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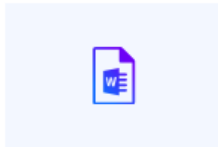


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Characterization of Lemongrass Extract (*Cymbopogon citratus*) Nanoemulsion and Its Application as Antibiofilm Agent in Acrylic Resin

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Keywords: *Acrylic resin, Antibiofilm, Candida albicans, Cymbopogon citratus, Nanoemulsion, Streptococcus mutans.*

Abstract

Background: Using acrylic resin dentures can contribute to oral problems without adequate cleaning. One of the oral problems is denture stomatitis which causes by the surface adhesion of *Streptococcus mutans* (*S. mutans*) and *Candida albicans* (*C. albicans*). Therefore, an antimicrobial agent is needed for denture cleaning, such as lemongrass, which has a bioactive antimicrobial component. Smaller particle sizes will provide more potent antimicrobial activity because of the ability to penetrate intercellular space. Thus, nanoparticle antimicrobial is a potential alternative to denture cleaner. **Methods:** This research analyzed lemongrass extract nanoparticles with a Particle Size Analyzer (PSA), Zeta Potential Analysis (ZPA), and biofilm formation inhibition in resin acrylic surface were examined. **Results:** Lemongrass oil nanoemulsion (LON) showed high stability in nanoparticle size. The highest LON inhibition percentage against biofilm was $95.59 \pm 0.54\%$ for 100% concentration. A paired t-test on resin acrylic hardness showed LON with concentrations of 100% and 50% had significant differences with a p-value of 0.022 and 0.021. While other concentrations, including chlorhexidine as a positive control, did not show any statistical differences. **Conclusion:** Lemongrass oil nanoemulsion (LON) has proved to be an antibiofilm and effective as a denture cleaning agent because of its ability to inhibit *Streptococcus mutans* and *Candida albicans* growth.

1 Introduction

Denture stomatitis affects 20-67% or around two-thirds of removable denture wearers. Common signs of this condition are inflammation and redness on mucosal tissue under the denture, with symptoms like discomfort, burning sensation, pain, and taste disorder. Poor oral hygiene is the most significant risk factor, which promotes bacterial colonization and adhesion in the denture base and oral cavity to form biofilm.¹⁻⁴ Thicker and more complex biofilm organization will contribute to more severe condition.^{5,6} *Candida albicans* and *Streptococcus mutans* are the commonest fungi and bacteria related to this condition.^{3,7-11}

The application of broad-spectrum and long-lasting antimicrobial agents can minimize or remove biofilm adhesion and prevent denture stomatitis.⁹ However, this application has disadvantages, such as high cost, dependence on patient compliance, and antimicrobial resistance potential. Chemical antimicrobial agents also potentially harm the environment and possess toxic effects on human health.^{3,14-16}

Recently there has been increasing initiatives to utilize natural ingredient in medication as an alternative to overcome the disadvantages of chemical agents.^{17,18} Plants' secondary metabolites or bioactive components, such as flavonoid, tannin, phenol, saponin, alkaloid, steroid, glycoside, dan carbohydrate, showed antimicrobial activities.^{3,15,18,19}

Lemongrass is one of the herbal plants which have been widely studied.¹⁸ This herb is a long-living plant with a particular smell that is inexpensive and easily found in the market. Citral is a bioactive component responsible for the smell and has an antimicrobial role.^{18,20} Citral can prevent yeast biofilm formation by altering ergosterol biosynthesis, increasing membrane fluidity, and preventing membrane synthesis, spore germination, proliferation and respiration.^{18,20–22}

Fabrication of nanoparticles is a solution for low availability of natural products.^{23,24} Smaller particle sizes will perform higher antimicrobial effects because of the ability to penetrate the intercellular space.^{24,25} Several studies have shown that nanoparticles of natural products provide higher broad-spectrum antibacterial and fungicidal activity through hyphae inhibitory mechanism.^{26–28}

Based on these backgrounds, we aim to fabricate lemongrass oil nano emulsion and test its potential against *S.mutans* and *C.albicans* as opportunistic microbes commonly found in denture stomatitis.

2 Materials and Methods

Lemongrass Oil Extraction

Lemongrass oil was produced using standardized herbal medicine extraction protocol in PT Indesso Aroma Pharmaceutical Industry, Baturaden, Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia.

Lemongrass Oil Nanoemulsion (LON) Production

Five ml of lemongrass oil (PT Indesso) was mixed with 5 ml propylene glycol (Carbowax-X29160), 5 ml PEG 400 (Carbowax-X29160), and 10 ml glycerin (Merck-104094). The mixture was stirred until homogenous. Subsequently, 5 ml of chromophore was added to the mixture.

Measurement of Particle Size Analysis (PSA)

Particle size was measured at HeNe 4 mW and 633nm wavelength laser source in Particle Size Analyzer (Horiba SZ-100). The measurement range (hydrodynamic size) was between 0.6nm– 9000nm, depending on the sample type.

Zeta Potential Analysis (ZPA) Measurement

ZPA was done using Particle Size Analyzer (PSA) (Horiba SZ-100) at 25°C temperature. One milliliters of emulsion was put in a zeta potential cuvette and placed on the PSA holder.

Biofilm Preparation and Inhibition

Lemongrass Oil Nanoemulsion (LON) Preparation

Thirty milliliters of 100% LON stock were serially diluted in 10% DMSO to following concentrations: 100%, 50%, 25%, 12.5%, 6.25%, and 3.125%. Each solution was then sterilized using a 0.22 µm pore syringe filter (Sartorius, 17845).

***S. mutans* and *C. albicans* Inoculum Preparation**

S. mutans (ATCC-25175) dan *C. albicans* (ATCC-10231) were cultured in Mueller Hinton Broth media for 24 hours at 37°C before being used for broth microdilution assay.

Acrylic Specimen Fabrication

A 5 mm diameter and 2 mm thickness flat cylinder with baseplate wax (Cavex) was placed into a cuvette mould. Next, a cold mould seal (CMS) was smeared into the cuvette, and the wax was boiled out. Heat-cured acrylic (ADM, ISO 1567) was stirred and poured into the cuvette, then cured for 60 minutes at 100°C. The acrylic was finished and polished, yielding a 400 grits acrylic specimen.

S. mutans and *C. albicans* Biofilm Inhibition

S. mutans and *C. albicans* were cultured in Brain Heart Infusion Broth (Himedia-M210) for 24 hours at 37°C. Fifty microliters of *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* (0.5 McFarland) were pipetted to 96 well plates (Costar, 3596) containing heat-cured acrylic. Then, 100uL of LON serial solutions were added. The microplate was then placed in an incubator (Thermo IH3543) for 48 hours at 37°C. After incubation, the remaining liquid was discharged and washed two times with Phosphate Buffer Saline (PBS) (Biowest). The well was then filled with 125 ul Crystal Violet 0.1% (Himedia - TC510), incubated for 10-15 minutes, and rinsed three times with sterile aquadest. Last, 125 uL of 30% acetic acid was added. The absorbance was measured at a wavelength of 625 nm.

Biofilm growth was measured by comparing the Optical Density (OD) of each treatment groups and blanks. OD formula was described as follows:

$$OD = 1 - \frac{(xODs - xODbs)}{(xODp)} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

ODs : OD of the tested sample (405 nm).

ODbs : OD of a blank sample.

ODp : OD of tested solvent - OD of blank solvent.

3 Results

Lemongrass Oil Nanoemulsion Particle Size

Three nano emulsion samples had the following average diameters: 63.5 nm, 62.2 nm, and 61.4 nm. The fabricated LON is categorized as a nanoparticle because the diameter is between 1-100 nm (Haraya, 2022). Particle 3 had the best result of particle distribution index (PDI = 0.555), followed by particle 2 (PDI = 0.578) and 1 (PDI = 0.603). These values showed that our nano-emulsion particles had homogenous particle distribution. PDI > 0.7 indicates an overly broad distribution of particle size and the possibility of sedimentation.

Zeta Potential Analysis (ZPA)

Zeta potential values of 3 LON samples are adequate with the following results: -48.6mV, -49.2mV, dan -47.4mV (Figure 1). It denotes that the fabricated nanoparticles have a high stability because of their charge to prevent particle agglomeration and sedimentation.²⁹ This also demonstrated how the manufactured nanoparticles would work well in suspension, be more effectively absorbed by the cell membrane, and be less toxic.³⁰

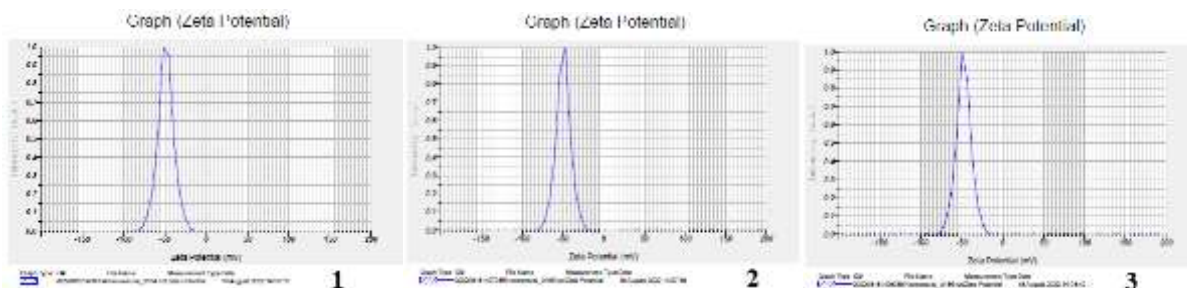


Figure 1 Zeta Potential Measurement of Lemongrass Oil

Biofilm Inhibition of *S. mutans* and *C. albicans*

The highest percentage value of LON inhibition against *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* biofilm was $95.59 \pm 0.54\%$ at 100% concentration. This value was nearly at the same rate as the inhibition value of chlorhexidine 0.2%, which was at $99.61 \pm 0.01\%$ (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1 Biofilm Inhibition Result of *S. mutans* and *C. albicans*

Sample	Inhibition (%)
LON1	95.59 ± 0.54^f
LON2	89.59 ± 1.00^e
LON3	68.07 ± 0.08^d
LON4	41.19 ± 1.00^c
LON5	27.26 ± 0.18^b
LON6	8.01 ± 0.74^a
Chlorhexidine 0.2%	99.61 ± 0.01^g

* Data were presented in average \pm deviation standard. a, b, c, d, e, f, g symbols showed significant differences in the Tukey HSD test ($p < 0.05$).

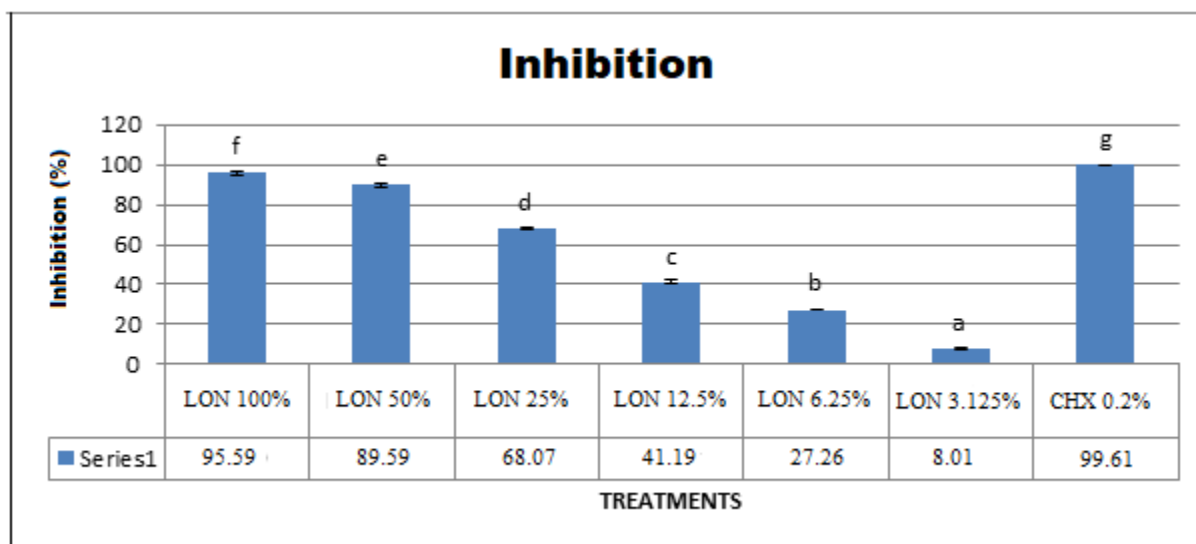


Figure 2 Inhibition percentage of Lemongrass Oil Nanoemulsion (LON) against *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* Biofilm.

4 Discussion

Nanoparticles can keep and protect natural active compounds. It can increase the potential of the extracts as therapeutics by delivering them more effectively and controlling the drug release, thus reducing dose and side effects. Previous studies showed that nanoparticles exhibited excellent stability and promoted the effectivity of antibacterial and antifungal. Smaller particles release drugs faster as they have a wider surface area.^{32,33}

Physicochemical properties such as particle size, shape, and surface charge are essential for nanoparticle absorption. Negatively charged particles are absorbed easier by the cell membrane.³⁴ Particle size and shape from the current study were physicochemical characteristics of LON that significantly influenced particle activity.^{35,36}

In addition to activity, these characteristics also influence the physical and chemical properties of the nanomaterial, such as electronic, optic, and catalytic abilities.³⁷ Surface charge is also related to the ability of nanoparticles to form aggregate. Attractive forces will cause the particles to form a growing cluster.³⁸ Based on the zeta-potential test, three LON formulas showed high stability because of their negative charge that prevents particle agglomeration and sedimentation.^{34,39}

The composition, functional groups, and structure of an active biological component of a plant will have an essential role in determining antimicrobial activity. A previous study from Basera (2019) showed that variation and quantification of the chemical composition of lemongrass were related to the plant characteristics, seasonal and geographical conditions, environmental factors, ecological conditions, type of plant cultivations, harvesting time, part of plant utilized, storage condition, and process of plant extraction.^{18,40,41}

A previous study showed that several essential oil constituents from lemongrass have activity as antimicrobials, including monoterpene (C₁₀H₁₆), diterpene (C₂₀H₃₂), sesquiterpene (C₁₅H₂₄), triterpene (C₃₀H₄₀), p-cymene, menthol, limonene, eugenol, anethole, geraniol, estragole, thymol, γ -terpinene, and cinnamyl alcohol.^{42,43} Antimicrobial activity is related to the constituent's oxygen contents.^{44,45} Higher oxygen compounds, such as in geraniol, will provide more effective antimicrobial activity.⁴⁶

The current study showed that LON has antibacterial and antifungal effects based on MIC and MBC tests, which was in line with Koseki *et al.* The ability of LON to inhibit *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* was nearly at the same rate as chlorhexidine, 0.2% against bacteria and fungi.^{24,47} LON mechanism as antifungal is through inhibition of fungi metabolism and growth.²⁴

Interaction between *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* can induce severe infection, which is challenging to treat. This interaction also increases the adhesion between species in biofilm and can cause microbial resistance.⁴⁸⁻⁵¹ Previous studies showed that bacterial biofilm could be inhibited or removed effectively by the active biology component of herbal plants.⁵² One of the examples was the essential oil component of lemongrass, which showed various biological activities, including antimicrobial, antioxidant, antifungal, antiinflammation, and antibiofilm.^{50,53}

The strategy of natural ingredients development as antibiofilm was to prevent microbial adhesion, eradicate attached microorganisms on the acrylic surface, inhibit quorum sensing, and disturb early biofilm formation.^{21,54} Biofilm inhibition can happen in the early phase of attachment by decreasing

planktonic cell adhesion on the acrylic surface. An active biological component of LON, citral, could penetrate and dissolve the exopolysaccharide matrix of mature biofilm.^{55,56}

The essential oil component of LON has hydrophobic properties, which can easily penetrate the phospholipid bilayer chain and fatty acid of the bacteria cell membrane. The oil can alter cell membrane permeability and induce ion and intracellular leakage resulting in cell lysis and death. Other known bactericidal mechanism of LON is cell structure disruption, proton pump and ion channel inhibition, membrane potential decrease, cellular component coagulation, and adenosine triphosphate (ATP) formation inhibition.^{20,43,57-60} The result is a significant reduction of biofilm formation to approximately 99,79%.^{50,53}

p-Cymene [1-methyl-4-(1-methyl ethyl)-benzene], one of the active constituents in LON, is a hydrocarbon monoterpene aromatic with alkyl substitution and benzene ring with methyl and isopropyl groups substitution. This component showed various biological activities, including antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, antiinflammation, antioxidant, antinociceptive, anticancer, and anxiolytic.⁶¹⁻⁶³ This component's hydrophobic property causes increase in bacteria cytoplasm membrane and cell wall permeability. Monoterpene can also interact with cell membrane phospholipids which cause cell leakage.^{43,61,64,65}

Cis-carveol causes cell membrane function, permeability, and integrity losses, leading to leakage of essential cell components and bacteria cell death.^{66,67} Citral, neral (cis-citral, citral B), and geranial (trans-citral, citral A) disrupt the cytoplasm wall, increasing cell permeability that leads to a significant number of proton and ion discharges and cell death.^{52,68,69}

Citral and neral were aldehydes formed by geranial monoterpene in cis and trans configurations. These substances damage cell membranes, cytoplasm, and mitochondria and cause DNA leakage.^{43,50,53} Citral also cause hyperpolarization of the cell membrane, which influences the pH balance inside and outside the cell, and changes in ATP concentration.^{11,70} However, utilization of citral alone or combined, could inhibit planktonic cells and cause bacteriostatic effects on cell biofilm. Citral can disturb bacterial attachment and exopolysaccharide formation by interfering metabolism of carbohydrates, protein, and nucleic acid.⁵²

Caryophyllene oxide, a sesquiterpene, has a gram-positive and gram-negative antibacterial effect. This component inhibits microbial growth because of its hydrophobic property, which disrupts membrane permeability. This component also had good antifungal activity.^{44,71,72} Therefore, the LON is a favourable antibiofilm because of its ability as an anti-microorganism that inhibits cellular growth.⁷³

A combination of mechanical and chemical denture cleaning often failed to remove *C. albicans* from denture biofilm.⁷⁴ One of the reasons is extracellular matrix material which prevented penetration of cleaning agent into deep layer organisms.⁷⁵ Additionally, acrylic resin porosity makes it difficult to clean mechanically; therefore, denture immersion in a disinfectant agent has been suggested.⁷⁶ Regular denture biofilm cleaning can prevent induced local and systemic oral diseases.⁷⁷ Dental prosthesis submersion is a chemical cleaning agent intended to inactivate bacteria, viruses, and fungi.⁷⁸ These commercial disinfectants contain a toxic component (glutaraldehyde) that is corrosive, irritative, and can stain tissues.⁷⁶

5 Conclusion

Lemongrass oil nanoemulsion (LON) has proved to be an antibiofilm and effective as a denture cleaning agent because of its ability to inhibit *Streptococcus mutans* and *Candida albicans* growth.

6 Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

7 Author Contributions

VKS: Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization, Project administration; RIS: Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization, Methodology; SN: Writing – original draft, Conceptualization, Methodology; JAVW: Writing – review & editing, Formal Analysis, Methodology; J: Writing – reviewing & editing; WLD: Writing – reviewing & editing; WW: Writing – reviewing & editing; AN: Writing – reviewing & editing.

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Dear Authors,

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We are delighted to inform you that your research paper "**Characterization of Lemongrass Extract (Cymbopogon citratus) Nanoemulsion and Its Application as Antibiofilm Agent for Acrylic Resin**" has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Pharmacy and Bioallied Sciences*. Your paper has undergone rigorous peer review by experts in the field, and we believe that it meets the high standards of our journal.

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