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An immobilised cell system for the delivery of functional *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 cells to their target site in a simulated gastrointestinal tract

Qian Zhao

2012
An immobilised cell system for the delivery of functional *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 cells to their target site in a simulated gastrointestinal tract

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Science at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

Qian Zhao

2012
List of publications

1. Functional properties of free and encapsulated *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 during and after passage through a simulated gastrointestinal tract (published by *World Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology*, 2012, 28(1), 61-70.);

2. Viability and delivery of immobilised *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 within calcium alginate gel systems during sequential passage through simulated gastrointestinal fluids (published by *Beneficial Microbes*, 2011, 2(2), 129-138.);

3. The effect of cell immobilisation on the antibacterial activity of *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 cells during passage through a simulated gastrointestinal tract system (submitted to *World Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology* on 18th April, 2012).
Abstract

The objective of this study was to design and produce calcium alginate beads that can deliver immobilised cells of *Lactobacillus reuteri* DPC16 to a target site of the colon in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, without any diminution of their important physiological characteristics. Several factors that might affect the effectiveness of calcium alginate beads for the cell delivery were investigated, using an *in vitro* GI tract model to simulate the conditions within the tract. Firstly, by varying the concentration of alginate at a constant concentration of CaCl₂, and combining the system with gelatin, chitosan or skim milk, the survival of immobilised DPC16 cells in simulated gastric fluid (SGF) was observed. Secondly, the physical stability of calcium alginate beads containing skim milk was observed during sequential incubation in the GI fluids using optimal concentrations of alginate. Finally, the survival of DPC16 cells immobilised within alginate beads containing skim milk was monitored when the beads were incubated for different times during sequential exposure to the simulated fluids. The results demonstrated that non-encapsulated DPC16 cells were sensitive to an acidic environment, and no viable cells were detected after 90 min exposure in SGF (pH 1.2). After appropriate experimentation, an alginate concentration of 3% (w/v) was deemed to be the optimum value and was used in subsequent investigations. When skim milk (8% (w/v)) was added to the alginate solution, the cell survival in SGF was improved markedly. The optimal concentration of calcium chloride was 0.3 M, based on the beads maintaining their integrity in SGF and simulated intestinal fluid (SIF) while disintegrating in simulated colonic fluid (SCF) to release viable cells. Hence, the beads made from 3% alginate, 8% skim milk and 0.3 M CaCl₂ proved to be an effective delivery and release system for DPC16 cells.

*L. reuteri* DPC16 has strong antimicrobial activities against pathogens, due mainly to its ability to produce reuterin. Hence this and other functional properties of the bacterial cells were studied before and after passage through the GI tract. The cells that were recovered after release from the alginate beads in the SCF showed no diminution in functional properties, including their growth kinetics, ability to adhere to epithelial cells and ability to inhibit the adhesion of *E. coli* to epithelial cells. However, the bacteriostatic and bactericidal properties of the recovered cells against some pathogens
Abstract

were significantly greater (P<0.05) than those of the original cells. Production of reuterin by the recovered cells was significantly greater (P<0.05) than that of the original cells when cultured in MRS medium in the absence of its metabolic precursor, glycerol. The results demonstrate significant (P<0.05) consequences for the application of the encapsulation technique to protect and/or enhance the functional properties of the probiotic cells.

Subsequently, an investigation was carried out to find the reason for the antimicrobial activity enhancement. By recovering cells from different stages of the immobilisation and delivery process and examining them for their antimicrobial properties, it was found that it was the immobilisation process *per se*, rather than passage through the simulated gastrointestinal fluids, that caused the enhancement of antimicrobial activity, and that this was related to increased activity of the enzyme (diol dehydratase) that is responsible for reuterin production from glycerol.

Finally, it was demonstrated that freeze-drying of the alginate beads was not an appropriate storage technique as it resulted in a significant (P<0.05) diminution of the antimicrobial activities.

Based on these findings it is confirmed that the alginate-skim milk-CaCl₂ immobilisation system is an effective and efficient method, not only for protecting the viability of DPC16 cells, but also for maintaining the physiological characteristics.
Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the people who made this thesis possible.

First and foremost, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my supervisors: Prof. Ian Maddox, Dr. Tony Mutukumira, Dr. Sung Je Lee, Prof. Yihuai Gao and Dr. Quan Shu. I could not have asked for a better team than you. The whole project brought us together to appreciate the true value of friendship.

The special thank goes to Prof. Ian Maddox, my chief supervisor. The supervision and support that he gave to me truly help the smoothness of the program.

I would like to thank for the Microbiology lab of IFHNN, Massey University and Plant & Food Institute to give me the opportunity to work there, and supply the experimental instruments. Thanks for the help from Song Chen and Hong Tian who provided several experimental protocols.

I also want to show my appreciation to my parents, my husband and those who may not be mentioned here. Thanks for their love, help, understanding and support through the whole process of my study.

The financial support partly from Drapac® Ltd., New Zealand is greatly acknowledged.

Last but not least I would like to thank my friends especially those who work together with me at Massey University.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-HPA</td>
<td>3-hydroxypropionaldehyde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis of variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATCC</td>
<td>American Type Culture Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>Bovine serum albumin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHI</td>
<td>Brian heart infusion broth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cFDA</td>
<td>Carboxy fluorescein di-acetate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.f.u.</td>
<td>Colony forming units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMEM</td>
<td>Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTA</td>
<td>Ethylenediamine tetra-acetic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI tract</td>
<td>Gastrointestinal tract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hb</td>
<td>Haemoglobin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>International Dairy Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Lactic acid bacteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEM</td>
<td>Modified Eagle’s medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min</td>
<td>Minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRS</td>
<td>De Man, Rogosa, Sharpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MRS broth supplemented with 250 mM glycerol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Optical density</td>
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<td>Provability value</td>
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<td>PBS</td>
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<td>Propidium iodide</td>
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<td>rpm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCFAs</td>
<td>Short chain fatty acids</td>
</tr>
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<td>Simulated colonic fluid</td>
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<td>Sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis</td>
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<tr>
<td>sec</td>
<td>Second</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGF</td>
<td>Simulated gastric fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIF</td>
<td>Simulated intestinal fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCA</td>
<td>Trichloroacetic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tris</td>
<td>Tris (hydroxymethyl) amiomethane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UV</td>
<td>Ultra violet light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>The World Health Organisation of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
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