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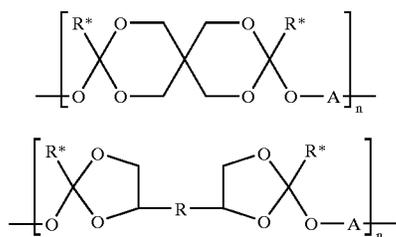
What is claimed is:

1. A pharmaceutical composition, comprising:

an active agent selected from mepivacaine, bupivacaine, dibucaine, procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, antibiotics, antivirals, fungicides, scabicides or pediculicides, benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, chlorhexidine gluconate, mafenide acetate, methylbenzethonium chloride, nitrofurazone, nitromersol, estrogens, progestins, androgens, adrenocorticoids, insulin, erythropoietin, morphogenic proteins, bone morphogenic protein, aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, ketorolac, COX-1 inhibitors, COX-2 inhibitors, mechlorethamine, cyclophosphamide, fluorouracil, thioguanine, carmustine, lomustine, melphalan, chlorambucil, streptozocin, methotrexate, vincristine, bleomycin, vinblastine, vindesine, dactinomycin, daunorubicin, doxorubicin, tamoxifen, morphine, meperidine, codeine, combrestatin, contortrostatin, anti-VEGF, astringents, antiperspirants, irritants, rubefacients, vesicants, sclerosing agents, caustics, escharotics, keratolytic agents, sunscreens, hypopigmenting and antipruritic agents, fungicides, pesticides, herbicides, plant growth promoters or inhibitors, preservatives, disinfectants, air purifiers, nutrients, dexamethasone, cortisone, hydrocortisone, prednisone, prednisolone, beclomethasone, betamethasone, flunisolide, flucinolone acetonide, flucinonide, triamcinolone, fluogestone, medroxyprogesterone, norgestrel, norgestimate, norethindrone, fluorouracil and LHRH antagonists; and

a semi-solid delivery vehicle comprising:

a polyorthoester of formula I or formula II



where:

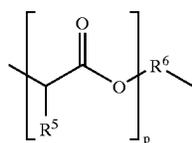
R is a bond, $-(CH_2)_a-$, or $-(CH_2)_b-O-(CH_2)_c-$; where a is an integer of 1 to 10, and b and c are independently integers of 1 to 5;

R* is a C₁₋₄ alkyl;

n is an integer of at least 5; and

A is R¹, R², R³, or R⁴, where

R¹ is:



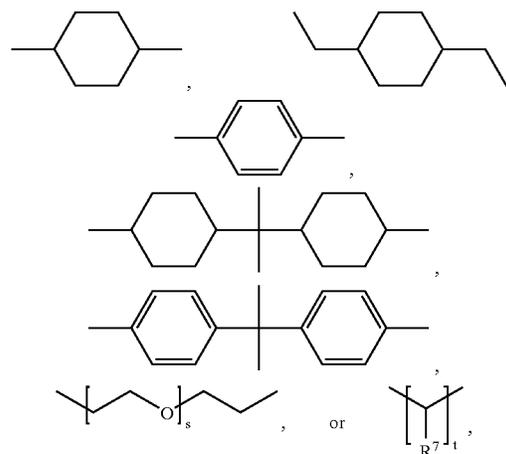
where:

p is an integer of 1 to 20;

R⁵ is hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl; and

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R⁶ is:



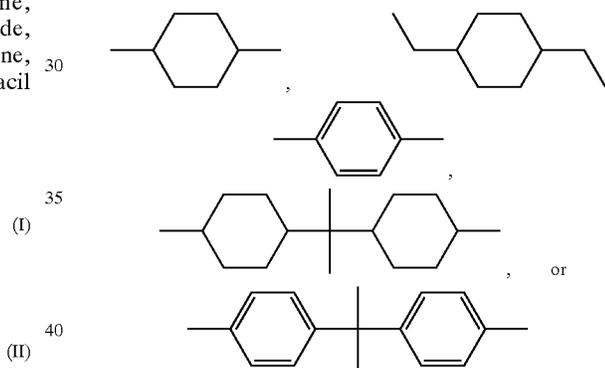
where:

s is an integer of 0 to 30;

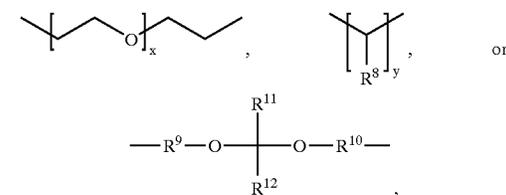
t is an integer of 2 to 200; and

R⁷ is hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl;

R² is:



R³ is:



where:

x is an integer of 0 to 30;

y is an integer of 2 to 200;

R⁸ is hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl;

R⁹ and R¹⁰ are independently C₁₋₁₂ alkylene;

R¹¹ is hydrogen or C₁₋₆ alkyl and R¹² is C₁₋₆ alkyl; or R¹¹ and R¹² together are C₃₋₁₀ alkylene; and

R⁴ is a diol containing at least one functional group independently selected from amide, imide, urea, and urethane groups;

in which at least 0.1 mol percent of the A units are of the formula R¹, and