

## $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and $\alpha$ -lactalbumin Hydrolysates as Sources of Antibacterial Peptides

M. Sedaghati<sup>1</sup>, H. Ezzatpanah<sup>1\*</sup>, M. Mashhadi Akbar Boojar<sup>2</sup>, M. Tajabadi Ebrahimi<sup>3</sup>, M. Aminafshar<sup>4</sup>, and M. Dameshghian<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The presence of antibacterial activity in bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and in  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin hydrolysates was investigated. The Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) and of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) were fractionated, using reversed phase high performance liquid chromatography. The antibacterial activity of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, nisin, plasmin, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  were *in vitro* tested against pathogenic (*Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*) and probiotic (*Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*) bacteria. Although  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin,  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and plasmin exhibited no antibacterial activity, PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin revealed antibacterial activity against the bacteria tested. The Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) of these compounds was determined for the bacteria cultures. Similar to nisin, the MIC of PD $\beta$  and of PD $\alpha$  against Gram-positive bacteria was recorded as considerably lower than the MICs against Gram-negative bacteria. The study also evaluated the effect of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin on the growth curves and on the plate count confirmations of the target bacteria. The results revealed that nisin, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  have inhibitory effects on the lag phase, maximum OD620 and on plate count confirmation of the bacteria tested. The maximum inhibitory effect of these compounds was created during the log phase. Their inhibitory effects depended upon their concentrations, higher concentration causing stronger antibacterial activity. The PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  proved more active against Gram-negative bacteria than did nisin, but nisin revealed substantial inhibitory activity against Gram-positive bacteria.

**Keywords:**  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, Antibacterial,  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin, Bovine, Plasmin.

### INTRODUCTION

The antibacterial properties of milk have been known for long time. As for the neonate, milk is known to provide not only excellent nutrition but also protection against infections (Lopez-Exposito and Recio, 2006). The antibacterial activity of milk is mainly attributed to the immunoglobulins, but the non-immune

proteins, lactoferrin, lactoperoxidase and lysozyme also exhibit distinct antibacterial activities (Pakkanen and Aalto, 1997; Floris *et al.*, 2003; Benkerroum, 2010).

The major proteins present in whey are  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (50%) and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (20%). Bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin is a globular protein of a molar mass (Mw) of 18.3 kDa, existing mainly as a dimer at neutral pH. Bovine  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin is a small compact globular protein with a Mw of 14.2 kDa.  $\beta$ -

<sup>1</sup> Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Food Science and Technology, Tehran Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

\* Corresponding author; e-mail: hamidezzatpanah@stbiau.ac.ir

<sup>2</sup> Department of Biochemistry, University of Kharazmi, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Science, Faculty of Biology, Tehran Central Branch, Islamic Azad University, Islamic Republic of Iran.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Animal Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.



lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin possess a variety of such useful functional characteristics as viscosity, gelation, foaming, solubility and emulsification that have rendered them as proper choices in the formulation of modern foods and beverages (Chatterton *et al.*, 2006). Although proteolytic digestion is not desirable for functional characteristics, however it produces peptide fragments of various bioactivities. It has been reported that the various peptides derived from the proteolytic digestion of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and from  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin have inhibitory effects against the angiotensin-converting enzyme. Antimicrobial, immunomodulating, opioid and hypocholesterolemic activities have also been documented (Brew and Grobler, 1992; Pellegrini *et al.*, 2001; Sternhagen and Allen, 2001; FitzGerald *et al.*, 2004; Korhonen and Pihlanto, 2004; Hernández-Ledesma *et al.*, 2008; Park, 2009).

Antibacterial peptides, lactoferrin (Bellamy *et al.*, 1992),  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (Pellegrini *et al.*, 1999) and  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (Pihlanto-Leppä *et al.*, 1999; Pellegrini *et al.*, 2001; and El-Zahar *et al.*, 2004) lately have been derived from bovine whey proteins.

Native bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin are resistant to enzymatic proteolysis but, their extensive hydrolysis has been observed through application of a relatively long incubation periods (44 hours) (Schmidt and Poll, 1991; Guo *et al.*, 1995, Dalasgaard *et al.*, 2008). Release of antibacterial peptides from whey proteins is typically achieved using such enzymes as pepsin, trypsin, and chymosin. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has been carried out to identify antibacterial properties of Plasmin-Digests of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) and of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) against pathogenic as well as probiotic bacteria.

Plasmin is the most important endogenous proteinase associated with casein in bovine milk. Plasmin is a heat-stable alkaline serine proteinase, optimally active at a pH of about

7.5 and a temperature of 37°C. Therefore, plasmin is not inactivated through pasteurization with proteolysis of milk proteins being continued during dairy product manufacture and storage. Some such diseases as mastitis are associated with increased plasmin level and this enzyme damages milk proteins by breaking the original large protein chains into smaller peptides (Fox, 1991, Thompson *et al.*, 2009). Although plasmin is a natural endogenous proteinase in bovine milk, the effect of this enzyme on antibacterial properties of milk proteins and especially on  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and on  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin has not been reported.

The objective of the present study was to evaluate the antibacterial effects of PD $\beta$ , and of PD $\alpha$  against pathogenic (*E. coli* and *S. aureus*) and probiotic (*L. casei* and *L. acidophilus*) bacteria and to make a comparison with nisin (a bacteriocin produced by *Lactococcus lactis*) as regards the antibacterial potentials. The study is also intended to determine the changes in the growth curves and in the plate count confirmation of pathogenic and probiotic bacteria in the presence of either one of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  or nisin.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, nisin and bovine plasmin (EC Number 3.4.21.7) were supplied from Sigma-Aldrich Chemie GmbH (Munich, Germany). Sodium dihydrogen phosphate, Sodium monohydrogen phosphate, Trifluoroacetic Acid (TFA), Acetonitrile (grade A), Brain-Heart Infusion Agar (BHIA), Brain-Heart Infusion Broth (BHIB), MRS Agar (Man, Rogosa and Sharpe Agar), and MRS Broth (Man, Rogosa and Sharpe Broth) were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). Cultures of *Escherichia coli* (PTCC 1399) and *Staphylococcus aureus* (PTCC 1431) came from the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology Company (IROST) in Tehran.

Cultures of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (DSMZ 1643) and *Lactobacillus casei* (DSMZ 1608) were obtained from the Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen Germany company.

### Enzymatic Hydrolysis

The bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin with concentrations of 3 mg ml<sup>-1</sup> were prepared in 10 mM phosphate buffer pH 6.8. Bovine plasmin was added to the aliquots of bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and to  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin substrate proteins at an enzyme: substrate ratio of 1:150 (v/v). Enzymatic hydrolysis was implemented through incubation at 30°C for 44 hours.

### Separation of Peptides in the Plasmin Hydrolysates

The separation of plasmin digest of proteins was similar to that in the published method (Dalasgaard *et al.*, 2008). Fractionation of the plasmin digest of bovine  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin were performed through Unicam crystal 200 series HPLC (Cambridge, United Kingdom). Aliquots of the PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  samples were injected onto a C18 reversed phase column (15 × 2.1 mm, 5- $\mu$ m particle size). The solvents consisted of: (A) 0.1% TFA in water and (B) 80% acetonitrile, 0.1% TFA. A linear gradient of solvent B with a time schedule of 2 to 10 minutes: 40%, 15 minutes: 50%, 45 to 50 minutes: 100% of solvent B were applied. The UV detector recorded results at 241 nm. The RP-HPLC separations were repeated in a number of three replicates.

### Antibacterial Assay

$\beta$ -lactoglobulin,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, plasmin, nisin, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  were tested for antibacterial activity against pathogenic and as well against probiotic bacteria. For

assaying the overnight of bacteria, every culture was diluted to approximately 10<sup>6</sup> cell ml<sup>-1</sup>. To each sterile Eppendorf vial, 450  $\mu$ l of either BHI or MRS broth, 50  $\mu$ l of the mentioned compound, along with 10  $\mu$ l of overnight cultured bacteria were added. Control sample contained 50 $\mu$ L of 20 mM phosphate buffer in place of peptide solution and while blank contained phosphate buffer in place of any of the peptide solutions, and as well the overnight cultured bacteria. The plasmin antibacterial experiment was performed for different concentrations of plasmin solution (enzyme: buffer ratio of 1:15 (v/v) to 1:300 (v/v)) in place of the peptide solution. Antibacterial test of nisin (from *Lactococcus lactis*) was performed by adding nisin powder to 0.02M hydrochloric acid and having it centrifuged at 7,000g for 10 minutes at 4°C. For sterilization, the solution was filtered through a 0.2  $\mu$ m filter. The vials were incubated at 37°C for 18 hours (36 hours for probiotic bacteria).

Optical density was assessed at 620 nm applying Cecil Spectrophotometer (Cecil 7400 UV-Visible, Cambridge, England) for all the samples. The experiments were repeated three times for each sample.

### Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) of Antibacterial Compounds

Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) assays were carried out only for the antibacterial compounds. The MIC for these compounds was defined as the lowest concentration of antibacterial compound that resulted in no increase of absorbance at 620 nm following incubation (McCann *et al.*, 2006).

For an assay of the overnight of any bacteria, the culture was diluted to approximately 10<sup>6</sup> cell ml<sup>-1</sup>. To each sterile Eppendorf vial, 450  $\mu$ l of either BHI or MRS broth, different concentrations of antibacterial compound (ranging from 0 to 600 ppm), and 10 $\mu$ l of overnight cultured bacteria were added. Control sample contained different concentrations of



phosphate buffer in place of the antibacterial compound.

The vials were incubated at 37°C for 18 hours (36 hours for probiotic bacteria). Optical density was read at 620 nm for all the samples. The experiments were repeated thrice for each sample.

### **Effect of Antibacterial Compounds on Growth Curves and Plate Count Confirmation of Bacteria**

For an assay of the overnight of any bacteria, the culture was diluted to approximately  $10^6$  cell  $\text{ml}^{-1}$ . To each sterile Eppendorf vial, either BHI or MRS broth, along with 10  $\mu\text{l}$  of overnight cultured bacteria were added. The antibacterial compound was added in different concentrations (MIC concentrations, 0.5 and 0.25 MIC concentrations) (Table 1). Control experiment contained 20 mM of phosphate buffer in place of antibacterial solution. The vials were incubated at 37°C. Optical density was measured at 620 nm every two hours and over 24 hours time for pathogenic bacteria and every two hours over 48 hours time for probiotic bacteria. For plate count test, at each incubation period, a 1 ml sample was taken, diluted, and plated onto either BHI or MRS agar. These plates were incubated at 37°C for either 24 or 48 hours and then all the plates were read by the colony counter (Colony Star Funke Gerber, Germany).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Evaluation the Chromatograms of the Hydrolysed Proteins**

Digestion of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin by indigenous milk protease plasmin after 44 hours of incubation yielded several peaks, as separated through RP-HPLC. The chromatogram of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin was divided into six distinct peaks with retention times of 10.4-, 12.6-,

13.8-, 14.4-, 15.9- and 16.6-minute (chromatogram not shown). Also, the chromatogram of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin was divided into eight distinct peaks with retention times of 10.3-, 11.8-, 14.1-, 15-, 16.1- 16.6- 17.2- and 18.1-minute (chromatogram not shown). The resulting chromatograms revealed that  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin were hydrolyzed by plasmin when at 30°C for 44 hours. In these chromatograms, every peak represented the presence of one hydrolyzed peptide. These findings differ from those of the previous studies stating that  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin were not degraded by plasmin (Chen and Ledford, 1971; Fox, 1991). However, our findings were in agreement with those of Dalasgaard *et al.* (2008), who reported extensive hydrolysis of these whey proteins over a relatively long incubation period (44 hours).

### **Evaluation of Antimicrobial Activity**

In the present study the antibacterial activities of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, Plasmin, PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  as well as nisin were tested against *E.coli*, *S.aureus*, *L.casei* and *L.acidophilus*. Although  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin and Plasmin exhibited no antibacterial effect against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin did demonstrate antimicrobial activity against all the target bacteria. Nisin, as a bacteriocin, was employed for an evaluation of the antibacterial properties of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ . Nisin revealed antibacterial activity against all the Gram-positive bacteria, but this bacteriocin bore no inhibitory effect on Gram-negative bacteria. PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  which contained high levels of unknown peptides, revealed significant antibacterial properties against all the target bacteria (Table 2).

Although Farouk (1982) reported antibacterial activity of trypsin and chymotrypsin, they used higher enzyme concentrations.

**Table 1.** Different concentrations ( $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ ) of antibacterial compound were used to evaluate the growth curve changes and growth inhibition curve.

Sample	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>L. casei</i>	<i>L. acidophilus</i>
PD $\beta$	MIC (50 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (20 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (15 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (15 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )
PD $\alpha$	MIC (40 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (18 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (12 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (12 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )
Nisin	MIC (550 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (3 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (2 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )	MIC (2 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )

**Table 2.** Numbers ( $\log_{10}$  cfu  $\text{ml}^{-1}$ ) of surviving bacteria following exposure to antibacterial compounds.

Samples <sup>a</sup>	Numbers ( $\log_{10}$ cfu $\text{ml}^{-1}$ ) of surviving bacteria			
	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>L. casei</i>	<i>L. acidophilus</i>
Nisin	8.89 $\pm$ 0.16	ND <sup>b</sup>	ND	ND
PD $\beta$	ND	ND	ND	ND
PD $\alpha$	ND	ND	ND	ND
Control	8.89 $\pm$ 0.16	8.95 $\pm$ 0.14	9.61 $\pm$ 0.14	10 $\pm$ 0.14

<sup>a</sup> PD $\beta$ = Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin; PD $\alpha$ = Plasmin-Digest of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, Control= Control sample, containing phosphate buffer in place of antibacterial compounds.

<sup>b</sup> Not Determined, as no growth was observed following incubation.

Although intact  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin had no antibacterial effect on Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, their plasmin digest, namely PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  did show antibacterial activity against the bacteria tested. The  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin chromatograms showed that following Plasmin Digestion, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  had hydrolyzed peptides and these peptides might have revealed antibacterial activity. To the best of our knowledge, there is no report regarding antibacterial potential of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ . However, Pellegrini *et al.* (1999) and as well Pellegrini *et al.* (2001), reported that peptides produced from proteolytic digestion of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin rendered antibacterial activity against the bacteria tested.

In agreement with the results obtained in the present study, Pihlanto-Leppala *et al.* (1999), reported that undigested  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin exhibited no inhibitory activity against *E. coli* JM103 at a high concentration, while proteolytically digested  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin inhibited the activity of the tested bacteria. The findings in the present study are not in agreement with those of Chaneton *et al.* (2011), who reported that intact  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin isolated from fresh milk

inhibited the growth of *S. aureus* and *St. uberis* but had no effect on *E. coli*. It should be noted that they had tested antibacterial activity of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin against a lesser number of target bacteria as compared with that in the present study.

#### Determination of Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC)

The respective MICs against target bacteria following the bacteria's exposure to the antibacterial compounds (PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin) are presented in Table 3.

As can be observed, the MIC of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  peptides ranged from 12 to 20  $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$  against the Gram-positive bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*), while around 50  $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$  against Gram-negative bacterium (*Escherichia coli*), indicating that PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  are active against all the tested bacteria. The MIC results for the PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  indicated that these compounds' high antibacterial potential. The observation is explainable by the presence of antibacterial peptides and as well by the synergism among the peptides within PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ .

**Table 3.** Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) of antibacterial compounds against the selected bacteria

Samples	MIC ( $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ )			
	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>L. casei</i>	<i>L. acidophilus</i>
PD $\beta$	50	20	15	15
PD $\alpha$	40	18	12	12
Nisin	550	3	2	2

Both PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  had higher MIC values for Gram-negative as compared with Gram-positive bacteria (about twice as high). The higher resistance of Gram-negative bacteria might be attributed to the complexity of their cell membrane structure as their cell wall contains an outer membrane consisting of lipopolysaccharide, phospholipid, lipoprotein, and protein in addition to a cytoplasmic membrane, all of which add strength to a Gram-negative bacterium's cell membrane (Hancock and Lehrer, 1998).

In contrast, nisin exhibited a relatively low MIC ranging from 2 to 3  $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$  against Gram-positive bacteria. Nisin MIC against Gram-negative bacteria, *E. coli* (550  $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ ) was very high. The inactivity of nisin against Gram-negative bacterium results from its relatively large size, preventing it from easily penetrating the outer membrane of the Gram-negative cell wall (Heike and Sahl, 2000). Nisin MIC values against Gram-negative bacterium were 11 times those of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ , but these MIC values against Gram-positive bacteria were 5 times lesser than those of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ . This finding is consistent with Kordel *et al.* (1989); Ganzle *et al.* (1999) and Boziaris and Adams (1999) who reported that Gram-negative bacteria were highly resistant to bacteriocins.

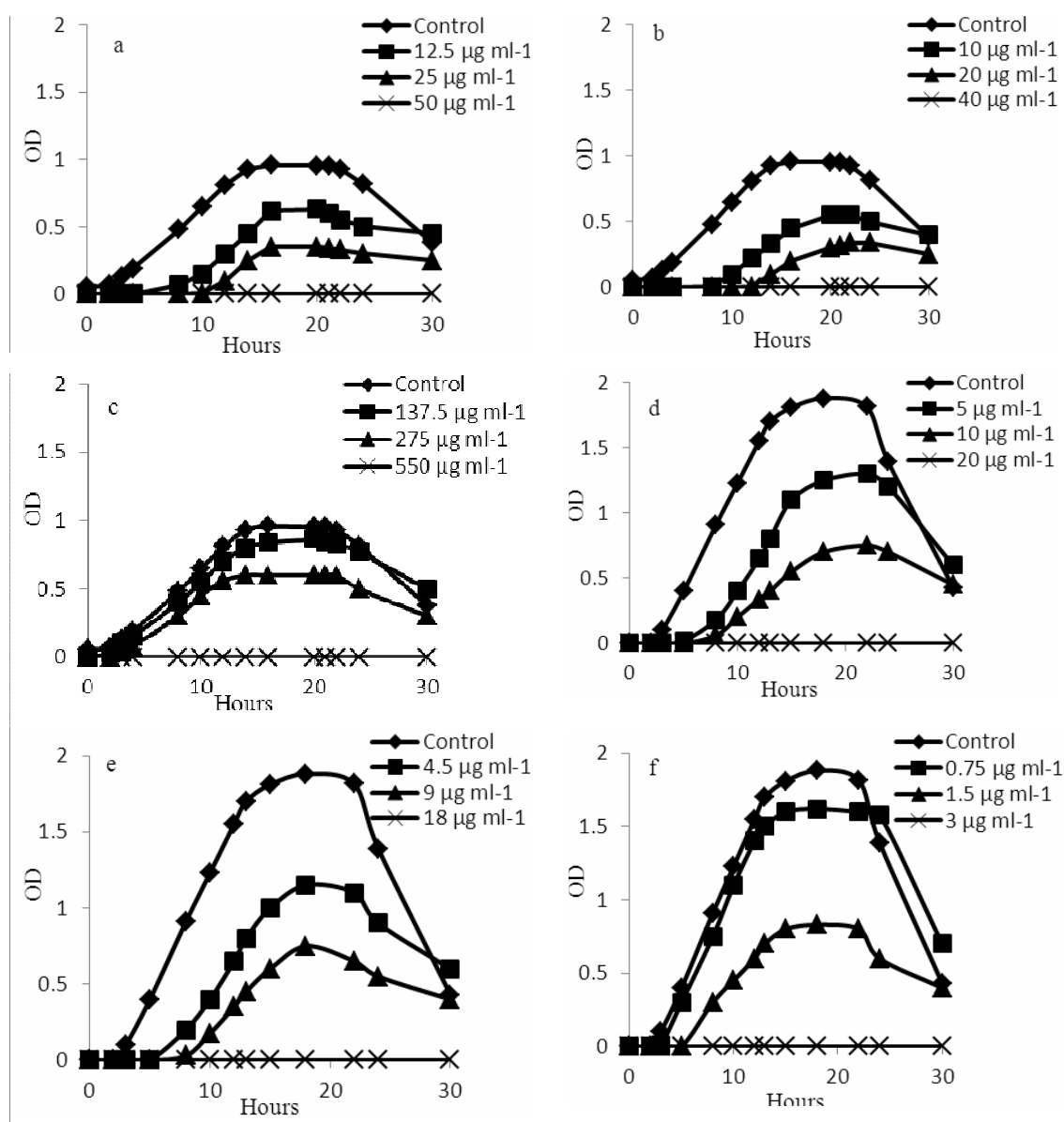
#### Effect of Antibacterial Compounds on the Growth Curves of Bacteria

The growth curves of pathogenic (*E. coli* and *S. aureus*) and of probiotic bacteria (*L. casei* and *L. acidophilus*) were obtained as recorded by measuring the optical density over either 24 or 48 hours. The growth curve

of *E. coli* and *S. aureus* in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin is shown in Figure 1. Although the control had a lag phase in the first 2 hours, the growth curve of *E. coli* and *S. aureus* in the presence of the PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin showed a longer lag phase in the first 3 to 10 hours. 2 hours past, OD<sub>620</sub> for the control increased at a faster rate and then kept stable. OD<sub>620</sub> for the treated samples increased at a lesser than the control and remained steady at a low value. The difference between OD<sub>620</sub> for the control and those for the treated samples indicated that the growth of *E. coli* and *S. aureus* had been inhibited by the presence of nisin and especially PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ 's presence.

The growth curve for *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus* in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$ , and nisin is shown in Figure 2. The control showed a lag phase for the first 2 to 4 hours, and while the treated samples showing a lag phase within the first 6 to 16 hours. 2 hours past, OD<sub>620</sub> increased for the control group at a faster rate and was then kept stable. OD<sub>620</sub> of the treated samples increased at a slower rate than that of the control group and remaining then steady at a low value. The difference between OD<sub>620</sub> values for the control and treated samples indicated that the growth of *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus* had been inhibited by the presence of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  and especially nisin. The results obtained indicated that the effect of different concentrations of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin on the lag phase and on the maximum OD<sub>620</sub> of *E. coli*, *S. aureus*, *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus*, compared with their controls, were statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

The growth curves of bacteria showed similar patterns in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$

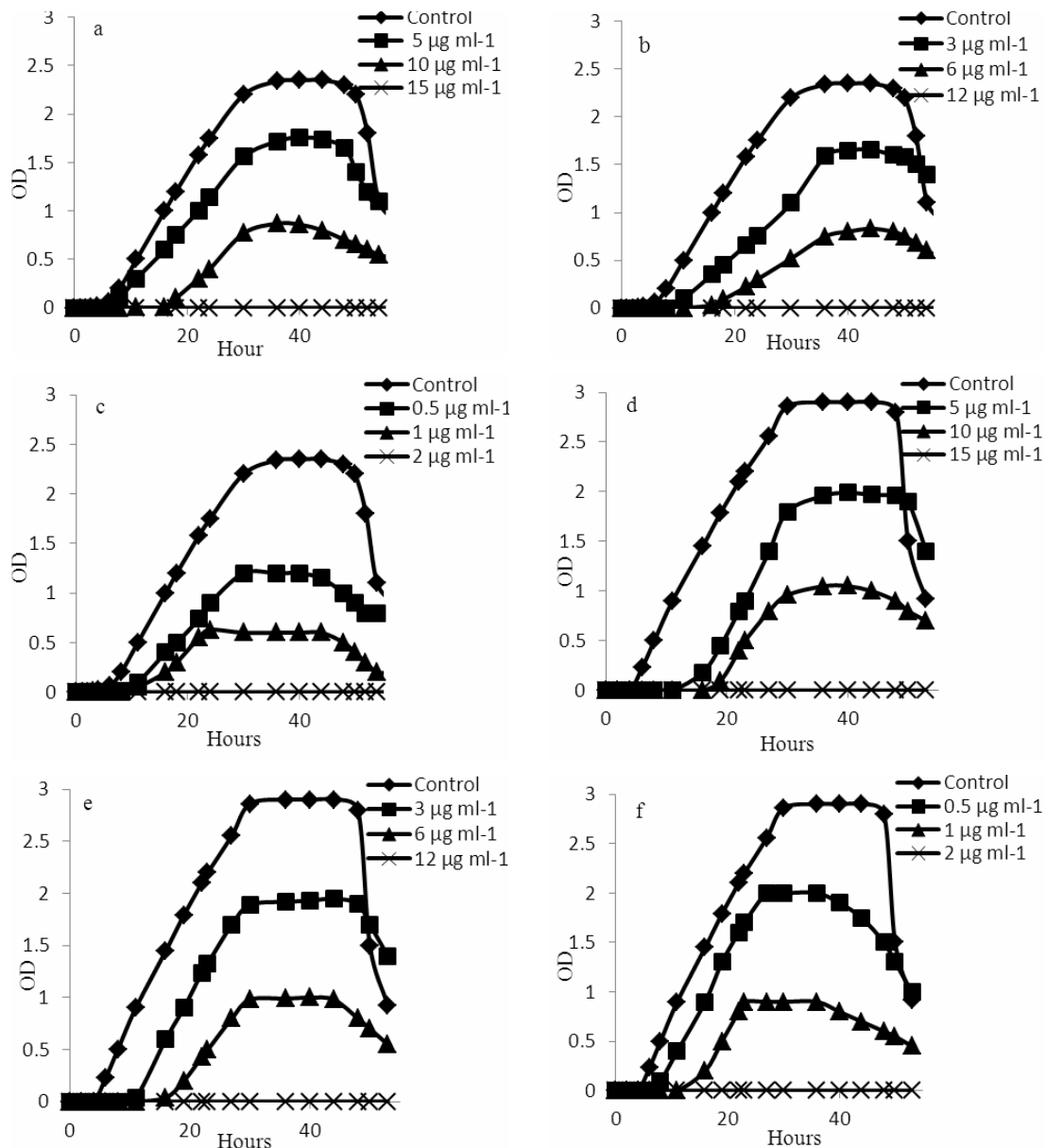


**Figure 1.** Growth curves of patterns' assay: Antibacterial effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) on *Escherichia coli* (a) on *Staphylococcus aureus* (d); antibacterial effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) on *Escherichia coli* (b) on *Staphylococcus aureus* (e), nisin antimicrobial effect on *Escherichia coli* (c) and on *Staphylococcus aureus* (f) over time, and at different concentrations. Controls contain no antibacterial compounds.

and nisin. The inhibitory effects of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin on the tested bacteria dependent on concentration, higher concentrations rendering stronger antibacterial activity. These findings are consistent with the findings of Vongsawasdi *et al.* (2012), who demonstrated that inhibition of *S. aureus* increased as nisin

concentration and its incubating time increased.

The growth curves for the bacteria in the presence of these compounds showed longer lag phases as compared with controls. The growth curves of bacteria showed a maximum difference in optical density between treated samples and control during



**Figure 2.** Growth curves of patterns' assay: Antimicrobial effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) on *Lactobacillus casei* (a) on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (d); antimicrobial effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) on *Lactobacillus casei* (b) and on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (e), antimicrobial effect of nisin on *Lactobacillus casei* (c) and on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (f) over time, and at different concentrations. Controls contain no antibacterial peptide.

the log phase. The differences in optical densities between treated samples and control, during the stationary and death phases were less than those for the log phase. These results indicate that a

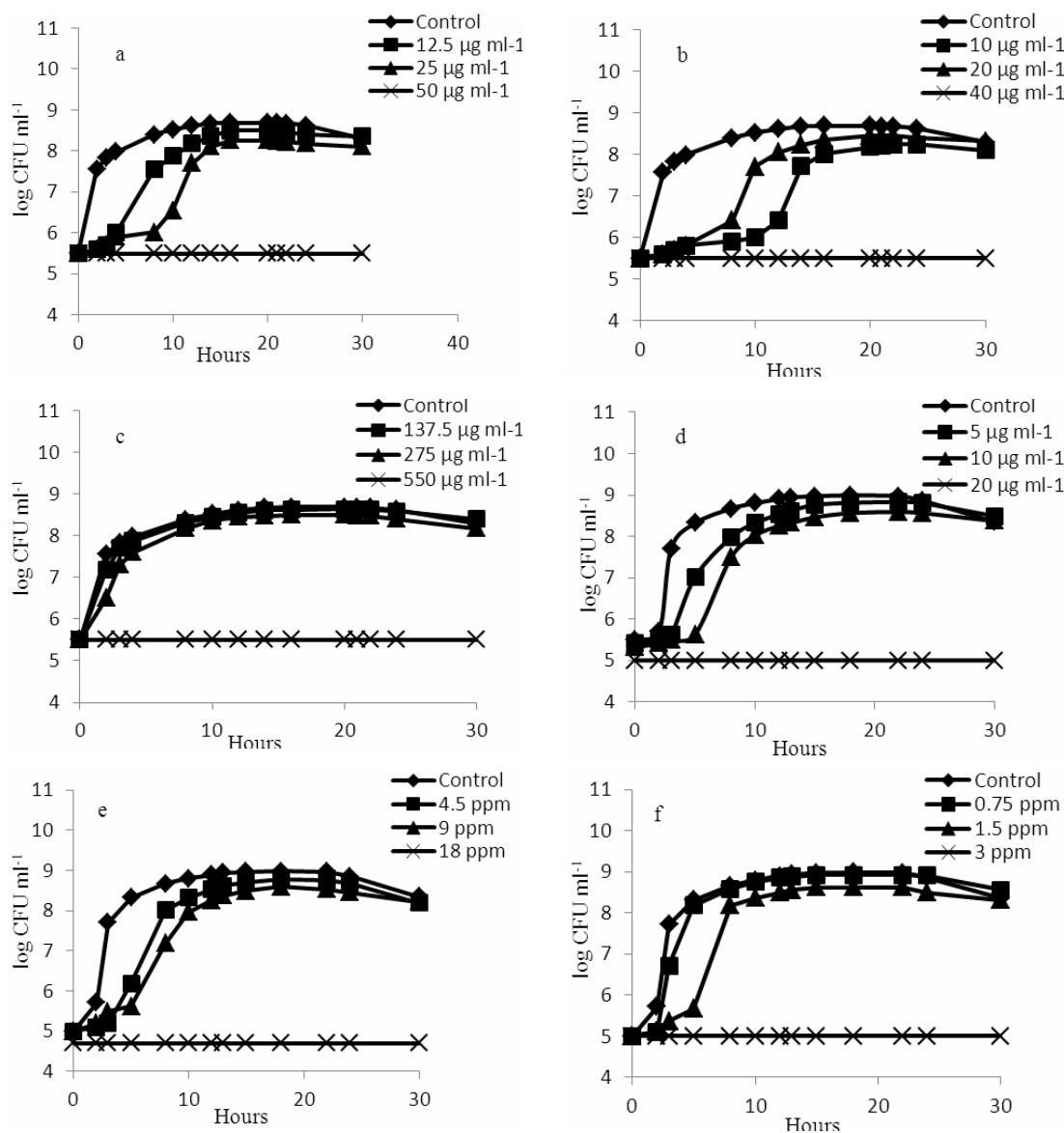
maximum sensitivity of bacteria to PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and to nisin occurred during their log phases.



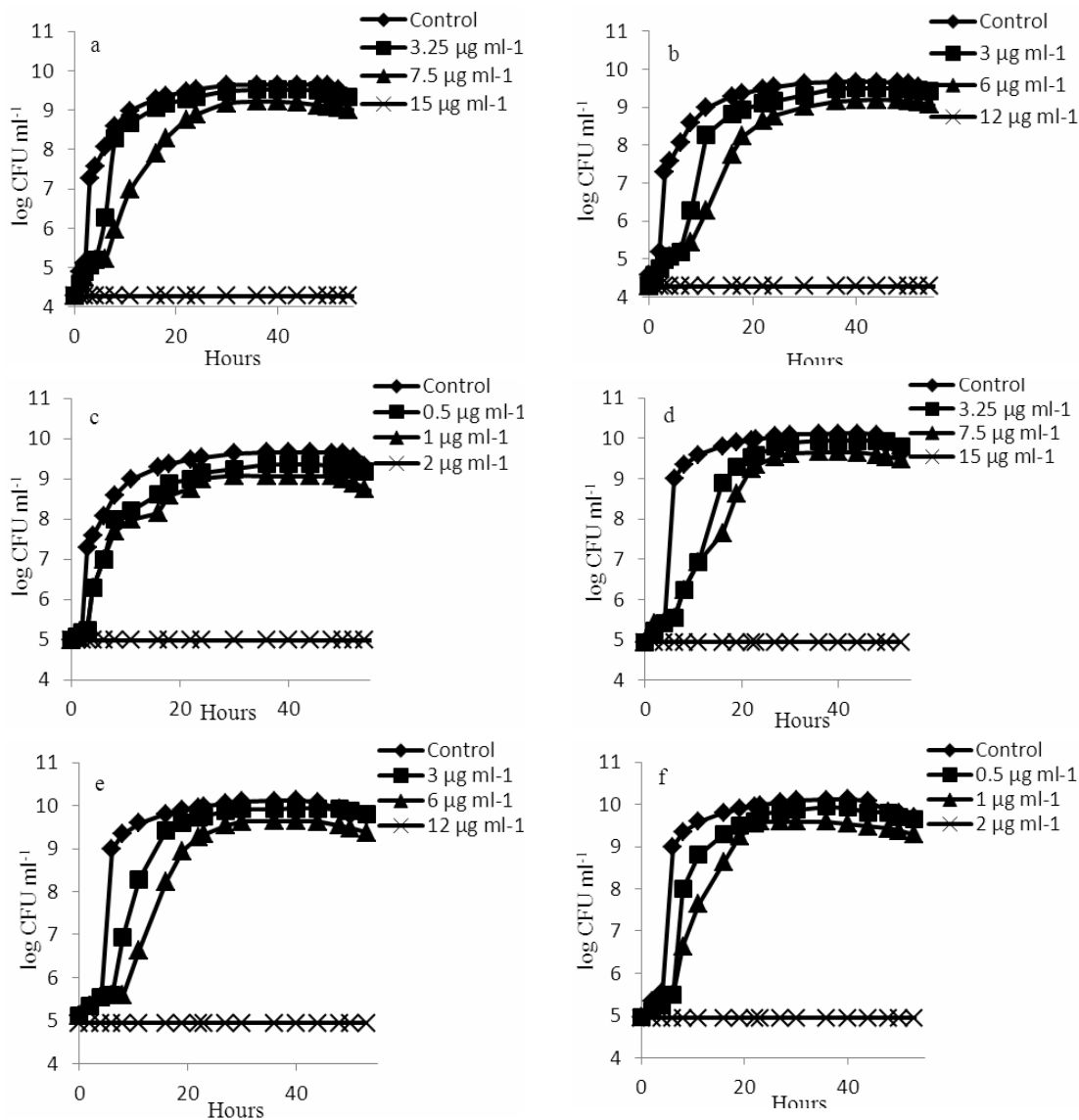
### Plate Count for Bacteria in the Presence of Antibacterial Compounds

Figure 3 shows the plate counts for *E. coli* and *S. aureus* in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin. The results show that *E. coli* and *S. aureus* were affected by PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and

nisin by maximum 3.19 and 3.97 log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> differences respectively, over the control and after a passage of 16 hours (MIC concentration). *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus* showed respective<sup>1</sup> maximum differences of 5.1 and 4.86 log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> between control vs. treated samples after 36 hours past (MIC concentration) (Figure 4). These results



**Figure 3.** Growth inhibition curves: Effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Escherichia coli* (a) on *Staphylococcus aureus* (d); effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Escherichia coli* (b) on *Staphylococcus aureus* (e), and the effect of nisin on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Escherichia coli* (c) and on *Staphylococcus aureus* (f) over time, and at different concentrations. Controls contain no antibacterial peptide.



**Figure 4.** Growth inhibition curves: Effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin (PD $\beta$ ) on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Lactobacillus casei* (a) on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (d); effect of Plasmin-Digest of  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin (PD $\alpha$ ) on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Lactobacillus casei* (b) on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (e), and the effect of nisin on numbers (log<sub>10</sub> cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>) of surviving *Lactobacillus casei* (c), and on *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (f) over time, and at different concentrations. Controls contain no antibacterial peptide.

indicated that maximum difference in log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> between treated samples and control during log phase for probiotic bacteria was higher than that for pathogenic bacteria. This could be because control group of probiotic bacteria, in the log phase, can obtain a higher log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> as compared with the

control group related to the pathogenic bacteria.

Although pathogenic and probiotic bacteria, in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin, had longer lag phases than the control, the numbers of bacteria in the lag phases showed limited variations. In the log phase, the plate count *E. coli* and *S. aureus* in the

presence of nisin showed differences of 0.18 and 2.65 respectively from the controls (less than the MIC concentration). In the presence of PD $\beta$ , *E.coli* and *S.aureus* were different from control by 2.21 and 2.60, respectively, (less than the MIC concentration). In the presence of PD $\alpha$ , *E. coli* and *S. aureus* had differences of 2.52 and 2.70 log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup>, respectively, over the controls (less than the MIC concentration). These differences in the stationary phase for treated samples were less than those for the log phase. The death phase showed the least difference in the number of bacteria from the control. These results indicate that nisin in its less than MIC concentration could not effectively reduce log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> of *E.coli*.

In the log phase, the plate counts of *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus* in the presence of nisin differed by of 1.64 and 2.3, respectively, as compared with the controls (less than the MIC concentrations). In the presence of PD $\beta$ , *L. casei* and *L. acidophilus* differed by 2.82 and 3.1, respectively, from their controls. These differences in the presence of PD $\alpha$  were 3.14 and 2.95 log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> respectively and as compared with the control. The difference in the stationary phase for the treated samples was less than that for the log phase. The death phase exhibited the least difference in the number of bacteria as compared with control.

Growth inhibition curves also showed the maximum difference in log cfu ml<sup>-1</sup> between treated samples and their control during the log phase. As a result, changes in the bacterial growth curves were consistent with the changes in the growth inhibition curves. There was a statistically significant difference observed, in mean number, between bacteria surviving in the presence of different concentrations of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin vs. bacteria present in the control samples ( $P < 0.05$ ).

In the current study, the effect of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  on pathogenic and on probiotic bacteria was evaluated, and the results compared with when nisin used. The growth curves of bacteria revealed similar patterns in the presence of PD $\beta$ , PD $\alpha$  and nisin. All tested

bacteria exhibited the most sensitivity to PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  in the log phase. As a result, it is recommended that one should use them in the log phase for stopping pathogenic bacteria survival in a medium.

The effect of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  on pathogenic bacteria revealed that these compounds benefit from a good potential for increasing food microbial safety. Therefore, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  have great potential as natural food additives in the food chain. In the meantime that PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  are effective in controlling pathogenic bacteria, these compounds could also effectively control probiotic bacteria too. Most probiotic bacteria strains are among the Gram-positive ones, and PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  are more effective on stopping the survival of Gram-positive bacteria. The viability of probiotic microorganisms in the final product until the time of its consumption is their most important qualitative parameter (Mortazavian and Sohrabvandi, 2006). The effect of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  on pathogenic bacteria, increases the safety of raw milk and dairy products, however, the effect of these compounds on probiotic bacteria is not desirable. Thus, further evaluation of the effect of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  on the viability of probiotic bacteria in the final product and under different conditions is necessary.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results of the present study show that antimicrobial activity can be influenced by PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$ . This result increases understandings of  $\beta$ -lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin and reveals that bactericidal peptides can be produced by the proteolytic digestion of  $\beta$ -Lactoglobulin and  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin from milk protease plasmin. Throughout the present study, PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  with a potent inhibition against either of Gram-positive or Gram-negative bacteria were scrutinized. It is expected that PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  might have a potentially valuable role as food additives and as well in strengthening the immune system of the



host. Some of the Gram-positive bacteria in the study were probiotic, so the effect of PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  on probiotic products should be further stressed. While PD $\beta$  and PD $\alpha$  are effective against Gram-negative bacteria, nisin is more effective against Gram-positive ones. Thus the application of a mixture of antibacterial peptides along with nisin might enhance the quality in a food product

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## بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده به عنوان منبع پپتیدهای ضد میکروبی

م. صداقتی، ح. عزت پناه، م. مهدی اکبر بوجار، م. تاج آبادی ابراهیمی، م. امین افشار و م. دمشقیان

### چکیده

در این تحقیق وجود فعالیت ضد باکتریایی در بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین گاوی هیدرولیز شده مورد بررسی قرار گرفت. پپتیدهای موجود در بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین گاوی



هیدرولیز شده با آنزیم پلاسمین به وسیله دستگاه RP-HPLC جداسازی شد. فعالیت ضد باکتریایی بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین، نیسین، پلاسمین، بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده در برابر باکتری های بیماریزا (اشرشیاکلی و استافیلوکوکوس اورئوس) و سلامتی بخش (لاکتوباسیلوس کازئی و لاکتوباسیلوس اسیدوفیلوس) در آزمایشگاه ارزیابی شد. اگرچه بتا لاکتوگلوبولین و آلفالاکتوآلبومین و پلاسمین فعالیت ضد باکتریایی در برابر باکتری های هدف نشان ندادند، بتا لاکتوگلوبولین هیدرولیز شده، آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده و نیسین در برابر باکتری های هدف خاصیت ضد باکتریایی داشتند. در مرحله بعد حداقل غلظت بازدارندگی (MIC) ترکیبات با خاصیت ضد باکتریایی در برابر باکتری های هدف تعیین شد. نتایج حاصل مشخص کرد، حداقل غلظت بازدارندگی این ترکیبات و نیسین در برابر باکتری های گرم مثبت کمتر از باکتری های گرم منفی است. در این مطالعه تاثیر بتا لاکتوگلوبولین هیدرولیز شده، آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده و نیسین بر منحنی رشد باکتری ها و شمارش کلی باکتری های زنده بررسی شد. نتایج حاصل مشخص کرد بتا لاکتوگلوبولین هیدرولیز شده، آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده و نیسین اثر بازدارنده بر دوره کمون، ماکزیمم رشد و شمارش کلی باکتری های زنده باکتری های مورد آزمون دارند. بیشترین اثر بازدارندگی این ترکیبات در فاز رشد باکتری ها مشاهده گردید. اثر بازدارندگی این ترکیبات به غلظت آنها بستگی داشت، با افزایش غلظت، خاصیت ضد باکتریایی افزایش می یافت. بتا لاکتوگلوبولین هیدرولیز شده و آلفالاکتوآلبومین هیدرولیز شده در برابر باکتری های گرم منفی بسیار فعال تر از نیسین بودند ولی نیسین فعالیت بازدارندگی خوبی در برابر باکتری های گرم مثبت نشان می داد.