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This month

Nature Materials **2**, 639–700 (2003)

BULLETS FOR CELLS

Delivering foreign DNA into the cell — child's play for viruses, whenever they infect us — is also the objective of gene therapy. Synthetic systems made of organic materials are naturally safer, but lack the targeting efficiency of viruses. An inorganic alternative is the bimetallic Au/Ni nanorod system presented by K.W. Leong and colleagues. The nickel half of the nanorod is functionalized with DNA, compacted to facilitate entry in the cell and minimize enzymatic attack, and the gold half is bound to a protein that targets cells and catalyses the internalization of the whole nanorod. Preliminary biological studies show promise for genetic vaccination applications.

Letter

Multifunctional nanorods for gene delivery

ALIASGER K. SALEM, PETER C. SEARSON AND KAM W. LEONG

Nature Materials **2**, 668–672

doi:10.1038/nmat974

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