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Submission date: 28-Jul-2021 12:55PM (UTC+0800)

Submission ID: 1624947167

File name: on Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus MRSA In Vitro.pdf (1.16M)

Word count: 3104

Character count: 17509

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Abstract

Objective: To determine the antibacterial activity of ethanol extract of garlic against Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. **Method:** Dilution test was performed on 9 different concentration of ethanol extract of garlic (1024, 512, 256, 128, 64, 32, 16, 8, 4 mg/mL) dissolved in DMSO 10% and MRSA suspension on Mueller Hinton broth medium to determine the Minimum Inhibitory Concentration. The Minimum Bactericidal Concentration was determined by the result of streaking of MRSA inoculation on the nutrient agar plate. **Results:** The observation through Mueller Hinton broth medium has shown turbidity both before and after incubation because of garlic ethanol extract color which is blackish-brown and thick, while in the nutrient agar medium, MRSA bacteria grew on the media with concentrations 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, & 128 mg/mL and unable to grow at concentrations of 256, 512, and 1024 mg/mL. **Conclusion:** The MIC of ethanol extract of garlic on MRSA could not be determined, and the MBC in this study was 256 mg/mL.

Keywords: Allium sativum, Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, antibacterial activity.

Introduction

Antibiotic resistance is a major problem and threat to public health. CDC reports at least 2 million United States citizens are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year, and 23 thousand of them died¹. One of the bacteria known for its resistance is Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus. Staphylococcus aureus is a Gram-positive opportunistic bacteria that live as normal flora of the skin and nose but can be pathogenic in some people with weakened immune systems². The main transmission of Staphylococcus infection occurs due to direct contact with human lesions, objects contaminated with human lesions, respiratory tract, and human skin³. Penicillin and β -lactam resistance in Staphylococcus aureus is caused by modification of

Vancomycin, as the drug of choice for MRSA infection, has been reported for its resistance status to MRSA³. The results of the nasal swab of the paramedics who served in the ICU room at Ratu Zalecha Martapura Hospital showed that there were 14 samples with the *Staphylococcus aureus* strain and 7 of them were Vancomycin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* strains⁷. Other research also found that most VRSA was found

the penicillin-binding protein⁴. A study on 643 patients

conducted at Dr. Soetomo Hospital Surabaya proved

that 8.1% of them were detected as carriers of MRSA⁵.

The widespread and inappropriate use of antibiotics can

significantly increase the risk of MRSA infection⁶.

among MRSA strains⁸; therefore, there is a need for new and effective drugs against MRSA.

Allium sativum L. or garlic is one of the most consumed kitchen ingredients in the world. Besides being popular as a food spice, garlic is also used by many people as traditional medicine. This family of Amaryllidaceae

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is believed to have high potential as anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant^{9,10}. Crushed garlic has been shown to have broad-spectrum antibacterial activity against Gram-positive, Gram-negative bacteria and acid-fast bacteria, including Escherichia, Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, Salmonella, Klebsiella, Proteus, Mycobacteria, Vibrio, and Clostridium species 10,11. The active compound possessed by garlic also acts as an antifungal, antiprotozoal, and antiviral agent¹². Several studies have shown that garlic can be an alternative medicine for cardiovascular diseases, including hypertension and stroke. Garlic has also shown benefits in several treatments for hyperlipidemia, cancer, diabetes, and its use and safety if consumed by children. Besides smell breath, nausea, and vomiting, especially when consuming it raw, garlic has not shown any adverse side effects9.

Various studies have confirmed that the pharmacological effects of Allium sativum have the potential to be a source of new drug development. This study is expected to be able to obtain data on the potential antibacterial activity of Allium sativum against MRSA, which in the future can be used as an alternative treatment of infections due to MRSA.

Materials and Methods

Bacterial used for study:

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus used in this study were procured from the Laboratory of the Clinical Microbiology Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia.

Preparation of garlic ethanol extract:

Garlic was collected from a local market in Surabaya, Indonesia. The garlic bulbs were peeled, washed, cut as thin as possible to reduce water content, and dried at room temperature for 2 days. The dried onion bulbs were crushed into a fine powder. Afterward, the powder was extracted by maceration method using 96% ethanol. Ethanol was used as an extraction material because it can dissolve secondary metabolites in garlic, selective, was not easy to grow fungi, non-toxic, and has good absorption ability¹³. The content of antibacterial compounds in garlic is more stable with alcohol compared to water14. The result of this extraction is a thick blackish brown extract with a distinctive pungent

In vitro study:

Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC)

About 2048 mg of garlic ethanol extract were diluted with 2 mL of 10% DMSO, yielding a concentration of 1024 mg/mL. Afterward, a serial dilution method was performed to obtain 9 concentrations of garlic ethanol extract, 1024, 512, 256, 128, 64, 32, 16, 8, and 4 mg/mL. Mueller Hinton broth media was inserted with a bacterial suspension equivalent to a standard of 0.5 McFarland for each test tube, then incubated at 37 \(\text{C} \) for approximately 24 hours. Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) was determined by observing turbidity in the test tube visually15.

Minimum Bactericidal Concentration (MBC)

The dilution test results with various concentrations were then streaked on the nutrient agar plate's surface using the inoculation needle and incubated again for 24 hours at 37°C. Media that showed a visualization of clarity and was not overgrown with bacteria was defined as the Minimum Bactericidal Concentration (MBC)¹⁶.

Result

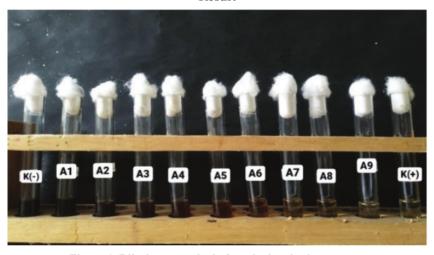


Figure 1. Dilution test tube before the incubation process

(K (-)) Negative control. Contains Mueller Hinton broth medium and garlic ethanol extract, (A1) Concentration of 1024 mg/mL. (A2) Concentration of 512 mg/mL. (A3) Concentration of 256 mg/mL. (A4) Concentration of 128 mg/mL. (A5) Concentration of 64 mg/mL. (A6) Concentration of 32 mg/mL. (A7) Concentration of 16 mg/mL. (A8) Concentration of 8 mg/mL. (A9) Concentration of 4 mg/mL. (K (+)) Positive control. Contains Mueller Hinton broth media and MRSA bacterial suspense.

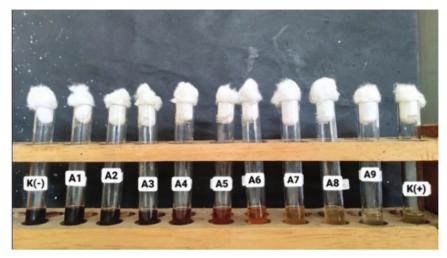


Figure 2. Dilution test tube after the incubation process

(K (-)) Negative control. Contains Mueller Hinton broth medium and garlic ethanol extract, (A1) Concentration of 1024 mg/mL. (A2) Concentration of 512 mg/mL. (A3) Concentration of 256 mg/mL. (A4) Concentration of 128 mg/mL. (A5) Concentration of 64 mg/mL. (A6) Concentration of 32 mg/mL. (A7) Concentration of 16 mg/mL. (A8) Concentration of 8 mg/mL. (A9) Concentration of 4 mg/mL. (K (+)) Positive control. Contains Mueller Hinton broth media and MRSA bacterial suspense.

All of the samples tested showed turbidity both before and after the incubation process. It is caused by the original color of the garlic ethanol extract, which is blackish-brown. Therefore, the MIC of garlic ethanol extract could not be determined.

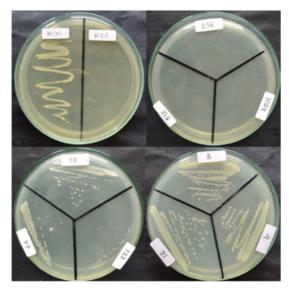


Figure 3. Results of streaking on nutrient agar plate media

After being streaked and incubated again for approximately 24 hours, K (-) or negative control showed no bacteria growing, indicating that the ethanol extract of garlic was not contaminated with bacteria, so the risk of bias could be avoided. Nutrient agar plates that have been streaked with concentrations of 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, and 128 mg/mL indicate growing bacteria's presence. Meanwhile, the results of streaking with concentrations of 256, 512, and 1024 mg/mL showed no bacteria grow. Therefore, it can be concluded that the MBC of garlic ethanol extract is 256 mg/mL.

Discussion

The garlic ethanol extract's blackish-brown color in this study might be caused by the Maillard reaction due to the lack of temperature and humidity control in the extraction process when drying at room temperature. The Maillard reaction occurs due to heating and drying, which causes a reaction between reducing sugars and amino acids in garlic. This reaction causes a change in the smell, original taste, and color of the extract 17.

The antibacterial effect of garlic extract itself is

played by thiosulfinate compounds, including allin, allicin, and dialyl sulfonate18. Allicin has a strong antibacterial role. The crushed garlic will produce allicin compounds, which play a role in inhibiting the synthesis of DNA, RNA, and bacterial protein^{19,20}. Allicin's precursor is a non-proteinogenic amino acid alliin ((S-allyl-L-cysteine sulfoxide)21. Crushed garlic activates the allinase enzyme, which then converts the alliin precursor to allyl sulfenic acid (2-propenesulfenic acid), which is unstable and highly reactive to room temperature. Then, two molecules of allyl sulfenic acid condense spontaneously with water elimination, which then forms allicin^{22,23}. Allicin is very sensitive and unstable to heat. In ensuring the presence of allicin compounds in garlic extract, this study was conducted at room temperature²²; therefore the maceration extraction method was used in this study.

The results of streaking on a nutrient agar plate in this study reveal no bacterial colonies that are growing at concentrations of 256, 512, and 1024 mg/ mL. It indicates that the ethanol extract of garlic has bactericidal properties against MRSA. Later these results also demonstrate that its concentration is directly proportional to its antibacterial activity. The greater the concentration of the extract means, the greater the inhibition and bactericidal properties. It is marked by fewer of the colony of bacteria that grows on media with high extracts.

The bactericidal effect of garlic can be influenced by the characteristics of the bacteria itself. The antibacterial effect of the allicin compound in garlic has been shown to be three times more effective against Grampositive bacteria than Gram-negative bacteria. Lipids in the membrane of Gram-positive bacteria such as Staphylococcus aureus play a role in helping allicin compounds penetrate into bacteria, so allicin can affect the activity of bacterial RNA synthesis and protein synthesis (one of which is by exchanging disulfide compounds) by inhibiting the activity of enzyme-free thiol groups then causes damage and even death of bacteria²³. This proves that the main target of allicin compounds as antibacterials is RNA^{14,24}. Although the molecule is unstable, allicin can easily pass through the bacterial cell membrane because of its hydrophobic nature, so it can reach the bacterial cellular compartment, which reacts quickly with the free thiol group²⁵.

However, Gram-negative bacteria such as *E. coli* which have lipid content on the membrane, are ten times higher than *Staphylococcus aureus*, making allicin compounds unable to reach their destination due to being trapped in the lipid content¹⁴. Allicin, which affects the enzyme thiol group's activity that acts on bacteria, makes these bacteria unable to change or modify the enzyme that plays a role, so the possibility of these bacteria being resistant to allicin and garlic is very small¹¹.

The results of this MBC study are slightly different from several studies, including research conducted by Johnson which showed MBC garlic was 104 mg/mL²⁶ and Venâncio which showed MBC of garlic against MRSA was 64 mg/mL²⁷. The difference in MBC results in other studies influenced by several factors, including the location of plant growth, harvesting period, storage, and plant age. The extraction method used, the extraction tool used, the solvent used can also affect the differences in the results of each study²⁸. In addition, different types of MRSA and different environments that MRSA develops also have different patterns of resistance and gene mutations against antibacterial compounds²⁹.

The ability of garlic to inhibit and kill resistant bacteria such as MRSA can also be seen from other studies whose results are in line with this study^{26,27}. Further research is needed due to differences between MIC and MBC from several other studies, further research on individual isolates or active ingredients that act as antibacterial agents in garlic, and further research on garlic's antibacterial activity with other experimental methods.

Conclusion

The MIC of ethanol extract of garlic against MRSA bacteria in this study could not be determined because the extract was turbid and blackish-brown, so the difference in turbidity in each tube with different concentrations was difficult to observe visually. The MBC of garlic ethanol extract against MRSA bacteria in this study was 256 mg/mL. This indicates that the ethanol extract of garlic has antibacterial activity against MRSA bacteria.

Ethical Clearance: This experimental study protocol had been approved by the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Source of Funding: Self funding.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, for providing facilities needed in this experimental study.

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