

Evaluation of Antioxidant and Antibacterial Effects of PLGA Nanoparticles Loaded with Rapeseed Pollen Extract

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Abstract

Background & Aims: In this study, the antioxidant and antibacterial capacity of PLGA nanoparticles containing rapeseed extract (RE-PNP) was investigated.

Materials & Methods: Three various methods including Disk Diffusion (DD), Minimal Inhibitory Concentration (MIC), and Minimum Bactericidal Concentration (MBC) were used to evaluate the antibacterial effects of synthesized nanoparticles against different strains of bacteria. The inhibition capacity of ABTS and DPPH free radicals was measured to evaluate the antioxidant power of RE-PNP.

Results: The results showed that the RE-PNP have the potential to inhibit DPPH radicals ($IC_{50} = 500\mu\text{g} / \text{ml}$) and ABTS ($IC_{50} = 1000\mu\text{g} / \text{ml}$). The inhibitory effect of RE-PNP on the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Micrococcus luteus* was confirmed by the growth inhibition zone 8 and 15 in the disk diffusion model.

Conclusion: According to the results, RPE-PNPs can be used as a safe, natural, and effective antibiotic for bacterial infections caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Micrococcus luteus* and also, this formulation can be used due to its antioxidant effects in treatment of oxidative stress-related diseases.

Keywords: PLGA nanoparticle, Rapeseed pollen, ABTS, DPPH, Disk Diffusion test, Minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC), Minimum Bactericidal concentration (MBC)

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1. Introduction

Herbs and their natural products are sources with active healing properties that are used not only as medicine, but also as unique patterns to start making synthetic analogues(1). In recent years, the use of herbal medicines to control diseases, especially infectious diseases, has increased due to their low side effects compared to chemical drugs (2). Increasing awareness

of the benefits of natural compounds with therapeutic properties and the desire of researchers to use these compounds have led to their widespread use in medicine and treatment. Studies have shown that many of the antioxidant and antimicrobial properties of plant extracts are due to the presence of substances such as phenol, flavonoids, and similar compounds(3). Previous studies have examined and confirmed the antioxidant

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and antibacterial effects of some plant extracts (4-8). One of the new approaches to increase the biological effects and stability of natural compounds as well as increasing their solubility and transfer is the use of nanocarriers. The use of therapies based on nanostructured drug delivery systems is of great importance in the prevention and treatment of infections due to the proper and continuous release of drugs to establish the appropriate concentration of drugs in the blood and tissues to treat infectious diseases (9). Today, synthetic polymers and natural macromolecules are widely used as colloidal materials to produce and design nanoparticles for drug delivery. Among synthetic polymers, polyesters such as polylactic-glycolic poly - (PLGA) are more important in the field of medical biology due to their biocompatibility and biodegradability(10). Biodegradable compounds are degraded in vitro enzymatically or non-enzymatically or both, producing biocompatible, non-toxic, and safe products that are eliminated by normal metabolic pathways. Therefore, the human body interacts effectively with these monomers (Lactic and glycolic acid monomers), these compounds are metabolized through the tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle, hence PLGA has been approved by the FDA and it is used in the medical system (11). Therefore, in this study, for the first time, the antibacterial and antioxidant effects of RPE-PNPs were evaluated.

2. Materials & Methods

2.1. Antibacterial effects of RPE-PNPs

2.1.1. Disk Diffusion assay (DD)

In order to evaluate the antimicrobial effect of RPE-PNPs, Disk diffusion by the Kirby-Bauer method was used. Cultures of *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 1112, *Micrococcus luteus* PTCC 1408, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* ATCC 1074, and *Escherichia coli* ATCC 1330 were cultivated on Mueller-Hinton agar plates, separately. Bacteria samples from one or two overnight grown colonies were suspended in a test tube containing

nutrient broth. The turbidity (expressed as optical density; OD) of the bacterial suspensions were measured with an optical spectrophotometer ($\lambda = 600$ nm) and adjusted to 0.25 or 0.50. A sterile swab was immersed in the resulting suspension and applied to the agar medium. Rapeseed pollen extract, aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen, and RPE-PNPs (3 mg per disk) were loaded onto the disks in a volume of 10 μ l and the samples were incubated at 37 °C for 24 hours. Inhibition zones around the disks were measured according to the Kirby-Bauer test protocol. Gentamicin (10 μ g/ml) was used as a positive control (12).

2.1.2. Minimal Inhibitory concentration (MIC) and Minimum Bactericidal Concentration (MBC)

In order to determine MIC and MBC, microbroth dilution method was used. In this method, 24 and 96 well microplates were used. Extracts of rapeseed, aqueous extract of rapeseed, and RPE-PNPs were prepared with concentrations of 0 to 5 mg/ml, and chloramphenicol antibiotic powder with a concentration of 100 μ g/ml was used as a control. After inoculating the bacteria in the wells, the microplate was incubated for 24 hours at 37 °C. After incubation, the first bacterial growth-free well was considered as the minimum concentration of growth inhibitor (MIC). From this dilution and higher dilutions, 10 μ l were transferred to the nutrient agar medium. The concentration that was free of bacterial growth was considered as the minimum lethal growth concentration (MBC)(13).

2.2. Antioxidant effects of RPE-PNPs

2.2.1. ABTS scavenging free radicals

To do this, ABTS free radicals must first be produced through the oxidation of ABTS by potassium persulfate. First, ABTS 7 mM was prepared and then potassium sulfate was added to it, the resulting solution was incubated for 16 hours in the dark at room temperature and then diluted 40 times. The resulting solution was used as a working solution to evaluate the inhibitory power of nanoparticles. For this purpose,

different concentrations of RPE-PNPs (with a volume of 500 μ l) were prepared and then equal volume of free radical solution was added to each and the adsorption of the samples was measured at a wavelength of 734 nm. Blank PLGA nanoparticles with ethanol were used as negative control and glutathione as positive control. The formulas used are: Free radical scavenging percentage ABTS = $(OD_{\text{control}} - OD_{\text{sample}}) / OD_{\text{control}} \times 100$ (14).

2.2.2. DPPH scavenging free radicals

In order to evaluate the free radical scavenging power of DPPH by RPE-PNPs, first DPPH free radicals were produced by dissolving 1 mg of DPPH powder in 17 ml of ethanol and then 500 μ l of different concentrations of RPE-PNPs were prepared and mixed with equal volumes of DPPH free radicals. Blank PLGA nanoparticles with ethanol were used as negative control and glutathione as positive control. The results of this study were expressed as IC₅₀, which indicates the concentration of RPE-PNPs that can inhibit 50% of free radicals.

The formulas used are: Free radical scavenging percentage DPPH = $(OD_{\text{control}} - OD_{\text{sample}}) / OD_{\text{control}} \times 100$ (14).

2.3. Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22 using one-way ANOVA and LSD test. Each experiment was triplicated and the results were expressed in mean of \pm SD. Significance of data was considered at the level of * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$.

3. Results

3.1. Antibacterial effects of RPE-PNPs

3.1.1. Disk Diffusion test (DD)

Rapeseed extract had a growth inhibitory effect only against *Micrococcus luteus* (8 mm). Aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen had no growth inhibitory effect on any of the bacterial strains. The RPE-PNPs showed a stronger bacteriostatic effect by creating inhibition zone of 8 mm on *Staphylococcus aureus* and 15 mm in *Micrococcus luteus* culture. The diameter of the growth inhibition zone in the presence of gentamicin antibiotic for *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Micrococcus luteus* bacteria were 12, 18, 19, and 37 mm, respectively. The data show that RPE-PNPs have higher inhibitory effects on *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Micrococcus luteus* bacteria than rapeseed extract alone.

Micrococcus luteus ATCC 1408	Staphylococcus aureus ATCC 1112	Pseudomonas aeruginosa ATCC 1074	Escherichia coli ATCC 1330	
8	0	0	0	Rapeseed pollen
0	0	0	0	Aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen
15	8	0	0	PLGA- rapeseed pollen extract
37	18	12	19	Gentamicin

Figure 1. The disk diffusion assay. Comparison of bacterial inhibition of rapeseed extract, aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen, RPE-PNPs, and gentamicin antibiotic in Disk Diffusion method.

3.1.2. Minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC)

After incubation at 37 °C, turbidity was not observed in the *Staphylococcus aureus* culture medium treated with rapeseed pollen and only *Micrococcus luteus* bacteria was grown at a concentration of 0.25 mg/ml

RPE-PNPs. 24 hours after RPE-PNP treatment at 37 °C, turbidity was observed at concentrations of 3 mg/ml (for *Micrococcus luteus*) and 5 mg/ml (for *Staphylococcus aureus*) indicating the bacterial growth in this concentrations.

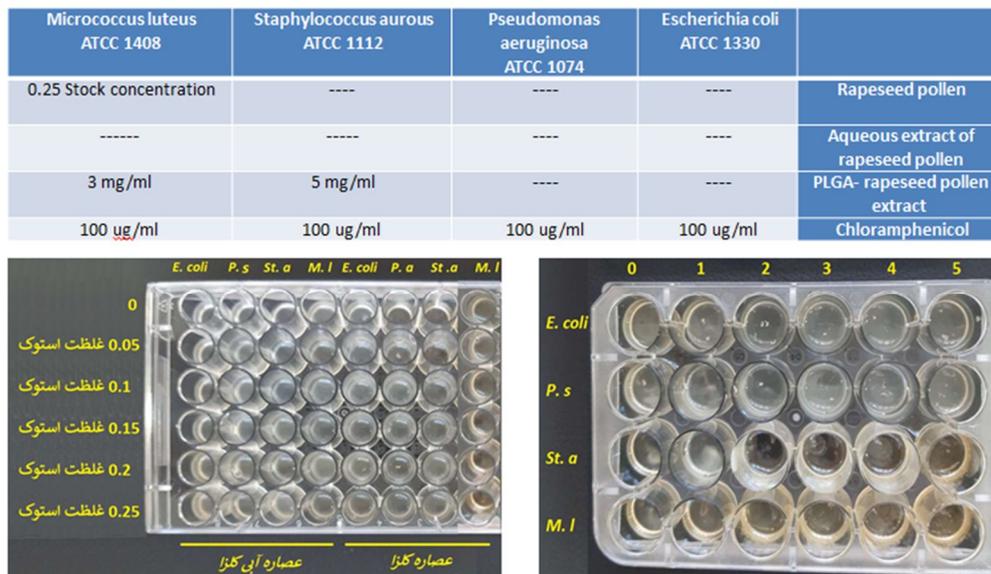


Figure 2. Minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC) assay. Comparison of bacterial inhibition of rapeseed extract, aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen, RPE-PNPs and gentamicin antibiotic in *Minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC)*.

3.1.3. Minimum Bactericidal concentration (MBC)

According to the results, rapeseed pollen extract and aqueous extract of rapeseed pollen had no lethal effect

on bacterial strains, while RPE-PNPs at a concentration of 5 mg/ml had a lethal effect against *Micrococcus luteus*.

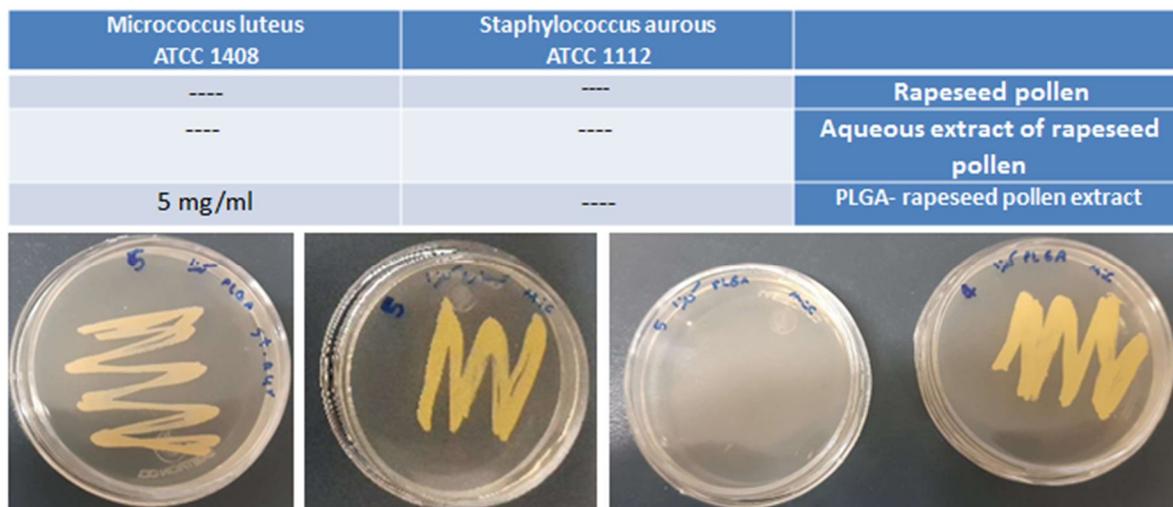


Figure 3. Minimum Bactericidal concentration (MBC) assay. The results reported a MBC of RPE-PNPs on the *Micrococcus luteus* strain of about 5 mg / ml.

3.2. Antioxidant effects of RPE-PNPs

3.2.1. ABTS scavenging free radicals

Examination of ABTS free radical scavenging in the presence of RPE-PNPs showed that the degree of

inhibition is dose dependent and by increasing the concentration from 62.5 to 1000 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ the inhibition rate increases from 7% to 45.26%. Comparison of ABTS and DPPH radical scavenging showed higher inhibitory effect of RPE-PNPs on DPPH free radicals.

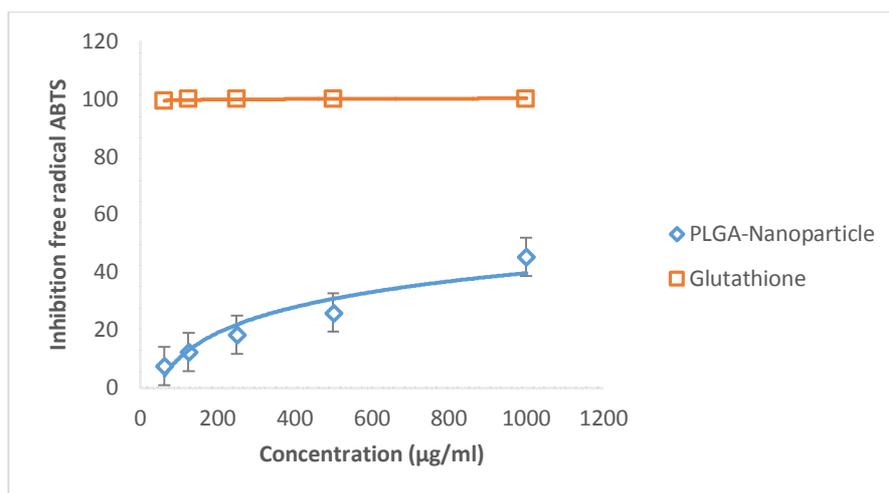


Figure 4. ABTS scavenging assay. Increased free radical scavenging of ABTS exposed to different concentrations of RPE-PNPs compared to glutathione as an antioxidant compound.

3.2.2. DPPH scavenging free radicals

The results reported an increase in the rate of DPPH free radicals inhibition while increasing concentration of RPE-PNPs. The rate of free radical scavenging at a

concentration of 100 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ was about 5% and by increasing the concentration to 500 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ the rate of inhibition increased to 52%, indicating the effectiveness of the concentration factor on inhibitory effect of RPE-PNPs.

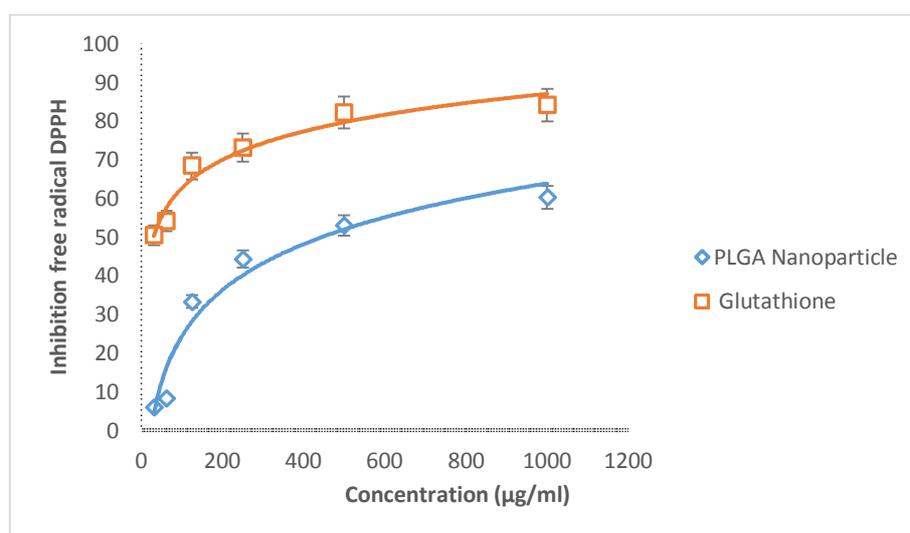


Figure 5. DPPH scavenging assay. Increased free radical scavenging of DPPH exposed to different concentrations of RPE-PNPs compared to glutathione as an antioxidant compound.

4. Discussion

In this study, the antioxidant properties of RPE-PNPs on DPPH and ABTS free radicals and the susceptibility of *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Micrococcus luteus*, and *Escherichia coli* to RPE-PNPs were evaluated. The results of studies have shown that plant extracts due to their secondary metabolites such as glycosides, alkaloids, terpenoids, phenolics, and coumarins have various biological effects including antibacterial, antioxidant, etc. (3). In various studies, the antioxidant and antibacterial effects of various extracts have been investigated and confirmed. In a study conducted in 2000, the antioxidant and antibacterial effects of clove extract were investigated and confirmed. Similarly, other studies have reported the antioxidant and antibacterial effects of extracts of clove(15), Portulaca(16), Tribulus(17), Eryngium(18), Turmeric(19, 20), Ginger(21), Thyme(22, 23), Pennyroyal(24), Fennel(25), Chamomile(25), Mint(26), Burdock(27), Eucalyptus(28), Primrose(29), Lemon balm(30), Mallows(31), Garlic (32), and cinnamon(33, 34). Examination of the antibacterial effect of *Tribulus* extract showed that this compound can have a high bacteriostatic effect against *E. faecali*, *S. aureus*, *P. aeruginosa*, and *E. coli* strains at a concentration of 2 mg/ml (35). Similarly clove extract at a concentration of 62.5 mg/ml showed a high inhibitory effect against *S. aureus* (36). The results of other studies also reported the inhibitory effect of mint and garlic extract against *E. coli* at a concentration of 64 µg/ml(37) and 0.075 mg/ml(38), respectively. Inhibition of ABTS free radicals by extracts of Tribulus(39), Cinnamon(40), clove(41), and inhibition of DPPH free radicals by extracts of Portulaca(42), Eryngium(43), Ginger(44), Thyme(45), etc. have been reported in the results of previous studies. In spite of all the activities of plant compounds and extracts, their use has limitations. Today, the use of nanocarriers to increase the

effectiveness of bioactive compounds has received much attention and many Nano carriers are used to deliver drugs and increase the bioavailability of active compounds (46). In this study, PLGA Nano polymer was used as a carrier for rapeseed pollen extract and its biological effects were examined. In a study conducted in 2019, rapeseed pollen extract was used to synthesize silver nanoparticles and its antioxidant effects were investigated. The results showed that the synthesized nanoparticles were able to inhibit ABTS and DPPH free radicals with IC₅₀ about 800 and 830 µg/ml, respectively(47) which is comparable and similar to the results of the present study in antioxidant capacity. The results of the inhibitory effect of zinc oxide nanoparticles synthesized with rapeseed pollen extract reported a moderate concentration of about 3 and 6 µg/ml to inhibit ABTS and DPPH free radicals, indicating the very high antioxidant effects of the synthesized nanoparticles(48). Different inhibitory effect of nanoparticles synthesized from rapeseed extract on free radicals can be related to the type of nanoparticles and their synthesis methods.

In another study, the antioxidant and antibacterial effects of Thymoquinone loaded on PLGA polymers were investigated and the results showed that the synthesized nanoparticles were able to inhibit 70% of DPPH free radicals at a concentration of 1 mg/ml, and this amount of inhibition is comparable and similar to the results of the present study. Similarly, Thymoquinone-PLGA also exhibited antibacterial properties against *E. coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Salmonella typhi* strains with inhibition zone of 6, 7, and 7 mm, respectively (49). Comparison of the results shows that RPE-PNPs have an inhibitory effect on gram-positive bacteria and no inhibitory effect was observed in the studied gram-negative bacteria, while the inhibitory effect of Thymoquinone-PLGA on both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria was reported.

Similar to the present study, the results of a study conducted in 2017 confirmed the antioxidant effect of PLGA loaded with guabiroba fruit phenolic extract (50).

5. Conclusion

The antioxidant potential of RPE-PNPs inhibit ABTS and DPPH free radicals and inhibit the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Micrococcus luteus* confirms the therapeutic effects of RPE-PNPs and these properties make this formulation an attractive option for clinical studies.

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