Phytochemistry, GC-MS Analysis, Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Potential of Essential Oil From Five Citrus Species

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Abstract

Citrus essential oils were extraction from hydro distillation technique yielding Citrus oil with reasonable yield. Phytochemical screening of all five Citrus oils showed that alkaloids, tannins, sterols, terpenoids, saponoins, flavonoids were present (50-80%). GC/MS analysis showed highest percentage of limonene (58-89%) in Citrus oils. Antioxidant study revealed that Citrus peel oils have strong scavenging activity (83%-91%). Antimicrobial activity was evaluated by agar well method against eight common pathogens depicted marked antimicrobial potential especially tangerine (4.9-1.9 cm inhibition zones) and grapefruit oil (4.5-1.2 cm) inhibition zones. The studies emphasized the therapeutic and commercial utilization of Citrus peel essential oils as food preservatives, phytomedicine and antioxidant agent.

Keywords: Citrus essential oils (EO), GC-MS analysis, phytochemicals, DPPH assay, antimicrobial activity

1. Introduction

All over the world Citrus is one of the widespread genus due to its prominent production. Citrus essential oils are naturally occurring, volatile and odoriferous oils synthesized by non woody parts of aromatic plants such as seeds, buds, leaves, flowers, stems, fruits, twigs and roots etc. and accumulated in secretory or epidermis cells and also sometimes in cavities (Ahmad, 2006). Essential oil from Citrus fruit peel is the fundamental product of genus Citrus and typically isolated by distillation or solvent extraction (Mondello et al., 2005). These are the complex mixtures of about 400 compounds of which 1-15% are non-volatile whereas 85-99% is the volatile constituents (Nannapaneni et al., 2009). Other organic compounds present in Citrus essential oils are aliphatic hydrocarbons, alcohols (linalool), aldehydes (citral), acids, esters and some aromatic compounds (Sharma & Tripathi, 2006). Svoboda & Greenaway (2003) reported the chief chemical constituent of Citrus essential oils is limonene and have a range of 32 to 98%. Citrus essential oils act as natural antioxidants because flavanone glycosides namely naringin, narirutin, hesperidin and neohesperidin are valuable phenolic compounds found in Citrus peel oil which make them liable to avert rancidity of food (Anagnostopoulou et al., 2006).

Essential oils of Citrus peels are medicinally very important and show variety of biological effects because they are rich in flavonoids (flavone, flavonol and flavanone), terpenes, carotenes and coumarines which are responsible for antimicrobial activity (Tepe et al., 2005). Consequently Citrus essential oils are extensively used in pharmaceutics as an antimicrobial, anti-diabetic, antioxidant, insect repellent, carminative, larvicidal, antiviral, antihepatotoxic and antimutagenic agent (Kanaze et al., 2008).

The rapidly growing importance of Citrus based essential oils in food, pharmaceuticals, perfumes, flavor and fragrance has forced Pakistan to import increasing amounts of Citrus oils despite its rich variegated acreage of Citrus fruits and one of the largest Citrus fruits producing country of the world. These factors provide the
opportunity for the production of highest grade essential oils from Citrus fruit peel. So there was an urgent need to focus on the extraction of essential oils as solid waste management and to improve our economy. This study was aimed for the assessment of phytochemical constituents, antioxidant as well as antimicrobial activities of five Citrus species, Citrus sinensis (L.) var. Malta, C. sinensis (L.) var. Mousami, C. reticulate (L.) var. Tangerine, C. reticulate (L.) var. Mandarin and C. paradisi (L.) Grapefruit.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Collection and Identification of Citrus Fruit Peels

Peels of five varieties of Citrus fruits were collected from local Citrus juice shop near University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam campus, Lahore, Pakistan during the month of January & February 2012. Voucher specimen number PU. HHC.901, PU.HHC.902, PU.HHC.903, PU.HHC.904 and PU.HHC. 905 were assigned to Malta, Mousami, Tangerine, Mandarin and Grapefruit respectively.

2.2 Extraction of Citrus Essential Oil

Essential oils of selected Citrus species was extracted by hydro distillation unit for 3-4 hours extraction. Mixture of Citrus oils and water was incorporated which was separated, in two liquid layers which was isolated. Hydro-distilled pure oil obtained was stored in dark brown sealed vials at 4°C until analysis.

2.3 Physicochemical and Phytochemical Investigation of Citrus EO

Physicochemical characteristics of Citrus essential oils including refractive index, optical rotation, specific gravity, color, odor and solubility were analyzed by the method of AOAC (2005). The chemical tests were carried out for screening of bioactive compounds present in Citrus essential oils using standard methods (Sofowora, 1993; Trease & Evans, 1989).

2.4 GC-MS Analysis of Citrus EO

Citrus essential oils were analyzed for their chemical composition by GC-MS analysis. GC/MS JOEL model JMS-A × 5050 H mass spectrometer (JOEL, Japan) Hewlett Packard 5890 Gas Chromatograph (JOEL, Japan). Helium as carrier gas, split ratio 1:100, electrical energy 70 eV, ionization current 200 µA, ionization temperature 250°C, column temperature with 6°C/min rise to 230°C. The chemical constituents were identified by their retention time and compared with known spectrum deposited in the National Institute Standard and Technology (NIST) library (NIST147.LIB).

2.5 DPPH Assay

Antioxidant potential was assessed by evaluating scavenging effect of each of five varieties of Citrus peel oils on DPPH. 500 µL of each essential oil was added in 3 ml of 0.002% methanolic solution of DPPH and shaken well. Absorbance was noted at 517 nm for all sample solutions and blank (contain only DPPH) after a stay time of 30 min in dark (Amin et al., 2006). All measurements were performed in triplicates. Scavenging potential of Citrus peel oils was determined in terms of percentage inhibition (I %) of DPPH by given formula:

\[ \text{Percent inhibition} = \left( \frac{A_{\text{blank}} - A_{\text{sample}}}{A_{\text{blank}}} \right) \times 100 \]

Where \( A_{\text{blank}} \) represents absorbance of DPPH only at 517 nm and \( A_{\text{sample}} \) represents absorbance of sample under investigation at 517 nm.

2.6 Antimicrobial Activity of Citrus Oils

2.6.1 Test Organisms

Antimicrobial activity of Citrus peel essential oils were studied against the two Gram positive bacteria Listeria monocytogenes and Corynebacterium minutissimum and three Gram negative bacteria Escherichia coli, Yersinia sp. and Klebsiella planticola whereas three fungal strains named as Aspergillus flavus, A. fumigates and A. niger were used. All microorganisms were obtained from First Fungal Culture Bank of Pakistan (FCBP), Institute of Agricultural Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

2.6.2 Agar Well Diffusion Method

Antimicrobial potential of Citrus peel essential oils was assessed using agar well method (Kim et al., 1995). Each microbial concentration was made 106 CFU/ml. Wells (8 mm) were prepared in plates (single well in case of fungi whereas four wells in case of bacteria). About 60 µL of the essential oil was dripped into the wells. Water was used as control. The inoculated plates were incubated for 24 hours at 37°C for bacterial isolates and for 72 h at 27°C for fungi isolates. Study was conducted in triplicates. Biostatic efficacy against test organisms was investigated by measuring the inhibition zones in comparison to a control.
3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Yield of Citrus EO by Hydro Distillation

For Citrus oil extraction by the hydro distillation, five batches of Citrus species were carried out to determine average productivity of Citrus oils (Table 1). Citrus oils yield were in the range of (0.28-0.45%) for 3-4 hours extraction, comparable and better in some varieties as compared to other extraction techniques reported in literature (Minh Tu et al., 2002; Lota et al., 2000). The highest yield among all Citrus essential oil was calculated for C. paradisi Grapefruit 0.45% followed by C. sinensis var. Malta 0.37%, C. reticulate var. Mandarin 0.33%, C. sinensis var. Mousami 0.30%, C. reticulate var. Tangerine 0.28% (Table 1). According to the previous work of Minh Tu et al. (2002) the yield of orange essential oil was 0.13% and tangerine essential oil was 0.25%. The essential oil yielded from various cultivars of mandarin was reported, 0.1% to 0.45% (Lota et al., 2000). Varying yields of essential oil are due to different extraction methods, units, soil and climatic conditions (Huet, 1991).

Table 1. Percentage yield of Citrus essential oils by fabricated unit

| Citrus species | Raw Material Input (g) | Time extract (minutes) | Oil volume (ml) | Productivity (ml/2000g) % |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| C. paradisi    | 2000                   | 215                    | 9.0            | 0.45                     |
| C. sinensis var. Malta | 2000          | 230                    | 7.5            | 0.37                     |
| C. reticulate var. Mandarin | 2000       | 210                    | 6.6            | 0.33                     |
| C. sinensis var. Mousami | 2000       | 235                    | 6.0            | 0.30                     |
| C. reticulate var. Tangerine | 2000       | 220                    | 5.6            | 0.28                     |

3.2 Physicochemical Characterization

Specific gravity of Citrus essential oils in present work was ranged from 0.842-0.858, refractive indices between 1.465-1.476 and all essential oils were found optically active (Table 2). These results were in line with preceding work on essential oils of Citrus species (Guenther, 1948).

Table 2. Physicochemical properties of C. reticulate var. Mandarin, C. sinensis var. Mousami, C. paradisi, C. sinensis var. Malta, C. reticulate var. Tangerine

| Physical Parameters | Citrus oils |
|---------------------|-------------|
|                     | Mandarin    | Mousami     | Grapefruit  | Malta       | Tangerine   |
| Color               | Yellow      | Light yellow| Light yellow| Pale yellow | Light yellow|
| Odour               | Pleasant, Intense | Pleasant, less Intense | Pleasant, less Intense | Pleasant, Intense | Pleasant, less Intense |
| Refractive index (25°C) | 1.465      | 1.471      | 1.476     | 1.471       | 1.468 |
| Optical rotation (25°C) | +86        | +91        | +93       | +89         | +88 |
| Specific gravity (25°C) | 0.844      | 0.849      | 0.858     | 0.847       | 0.842 |
| Solubility Water    | Insoluble   | Insoluble   | Insoluble | Insoluble   | Insoluble   |
| Ether               | Soluble     | Soluble     | Soluble   | Soluble     | Soluble     |
| Acetone             | Fairly Soluble | Fairly Soluble | Fairly Soluble | Fairly Soluble | Fairly Soluble |
3.3 Phytochemical Investigation

Phytochemical screening of all tested Citrus peel oils gave presence of alkaloids, tannins, terpenoids, saponins and combined anthraquinones in significant amounts (25-80%). Flavonoids and sterols were highly present in five Citrus essential oils (>80%). Anthraquinones were moderately present (50-80%) in essential oils of C. sinensis var. Mousami and Malta whereas highly depicted in C. paradisi, C. reticulate var. Tangerine and var. Mandarin (>80%). In all Citrus essential oils, alkaloids were in the range of 50-80%. Only C. paradisi peel oil depicted the presence of coumarin whereas all Citrus peel oils gave negative test for phlobatanins (Table 3). Mondello et al. (2005) explored flavonoids, terpenes, coumarins and carotenes as the major phytochemicals of Citrus essential oils. Likewise, Okwu et al. (2007) screened phytochemicals of five Citrus species and revealed the presence of saponins, tannins, flavonoids, alkaloids and phenols.

Table 3. Phytochemical Constituents of C. reticulate var. Mandarin, C. sinensis var. Mousami, C. paradisi, C. sinensis var. Malta, C. reticulate var. Tangerine

| Phytochemicals          | Citrus oils |
|-------------------------|-------------|
|                         | Mandarin    | Mosammi   | Grapefruit | Malta    | Tangerine |
| Alkaloids               | ++          | ++        | ++         | ++       | ++        |
| Tannins                 | +           | +         | +          | +        | +++       |
| Sterols                 | +++         | +++       | +++        | +++      | +++       |
| Terpenoids              | ++          | +         | ++         | ++       | +++       |
| Saponins                | +           | +         | +          | ++       | +         |
| Flavonoids              | +++         | ++        | +++        | +++      | +++       |
| Coumarins               | -           | -         | +          | -        | -         |
| Anthraquinones          | +++         | ++        | +++        | ++       | +++       |
| Combined anthraquinones | ++          | +         | ++         | +        | ++        |
| Phlobatanins            | -           | -         | ++         | -        | -         |

(-)=absent, (+) = present, > 50 %, compared with control, (+++) = 50% < 80%, (++++) =>80%.

3.4 Chemical Composition by GC-MS Analysis

Limonene was identified as the key element of Citrus peel oils. GC-MS analysis of Citrus peel oils revealed that among five Citrus essential oils, Grapefruit essential oil displayed highest concentration of limonene (89.84%) followed by essential oils of Malta (88.57%), Mousami (87.84%), Mandarin (87.45%) and Tangerine (58.50%). Other chemical constituents identified were limonene oxide, α-terpineol, carvone, carveol, eugenol, spathulenol and caryophyllene oxide. α-Terpineol (12.55%) was the second major component of all five Citrus essential oils with Mandarin peel oil containing highest of it (Table 4). These results were in line with the former work on Brazilian tangerinesin which limonene was the major component (Feger et al., 2003). Similarly, Espina et al., (2011) reported limonene (85.50%) and α-terpineol (0.36%) as chief component of Citrus essential oils. In present study, apart from limonene (88.57%) and α-terpineol (8.45%), Malta peel oil also contained eugenol (0.58%), spathulenol (0.55%), caryophyllene oxide (0.99%), n-hexadecanoic acid (0.86%). Tangerine peel oil showed presence of carvone (16.97%), carveol (8.77%), 3-cyclohexene-1-methanol (8.91%) and limonene oxide (6.85%) in addition to limonene (58.50%). In Mousami peel oil, α-terpineol (12.16%) was major component after limonene (Table 4). Most of the compounds identified in Citrus peel oils were found to be hydrocarbons in nature (Ayoola et al., 2008). The major constituents of Citrus peel oils investigated by Vekiari et al., (2002) were limonene, neral, geranial, β-pinene, β-caryophyllene and neryl acetate. Preceding work stated limonene (86.27%), γ-terpinene (2.11%) and α-pinene (1.26%) in Grapefruit peel essential oil and limonene (76.28%), β-pinene (5.45%), linalool (2.32%), citral (1.74%) and α-pinene (1.26%) in Mousami peel oil (Ahmad et al., 2006). The different chemical constituents of different Citrus species are assumed may be due to different genetic characteristics.
Table 4. Chemical constituents of Citrus oils (GC-MS Analysis)

| Citrus Essential oils (EO) | Retention time | Compounds     | % Area |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|
| Mousami EO                 | 7.215          | Limonene      | 87.84  |
|                            | 8.867          | α-terpineol   | 12.16  |
|                            | 7.210          | Limonene      | 88.57  |
|                            | 8.895          | α-terpineol   | 8.45   |
| Malta EO                   | 10.693         | Eugenol       | 0.58   |
|                            | 11.417         | Spathulenol   | 0.55   |
|                            | 11.486         | Caryophyllene oxide | 0.99 |
|                            | 13.935         | n-Hexadecanoic acid | 0.86 |
| Grapefruit EO              | 7.215          | Limonene      | 89.84  |
|                            | 8.871          | α-terpineol   | 10.16  |
| Mandarin EO                | 7.216          | Limonene      | 87.45  |
|                            | 8.893          | α-terpineol   | 12.55  |
|                            | 7.218          | Limonene      | 58.50  |
|                            | 8.345          | Limonene oxide| 6.85   |
| Tangerine EO               | 9.096          | Carveol       | 8.77   |
|                            | 9.332          | Carvone       | 16.97  |
|                            | 10.152         | 3-Cyclohexene-1-methanol | 8.91 |

3.5 Antioxidant Activity

Antioxidant study revealed that all the Citrus peel oils have strong potential to reduce DPPH radical to DPPH-H (83%-91%). Highest antioxidant activity was shown by C. raiticulata var. Mandarin (91.1%) followed by C. reticulate var. Tangerine (88.0%), C. paradisi (87.2%), C. sinensis var. Malta (86.0%) and C. sinensis var. Mousami 83.2% for 500 μl/ml oil (Figure 1). Antioxidant efficacy of Citrus peel oils in decreasing order was as follows: Mandarin >Grapefruit> Tangerine > Malat >Mousami. These results were in accordance with work of Kamal et al. (2013) that C. reticulate var. Mandarin showed maximum antioxidant potential whereas C. sinensis var. Mousami showed minimum antioxidant potential. Correspondingly, Yang et al. (2010) reported limonene is a major constituent of Citrus peel oils having antioxidant potential equivalent to that of strong antioxidants.

![Antioxidant Activity of Citrus oils](image)

Figure 1. Antioxidant activity of Citrus oils by DPPH assay using BHT as standard. Data expressed as ±standard error bars
3.6 Antimicrobial Activity

The antimicrobial activity of *Citrus sinensis* (L.) var. Malta and Mousami, *Citrus reticulate* (L.) var. Tangerine and Mandarin and *Citrus paradise* (L.) grapefruit was examined on five bacterial strains *L. monocytogenes*, *C. minutissimum*, *E. coli*, *Y. sp.* and *K. planticola* (Figure 2A). The essential oils had various degrees of inhibition potential against the five bacterial strains. Tangerine oil depicted maximum bacteriostatic activity against all the test bacteria i.e., *E. coli*, *Y. sp.*, *K. planticola*, *L. monocytogenes* with inhibition zones (4.9 cm, 4.8 cm and 4.6 cm and 1.9 cm, respectively) except *C. minutissimum* var. Mandarin essential oil revealed second highest inhibitory potential against *E. coli* and *C. minutissimum* (4.7 cm and 2.8 cm) while Mousami oil against both *L. monocytogenes* (1.3 cm) and *Y. sp.* (4.7 cm). Grapefruit essential oil displayed marked bactericidal activity against *K. planticola* depicting the inhibition zone of 4.4 cm. Least antibacterial effect was shown by Mousami in case of *C. minutissimum*, *E. coli* and *K. planticola* (1.6 cm, 3.7 cm and 3.2 cm, respectively), whereas Grapefruit and Mandarin against *Y. sp.* (4.5 cm each). The growth of *L. monocytogenes* was least affected by Malta oil (1.1 cm). *C. minutissimum* and *L. monocytogenes* were least susceptible to growth inhibition by *Citrus* essential oils.

The antimicrobial activities of *Citrus* species are strongly related with chemical constituents like flavonoids and phenols (Viuda-Martos et al., 2008). The active ingredients responsible for antimicrobial potential of *Citrus* peel oils are monoterpenic components (Pavithra et al., 2009). D-limonene, linalool or citral are major attributors for the antimicrobial capacity of *Citrus* peel oils. Previous work revealed that the inhibitory influence of *Citrus* peel essential oils is owed to the presence of linalool rather than limonene (Fisher & Phillips, 2006). However it has
been found that antimicrobial activity is not only produced by one particular major component but also due to the antagonistic and synergistic effects of variety of compounds (Deba et al., 2008).

The essential oils of Grapefruit, Mousami, Malta, Mandarin and Tangerine showed the tendency to impede the growth of molds *A. flavus*, *A. fumigatus* and *A. niger* (Figure 2B). In all molds, Tangerine and Grapefruit oils revealed great antifungal potentials. In case of *A. flavus* and *A. fumigatus*, Tangerine peel oil was the best growth inhibitor (3.4 cm-4.0 cm). Followed by Grapefruit and Malta peel oils, which showed almost equal reduction in growths for these two molds. Mandarin and Mousami showed the lowest growth reductions of *A. flavus* and *A. fumigatus*. The mycelium growth of *A. niger* was most susceptible to grapefruit essential oil with inhibition zone (2.8 cm) while least affected by mousami peel oil with inhibition zone (0.7 cm). Viuda-Martos et al. (2008) studied inhibitory influence of mandarin, orange and grapefruit peel essential oils on four fungal pathogens. *A. flavus* growth was best prevented by Mandarin essential oil whereas *A. niger* growth was most susceptible to Orange peel oil. Grapefruit essential oil was the most efficient against *P. verrucosum* and *P. chrysogenum*.

4. Conclusion

The results of present investigation are the basis for extraction of essential oil of *Citrus* by cheaper methods to design pilot plant to extract EO for industrial production. Some major restraints in viable industrial exploitation of medicinal plants are due to the poor agricultural practices, quality control trials, strain in marketing and dearth of research on process and product development. Coordination among various institutes and organizations of the country can lead for sustainable commercial utilization.

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