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Nano propellers may be tomorrows drug deliverers

Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago have created a theoretical blueprint for assembling a nanoscale propeller with molecule-sized blades.

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Washington, July 17: Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago have created a theoretical blueprint for assembling a nanoscale propeller with molecule-sized blades.

Scientists say the propeller opens the possibility of targeting medicines and regularising their flow into and out of cells.

Petr Kr♦I, Assistant Professor of chemistry at UIC, and

his laboratory co-workers, used classical molecular dynamics simulations to learn how tiny propellers pump liquids.

They found that at the molecular level the chemistry of the propeller's blades and their sensitivity to water plays a big role in determining whether the propeller pumps efficiently or just spins with little effect.

If the blades have a hydrophobic, or water-repelling nature, they pump a lot of water. But if they are hydrophilic -- water-attracting -- they become clogged with water molecules and pump poorly, the study showed.

"Pumping rates and efficiencies in the hydrophilic and hydrophobic forms can differ by an order of magnitude, which was not expected," said Prof. Kr�I.

The study appears in the July 12 issue of Nature and is scheduled for publication as the June 28 cover story of Physical Review Letters.

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