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PEG length of PLA-PEG nanoparticles modulates nanoparticle interactions with brain endothelial cells

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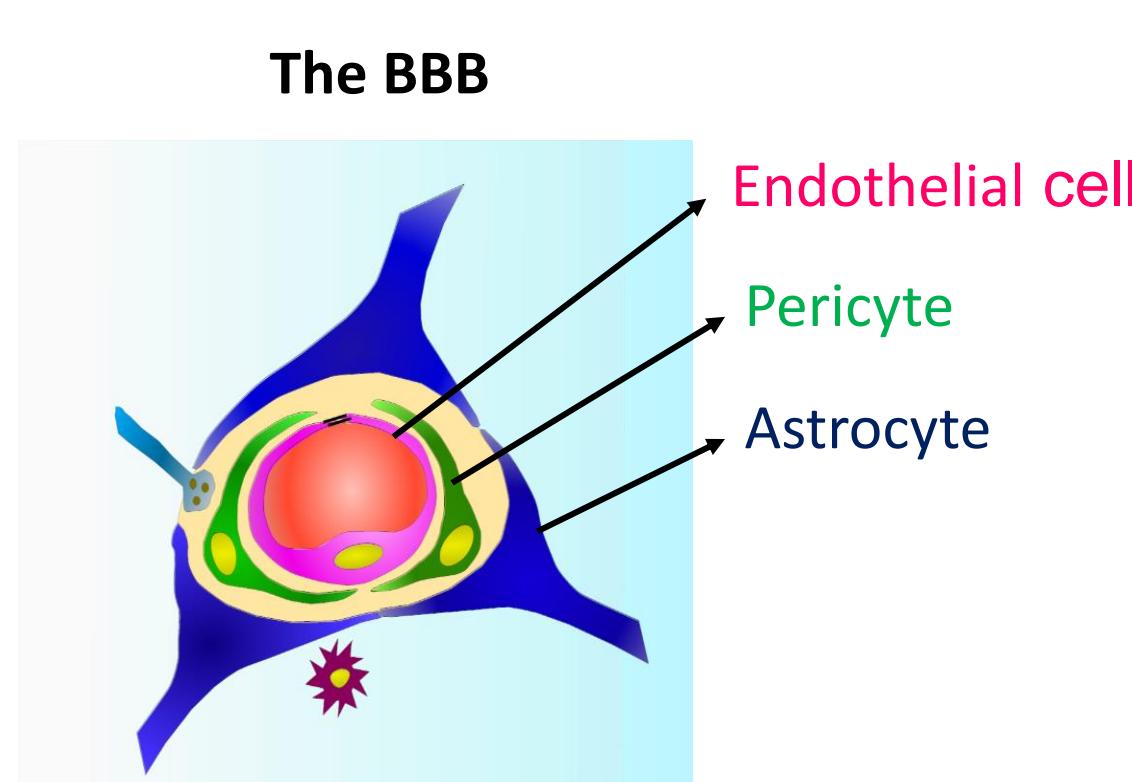
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Background and Objectives

Problem

The blood-brain barrier (BBB) prevents or slows down the passage of therapeutic molecules from the blood into the central nervous system⁽¹⁾.



Strategy

- Vectorization of active substances via polymeric nanoparticles (NPs)
- Functionalization of NPs with polyethylene glycol (PEG):
 - PEG chains are known to extend circulation times of NPs in blood⁽²⁾.
 - PEG chains on NP surface promote penetration into the brain^(3,4).

PLA-PEG NPs:
Hydrophobic PLA core with hydrophilic PEG corona

Hypothesis

Increasing the PEG chain length will modulate NPs translocation through the BBB.

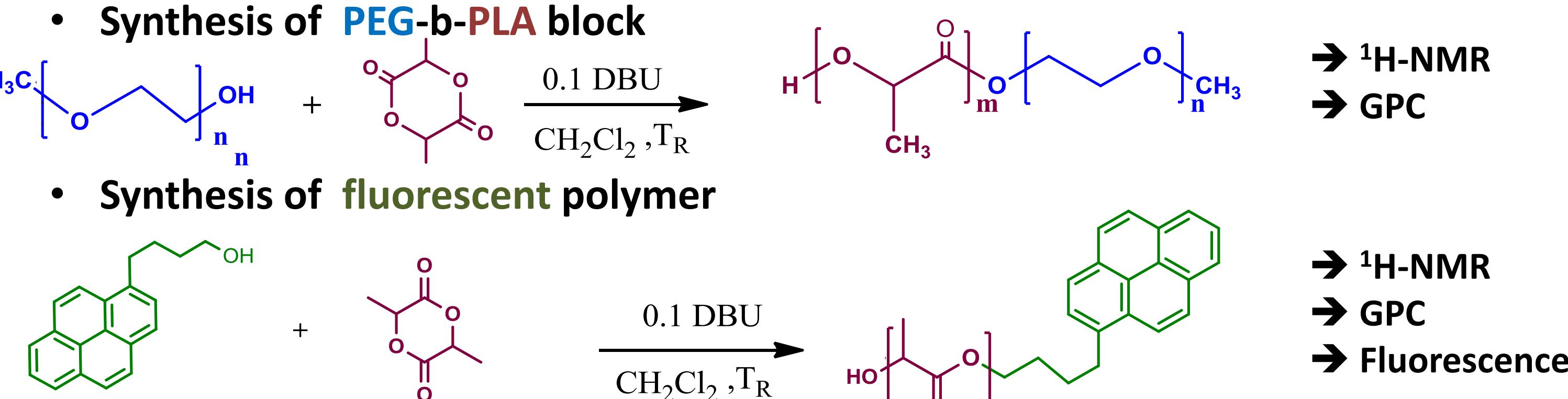
Objectives

- Synthesis and characterization of a library of PLA-PEG polymers
- Synthesis and characterization of a library of PLA-PEG NPs
- Investigation of endocytosis of PLA-PEG NPs in bEnd.3 monolayers
- Investigation of the passage of the PLA-PEG NPs vs PEG chain length through bEnd.3 monolayers

Materials and Methods

Synthesis and characterisation

- Synthesis of PEG-b-PLA block
- Synthesis of fluorescent polymer

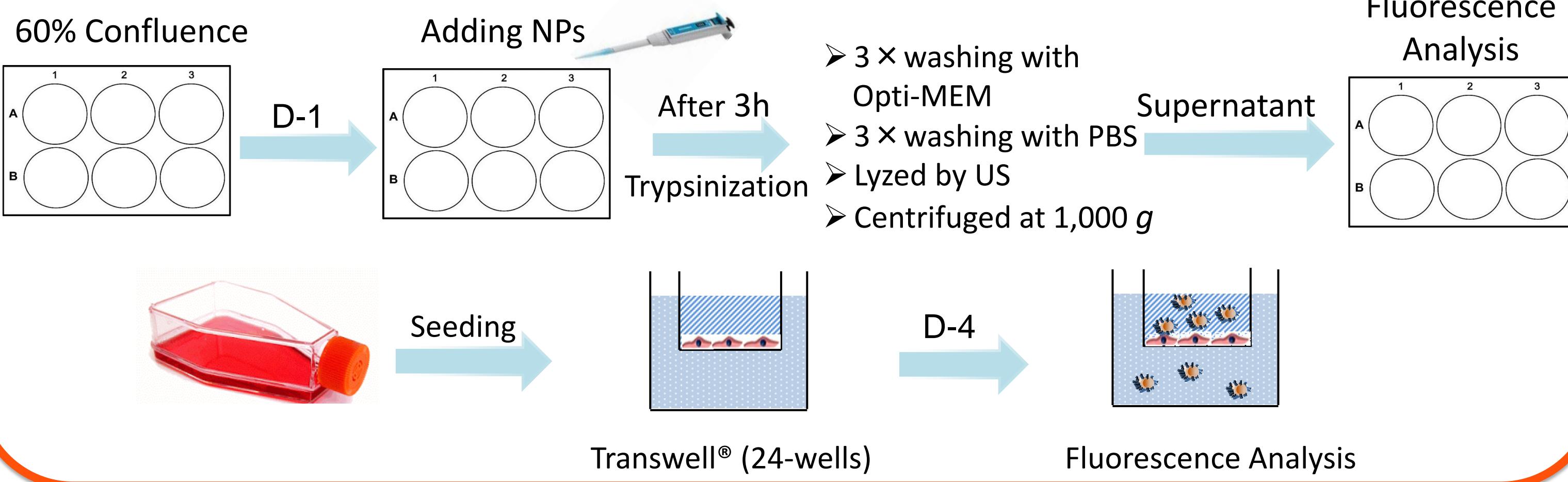


Preparation of polymeric nanoparticles (10% FLU)

PLA-PEG polymer in solution + FLU-PLA → Nanoprecipitation in water under magnetic stirring → Nanosuspension of PLA-PEG NPs → PLA-PEG NPs: Hydrophobic PLA core with hydrophilic PEG corona & a FLU tag.

→ 1H-NMR
→ GPC
→ Fluorescence

In vitro studies



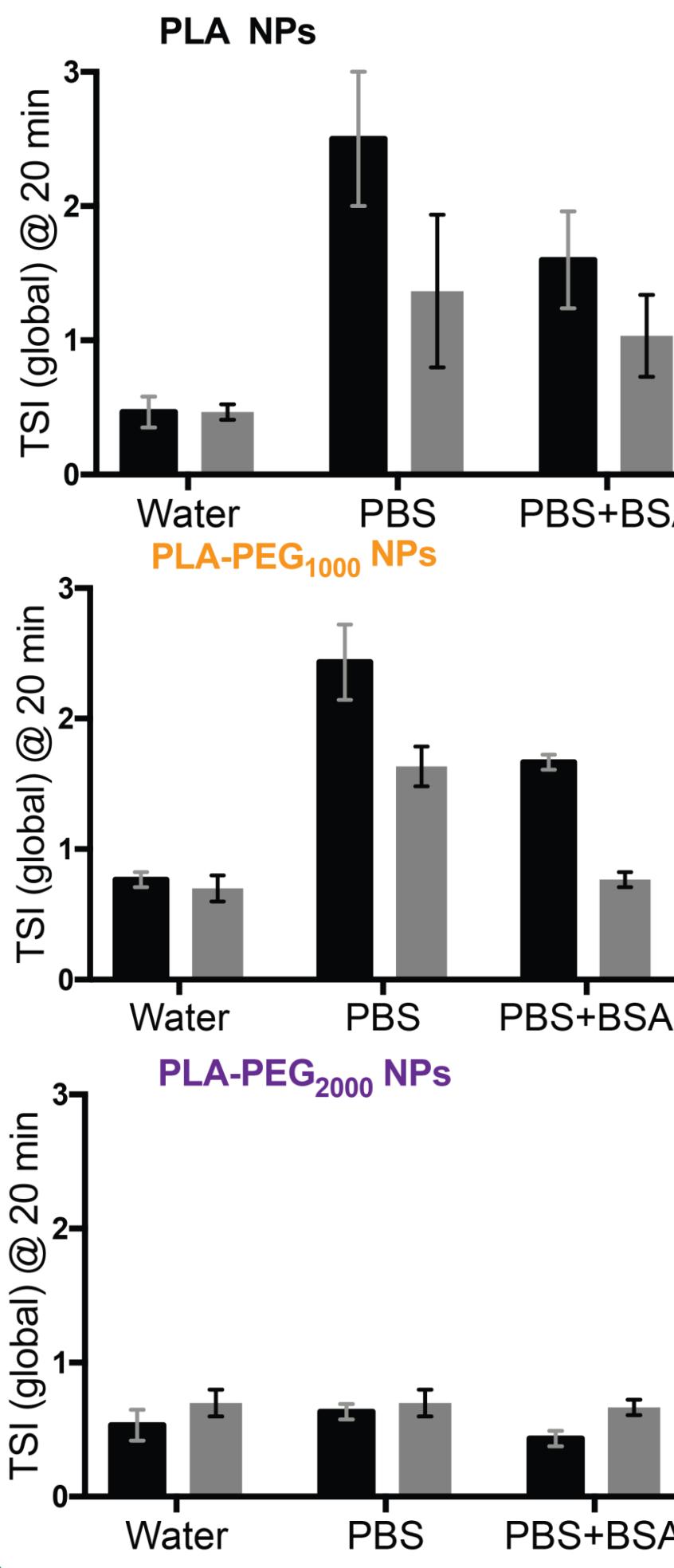
Results: NP physicochemical characterization

Table 1: PLA-PEG NP characteristics (n=9)

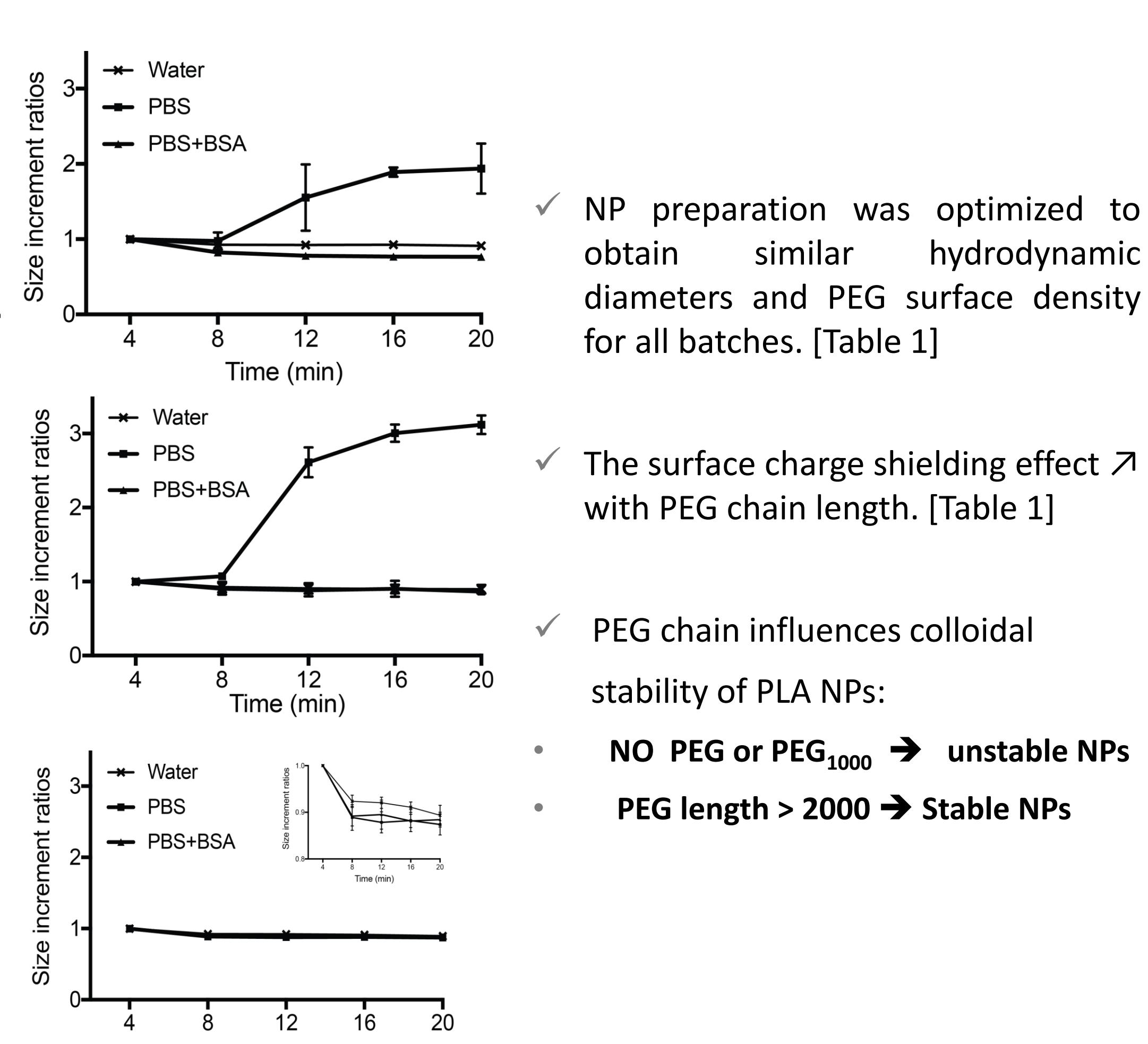
Samples	HD (nm)	Pdl	ζ -potential (mV)	PEG density (N_{PEG}/nm^2)
NP-PLA	118 ± 1	0.12 ± 0.01	-32 ± 1	N/A
NP-PLA-PEG ₁₀₀₀	105 ± 1	0.14 ± 0.02	-18 ± 1	0.165 ± 0.003
NP-PLA-PEG ₂₀₀₀	107 ± 4	0.12 ± 0.03	-12 ± <1	0.170 ± 0.002
NP-PLA-PEG ₅₀₀₀	99 ± 3	0.11 ± 0.01	-11 ± <1	0.190 ± 0.001
NP-PLA-PEG ₁₀₀₀₀	98 ± 1	0.10 ± 0.02	-6 ± 1	0.175 ± 0.003

Colloidal stability results:

Turbidimetry (TSI)



Dynamic light scattering (DLS)



✓ NP preparation was optimized to obtain similar hydrodynamic diameters and PEG surface density for all batches. [Table 1]

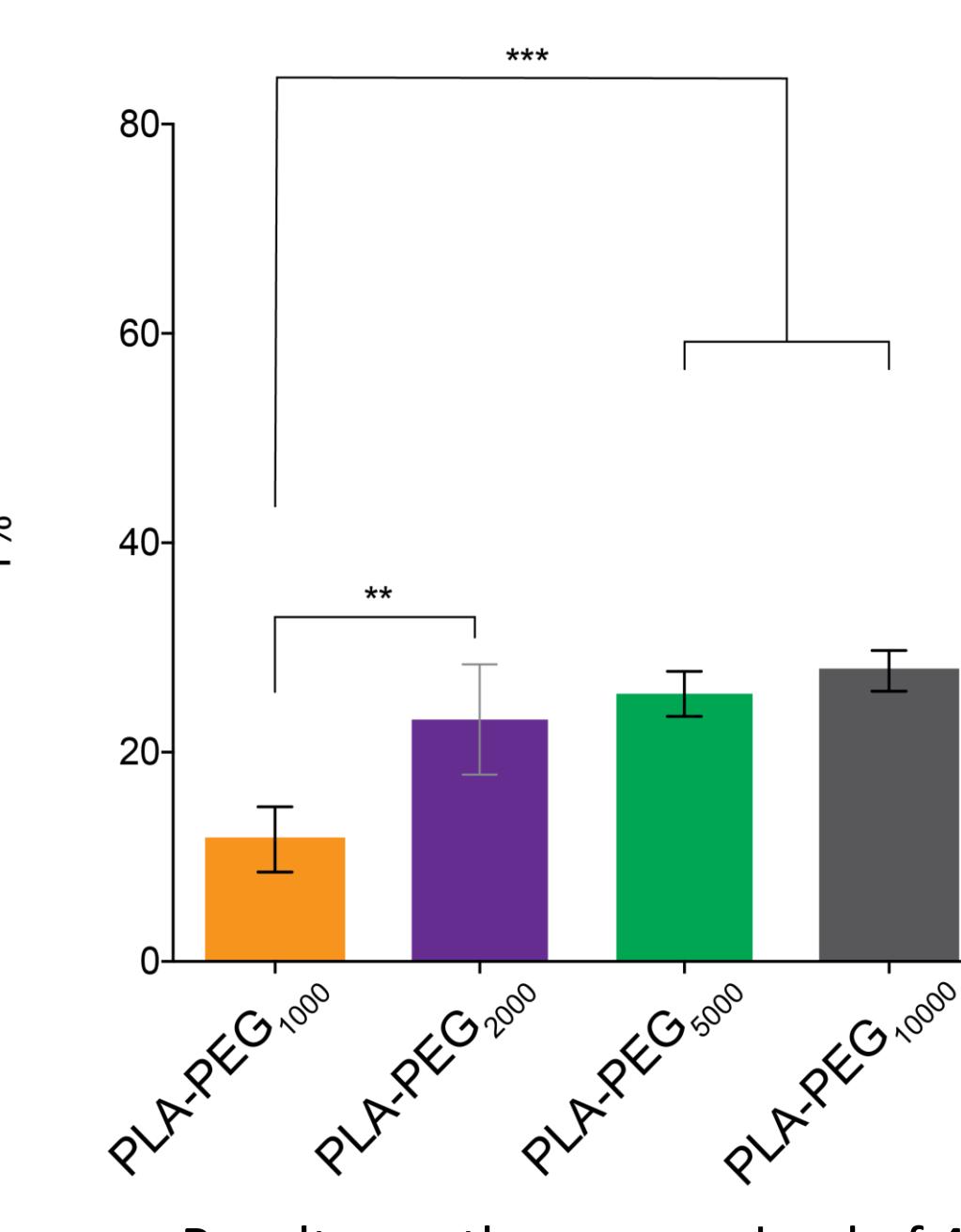
✓ The surface charge shielding effect ↑ with PEG chain length. [Table 1]

✓ PEG chain influences colloidal stability of PLA NPs:

- NO PEG or PEG₁₀₀₀ → unstable NPs
- PEG length > 2000 → Stable NPs

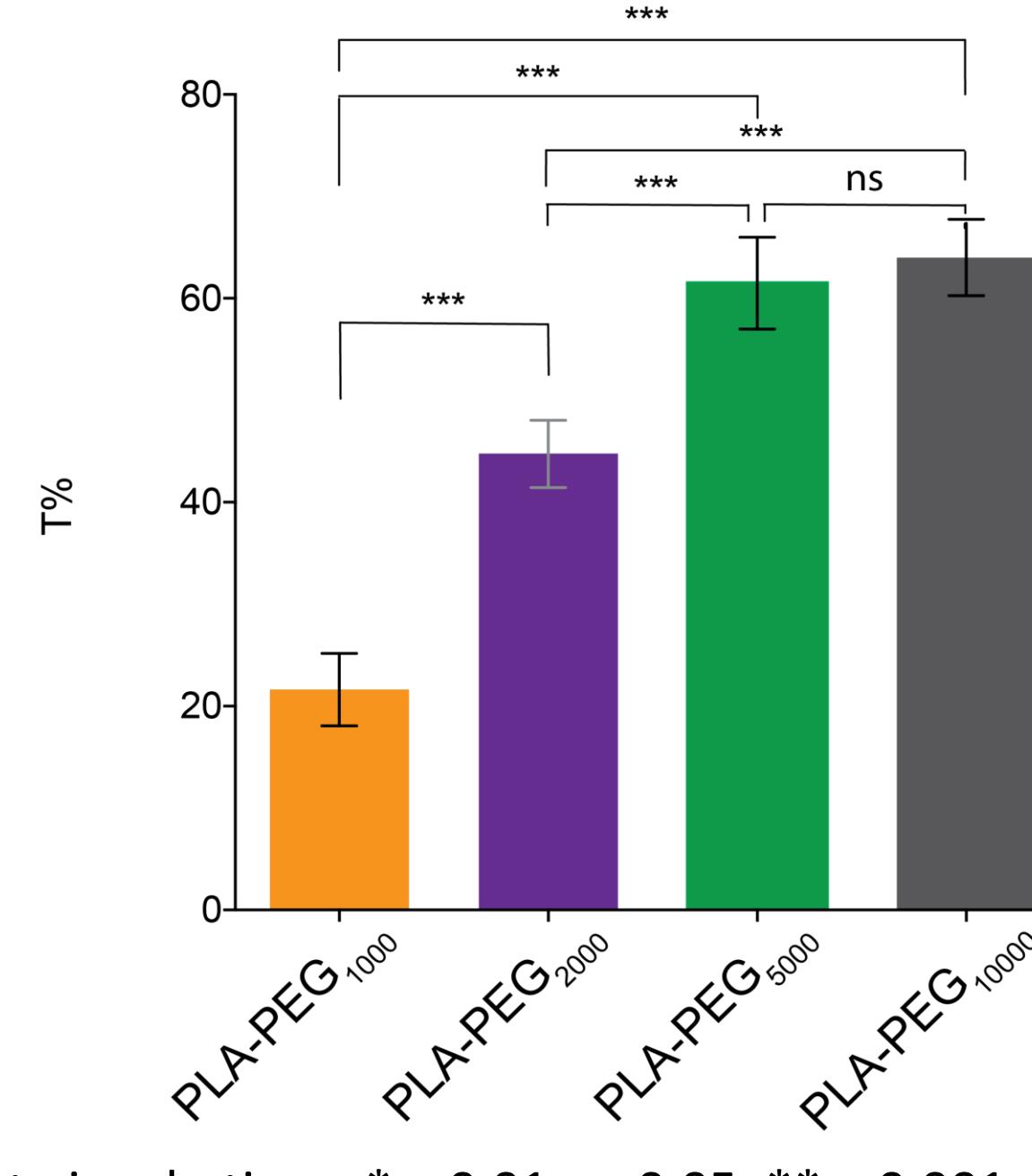
Figure 1: Transcytosis through the bEnd.3 monolayers

a) Transcytosis at 3 h



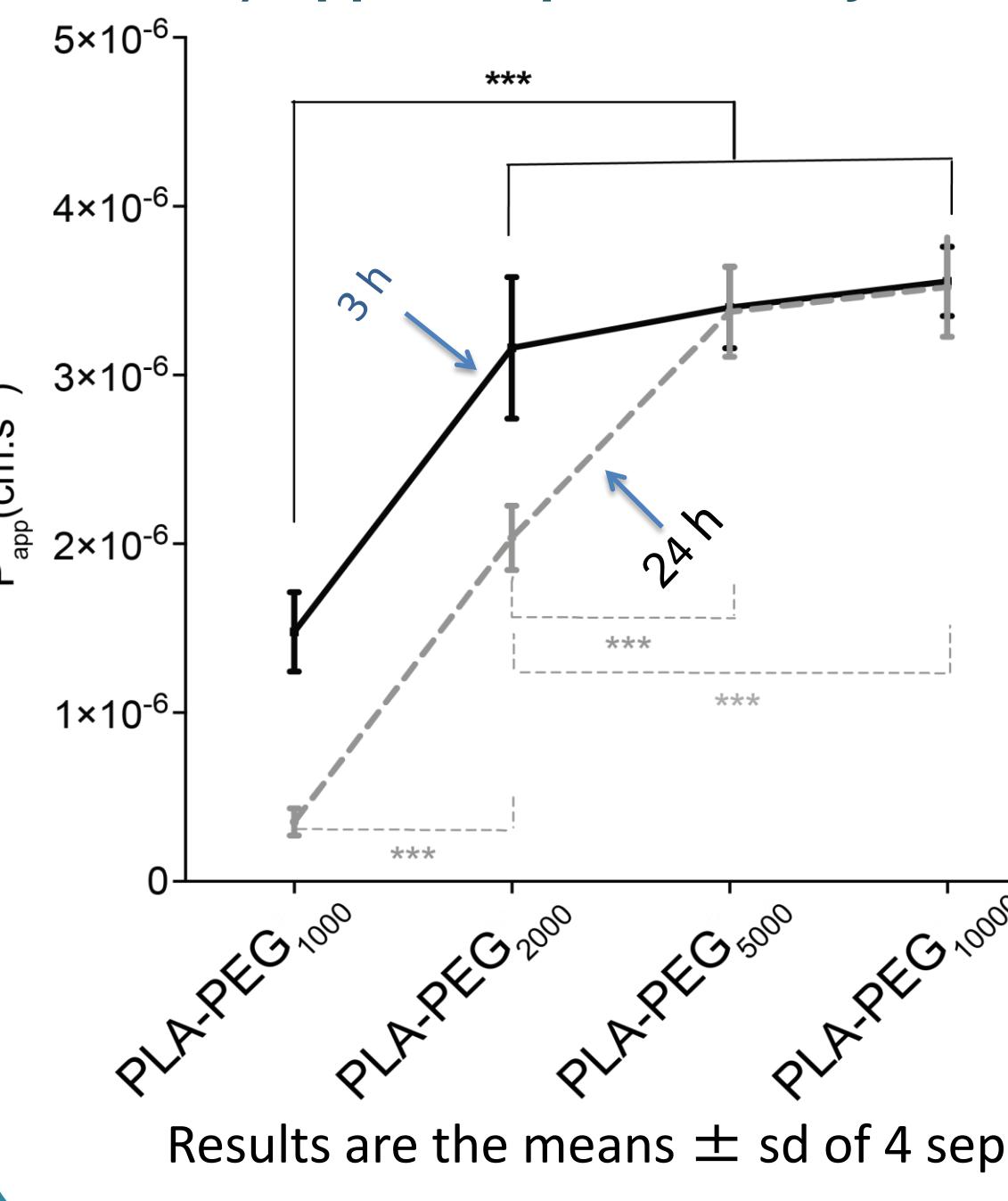
Results are the means ± sd of 4 separate incubations. * = 0.01 < p < 0.05, ** = 0.001 < p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001

b) Transcytosis at 24 h



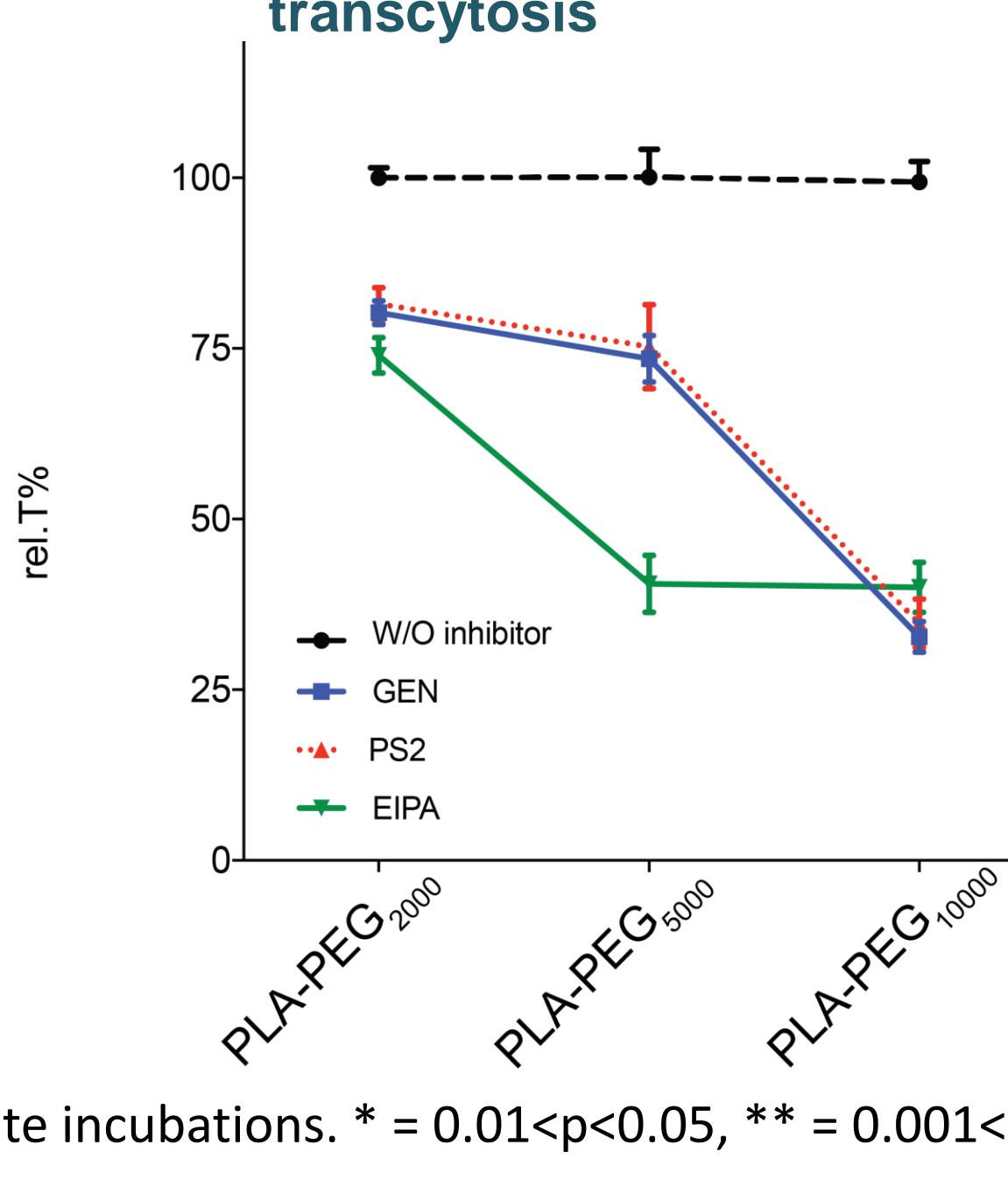
NP transcytosis ↑ with PEG chain length.

c) Apparent permeability



Results are the means ± sd of 4 separate incubations. * = 0.01 < p < 0.05, ** = 0.001 < p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001

d) Endocytotic mechanisms related to transcytosis



Macropinocytosis appeared highly involved in transcytosis for NPs either coated with PEG₅₀₀₀ or PEG₁₀₀₀₀.

Conclusion

- For similar hydrodynamic diameters and PEG densities: NP endocytosis and transcytosis ↑ with PEG chain length: (no PEG ; PEG₁₀₀₀) < PEG₂₀₀₀ < (PEG₅₀₀₀ ; PEG₁₀₀₀₀)
- PEG chain length influences Papp of NPs across an *in vitro* model of the BBB
- PEG chain length influences NP endocytosis pathway

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