan is between 200-1500 kg/mol, preferably in the range 400-

1100 kg/mol, more preferably 500-1000 kg/mol, more preferably 600-800 kg/mol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the molecular weight of the
5 glycosaminoglycan is between 50-1000 kg/mol, such as 50-500 kg/mol, such as 50-200 kg/mol, such as around 100 kg/mol.

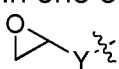
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the degree of substitution of the glycosaminoglycans is 0.05-0.3, preferable 0.1-0.2. It has been
10 experimentally observed that these ranges of degree of substitution of the hyaluronic acid with a boronate hemiester and subsequently mixed with a glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol functional moiety exhibit improved gel properties (e.g. G' and G''). The degree of substitution may be measured on the substituted polymer glycosaminoglycans by NMR.

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In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is capable of forming an amide bond or an ether bond to said second glycosaminoglycan. According to this embodiment, the linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond, respectively, with the backbone of said second glycosaminoglycan.
20 Forming an ether bond may be done by reacting for hydroxy group of the backbone of the glycosaminoglycan with an epoxy functionality of the linker. Forming an amide bond between a linker comprising an amine function and a glycosaminoglycan may be done by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on the
25 second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting species with an amine function of said linker to form a stable amide. The use of a compound of Formula (IV) with a linker capable of forming an amide bond or an ether bond to said second glycosaminoglycan gives a more facile synthesis with fewer steps for grafting a boronate hemiester to a glycosaminoglycan.

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In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R² is a linker.

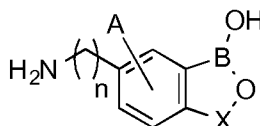
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$ or  and capable of forming an amide bond or an ether bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ fluoroalkyl;

- 5 Y is selected from a bond and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene in which one or two CH_2 are optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and phenylene, said $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to 12 R^8 ; and R^8 is selected from F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ hydroxyalkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, NH_2 , $\text{N-C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylamino, $\text{N,N-C}_1\text{-C}_4$ dialkylamino.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said linker is $\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$ and capable of forming an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ fluoroalkyl; and

- 15 Y is a bond or an unsubstituted $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6$ alkylene. According to this embodiment, the linker forms an amide bond with the backbone of said second glycosaminoglycan. Forming an amide bond between a $\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$ linker and a glycosaminoglycan may be done by using 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) to activate carboxylic groups on the second glycosaminoglycan and react the resulting species with an amine function ($\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$) of said linker to form a stable amide. The use of a compound of Formula (IV) with a $\text{HR}^9\text{N-Y-}$ linker gives a more facile synthesis with fewer steps for grafting a boronate hemiester to a glycosaminoglycan.
- 20
- 25 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^9 is hydrogen.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the boronate hemiester is



- 30 wherein A is selected from H, F, CF_3 , NO_2 , OCH_3 and CH_3 ; n is selected from 0, 1, 2 and 3; and

X is selected from CH_2 , $\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2$, $\text{CH-NC}_5\text{H}_{11}$ (CH-piperidine) and $\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_2$.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, R^1 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, CF_3 and CH_3 ;

5 R^2 is a linker;

said linker is $\text{H}_2\text{N-Y-}$ and capable of forming an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

Y is a bond or an unsubstituted $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylene;

X is a bond or CH_2 ; and

10 R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from H and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention,

R^1 is selected from H, F and OCH_3 ;

R^2 is a linker;

15 R^3 and R^4 are hydrogen;

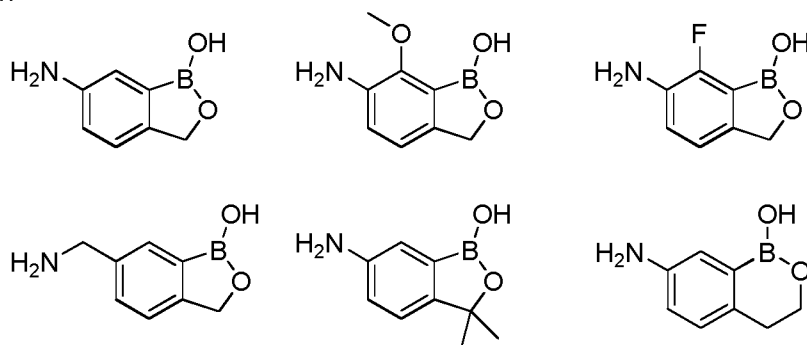
said linker is -HN- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

Y is a bond or an unsubstituted methylene;

X is a bond or CH_2 ; and

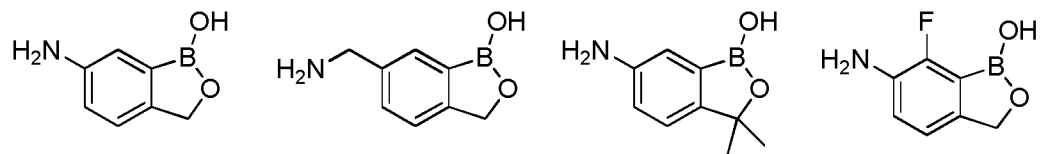
20 R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from H and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is selected from



25 wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH_2 group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

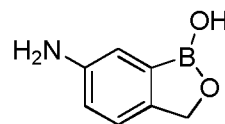
In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is selected from



- 5 wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH_2 group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said boronate hemiester is

10



In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof.

- 15 Typically, such diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C_6 alditol or a derivative thereof.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or a derivative thereof. Suitable derivatives for are maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol derivatives suitable for binding to a glycosaminoglycan. Such derivatives may be a mono- or di-saccharide-disulfide or an aminosugar.

- 20 In one embodiment of the invention said diol portion is selected from Maltose-disulfide, Lactobionic-disulfide, 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-fructose and 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-sorbitol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is a ketose or a derivative thereof.

30

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is a ketose or a derivative thereof.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said diol portion is fructose
5 or a derivative thereof.

In one aspect of the invention, there is provided a polymer composition comprising crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to the invention and an aqueous buffer. The polymer composition is optionally a self-healing hydrogel
10 with higher degree of substitution than a gel based on phenylboronic acid crosslinking. The buffer is typically HEPES buffer. The crosslinked glycosaminoglycan product is preferably biocompatible. This implies that no, or only very mild, immune response occurs in the treated individual. That is, no or only very mild undesirable local or systemic effects occur in the treated
15 individual.

The crosslinked product according to the disclosure is a gel, or a hydrogel. That is, it can be regarded as a water-insoluble, but substantially dilute crosslinked system of glycosaminoglycan molecules when subjected to a
20 liquid, typically an aqueous liquid.

Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans produced according to the method according to the invention.

25 According to related aspects, the present disclosure also provides use of the hydrogel product as a medicament, such as in the treatment of soft tissue disorders. There is provided a method of treating a patient suffering from a soft tissue disorder by administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of the hydrogel product. There is also provided a method of providing
30 corrective or aesthetic treatment to a patient by administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of the hydrogel product.

According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method for use as a medicament.

5 According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method for use in the treatment of soft tissue disorders.

10 According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided the use of a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method for the manufacture of a medicament for treatment of soft tissue disorders.

15 According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided a method of treating a patient suffering from a soft tissue disorder by administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method.

20 According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided a method of providing corrective or aesthetic treatment to a patient by administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method.

25 According to other aspects illustrated herein, there is provided a method of cosmetically treating skin, which comprises administering to the skin a hydrogel product obtained by the inventive method.

Other aspects and preferred embodiments of the present invention will be evident from the appended examples.

30 The crosslinked glycosaminoglycan gel can be simply obtained from mixtures of HA-BOR/HA-polyol in a physiological buffer.

Due to its significant liquid content, the gel product is structurally flexible and similar to natural tissue, which makes it very useful as a scaffold in tissue

engineering and for tissue augmentation. It is also useful for treatment of soft tissue disorder and for corrective or aesthetic treatment. It is preferably used as an injectable formulation.

- 5 The hydrogel product may be present in an aqueous solution, but it may also be present in dried or precipitated form, e.g. in ethanol.

The hydrogel product is preferably injectable.

- 10 The hyaluronic acid can be obtained from various sources of animal and non-animal origin. Sources of non-animal origin include yeast and preferably bacteria. The molecular weight of a single hyaluronic acid molecule is typically in the range of 0.1-10 kg/mol, but other molecular weights are possible.

15

In certain embodiments the concentration of said hyaluronic acid is in the range of 1 to 100 mg/ml. In some embodiments the concentration of said hyaluronic acid is in the range of 2 to 50 mg/ml. In specific embodiments the concentration of said hyaluronic acid is in the range of 5 to 30 mg/ml or in the
20 range of 10 to 30 mg/ml.). Crosslinked hyaluronic acid comprises crosslinks between the hyaluronic acid chains, which creates a continuous network of hyaluronic acid molecules which is held together by reversible covalent crosslinks.

- 25 A typical application of the resulting hydrogel product involves the preparation of injectable formulations for treatment of soft tissue disorders, including, but not limited to, corrective and aesthetic treatments.

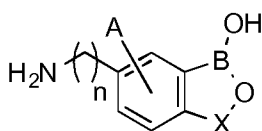
- The term "molecular weight" as used herein in connection with various
30 polymers, e.g. polysaccharides, refers to the weight average molecular weight, M_w , of the polymers, which is well defined in the scientific literature. The weight average molecular weight can be determined by, e.g., static light

scattering, small angle neutron scattering, X-ray scattering, and sedimentation velocity. The unit of the molecular weight for polymers is g/mol.

The person skilled in the art realizes that the present invention by no means is limited to the preferred embodiments described herein. On the contrary,

- 5 many modifications and variations are possible within the scope of the appended claims. Additionally, variations to the disclosed embodiments can be understood and effected by the skilled person in practicing the claimed invention, from a study of the drawings, the disclosure, and the appended claims. In the claims, the word "comprising" does not exclude other elements
10 or steps, and the indefinite article "a" or "an" does not exclude a plurality. The mere fact that certain measures are recited in mutually different dependent claims does not indicate that a combination of these measures cannot be used to advantage.

- 15 The derivatives of benzoboroxole acid selected consist of but, are not limited to compound of formula (I):



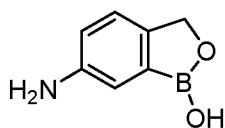
- 20 With A = H, F, CF₃, NO₂, OCH₃, CH₃

n = 0, 1, 2 or 3

X = CH₂, CH₂-CH₂, CH-NC₅H₁₁ (CH-piperidine), C(CH₃)₂

The preferred derivatives of benzoboroxole is the benzoboroxole

25



One object of the invention is a polymer composition comprising a mixture of:

a) Boroxole modified HA polymer grafted on at the carboxylate group with a group comprising boroxole, and

b) Polyol, preferably monosaccharide, disaccharide and diol modified HA, and more preferably mono-, disaccharide and cis-diol modified HA polymer
5 grafted on at least a hydroxyl group or at the carboxylate group.

More specifically, polyols that can be used to form derivatives with HA are preferably fructose, maltose, glucose, lactose, mannose, galactose, sorbitol, or glycerol.

HA-Boroxole obtained is a compound of formula (III) as previously defined.

10

In one aspect of the invention, there is provided a, polymer composition comprising glycosaminoglycans (GAG) crosslinked by reversible boronate ester bonds.

15 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, said glycosaminoglycan is hyaluronic acid (HA)

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the boroxole (BOR) modified hyaluronic acid (HA) is a polymer grafted at the carboxylate group

20 comprising boroxole.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the compositions comprises a mixture of:

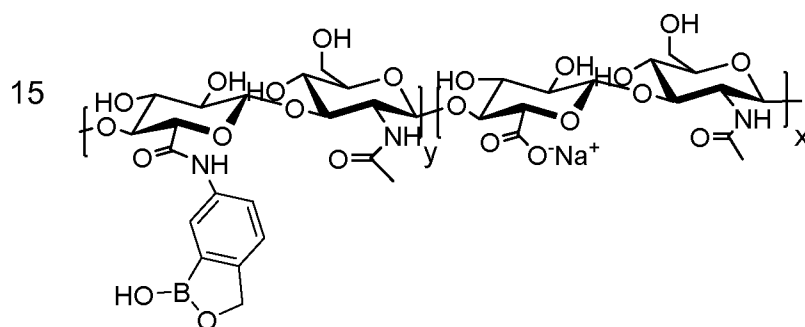
- 25 a) polymer grafted at the carboxylate group comprising boroxol;
and
b) polyol modified hyaluronic acid (HA) polymer grafted on at least a hydroxyl with a group comprising a polyol.

In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the polymer composition
30 comprises hyaluronic acid, wherein the polymer comprises doubly crosslinking based on biopolymer combining covalent ether bonds and reversible ester bonds, wherein, the stable covalent ether bonds is carried out

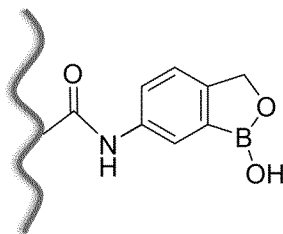
between hydroxyl group of hyaluronic acid with 1,4-butanediol diglycidyl ether (BDDE), and wherein the reversible ester bonds are formed between benzoboroxole modified hyaluronic acid and polyols modified hyaluronic acid.

- 5 In one embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the compositions comprises a mixture of :
- a) iminodiacetic acid (IDA) or diethanolamine (DEA) modified HA polymer grafted on at least a hydroxyl or at the carboxylate group with a group comprising na IDA or DEA derivative,
 - 10 b) phenylboronic acid (PBA) or boroxole modified HA polymer grafted at the carboxylate comprising a boroxole or PBA derivative,

HA-BOR

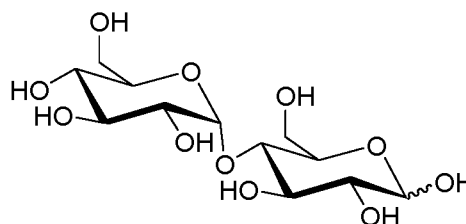


20 Or



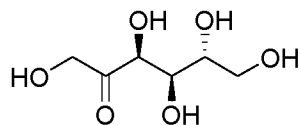
The polyols selected consist preferably of: Maltose, Lactose, Fructose and
25 Sorbitol.

Maltose



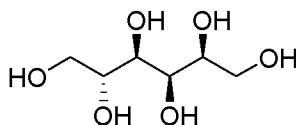
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Fructose

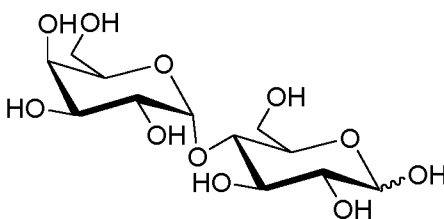


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Sorbitol



Lactose

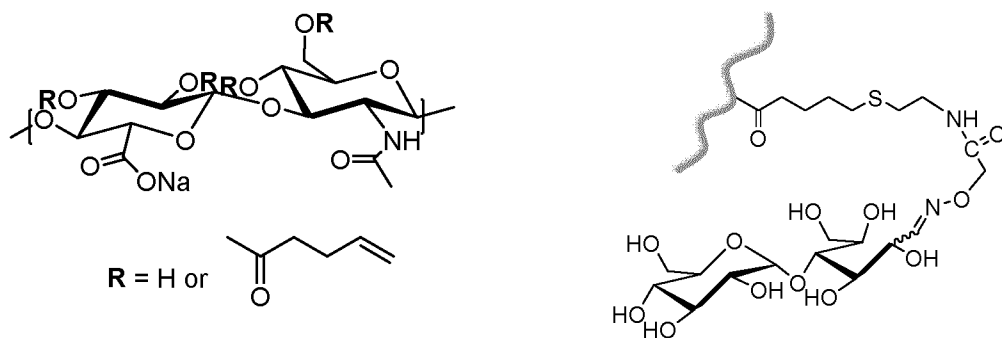


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HA-polyols obtained are, as examples:

HA-maltose:

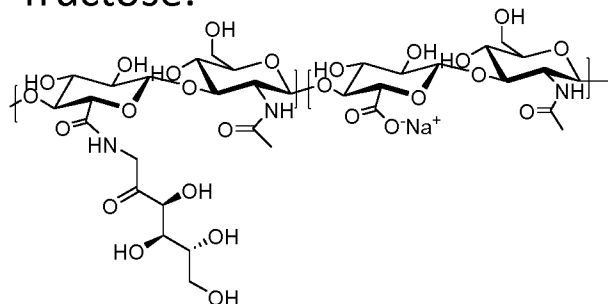
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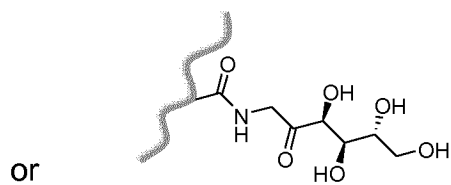
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HA- fructose:

25

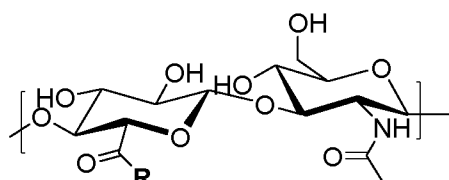


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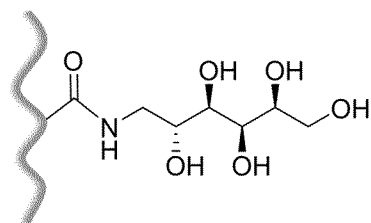
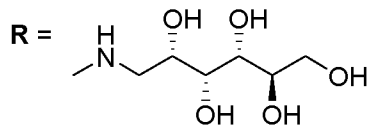


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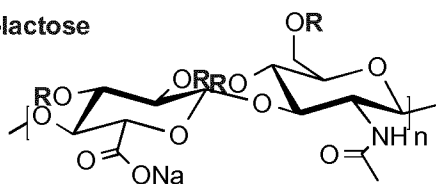
HA-sorbitol:



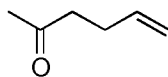
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R = O⁻Na⁺ or

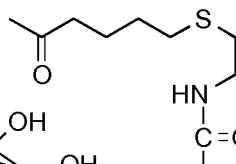
HA-lactose



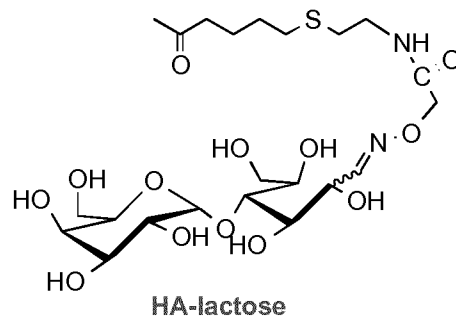
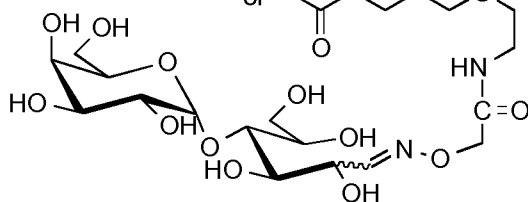
R = H or



or



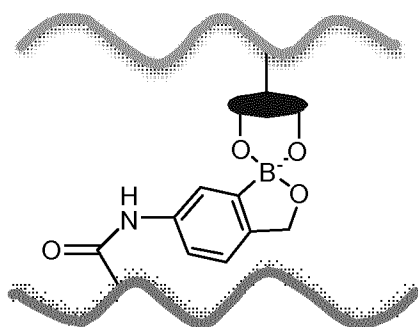
15



The hydrogel combining HA-BOR and HA-polyols obtained according to the invention is, for example:

20

5



10 In the text of the present application, this symbol  represents the polyol.

Brief description of the figures

15 Figure 1: Rheological analyses of HA-BOR/HA-fructose and HA-PBA/HA-fructose mixtures in 0.01M HEPES buffer containing 0.15M NaCl at pH 7.4, using HA-BOR and HA-PBA with DS of 0.15 (A) and with higher DS of 0.4 and 0.5, respectively (B). Viscosity measurements of the HA-BOR and HA-PBA derivatives alone with DS of 0.15 (C) and with higher DS of 0.4 and 0.5, respectively (D).

20

Figure 2: Photo of a gel obtained with HA-BOR/HA-polyol

25 Figure 3: Self-healing properties of a dynamic gel of HA-BOR/HA-fructose (CHA = 15 g/L) at 25 °C: stress recovery of the hydrogel after four cycles of recovery from stress-induced breakdowns at pH 7.4.

30

Figure 4: Rheological analyses of HA-BOR/HA-fructose (A), HA-FBOR/HA-fructose (B) and HA-PBA/HA-fructose (C) mixtures in 0.01M HEPES buffer containing 0.15M NaCl at different pH (from 4 to 8).

Figure 5: Recovery of G' and G'' as a function of time post-extrusion of HA-BOR or HA-DMABOR or HA-FBOR/HA-fructose gels ($M_w = 100$ kg/mol) through a 27 gauge needle.

- 5 The following terms and characteristics will be used in the examples and results shown. The definitions are the one hereafter:

M_w – Molecular Weight : The mass average molecular mass

- DS-** Degree of Substitution The term “degree of substitution” (DS) as used
10 herein in connection with various polymers, e.g. polysaccharides, refers to the average number of substituting group per repeating disaccharide unit.

[PS] – The polysaccharide concentration (g/l).

G' : storage (elastic) modulus (in Pa)

G'' : loss (viscous) modulus (in Pa)

- 15 **G' 1Hz**: storage modulus (in Pa) measured at a frequency of 1 Hz

G'' 1Hz: loss modulus (in Pa) measured at a frequency of 1 Hz

Gel-like behavior: $G' > G''$ within the whole range of frequency covered (0.01-10 Hz)

Viscoelastic behavior: viscous ($G' < G''$) and elastic ($G' > G''$) behavior

- 20 observed within the range of frequency covered (0.01-10 Hz).

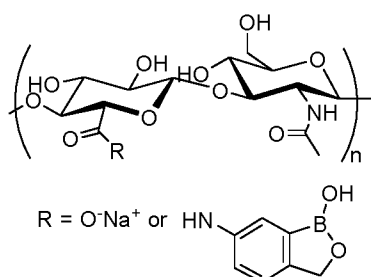
The IUPAC names of the benzoboroxol derivatives in example 4-11 are generated using Biovia DRAW 4.2.

EXAMPLES

- 25 Without desiring to be limited thereto, the present invention will in the following be illustrated by way of examples.

Example 1: Synthesis of HA-BOR

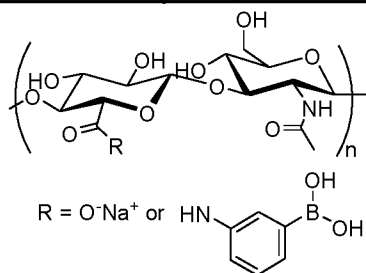
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The amine-acid coupling agent 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) was dissolved in 1 mL of water and was added to a solution of native HA in a mixture of water/DMF (3/2, v/v). A concentration of HA in the reaction medium of 3 g/L was used for HA samples of 75 and 100 kg/mol, whereas 2 g/L was used for HA with 600 kg/mol. Then, 5-amino-2-hydroxymethylphenylboronic acid hydrochloride (1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine, ABOR) solubilized in 1 mL of water was added to the reaction medium. The pH was adjusted to 6.5 using 0.5 M HCl or NaOH and the reaction was kept under stirring at room temperature for 24 h. The product was purified by diafiltration with ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-BOR was determined by ¹H NMR (DS_{NMR}), and were also estimated from the reaction kinetics performed using 2,4,6-Trinitrobenzene Sulfonic Acid (DS_{TNBS}). This method consisted in quantifying the free primary amines in the reaction medium as a function of time. Table 1 summarizes the DMTMM/HA and BOR/HA molar ratios used for the syntheses with different M_w HA, as well as the DS and the yields of HA-BOR conjugates.

HA-BOR: ¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_H (ppm) 4.55 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.25 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 3.9-3.1 (H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of HA), 2.08 (CH₃-CO from HA), 7.95 (s, 1H, NH-C-CH-C-B from Ph), 7.72 (m, 1H, C-CH-CH-C-C-B from Ph), 7.55 (m, 1H, C-CH-CH-C-C-B from Ph), 5.13 (s, 2H, CH₂-O-B).

25

Example 2 : Synthesis of HA-PBA (comparative example)

Grafting of phenylboronic acid was done according to Example 1, but using 3-aminophenylboronic acid hemisulfate salt (APBA) instead of 5-amino-2-hydroxymethylphenylboronic acid hydrochloride (ABOR). The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-PBA was determined by ¹H NMR (DS_{NMR}), and were also estimated from the reaction kinetics performed using 2,4,6-Trinitrobenzene Sulfonic Acid (DS_{TNBS}). This method consisted in quantifying the free primary amines in the reaction medium as a function of time. Table 1 summarizes the DMTMM/HA and PBA/HA molar ratios used for the syntheses with different M_w HA, as well as the DS and the yields of HA-PBA conjugates.

HA-PBA: ¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_H (ppm) 4.55 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.25 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 3.9-3.1 (H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of HA), 2.08 (CH₃-CO from HA), 7.93 (s, 1H, NH-C-CH-C-B from Ph), 7.7 (m, 2H, C-CH-CH-CH-C-B from Ph), 7.55 (m, 1H, C-CH-CH-CH-C-B from Ph).

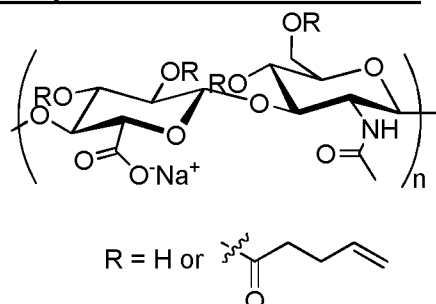
Table 1. Syntheses of HA-BOR and HA-PBA.

HA- boronic acid derivative	M _w HA (Kg/mol)	DMTMM/HA molar ratio	BOR or PBA/HA molar ratio	DS _{NMR} ^a	DS _{TNBS}	Yield (%) ^b
HA-BOR	75	1	0.16	0.16	0.16	75
HA-BOR	100	1	0.16	0.12	0.14	85
HA-BOR	600	1	0.14	0.11	0.13	75
HA-PBA	75	1	0.16	0.16	0.16	75
HA-PBA	100	1	0.16	0.16	0.16	77
HA-PBA	600	1	0.14	0.14	0.14	78

^aDS by ¹H NMR: 10 % of accuracy.

^bHA-BOR or HA-PBA yield: calculation considering the DS_{NMR}.

5 **Example 3: Synthesis of pentenoate-modified HA**

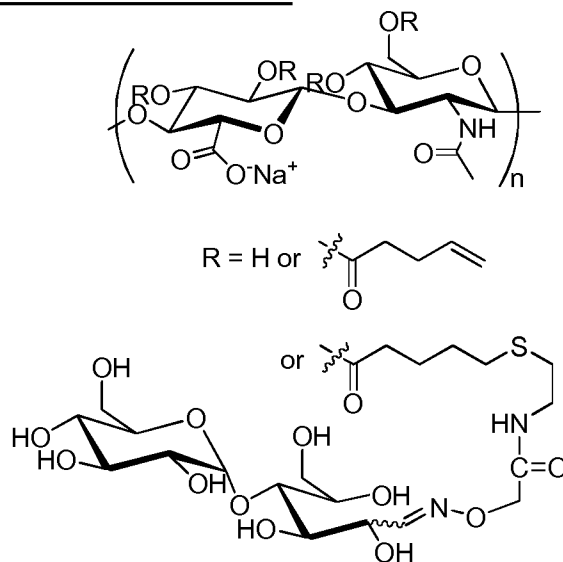


HA (1g, 2.5 mmol, M_w = 100 kg/mol) was dissolved in ultrapure water (50 mL) under continuous stirring overnight at 4 °C. DMF (33 mL) was then added dropwise in order to have a water/DMF ratio of (3/2, v/v). 4-pentenoic anhydride (0.454 g, 2.5 mmol) was added while maintaining the pH between 8 and 9 by adding 1 M NaOH for at least 4 h. The reaction was kept at 4 °C under stirring for one night. The product was purified by diafiltration with ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-pentenoate was found to be 0.18 ± 0.01 by ¹H NMR. A yield of 49% was calculated considering its DS.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_H (ppm) 4.71 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.53 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 4.13-3.2 (H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of

HA), 2.1 (CH₃-CO from HA), 6.0 (m, 1H, CH=CH₂), 5.18 (m, 2H, CH=CH₂), 2.62 (m, 2H, CH₂-C=O), 2.45 (m, 2H, OCCH₂-CH₂).

Example 4: Synthesis of HA-maltose



5

a. Maltose-disulfide

To an aqueous solution of maltose (0.25 g, 0.694 mmol) in 25 mL of ultrapure water at room temperature, O-(carboxymethyl)hydroxylamine hemihydrochloride (0.0768 g, 0.694 mmol) was added. The pH was adjusted to 4.8 using 0.5 M NaOH. The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at room temperature and then, was neutralized to pH 7 by addition of 0.5 M NaOH. The maltose-COOH derivative was then recovered by freeze-drying without further purification as a white powder (46 mol% of maltose-COOH/maltose). To a solution of maltose-COOH (0.25g, 0.622 mmol) in dry DMF (50 mL), hydroxybenzotriazole (HOBt) (0.1875g, 1.39 mmol), diisopropylcarbodiimide (DIC) (0.3483g, 2.8 mmol) and cystamine dihydrochloride (0.094g, 0.42 mmol) were successively added. The resulting mixture was stirred overnight at room temperature under nitrogen. After evaporation of most of the solvent, the residual syrup was poured dropwise into acetone (500 mL) under stirring. The white precipitate was collected by filtration, washed three times with acetone and dried to give the desired maltose-disulfide in 60 % yield (0.295g, 0.625 mmol).

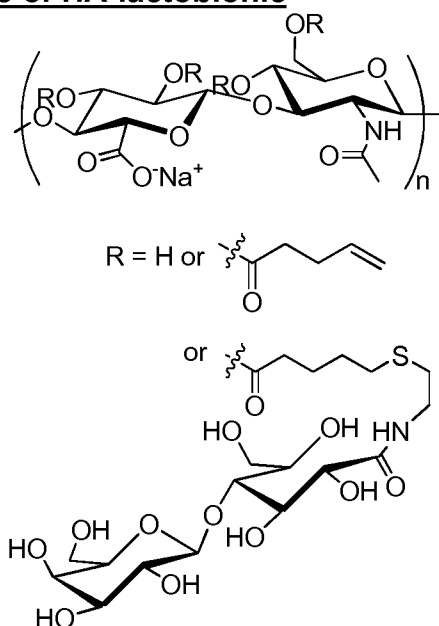
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¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_H (ppm) 7.75 (1H, anomeric H_β from linked glucose unit, N=CH_β-), 7.13 (1H, anomeric H_α from linked glucose unit, N=CH_α-), 5.4 (1H, anomeric H from pendant glucose unit of maltose), 5.19 (1H, anomeric H_α from linked glucose unit), 5.14 (1H, anomeric H from pendant glucose unit of maltose-disulfide), 4.7 (1H, anomeric H_β from pendant glucose unit), 4.66 (2H, N-O-CH₂), 4.6 (1H, N=CH_{α,β}-CH(OH) from linked glucose group), 3.4-4.2 (8H, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 from linked and pendant glucose groups), 2.95 (4H, NH-CH₂-CH₂).

10 b. HA-maltose

The first step consisted in reducing the disulfide bond of maltose-disulfide. Thus, to an aqueous solution of this derivative (0.2 g, 0.211 mmol) in 4 mL of degassed phosphate buffered saline (PBS) pH 7.4 at room temperature, a solution of TCEP (91 mg, 0.317 mmol) in 1 mL of degassed PBS was added and the pH was adjusted to 5-5.5. The mixture was stirred for 15 min under nitrogen at room temperature to give maltose-SH. The pH was adjusted to 7.4 using 0.5 M NaOH and the mixture was added to HA-pentenoate solubilized in PBS in the presence of Irgacure 2959 (0.1 %, w/v) as a photoinitiator. The grafting of maltose-SH moieties was performed under UV radiation (λ = 365 nm, at 20 mW/cm² for 15 min). The product was purified by diafiltration with ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-maltose was found to be 0.1 ± 0.01 by ¹H NMR.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_H (ppm) 4.55 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.25 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 3.9-3.1 (H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of HA), 1.85 (CH₃-CO from HA), 1.52 (m, 2H, CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-S), 1.62 (m, 2H, CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-S), 2.35 (m, 2H, OC-CH₂) 2.63 (m, 2H, CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-S), 2.82 (m, 2H, S-CH₂-CH₂-NH), 7.63 (m, 1H, H anomer of maltose).

Example 5: Synthesis of HA-lactobionic**a. Lactobionic-disulfide**

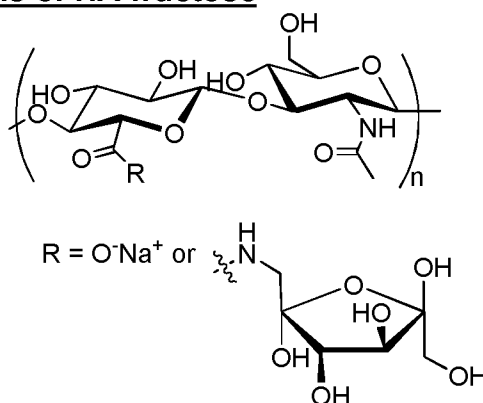
- To a solution of lactobionic acid (0.5023g, 1.39 mmol) in dry DMF (50 mL),
- 5 hydroxybenzotriazole (HOBt) (0.3768g, 2.79 mmol), diisopropylcarbodiimide (DIC) (0.705g, 5.56 mmol) and cystamine dihydrochloride (0.141g, 0.626 mmol) were successively added. The resulting mixture was stirred overnight at room temperature under nitrogen. After evaporation of most of the solvent, the residual syrup was poured dropwise into acetone (500 mL) under stirring.
- 10 The white precipitate was collected by filtration, washed three times with acetone and dried to give the desired lactobionic-disulfide in 29 % yield (0.2362g, 0.585 mmol).

b. HA-lactobionic

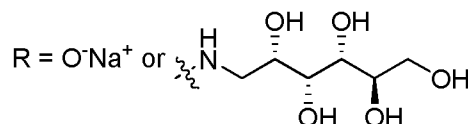
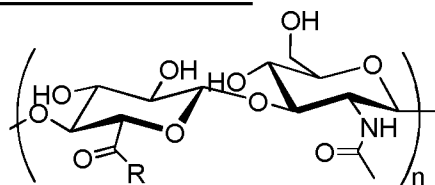
- 15 A first step of reduction of the disulfide bond of the lactobionic-disulfide derivative (0.2 g, 0.211 mmol) dissolved in 1 mL of degassed PBS was performed by adding TCEP (91 mg, 0.317 mmol) in 1 mL of degassed PBS, with pH adjusted to 5-5.5. The mixture was stirred for 15 min under nitrogen at room temperature to give lactobionic-SH. The pH was adjusted to 7.4 using
- 20 0.5 M NaOH and the mixture was added to HA-pentenoate solubilized in PBS in the presence of Irgacure 2959 (0.1 %, w/v) as a photoinitiator. The grafting of lactobionic-SH moieties was performed under UV radiation ($\lambda = 365$ nm, at

20 mW/cm² for 15 min). The product was purified by diafiltration with ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-lactobionic was found to be 0.2 ± 0.01 by ¹H NMR.

5 **Example 6: Synthesis of HA-fructose**



- 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-fructose hydrochloride (0.0121g, 0.056 mmol) dissolved in 1 mL of ultrapure water was added to a solution of native HA (0.15g, 0.374 mmol) in a mixture of water/DMF (3/2, v/v) in the presence of 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) (0.1035g, 0.374 mmol) as an amine-acid coupling agent. The pH was adjusted to 6.5 using 0.5 M HCl or NaOH and the reaction was kept under stirring at room temperature for 24 h. The product was purified by diafiltration with ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-fructose was determined by ¹³C NMR ($\text{DS}_{\text{NMR}} = 0.15 \pm 0.01$), and was also estimated from the reaction kinetics performed using 2,4,6-Trinitrobenzene Sulfonic Acid ($\text{DS}_{\text{TNBS}} = 0.14$). A yield of 84 % was determined for HA-fructose (considering its DS_{NMR}).
- ¹H NMR (400 MHz, D₂O) δ_{H} (ppm) 4.62 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.46 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 4.05-3.2 (18H, H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of HA and of fructose moieties), 2.02 (CH₃-CO from HA).

Example 7: Synthesis of HA-sorbitol

- 1-amino-1-deoxy-D-sorbitol hydrochloride (D-glucamine) (0.0088g, 0.05 mmol) dissolved in 1 mL of ultrapure water was added to a solution of native
- 5 HA (0.1305g, 0.325 mmol) in ultrapure water in the presence of 4-(4,6-dimethoxy-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)-4-methylmorpholinium chloride (DMTMM) (0.09g, 0.325 mmol) as an amine-acid coupling agent. The pH was adjusted to 6.5 using 0.5 M HCl or NaOH and the reaction was kept under stirring at room temperature for 164 h. The product was purified by diafiltration with
- 10 ultrapure water and was recovered by freeze-drying. The degree of substitution (DS) of HA-sorbitol was determined by ^{13}C NMR ($\text{DS}_{\text{NMR}} = 0.15 \pm 0.1$), and was also estimated from the reaction kinetics performed using 2,4,6-Trinitrobenzene Sulfonic Acid ($\text{DS}_{\text{TNBS}} = 0.1$). A yield of 76% was determined for HA-sorbitol (considering its DS_{NMR}).
- 15 ^1H NMR (400 MHz, D_2O) δ_{H} (ppm) 4.68 (H-1 from *N*-acetylglucosamine unit), 4.51 (H-1 from glucuronic acid), 4.1-3.3 (19H, H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, H-6 protons of HA and of sorbitol moieties), 2.07 ($\text{CH}_3\text{-CO}$ from HA).

Example 8: Preparation of HA-BOR/HA-polyol gel

- 20 Solutions of HA-BOR and of the HA-polyol derivatives (HA-maltose or HA-lactobionic or HA-fructose or HA-sorbitol) were prepared at 15 g/L in 0.01 M HEPES buffer containing 0.15 M NaCl pH 7.4, and were kept under stirring overnight at 4 °C. Combinations of HA-BOR/HA-polyol derivative, were prepared by mixing a solution containing HA-BOR with a solution containing a
- 25 HA-polyol derivative at physiological pH, at a total polymer concentration of 15 g/L and with BOR/polyol molar ratio of 1/1.

Results: When gels were formed quasi-instantaneously upon mixing HA-BOR solution with a solution of a HA-polyol derivative. Characteristics of the resulting HA-BOR/HA-polyol mixtures are summarized in Table 2.

5 **Example 9: Preparation of HA-PBA/HA-polyol gel (comparative example)**

HA-PBA/HA-polyol gels were prepared according to example 8, but using HA-PBA instead of HA-BOR.

Results: When gels were formed quasi-instantaneously upon mixing HA-BOR
10 solution with a solution of a HA-polyol derivative. Characteristics of the resulting HA-PBA/HA-polyol mixtures are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Characteristics of HA-BOR/HA-polyol and HA-PBA/HA-polyol mixtures in 0.01M HEPES buffer containing 0.15M NaCl pH 7.4 ([PS] = 15
15 g/L, BOR or PBA/fructose molar ratio = 1/1).

HA-boronic acid	DS HA-boronic acid	HA-polyol	DS HA-polyol	M _w HA (kg/mol)	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)	Rheological behavior
HA-BOR	0.15	HA-maltose	0.12	75	34	20	Viscoelastic
HA-BOR	0.15	HA-fructose	0.15	75	515	17	Gel
HA-BOR	0.15	HA-sorbitol	0.15	75	250	125	Viscoelastic
HA-BOR	0.1	HA-fructose	0.15	100	280	30	Gel
HA-BOR	0.15	HA-fructose	0.15	100	275 ± 35	20.5 ± 2.5	Gel
HA-BOR	0.12	HA-lactobionic	0.2	100	87	33	Viscoelastic
HA-BOR	0.1	HA-fructose	0.08	600	250	80	Gel
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-maltose	0.12	75	490	7	Gel

HA-boronic acid	DS HA-boronic acid	HA-polyol	DS HA-polyol	M _w HA (kg/mol)	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)	Rheological behavior
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-fructose	0.15	75	447	6.6	Gel
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-sorbitol	0.15	75	150	45	Viscoelastic
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-fructose	0.15	100	227 ± 12	8 ± 1.5	Gel
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-lactobionic	0.2	100	439	21	Gel
HA-PBA	0.15	HA-fructose	0.08	600	91	27	Gel

Example 10: The effect of a higher Degree of Substitution (DS) on the behavior of HA-BOR/HA-fructose and HA-PBA/HA-fructose gels

HA-BOR/HA-fructose and HA-PBA/fructose gels were prepared according to example 8, but using HA-BOR and HA-PBA derivatives with higher DS of 0.4 and 0.5, respectively.

Results: Gels were formed quasi-instantaneously upon mixing HA-BOR solution with a solution of a HA-fructose. Characteristics of the resulting HA-BOR or HA-PBA/HA-fructose mixtures are summarized in Table 3. Higher dynamic moduli (G' and G'') were obtained for the HA-BOR/HA-fructose hydrogel when using HA-BOR with a higher DS, compared to the mixture using HA-PBA with a DS of 0.5 (Fig 1). Viscosity measurements showed that cross-links formed between BOR moieties and HA hydroxyl groups lead to increase the viscosity of HA network (Fig 1). Therefore, the double crosslinking of BOR/fructose moieties and BOR/HA contribute to improve gel properties, in opposition to the HA-PBA/HA-fructose mixture.

Table 3: Characteristics of HA-BOR/HA-polyol and HA-PBA/HA-polyol mixtures in 0.01M HEPES buffer containing 0.15M NaCl pH 7.4 ([PS] = 15 g/L, BOR or PBA/fructose molar ratio = 1/1).

HA-boronic acid	DS HA-boronic acid	HA-polyol	DS HA-polyol	Mw HA (kg/mol)	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)	Rheological behavior
HA-BOR	0.4	HA-fructose	0.15	100	350	17	Gel
HA-PBA	0.5	HA-fructose	0.15	100	185	5	Gel

Example 11 : HA-benzoboroxole (HA-BOR)/HA-polyol:

Gels obtained from mixtures of benzoboroxole modified HA (HA-BOR)/HA-polyol were prepared by simply mixing solutions of the two HA partners

- 5 solubilized in 0.01 M HEPES buffer with 0.15 M NaCl at physiological pH. When these solutions were mixed at a total polymer concentration of 15 g/L, and with benzoboroxole/polyol molar ratio of 1/1, transparent gels were formed quasi-instantaneously (Fig 2).

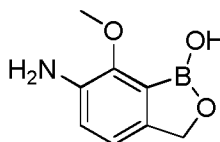
- 10 Results: Characteristics of the resulting HA-BOR/HA-polyol mixtures are summarized in Table 4. Self-healing properties of a dynamic gel of HA-BOR/HA-fructose (CHA = 15 g/L) at 25 °C were investigated by, while measuring G' and G'', applying successive stress values from 1800 to 2100 Pa for 2 min. These were intercalated with short time periods in which low
- 15 stress values (corresponding to 5 % strain) were applied for 3 min. This experiment demonstrated the stress recovery of the HA-BOR/HA-fructose gel after 4 cycles of stress-induced breakdowns. Large stress (from 1800 to 2100 Pa) inverted the values of G' (filled circles) and G'' (empty circles), indicating breakage of crosslinks and conversion to solution state. G' was recovered
- 20 under a small strain (5 %) within few seconds. These gels provide self-healing properties (Fig 3).

Table 4 : Characteristics of HA-BOR /HA-Polyol hydrogel

DS HA-BOR derivative	HA-polyol derivative	DS HA-polyol derivative	Mw HA	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)	Rheological behavior
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			(kg/mol)			
0.16	HA-maltose	0.12	75	34	20	Viscoelastic
0.16	HA-fructose	0.15	75	500	17	Gel
0.16	HA-sorbitol	0.15	75	250	125	Viscoelastic
0.12	HA-fructose	0.15	100	490	7	Gel
0.11	HA-fructose	0.08	600	250	80	Gel

Example 12 : Synthesis of HA-1-hydroxy-7-methoxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine



- 5 Example 12 is performed according to Example 1, but using 1-hydroxy-7-methoxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine hydrochloride as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride.

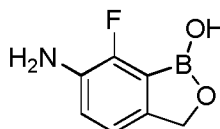
Example 13 : HA-1-hydroxy-7-methoxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

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Gels are prepared according to example 8, but using HA-1-hydroxy-7-methoxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine instead of HA-BOR.

Example 14 : Synthesis of HA-7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine

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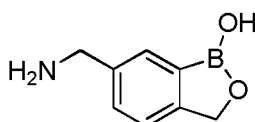


Example 14 is performed according to Example 1, but using 7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine hydrochloride as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride.

Example 15 : HA-7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels are prepared according to example 8, but using HA-7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine instead of HA-BOR.

Example 16 : Synthesis of HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine

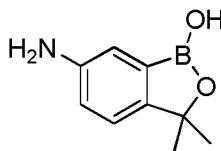


Example 16 is performed according to Example 1, but using (1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine hydrochloride as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride.

Example 17 : HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels are prepared according to example 8, but using HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine instead of HA-BOR.

Example 18 : Synthesis of HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine

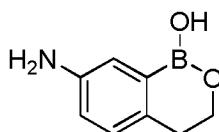


Example 18 is performed according to Example 1, but using 1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine hydrochloride as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride.

Example 19 : HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels are prepared according to example 8, but using HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine instead of HA-BOR.

Example 20 : Synthesis of HA-1-hydroxy-3,4-dihydro-2,1-benzoxaborinin-7-amine

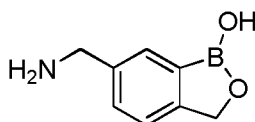


Example 20 is performed according to Example 1, but using 1-hydroxy-3,4-dihydro-2,1-benzoxaborinin-7-amine hydrochloride as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride.

Example 21 : HA-1-hydroxy-3,4-dihydro-2,1-benzoxaborinin-7-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels are prepared according to example 8, but using HA-1-hydroxy-3,4-dihydro-2,1-benzoxaborinin-7-amine instead of HA-BOR.

Example 22 : Synthesis of HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine

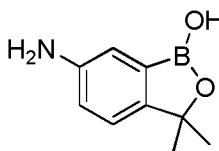


Example 22 was performed according to Example 1, but using (1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine hydrochloride (AMBOR) as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride. The molecular weight of the Hyaluronic acid was 100 kg/mol.

Example 23 : HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels were prepared according to example 8, but using HA-(1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-yl)methanamine (HA-AMBOR) instead of HA-BOR.

Example 24 : Synthesis of HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine



Example 24 was performed according to Example 1, but using 1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine hydrochloride (DMABOR) as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride. The molecular weight of the Hyaluronic acid was 100 kg/mol.

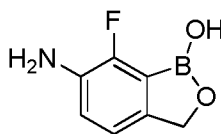
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Example 25 : HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation:

Gels were prepared according to example 8, but using HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine (HA-100DMABOR) instead of HA-BOR.

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Example 26: Synthesis of HA-7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine

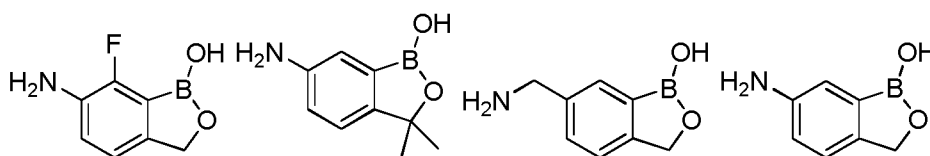


Example 26 was performed according to Example 1, but using 7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine hydrochloride (FBOR) as the ABOR derivative instead of 1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-amine hydrochloride. The molecular weight of the Hyaluronic acid was 100 kg/mol.

Example 27: HA-1-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine/HA-polyol gel preparation

Gels were prepared according to example 8, but using 7-fluoro-1-hydroxy-3H-2,1-benzoxaborol-6-amine (HA-FBOR) instead of HA-BOR.

Example 28: Rheological behavior of gels using HA-BOR derivatives, compared to HA-PBA



Results: Characteristics of the resulting HA-BOR/HA-polyol mixtures are summarized in Table 5.

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Table 5: HA100-boronic acid/HA100-fructose mixtures analyzed by rheology ([PS] = 15 g/L; BOR or DMABOR or AMBOR or FBOR or PBA/fructose molar ratio = 1; 0.01M HEPES/0.15M NaCl buffer pH 7.4).

5

HA-boronic acid	DS of HA-boronic acid	DS of HA-fructose	Rheological behavior	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)
HA100-BOR	0.15	0.15	Gel	275 ± 35	20.5 ± 2.5
HA100-FBOR	0.12	0.15	Gel	525 ± 11	14 ± 2.8
HA100-DMABOR	0.14	0.15	Gel	120 ± 32	7 ± 1.3
HA100-AMBOR	0.12	0.15	Gel/Viscoelastic	116 ± 9	12 ± 1.3
HA100-PBA	0.16	0.15	Gel	227 ± 12	8 ± 1.5

Example 29: The effect of pH on the behavior of HA-BOR/HA-fructose or HA-FBOR/HA-fructose and HA-PBA/HA-fructose gels

Rheological analyses were performed to compare the effect of pH on the behavior of HA-BOR/HA-fructose or HA-FBOR/HA-fructose vs HA-PBA/HA-fructose gels (Fig 4).

Results: Table 6 summarizes the characteristics of the gels at different pH. These results showed that a higher stability at a pH range from 4 to 8 was observed for the HA-BOR/HA-fructose and HA-FBOR/HA-fructose mixtures, compared to HA-PBA/HA-fructose (Fig 4).

Table 6: Analyses of HA-BOR or HA-FBOR or HA-PBA/HA-fructose mixtures in 0.01M HEPES buffer containing 0.15M NaCl at different pH (M_w HA = 75 or 100 kg/mol, [PS] = 15 g/L, DS of HA-BOR or HA-PBA or HA-fructose = 0.15, DS of HA-FBOR = 0.12, BOR or FBOR or PBA/fructose molar ratio = 1). Cross-over frequency: < 0.01 = near 0.01 Hz or << 0.01 = far below 0.01 Hz.

HA-boronic acid derivative	pH	G' 1Hz (Pa)	G'' 1Hz (Pa)	Cross-over frequency (Hz)
HA-BOR (M _w = 75 kg/mol)	4	6	2	0.13
	5	23.5	9	0.25
	6	125	20	0.063
	6.5	210	17.5	0.02
	7.4	515	17	< 0.01
	8	572	13	<< 0.01
HA-FBOR (M _w = 100 kg/mol)	4	1.4	4	G' < G''
	5	19	22	1.3
	6	126	50	0.2
	6.5	332	50	0.025
	7.4	533	12	<< 0.01
	8	545	11	<< 0.01
HA-PBA (M _w = 75 kg/mol)	4	≤ 0.1	≤ 0.1	G' < G''
	5	≤ 0.1	≤ 0.1	G' < G''
	6	2.4	1.2	0.13
	6.5	93.5	5	0.016
	7.4	447	7	<< 0.01
	8	564	9	<< 0.01

Example 30: Self healing properties of obtained gels

The variation of G' and G'' as a function of time immediately after injection through a 27 gauge needle of HA-BOR/HA-fructose or HA-DMABOR/HA-fructose or HA-FBOR/HA-fructose gels was investigated. Gels were prepared in 0.01M HEPES/0.15M NaCl buffer pH 7.4, at a [PS] = 15 g/L and BOR or DMABOR or FBOR/fructose molar ratios of 1/1).

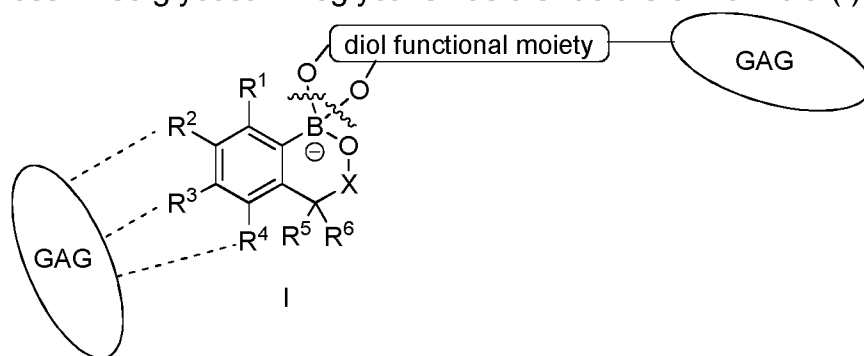
Results:

- 10 The hydrogels exhibited self-healing properties. Consequently, they can be injected as preformed solids, because the solid gel can manage external damages and repair itself under a proper shear stress. Due to fast gelation kinetics after extrusion/injection, they recover their solid form immediately. As

an example, Figure 5 shows the variation of G' and G'' as a function of time immediately after injection of HA-BOR/HA-fructose or HA-DMABOR/HA-fructose or HA-FBOR/HA-fructose gels through a 27 gauge needle. From this Figure, it can be seen that the three samples recovered into a solid gel quasi-instantaneously.

CLAIMS

1. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, wherein said glycosaminoglycans are crosslinked via an alkoxyboronate ester anion formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan.
2. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to claim 1, wherein said crosslinked glycosaminoglycans has a structure of Formula (I)

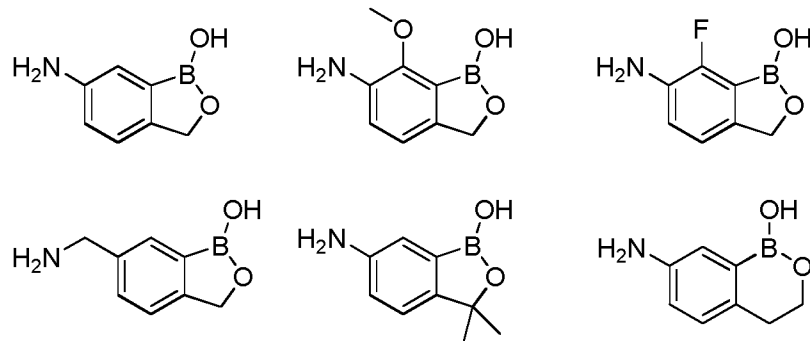


wherein

- R^1 is selected from H, F, Cl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy;
- R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and a linker, said linker binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;
- X is selected from CHR^7 and a bond;
- R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from H, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ alkyl, $\text{C}_3\text{-C}_6$ cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S; and wherein one of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is a linker.
3. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said glycosaminoglycans are hyaluronic acid.

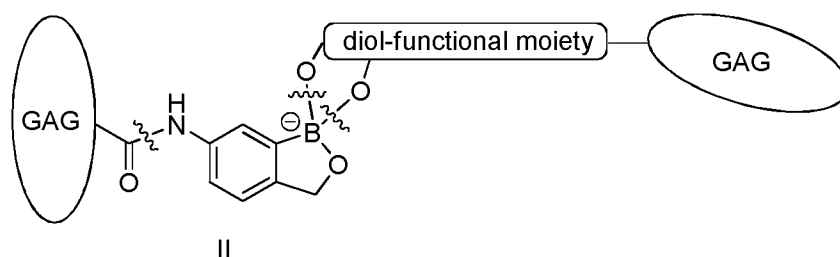
4. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;
Y is selected from a bond and C₁-C₆alkylene in which one or two
5 CH₂ are optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and phenylene, said C₁-C₆alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to 12 R⁸; and
R⁸ is selected from F, Cl, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, C₁-C₃hydroxyalkyl, C₁-C₃alkoxy, NH₂, N-C₁-C₃alkylamino, N,N-C₁-
10 C₄dialkylamino.
5. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein R² is a linker.
- 15 6. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein said linker is -NR⁹-Y- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycans, wherein R⁹ is selected from hydrogen, C₁-C₃alkyl and C₁-C₃fluoroalkyl; and
Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C₁-C₆alkylene.
- 20 7. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein
R¹, R³ and R⁴ are independently selected from H, F, OCH₃, CF₃ and CH₃;
R² is a linker;
25 said linker is -HN-Y- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;
Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C₁-C₃alkylene;
X is a bond or CH₂; and
30 R⁵ and R⁶ are independently selected from H and C₁-C₃alkyl.
8. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to claim 1, wherein said boronate hemiester is selected from

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wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH_2 group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

9. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 8, said crosslinked glycosaminoglycans having a structure of Formula (II)

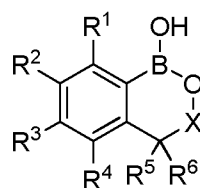


10. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof.
11. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein said diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C_6 alditol or a derivative thereof.
12. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or an amino- or a derivative thereof.

13. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein said diol portion is fructose or a derivative thereof.

14. A method of crosslinking a first glycosaminoglycan grafted with a diol-functional moiety having a diol portion and a second glycosaminoglycan grafted with a boronate hemiester, comprising crosslinking said first glycosaminoglycan with said second glycosaminoglycan by forming an alkoxyboronate ester anion linkage between the boronate hemiester of said second glycosaminoglycan and the diol portion of said diol-functional moiety of said first glycosaminoglycan.

15. A method according to claim 14, further comprising prior to the crosslinking step:
grafting said second glycosaminoglycan with said boronate hemiester, said boronate hemiester being a compound of Formula (III),



III

wherein

20 R^1 is selected from H, F, Cl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy;

R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and a linker binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;

25 X is selected from CHR^7 and a bond; and

R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from H, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ alkyl, $\text{C}_3\text{-C}_6$ cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S,

wherein one of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is a linker.

16. A method according to claim 14 or claim 15, wherein said first and said second glycosaminoglycans are hyaluronic acid.

5

17. A method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein said linker forms an amide bond or an ether bond to said second glycosaminoglycan;

10

Y is selected from a bond and C_1 - C_6 alkylene in which one or two CH_2 are optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and phenylene, said C_1 - C_6 alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to 12 R^8 ; and

15

R^8 is selected from F, Cl, C_1 - C_3 alkyl, C_1 - C_3 haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, C_1 - C_3 hydroxyalkyl, C_1 - C_3 alkoxy, NH_2 , N- C_1 - C_3 alkylamino, N,N- C_1 - C_4 dialkylamino.

18. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein R^2 is a linker.

20

19. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 18, wherein said linker is HR^9N -Y- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan, wherein R^9 is selected from hydrogen, C_1 - C_3 alkyl and C_1 - C_3 fluoroalkyl; and Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C_1 - C_6 alkylene.

25

20. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein R^1 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, OCH_3 , CF_3 and CH_3 ;

30

R^2 is a linker;

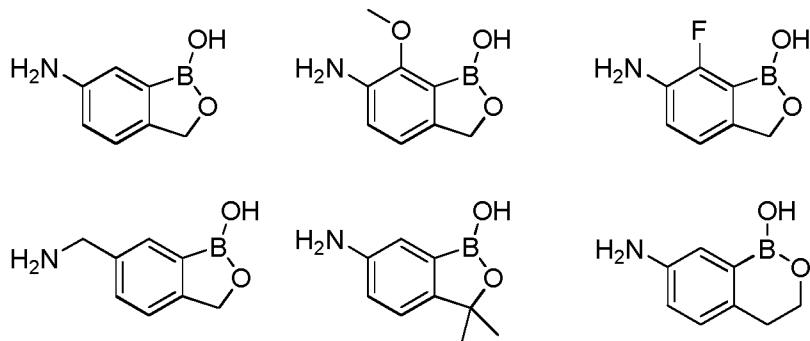
said linker is H_2N -Y- and forms an amide bond with said second glycosaminoglycan;

Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C_1 - C_3 alkylene;

X is a bond or CH_2 ; and

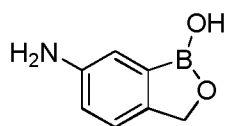
R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from H and C_1 - C_3 alkyl.

21. A method according to claim 14, wherein said boronate hemiester is selected from



wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the $-NH_2$ group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

22. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 21, said boronate hemiester being



23. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 22, wherein said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof.

24. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 23, wherein said diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C_6 alditol or a derivative thereof.

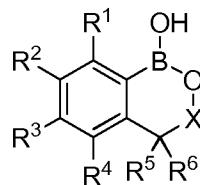
25. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 24, wherein said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or a derivative thereof.

26. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 25, wherein said diol portion is fructose or a derivative thereof.

5 27. Use of a boronate hemiester in the manufacture of crosslinked glycosaminoglycans, the crosslinkage being via an alkoxyboronate ester anion formed between a diol portion of a diol-functional moiety grafted to a first glycosaminoglycan and a boronate hemiester grafted to a second glycosaminoglycan.

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28. Use according to claim 27, wherein said boronate hemiester is a compound of Formula (IV)



IV

15

wherein

R^1 is selected from H, F, Cl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl and $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy;

R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from H, F, Cl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ haloalkyl, NO_2 , $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkoxy, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkyl and a linker capable of binding covalently to said second glycosaminoglycan;

20

X is selected from CHR^7 and a bond; and

R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from H, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ alkyl, $\text{C}_3\text{-C}_6$ cycloalkyl, phenyl, and a five- to six-membered heteroaromatic ring comprising 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from O, N and S,

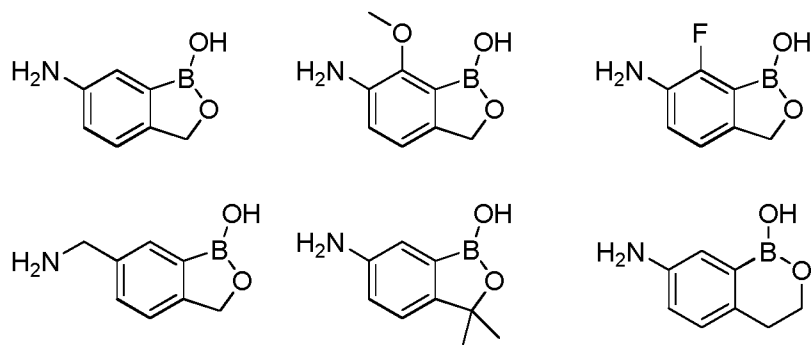
25

wherein one of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is a linker.

29. Use according to claim 27 or 28, wherein said glycosaminoglycans are hyaluronic acid.

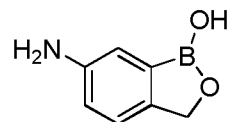
30. Use according to any one of claim 28 or claim 29, wherein
said linker is capable of forming an amide bond or an ether bond to
said second glycosaminoglycan;
Y is selected from a bond and C₁-C₆alkylene in which one or two
5 CH₂ are optionally replaced by a group selected from O, NH and
phenylene, said C₁-C₆alkylene being optionally substituted with 1 to
12 R⁸; and
R⁸ is selected from F, Cl, C₁-C₃alkyl, C₁-C₃haloalkyl, phenyl, OH, C₁-
C₃hydroxyalkyl, C₁-C₃alkoxy, NH₂, N-C₁-C₃alkylamino, N,N-C₁-
10 C₄dialkylamino.
31. Use according to any one of claims 28 to 30, wherein
R² is a linker.
- 15 32. Use according to any one of claims 28 to 31, wherein said linker is
HR⁹N-Y- and forms an amide bond with said second
glycosaminoglycan, wherein R⁹ is selected from hydrogen, C₁-
C₃alkyl and C₁-C₃fluoroalkyl; and
Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C₁-C₆alkylene.
20
33. Use according to one of claims 28 to 32, wherein
R¹, R³ and R⁴ are independently selected from H, F, CF₃ and CH₃;
R² is a linker;
said linker is H₂N-Y- and capable of forming an amide bond with
25 said second glycosaminoglycan;
Y is a bond or an unsubstituted C₁-C₃alkylene;
X is a bond or CH₂; and
R⁵ and R⁶ are independently selected from H and C₁-C₃alkyl.
- 30 34. Use according to claim 27, wherein said boronate hemiester is
selected from

66



wherein the boronate hemiester is grafted to said second glycosaminoglycan by that the -NH₂ group of the boronate hemiester forms an amide with a backbone carboxylate group of said second glycosaminoglycan.

35. Use according to any one of claims 27 to 34, said boronate hemiester being



36. Use according to any one of claims 27 to 25, wherein said diol portion is selected from a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an alditol or a derivative thereof.

37. Use according to any one of claims 27 to 36, wherein said diol portion is selected from a hexose, a dihexose and a C₆alditol or a derivative thereof.

38. Use according to any one of claims 27 to 37, wherein said diol portion is selected from maltose, fructose, lactose and sorbitol or a derivative thereof.

39. Use according to any one of claims 27 to 38, wherein said diol portion is fructose or a derivative thereof.

40. Polymer composition comprising crosslinked glycosaminoglycans according to any one of claims 1 to 13 and an aqueous buffer.
41. Crosslinked glycosaminoglycans produced according to the method according to any one of claims 14 to 26.
- 5

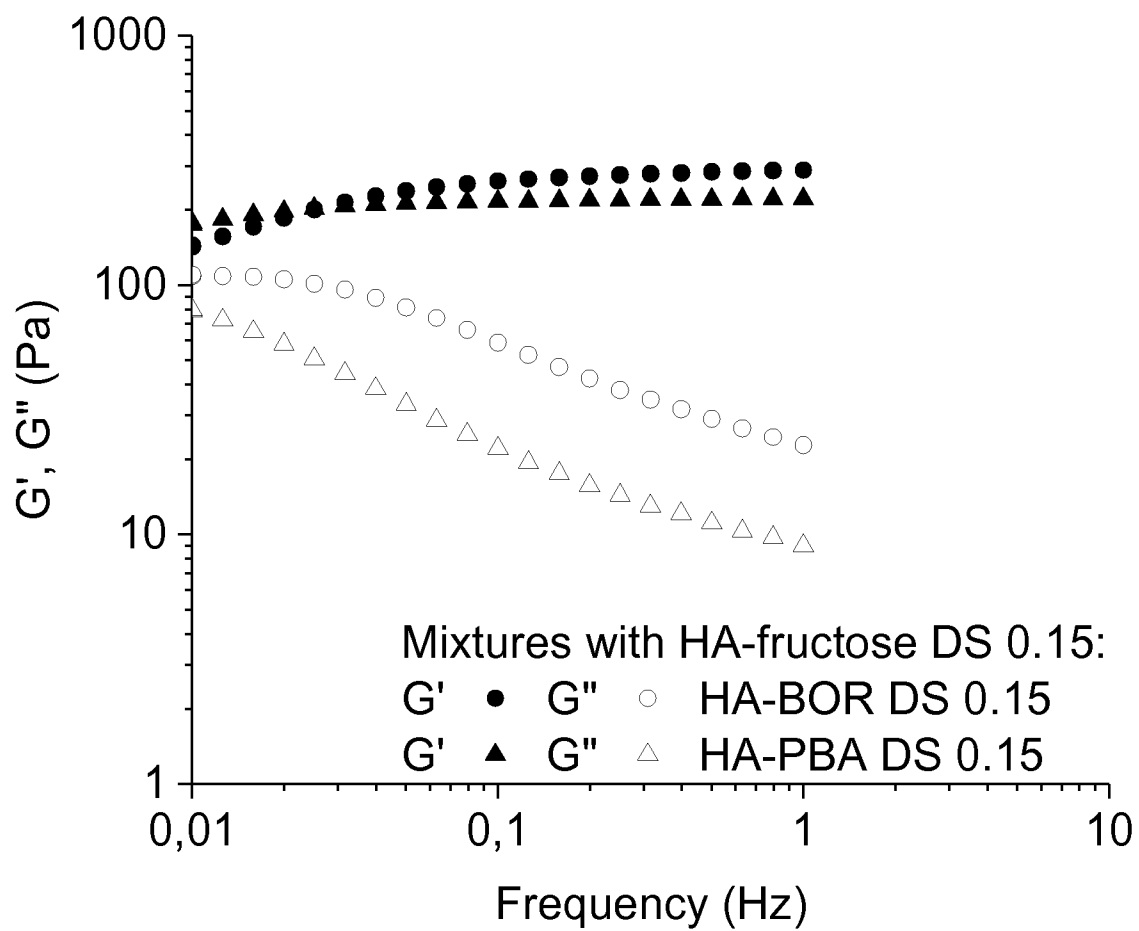


Figure 1A

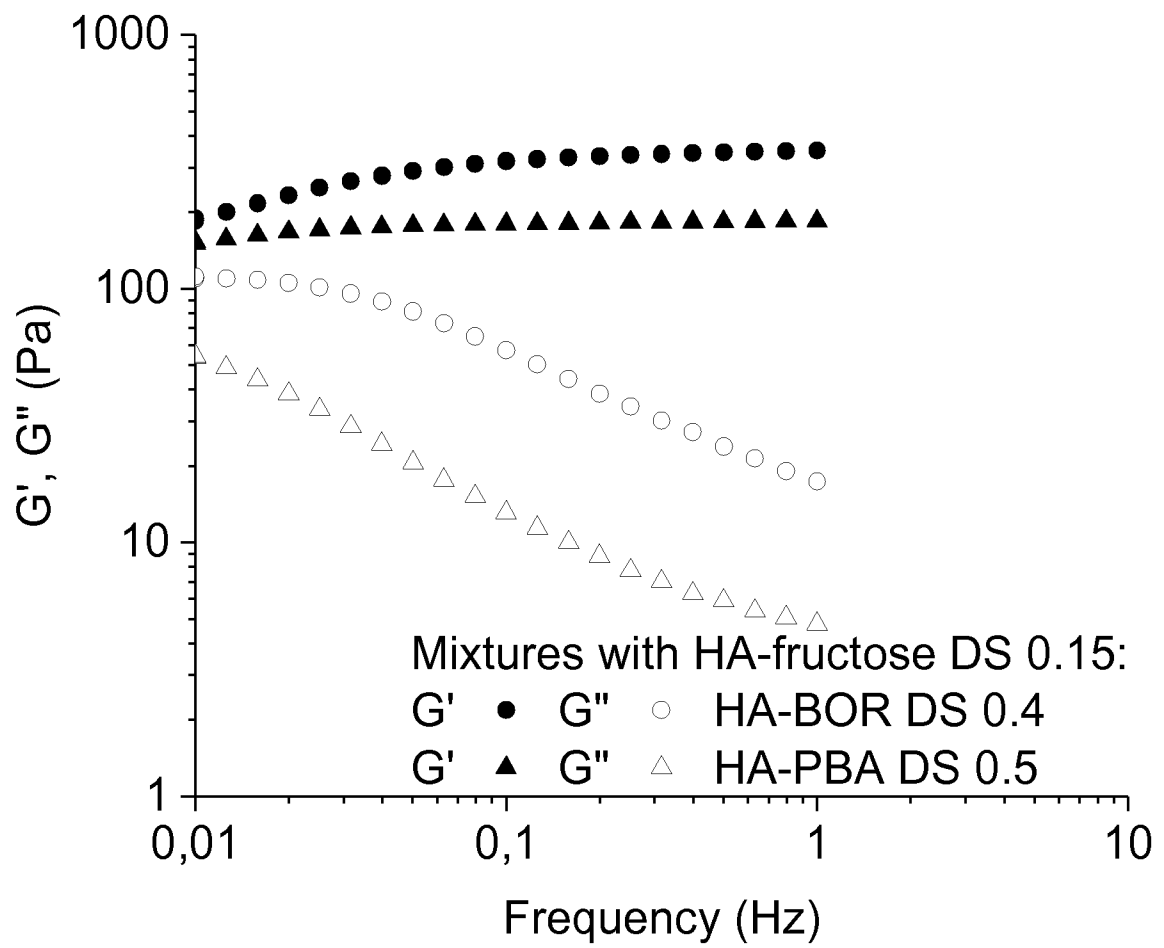


Figure 1B

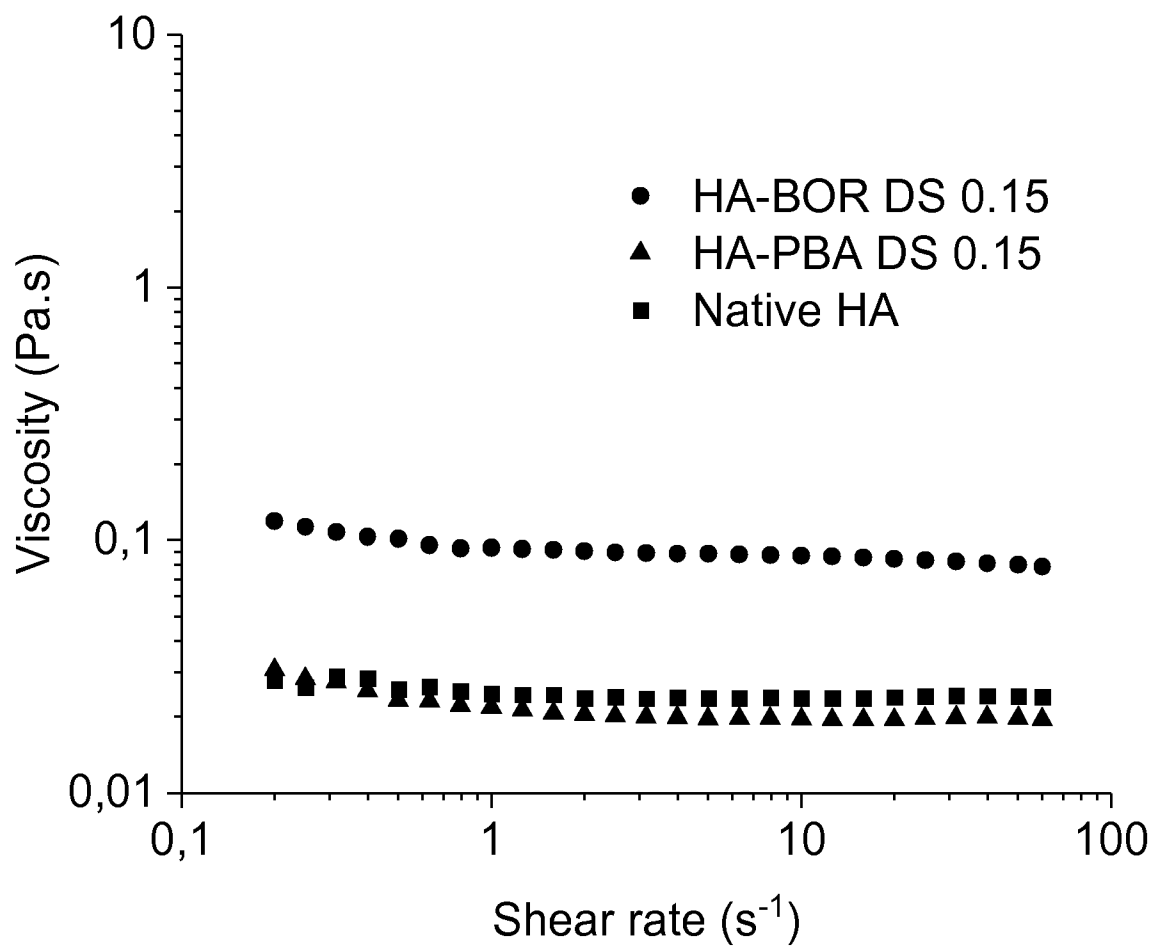


Figure 1C

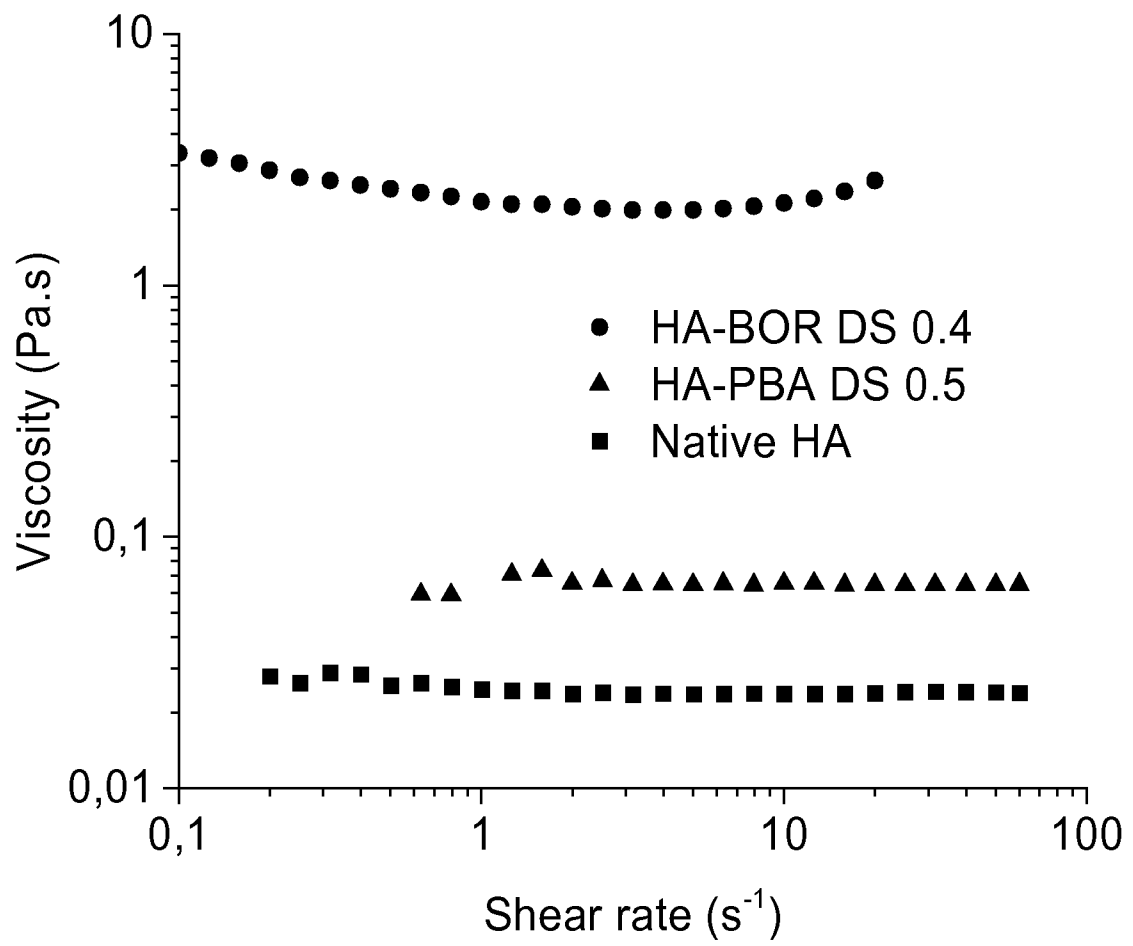


Figure 1D

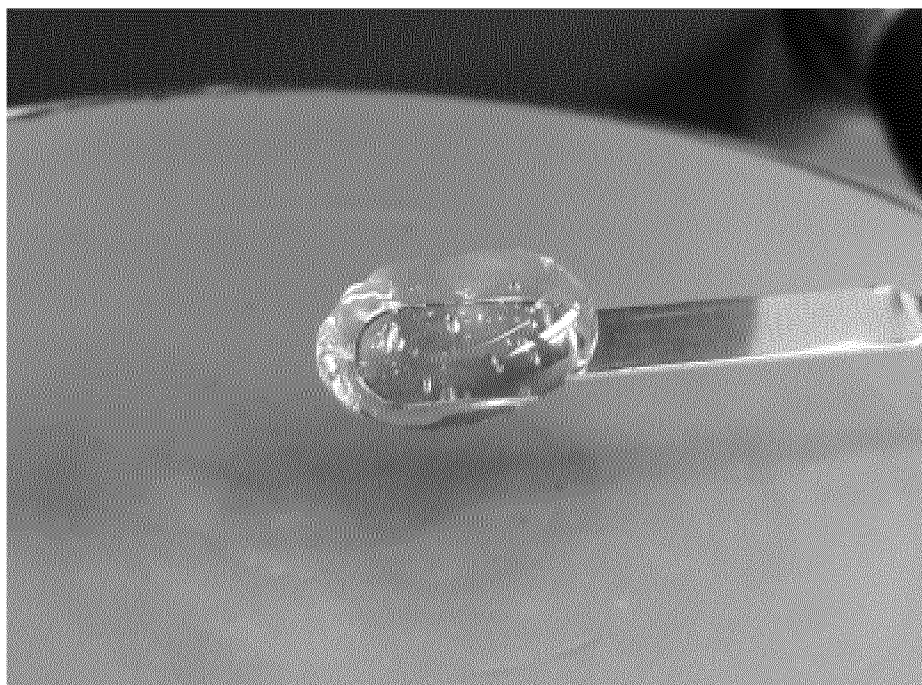


Figure 2

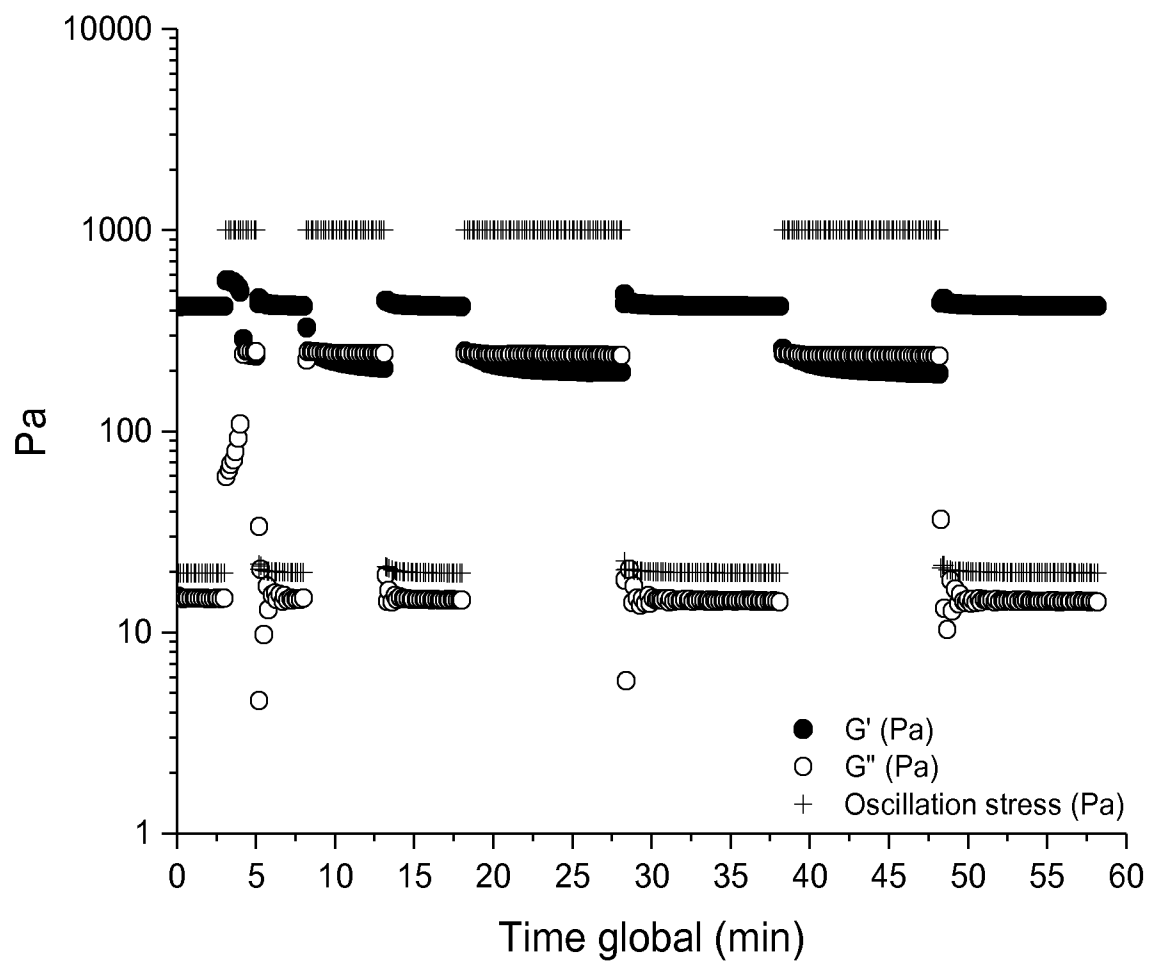


Figure 3

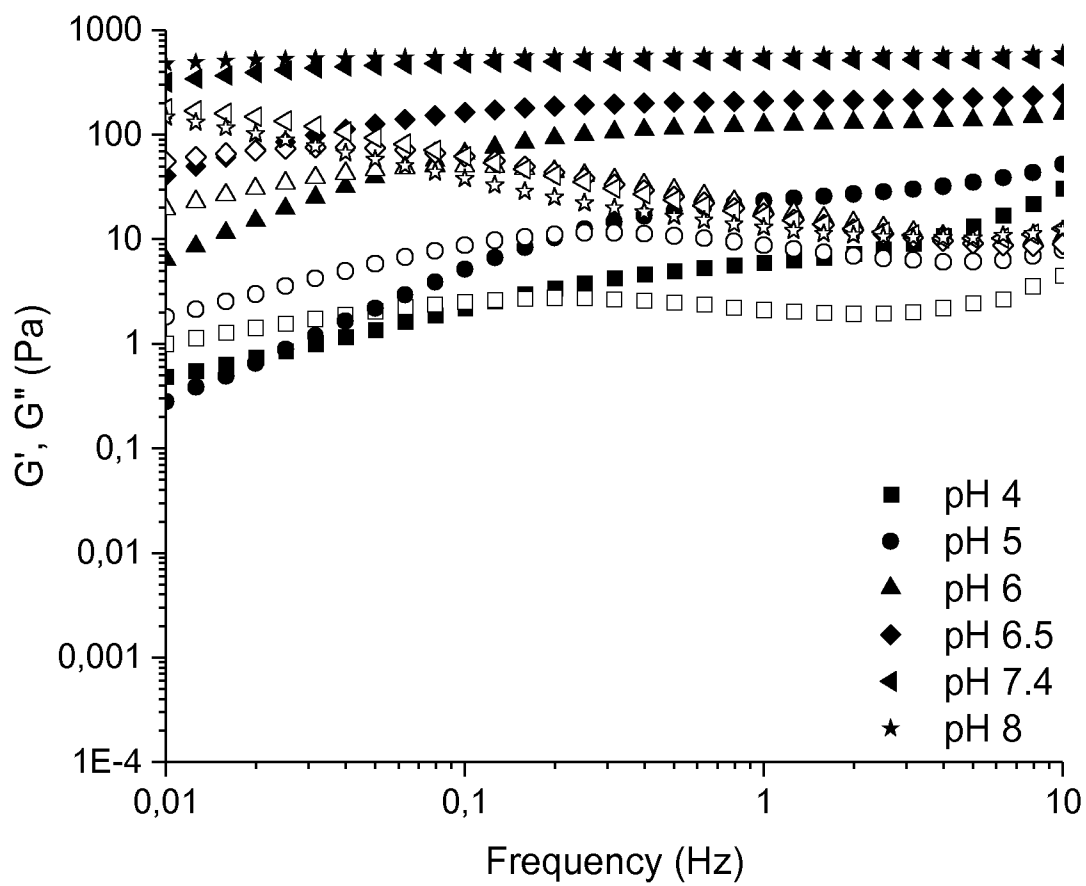


Figure 4A

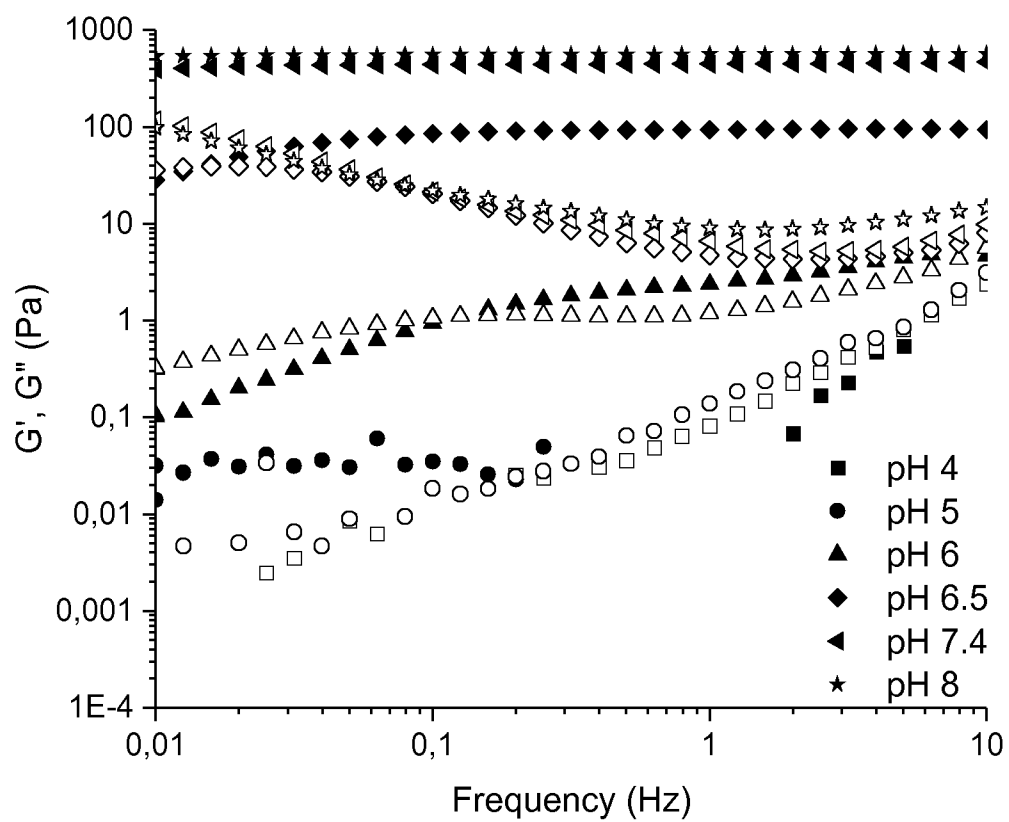


Figure 4B

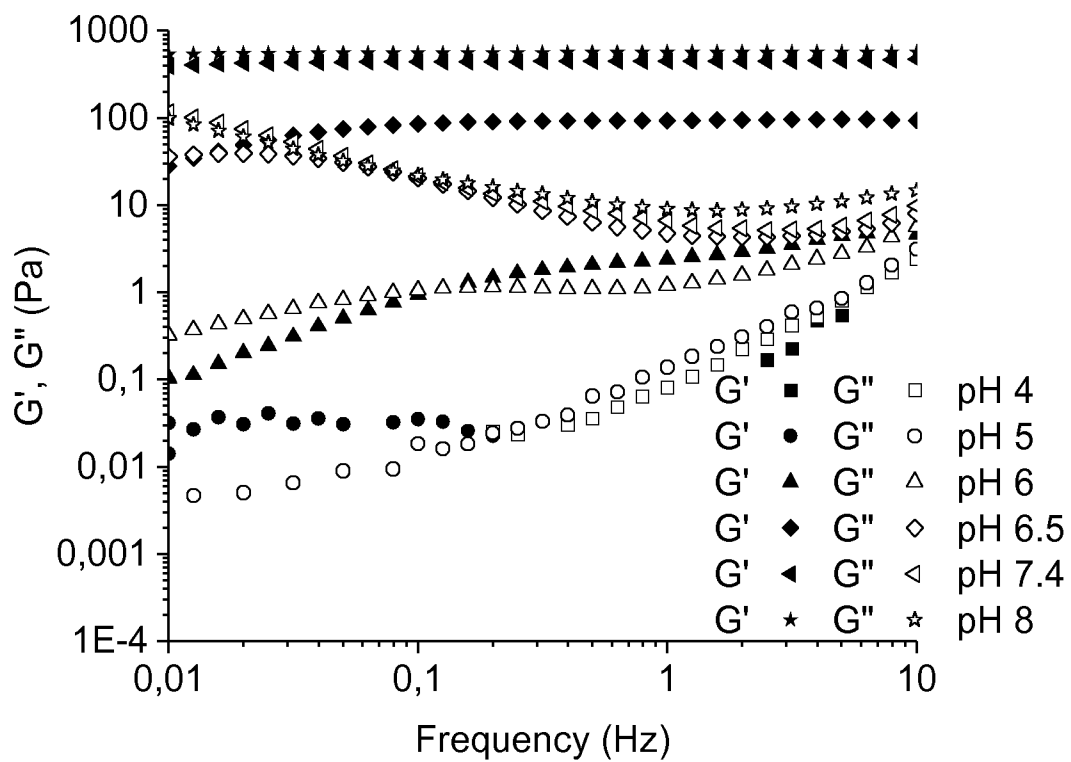


Figure 4C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/EP2017/069574

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. C08B37/08 A61K31/728
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

C08B A61K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 2014/072330 A1 (CENTRE NAT RECH SCIENT [FR]; UNIV GRENOBLE 1 [FR]) 15 May 2014 (2014-05-15) cited in the application the whole document	1-41
A	US 2014/155305 A1 (HARTSHORNE ROBERT SETH [GB] ET AL) 5 June 2014 (2014-06-05) cited in the application the whole document	1-41
A	US 2013/129797 A1 (GUPTA KAVITA [US] ET AL) 23 May 2013 (2013-05-23) the whole document	1-41



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

17 August 2017

Date of mailing of the international search report

04/09/2017

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Authorized officer

Zellner, Armin

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2017/069574

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 2014072330	A1	15-05-2014	CA 2887324 A1 15-05-2014
			EP 2727597 A1 07-05-2014
			EP 2916848 A1 16-09-2015
			JP 2015537078 A 24-12-2015
			US 2015283247 A1 08-10-2015
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US 2013129797	A1	23-05-2013	NONE