



Absorption of Aflatoxins by Lactic Acid Bacteria

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CONTENTS

		Page Number
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	4
	1. Aflatoxins in Foods	4
	2. Physicochemical properties of Aflatoxins	5
	3. Biological effect of aflatoxins	6
	4. Control of aflatoxins	8
	5. Lactic acid bacteria	9
	5.1. General description	9
	5.2. Lactic acid bacteria as probiotics	10
	5.3. Ability of LAB to inhibit fungal growth of <i>Aspergillus</i> species	11
	6. Binding of aflatoxins by lactic acid bacteria	12
	6.1. Role of cell viability in binding process between AFB ₁ by LAB	13
	6.2. Effect of incubation time in binding of AFB ₁ by LAB	16
	6.3. Effect of pH and temperature in binding of AFB ₁ by LAB	17
	7. Nature of aflatoxin binding by LAB	18
3.	MATERIALS AND METHODS	20
	Materials	20
	1. Isolation Media	20
	1.1. De man, Rogosa and Sharpe (MRS) agar	20
	1.2. Sabouraud agar	21
	2. Radiation gamma source	21
	3. Fungal inoculation	22
	Methods	22
	1. Isolation of lactic acid bacteria	22
	1.1. Isolation of LAB from dairy products	22
	1.1. a. Milk	22
	1.1. b. Cheese and yoghurt	23
	1.2. Isolation from non-dairy products	23
	1.2.a. Isolation from bread- dough	23

	Page Number
1.2.b. Isolation from honey	23
1.3. Characterization of isolates	24
1.4- Identification of bacterial isolates by 16S ribosomal RNA	24
2. Aflatoxin Standard preparation	24
3.Aflatoxin Binding Assay	25
4. Quantification of Aflatoxin in Supernatant Fluid Samples	26
Binding Assay using viable, acid and heat treated cells	27
6. Influence of incubation time on AFB ₁ binding process	27
7. Effect of Temperature on AFB ₁ binding process	27
8. Influence of different pH on AFB ₁ binding process	28
9. Complex stability	28
10. Radiation	29
11. Inhibition of growth of <i>Aspergillus sp</i> by LAB	29
12.Binding by partially purified bacterial cell wall fragments	30
13. Statistical Analysis	30
4. RESULTS	31
1. Isolation of lactic acid bacteria from different sources	31
1.1. Samples collection	31
1.2. Isolates identification	33
1.3. Isolates selection	39
2. Ability of the LAB isolates for aflatoxin B ₁ binding	39
3. Identification of selected LAB	40
4. Optimization of binding process	44
4.1. LAB viability effect on AFB ₁ binding	44
4.2.Influence of incubation time on AFB ₁ binding by LAB .	45
4.3. Influence of incubation temperature on the AFB ₁ binding by LAB	48
4.4. Influence of pH on the AFB ₁ binding by LAB	49
5.Stability of the lactic acid bacteria–aflatoxin complexe	51
5.1. Untreated cells-AFB ₁ complexes stability	51

		Page Number
	5.2. Complex stability between AFB ₁ and treated/untreated cells of selected isolates	52
	5.2.a. Complex stability of <i>Lc. lactis</i> /AFB ₁	52
	5.2.b. Complex stability of <i>Lb. acidophilus</i> /AFB ₁	53
	5.2.c. Complex stability of <i>Lb. rhamnosus</i> /AFB ₁	55
	5.2.d. Complex stability of <i>Lb. fermentum</i> /AFB ₁	56
	5.2.e. Complex stability of <i>Ec. faecium</i> /AFB ₁	57
	6. Binding of Aflatoxin B ₂ and G ₂ by probiotic LAB	59
	7. Inhibition of fungal growth by LAB	60
	8. Influence of Radiation on viable bacterial pellets to bind AFB ₁	61
	9. Influence of adding cell wall fragments in AFB ₁ binding	63
5.	DISCUSSION	65
6.	CONCLUSION	78
7.	SUMMARY	79
8.	REFERENCES	83
	ARABIC SUMMARY	

List of Tables

Table Number		Page Number
1	Diversity of LAB in the collected samples	32
2	Phenotypic characteristics of the isolates	34
3	LAB binding Capacities of selected isolates to remove AFB ₁	40
4	Identification, Description, Source and binding capacities of selected isolates	43
5	Percentage of AFB ₁ binding by viable cells, heat- and acid-treated bacterial cells	44
6	Influence of incubation time (hr) on AFB ₁ binding by viable cells	46
7	Influence of incubation time (min) on AFB ₁ binding by viable cells of LAB	47
8	Influence of incubation temperature on the AFB ₁ binding by viable cells of LAB isolates	49
9	Influence of pH on the AFB ₁ binding by viable cells of LAB strains	50
10	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound by viable cells after five washes with distilled water	51
11	Effect of washing on <i>Lc. lactis</i>	53
12	Effect of washing on <i>Lb. acidophilus</i>	54
13	Effect of washing on <i>Lb. rhamnosus</i>	55
14	Effect of washing on <i>Lb. fermentum</i>	56
15	Effect of washing on <i>Ec. faecium</i>	58
16	Binding ability of LAB isolates to reduce Aflatoxin B ₂ and G ₂	59
17	Effect of LAB isolates on fungal growth of <i>Aspergillus flavus</i> and <i>Aspergillus parasiticus</i>	61
18	Influence of gamma radiation on binding abilities of LAB	62
19	Effect of cell wall fractions in reduction of AFB ₁ by <i>Lb. rhamnosus</i> (treated and untreated cells)	64

Lists of Figures

Figure Number		Page Number
1	Structures of aflatoxins	5
2	The percentage of cocci and bacilli collected from different sources	32
3	Phylogenetic tree of isolate 1M obtained from milk	41
4	Phylogenetic tree of isolate 2M obtained from milk	41
5	Phylogenetic tree of isolate 4Ch obtained from cheese.	42
6	Phylogenetic tree of isolate 1Y obtained from yoghurt.	42
7	Phylogenetic tree of isolate 3Y obtained from yoghurt.	43
8	Percentage of AFB ₁ bound on exposure to viable cells, heat- and acid-treated bacteria.	45
9	Influence of incubation period (h) on AFB ₁ binding by untreated cells of LAB.	46
10	Influence of short incubation time (min) on AFB ₁ binding by untreated cells of LAB.	48
11	Influence of incubation temperature on AFB ₁ binding by untreated cells of LAB.	49
12	Effect of pH on the AFB ₁ binding by untreated cells of LAB isolates.	50
13	Percentage of AFB ₁ initial binding by viable cells and remaining bound to the bacteria after five washes with 1ml of distilled water.	52
14	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound to the bacterial pellets of <i>Lc. lactis</i> after five washes.	53
15	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound to the bacterial pellets of <i>Lb. acidophilus</i> after five washes.	54
16	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound to the bacterial pellets of <i>Lb. rhamnosus</i> after five washes with 1ml of distilled water	56

Figure Number		Page Number
17	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound to the bacterial pellets of <i>Lb. fermentum</i> after five washes with 1ml of distilled water.	57
18	Percentage of AFB ₁ remaining bound to the bacterial pellets of <i>Ec. faecium</i> after five washes.	58
19	Binding activity of LAB to remove different types of aflatoxin B ₂ and G ₂ .	60
20	Inhibitory effect of LAB isolates on growth of <i>Aspergillus flavus</i> and <i>parasiticus</i>	61
21	Influence of radiation on AFB ₁ binding by LAB	63

List of abbreviation

Aflatoxin B ₁	AFB ₁
Aflatoxin B ₂	AFB ₂
Aflatoxin G ₂	AFG ₂
Aflatoxins	AFs
Aspergillus flavus	<i>Asp. flavus</i>
Aspergillus parasiticus	<i>Asp. parasiticus</i>
De man, Rogosa and Sharpe agar	MRS agar
Enterococcus	<i>Ec</i>
Grey	Gy
Lactic acid Bacteria	LAB
Lactobacillus	<i>Lb</i>
Lactococcus	<i>Lc</i>
Optical density	OD
Phosphate Buffer solution	PBS

INTRODUCTION

Mycotoxins are toxic fungal metabolites found as contaminants in many agricultural products. Feeds and foodstocks contaminated with mycotoxins have a health risk to animals, human and cause big economical losses (**CAST, 2003 and Richard , 2007**). Aflatoxins (AFs) are secondary metabolites produced by *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus* . AFs represent a group of closely related difuranocoumarin compounds (**Mishra and Das, 2003**), they are potent hepatocarcinogens in human (**IARC, 1993**). Aflatoxin B₁ (AFB₁) is considered one of the most potent carcinogenic agents in nature (**Zinedine *et al.*, 2005**). Its ingestion is associated with hepatic and renal necrosis, mutagenic, carcinogenic, tetratogenic and immunosuppressive effects, as well as Reye syndrome (**Bennett and Klich 2003; Ruiqian *et al.*, 2004**).

Aflatoxins have been found in many foods and animal feeds and their production can be influenced by several factors including; temperature, water activity, pH, available nutrients and competitive growth of other microorganisms (**Ellis *et al.*, 1991**). The incidence of AFs is worldwide but is typically much higher in tropical and subtropical regions, where warmer climates provide optimal conditions for mould growth. *Aspergillus* genus grow on grains (corn, sorghum, millet) ,beans ,peanuts and tree nuts (almonds, pistachios, etc.) during growth, harvest, storage and transportation

so fungal contamination occurs easily, making its prevention difficult (**Pereyra *et al.*, 2010**).

Numerous pre- and post harvest methods have been used for detoxification or inactivation of aflatoxins, including physical separation, thermal inactivation, irradiation and chemical treatments (**Rustom, 1997**). Once food is contaminated with aflatoxin, there are only two options if the food is to be used: either the toxin is removed or the toxin is degraded into less toxic or non-toxic compounds. The first option is allowed when aflatoxin is present in identifiable pieces of food which can be removed from the remainder of the lot, or when solvents can be used to extract aflatoxin without leaving unwanted residues or markedly altering the composition of the food. As for the second option, a variety of methods have been developed. Aflatoxin may be degraded by physical, chemical, biological methods (**Park, 1993**). Physical methods to aflatoxin destruction involve treating with heat, UV light or ionizing radiation. These current methods are not very effective. Chemical degradation of aflatoxin is usually carried out by the addition of chlorinating, oxidizing or hydrolytic agents. Chemical treatments require expensive equipment and may result in losses of nutritional quality of treated commodities. In addition, the undesirable health effects of such treatments have not been fully evaluated (**Samarajeeva *et al.*, 1990** and **Phillips *et al.*, 1994**).

New strategies involving use of microorganisms for biological detoxification of aflatoxin have been investigated. Specific strains of lactic acid bacteria have the ability to remove mutagenic contaminants from food (**Turbic *et al.*, 2002; Corthier, 2004**). The studies reported that certain *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria* can bound AFB₁ from liquid solution (**El-Nezami *et al.*, 1998a; Peltonen *et al.*, 2000, 2001; Haskard *et al.*, 2001**). Also, LAB are known to inhibit mold growth and bind aflatoxins in different matrices. Reduced mold growth and aflatoxin production may be caused by competition for nutrients between bacterial cells and fungi or due to antifungal compounds produced by LAB. Binding of aflatoxins depends on environmental conditions and is strain-specific (**Haskard *et al.*, 2001; Peltonen *et al.*, 2001 and Ahlberg *et al.*, 2015**). The present study aimed to isolate local strains of LAB that can bind AFB₁ with high efficiency.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Aflatoxins in Foods

Aflatoxins (AFs) are poisonous carcinogenic compounds produced by *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus* which grow in soil, decaying vegetation, hay, and grains. They are regularly found in improperly stored commodities such as chili peppers, corn, cotton seeds, peanuts, rice, sesame seeds, sorghum, sunflower seeds, tree nuts, wheat, and a variety of spices. When contaminated food is processed, aflatoxins enter the general food supply where they have been found in both pet and human foods, as well as in feed stocks for agricultural animals. Aflatoxins have an undeniable role in the deterioration of the marketable quality and hygiene of foodstuffs. So these toxins have been identified and responsible for significant problems in foodstuffs (**Azizollahi *et al.*, 2013**)

Among mycotoxins, aflatoxins are the most toxic. There are different types of aflatoxins B₁, B₂, G₁ and G₂, also M₁ and M₂ as metabolic products of AFB₁. AFB₁ to G₂ belong to Group 1 carcinogen, M₁ and M₂ belongs to Group 2 carcinogen, AFB₁ is the most carcinogenic type of aflatoxins (**IARC, 2002**) and causes acute and chronic intoxication in humans and animals (**Shetty *et al.*, 2007**). The metabolized aflatoxin M₁ (AFM₁) and M₂ are

excreted into the tissues, biological fluids and milk of lactating animals including humans (**IARC, 2002**).

2. Physicochemical properties of Aflatoxins

The aflatoxins compounds are colorless to pale yellow crystals. Fluorescence in ultraviolet (UV) light is blue by aflatoxins B₁ and B₂, and green fluorescence by aflatoxins G₁ and G₂. Afs optically active and have a strong absorbance at about 365 nm with a fluorescence emission of 415–450 nm, depending on the solvent or physical status. The aflatoxins are soluble in a range of organic solvents such as chloroform, ethanol, methanol, and acetone, and insoluble in lipophylic solvents such as hexane, petroleum ether, and diethyl ether. The molecular formula of aflatoxin B₁ is C₁₇H₁₂O₆, and of aflatoxin G₁ is C₁₇H₁₂O₇; aflatoxins B₂ and G₂ were found to be the dihydro derivatives of the parent compounds, C₁₇H₁₄O₆ and C₁₇H₁₄O₇ (**Moss, 2003**).

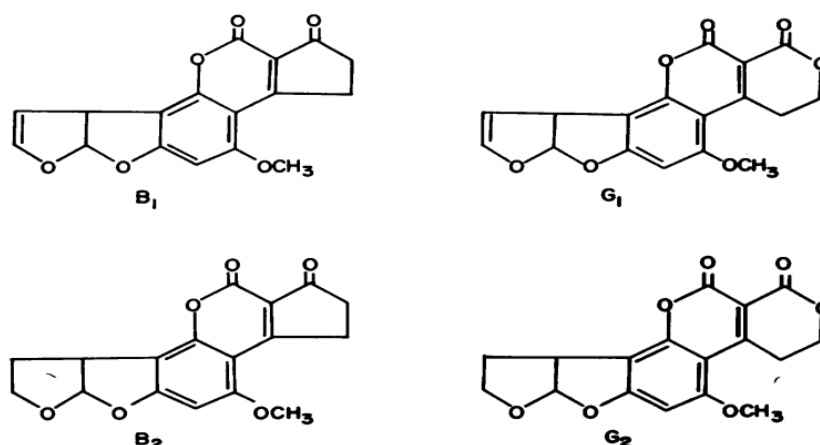


Figure (1): Structures of aflatoxins

3. Biological effect of aflatoxins

Exposure to aflatoxins can cause aflatoxicosis and severe hepatotoxicity and hepatocellular carcinoma, resulting in mortality rate reaching to 25%. Moreover AFs side effects are immunological suppression, impaired growth, nutritional interference, teratogenic, neurotoxic, nephrotoxic and hepatotoxic (**Williams *et al.*, 2004** and **Strosnider *et al.*, 2006**). Aflatoxin-induced liver cancer cases occur globally each year of which 40% are estimated to be in Africa. Co-occurrence of AFB₁ with hepatitis B increases the liver cancer risk 12-fold. Data from **Wu and Tritscher (2011)** and **Wild, (2007)** reported that children are more susceptible to acute hepatotoxicity from ingested aflatoxins than adults.

AFB₁ is metabolized predominantly by the cytochrome P450 enzyme system to produce highly reactive AFB₁-8,9-epoxide which forms covalent adducts with macromolecules, such as proteins and DNA. The 8,9-epoxide of AFB₁ is short-lived but highly reactive and is capable of causing damage to cells in the liver and at the intestinal interface. Direct damage caused by aflatoxin exposure within the intestine may alter nutrient uptake (**Gratz *et al.*, 2007**). Aflatoxin does not accumulate in muscle meat, but is excreted in milk, urine, and feces and is found also in blood. Accepted exposure levels are different due to the wide