

The Overview of Natural by-Products of Beneficial Lactic Acid Bacteria as Promising Antimicrobial Agents

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Aside from ability of lactic acid bacteria to conduct fermentation process, by transforming the raw materials into the final food products, they play an essential role in preservation and also production of distinct food flavors through biotransformation of organic acids and compounds. Functionality of lactic acid bacteria has been associated with their ability to produce a wide array of antimicrobial compounds which acts as a gatekeeper for the integrity of food products and safety for the consumers. Bio-preservation properties of lactic acid bacteria is associated to the production of antimicrobial peptides (including bacteriocins), variety of organic acids, diacetyl, reuterin, low molecular organic metabolites, hydrogen peroxide, and carbon dioxide, among many others. Different antimicrobials play an essential role not only in the bio-preservation, based on their antibacterial properties, but can be key factors in the anti-mould and consequently reducing the mycotoxins and/or enhance probiotic properties when lactic acid bacteria were applied as. In this review, we aim to present this in a structured manner with different examples for the application of lactic acid bacteria and their antimicrobials metabolites in bio-preservation and medical sector versus bacterial and molds and as part of the probiotics properties.

Results and Conclusion: Lactic acid bacteria are powerful microbial factories, which are able to conduct different fermentation process, to produce variety of beneficial metabolites not just for food biosafety but also for beneficial properties of probiotics and their health promoting properties.

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1. Introduction

The increasing trend for green consumerism has driven industries to find and elucidate functional products for various human applications and consumption. The earnest quest is for products that will fit the category of “sustainable lifestyle” with a primary goal of obtaining beneficial effects for the stakeholders. This led to the exploitation of previously existing technologies that have sustained civilizations in ancient times with the aim of specialized applications.

Fermentation technology has been empirically employed worldwide for thousands of years. The scientific elucidation of the beneficial effects of consuming fermented foods started in the early 1900s when Ilya Metchnikoff and his collaborator, Stamen Grigorov, promoted the consumption of yogurt-fermented milk by “Bulgarian bacillus”– as it

seemed to contribute to life longevity. The modernization of fermentation technology has dramatically impacted the consumption of fermented food products globally. The technical and microbiological optimization has been of great advantage particularly for the commercial bulk production of fermented products under specified conditions, with minimal cost, reduction of risk, and efficient control of consistent physicochemical properties [1-3]. Consumption of fermented goods provides an avenue of delivering the auxiliary benefit of various functional and beneficial microbes aimed to improve the health and quality of life of consumers [3]. Although industrially designed fermentation processes have provided safe and uniform final products, the consumption of artisanal fermented foods is still widely favored by the

majority, particularly those that are strongly linked to traditions [2]. For example, artisanal Korean traditional fermented foods have been associated with various health benefits and have also been identified as sources of beneficial strains [4]. The majority of the identified beneficial strains associated with these food products are lactic acid bacteria (LAB); they have snatched the keen interest of research on their probiotic properties. In addition, members of this group have also served as sources of metabolites with the potential of combating and controlling food contamination on the small-scale and local production of fermented goods. Furthermore, numerous strains have been shown to produce various antimicrobial by-products [2,5-7]. These have the potential of exploitation as sources of naturally occurring potent antimicrobials and/or biocontrol agents for addressing the continuous rise of antimicrobial-resistant pathogens [8].

LAB are commonly found in foods such as fermented meats, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, on insects, as well as mucosal surfaces of the respiratory tract, intestinal or genital tracts of humans and other animals. Although these organisms are commonly known for their probiotic properties and potential, some species particularly those that belong to *Enterococcus* can be pathogenic. Some of these cause human infections such as urinary tract infection and endocarditis [8]. Also, LAB are known to be naturally resistant to antibiotics, which enables them to successfully colonize the intestinal mucosa. Generally, LAB require a nutrient-rich environment to establish a niche. Furthermore,

additional supplements such as amino acids, vitamins, peptides, and salts are required for their growth [9-11].

2. Functional Properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria

Although LAB are prominently known for their probiotic properties, various associated functional properties of these organisms play a key role in their continuous exploitation and applications in the food production, feed production, and pharmaceutical industries. Some of the current applications of these organisms and their metabolic products involve their capacity for antibacterial [12-17], antifungal, antiviral, anti-*Mycobacterium*, anti-biofilm [14,18], immunomodulatory properties particularly the gut-associated immune system [3,19], and as cell factories for alcohol sugars, enzymes, vitamins, and bioactive peptides [19-25] (Figure 1).

3. Antibacterial properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria

The applications of LAB in the food manufacturing industries do not limit their involvement in the fermentation process but also in their capacity to produce a wide range of antimicrobial substances [26]. Multiple studies have focused on the uses of by-products produced by LAB to inhibit the growth of food-borne pathogens and nosocomial obtained pathogens, especially with the continuous emergence of multi-drug resistant mutants [18,27,28].

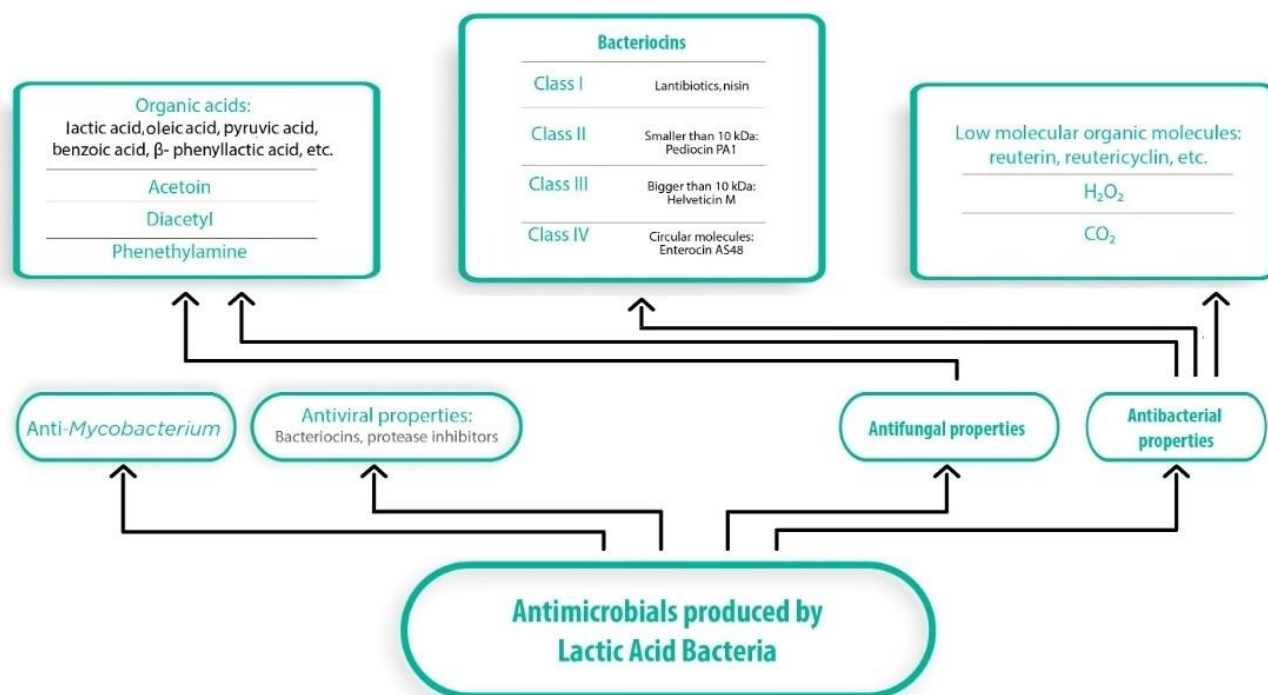


Figure 1. Antimicrobials produced by Lactic Acid Bacteria, their applications and variety

3.1. Organic Acids

Concomitantly with low pH is the accumulation of organic acids that are produced at the end of fermentation. Production of relatively large amounts of lactic acid from hexoses during homolactic and heterolactic fermentation. Whereas the production of acetic acid alongside the lactic acid occurs on heterofermentative LAB. The ability of these weak acids to inhibit contaminant microorganisms is attributed to the dissociation of the acid at a certain pH. As explained by Chikindas et al. [29], acids with the highest pKa values have higher dissociated ions in a specific pH that interacts with the target organism. Comparatively, it was observed that acetic acid had higher antimicrobial activity due to its higher pKa values [30].

Benzoic acid can be produced by some LAB and contribute to their antimicrobial properties. The food industry already explored the application of benzoic acid, specifically its salts in the preservation process for control of molds, yeasts, and some bacteria by moderating anaerobic fermentation of glucose through phosphor-fructokinase decrease by 95% [31]. Benzoic acid has been well employed by the pharmaceutical industry as a key component of treatment for fungal skin diseases such as tinea, ringworm, and athlete's foot. Moreover, benzoic acid is a general component of some topical antiseptics and inhalant decongestants with a long history of use: as an expectorant, analgesic, and antipyretic [32].

The production of β -phenyllactic acid has been attracting scientific attention for the last few decades related to its strong antimicrobial properties, highlighting its effectiveness against some molds [33]. Moreover, Lavermicocca et al. [34] evaluated application of β -phenyllactic produced by *Lactobacillus plantarum* against different representatives of *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium*, and *Fusarium*.

3.2. Hydrogen Peroxide

LAB, through the action of flavoprotein-containing oxidases, NADH oxidases, and superoxide dismutase, can produce hydrogen peroxide when oxygen molecules are available. Hydrogen peroxide acts as a strong oxidizing agent on the bacteria cell, targeting cell proteins (those that contain sulfhydryl) and membrane lipids. Additionally, the oxygen scavenging action of hydrogen peroxide renders the environment anaerobic contributing to the delimitation of organisms that can survive. Furthermore, the inhibitory effects of hydrogen peroxide can be optimized in the presence of thiocyanate and lactoperoxidases, in which, the reaction between these molecules yields a highly toxic substrate such as hypothiocyanite [35,36].

In the last decades, special focus was given to the application of LAB as probiotics (beneficial organisms), including their role in the healthy functional properties of the vagina. LAB, particularly *Lactobacillus* spp., has a health-

promoting role in the cervicovaginal environment where production of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) by some vaginal lactobacilli plays a critical factor in the *in vivo* vaginal microbiota antimicrobial properties [37]. A combination of different antimicrobial factors, including lactic acid, H_2O_2 , antimicrobial peptides, etc, can play an important role in the antimicrobial properties of protective vaginal *Lactobacillus* spp. [37].

3.3. Carbon dioxide

The production of carbon dioxide is primarily associated with heterofermentation of hexoses, but some metabolic pathways also produce this molecule as a by-product. Accumulation of CO_2 in the system curates an anaerobic environment that primarily limits the range of possible contaminating organisms. Due to this mechanism, carbon dioxide has been long applied for vacuum or modified air packing in the food and beverage industries [38,39].

Carbon dioxide has been well-studied for its dual physiological role in microorganisms' life. It can both stimulate and inhibit cell development depending on the specificity of oxygen/ CO_2 requirement of bacterial cells. The inhibitory action of CO_2 has been intensively exploited by the food industry to improve the hygiene parameters of both liquid and solid food products and protect them from bacterial spoilage [40]. Moreover, Blickstad et al. [41] reported on the effect of carbon dioxide on the microflora of pork and suggested that the increase of the partial pressure of CO_2 supplemented to packaging atmosphere can play the role and extend the shelf life of the stored meat products.

3.4. Diacetyl

Production of diacetyl is dependent on the citric acid metabolism, wherein some LAB including *Streptococcus*, *Leuconostoc*, *Pediococcus*, and some *Lactobacillus* species can produce this molecule that showed strong inhibitory properties against *Bacillus* spp. The antimicrobial activity of diacetyl is more effective against Gram-negative bacteria. This activity is associated with the ability of these molecules to interact with the arginine-binding proteins of the target cells, affecting the protein utilization of the target organisms [42-44]. The antimicrobial properties of certain compounds can be influenced by different environmental factors, has been shown that can be antagonized by glucose, acetate, and Tween 80 [44]. However, the beneficial properties of diacetyl was much more related to his organoleptic properties and role in the formation of the aromatic specificity of dairy products [44], as flavor related to a butter already around 1929 by van Neil et al. (presented in Jay et al. [44]). Moreover, some of the first reports on antibacterial properties for diacetyl date from 1936 [44], and even traditional medicine in Finland was suggested for the treatment of tuberculosis. Some research projects described the effect of diacetyl against *Mycobacterium (M.) tuber-*



culosis or killing effect against *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, *Enterobacter aerogenes*, *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Mycobacterium phlei*, *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, *Staphylococcus (St.) aureus* (summarized by Jay *et al.* [44]). Even if diacetyl was never received an industrial antimicrobial application as a pharmaceutical component, his role in the complex antimicrobial properties in the food industry and artisanal food productions is a well-acknowledged fact and plays an essential role in the control of different foodborne pathogens in preparation and bio-conservation of fermented food products. Kang and Fung [45] demonstrated the role of diacetyl for control of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* Typhimurium in meat fermented products; Langa *et al.* [46] suggested a combination of reuterin and diacetyl for control of *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella* Enteritidis, and *Listeria (L.) monocytogenes* in dairy products.

3.5. Low molecular weight antimicrobials

The low pH environment established during fermentation allows optimal conditions for low molecular weight antimicrobial substances produced by LAB. Reuterin, which was found to be a broad-spectrum antibiotic, and reutericyclin, which acts as proton ionophore, are both molecules produced by *Lactobacillus reuteri*. Another metabolite called pyroglutamic acid or PCA which is typically produced by *Lactobacillus casei* and *Streptococcus bovis*. It was mentioned that PCA has the same mechanism of action as organic acids, but PCA has demonstrated higher antibacterial activity compared to lactic acid in the same concentration [47,48].

Asare *et al.* [49] pointed out that reuterin needs to be regarded as a broad-spectrum antimicrobial system (consisting of 3-hydroxypropionaldehyde (3-HPA), 3-HPA hydrate, 3-HPA dimer, and acrolein), where acrolein is the main component associated with its antimicrobial activity. *Lactobacillus reuteri* is the main producer of reuterin via the anaerobic metabolism of glycerol. Antimicrobial effectiveness of acrolein/reuterin was described versus *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli* at low MIC doses (1.5 and 3.0 μM acrolein, respectively) and was suggested as bio-preservatives for meat products [49].

Arques *et al.* [50] suggested the application of reuterin which can either be used as an independent antimicrobial agent or in combination with nisin for control of different food-borne Gram-positive and Gram-negative pathogens in dairy products. Authors pointed out that it only requires at least 8 AU ml^{-1} of reuterin to be bacteriostatic activity against *L. monocytogenes*, and moderate bactericidal against *St. aureus*, however, strong bactericidal activity was recorded versus *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella choleraesuis* subsp. *choleraesuis*, *Yersinia enterocolitica*, *Aeromonas hydrophila* subsp. *hydrophila* and *Campylobacter jejuni*, all of them are well-known food-borne pathogens. Moreover, potential

synergistic effect on inhibition of *L. monocytogenes* and cumulative effect on *St. aureus* was detected when reuterin (8 AU ml^{-1}) was applied in combination with nisin (100 AU ml^{-1}) [50].

3.6. Bacteriocins from LAB

Aside from the major products of homolactic and heterolactic fermentation, other antimicrobial substances such as bacteriocins are also produced. Bacteriocins, defined as small peptides that act as bactericidal molecules against closely related bacteria, produced by LAB have been considered food-grade or safe for applications. The continuous discoveries for novel bactericidal and naturally produced antimicrobials, especially with the continuous rise of multi-drug resistant pathogens, have been the center of interest as the need for the new era of antimicrobials is rapidly increasing. Exploiting LAB as sources of these antimicrobials has been of great interest, which is highly attributed to their GRAS (generally recognized as safe) status [51]. The discovering of new generation of antibiotics is considered to be exponentially behind as compared to the rise of emerging “super-bugs”. Nisin, which is the solely commercialized bacteriocin up to date, has been in the market for decades but the follow-up for newly commercialized bacteriocins is yet to be established. But the characterization of bacteriocins isolated from LAB was observed to be increasing. Some of the notable bacteriocins have been isolated from species belonging to *Enterococcus*, *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, and *Pediococcus* [12,15,52,53].

Bacteriocins are biologically active peptides or protein complexes produced by LAB (and other microorganisms) which act as bactericidal agents against closely related organisms [29]. These antimicrobial proteins are generally classified into three groups namely: Class I or the lantibiotics, Class II or the non-lanthionine containing bacteriocins, and Class III or the large heat-labile proteins [54,55]. Bacteriocins produced by LAB are promising in food-preservation industries especially against *Bacillus cereus* [56], *L. monocytogenes* [14,57,58], and *St. aureus* [18,27] which are common food contaminants and spoilage organisms.

The biological role of bacteriocins initially was associated with their killing property against closely related bacterial species [29]. Their application was extensively explored as a potent bio-preservative for the reduction and killing of different spoilage and food-borne pathogens, including *L. monocytogenes*, *Clostridium* spp., and *Staphylococcus* spp. [29]. Several research projects were evaluating the role of bacteriocins in the reduction of the above-mentioned organisms in different food-associated matrices, showing the role of the bacteriocins as individual inhibitory/killing agents or in combination with other antimicrobials, exploring the cumulative or synergetic mode of actions [59]. However, in



the last two decades, several reports suggested that bacteriocins from LAB have much broader spectrum of activity, especially against some fungal, yeast, Gram-negative, *Mycobacterium* spp., or even viruses [59]. Such as reports are adding a positive hope that some bacteriocins can be applied in the different, including pharmaceutical applications. Extensive modifications bio-engendered on existing bacteriocins are used as tools for the optimization of their activity [29], or exploring the combination of the bacteriocins with other antimicrobials metabolites [29,59] are only two of the different research approaches in extending the applications of bacteriocins.

But there is still a question of whether bacteriocins are just simple killers or they have a more complex role in the microbial universe. According to the Chikindas et al. [29] bacteriocins can play a much more diverse role and can serve as quorum sensing molecules, involved in intracellular communications. Maybe in the next decades, there will be more reports on the role of bacteriocins as well.

4. Applications of bacteriocins

4.1. Bacteriocins for food bio-preservation

The potential of LAB in food production has long been exploited due to its ability to impart desirable sensory and technological characteristics to fermented foods, in addition to the ability to inhibit the multiplication of contaminating microorganisms and pathogens [59,60]. A wide range of bioactive metabolites with antimicrobial activities is produced by this group including lactic acid, hydrogen peroxide, diacetyl, and other organic acids [29]. Aside from these by-products resulting from their metabolism, some species are also capable of synthesizing proteinaceous antimicrobial compounds called bacteriocins [15,60,61].

Bacteriocins are ribosomal synthesized antimicrobial peptides that have antagonistic activity against pathogens and niche competitors, especially those which are phylogenetically related to the producer strains [12,29,59,62,63]. Some bacteriocins are also active against certain Gram-negative bacteria, *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella typhimurium* [59] and even *Campylobacter jejuni*, one of the leading causative agents of gastric ulcers in the world [64]. Some studies have shown significant reductions in the counts of pathogens and deteriorating microorganisms through the use of bacteriocins in different food matrices (Table 1).

4.2. Bacteriocins in the medical field

Although bacteriocins have been widely studied and employed as biocontrol agents in the food industry, their antimicrobial potential, on the other hand, pans out more than this scope. One of the known applications of bacteriocins in the medical field includes their potential as an alternative to conventional antibiotics as shown in Table 2, highlighting their application against drug-resistant pathogens. Additionally, some bacteriocins are also elucidated to be active against some viruses, but their mechanisms for this application are yet to be demonstrated in a detailed manner. Some of the proposed and well-studied mechanisms for this specific application include viral aggregation, block specific reactions, or on the receptor sites [76].

The continuous rise of ‘super bugs’ or multidrug-resistant pathogens between enterococci has been continually threatening the efficacy of the existing conventional antibiotics. Although representatives of this group are considered as natural members of the human and animal microbiota that localized in the gastrointestinal tract. And this made the problem even more relevant to have effective antimicrobials with effect on pathogens, but not on commensal enterococci.

Table 1. Some examples of the use of bacteriocins in the control of pathogenic and deteriorating

Bacteriocin	Producer	Target	Applied to	Reduction log CFU.g ⁻¹	Reference
Nisin	<i>Lactococcus lactis</i>	<i>Brochotrix thermosphacta</i>	pork meat	3.5	[65]
Nisin	<i>Lactococcus lactis</i>		fermented milk	6.0	[66, 67]
Pediocin AcH/PA1	<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i>	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	milk	2.0	[68]
Enterocin	<i>Enterococcus faecium</i>		milk	2.0	[69]
Enterocin	<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i>		sausages	5.3	[70]
Nisin Z	<i>Lactococcus lactis</i> subsp. <i>lactis</i>	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	cheese Afuega'l Pitu	2.0	[71]
Divercin V41	<i>Carnobacterium divergens</i> V41		smoked salmon	4.0	[72]
Enterocin CRL35	<i>Enterococcus mundtii</i> CRL35		cheese	5.0	[73]
Curvacin MBSa2	<i>Lactobacillus curvatus</i> MBSa2	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	salami	2.0	[74]
Sakacin P/Q	<i>Lactobacillus sakei</i> subsp. <i>sakei</i> 2a		cheese spread	5.0	[75]
Curvacin NPAC1	<i>Lactobacillus curvatus</i> UFV-NPAC1		calabrese, fresh sausage	1.0	[60]



Table 2. Main applications of bacteriocins as therapeutic agents, some examples

Area of application	Bacteriocin	Activity	Reference	
VRE and MRSA	Nisin	<i>Enterococcus</i> lysis	[99]	
	Nisin	Anti MRSA	[100]	
	Lacticin 3147	Anti MRSA and VRE	[101]	
<i>Clostridium difficile</i> colitis	Mutacin 1140	Anti MRSA and VRE	[102]	
	Nisin	Anti <i>Helicobacter pylori</i>	[103]	
	Mutacin B-Ny266	Anti <i>Helicobacter pylori</i>	[103]	
Gynecology	Nisin	Anti <i>Gardnerella vaginalis</i>	[104]	
	Subtilosin	Anti <i>Gardnerella vaginalis</i>	[105]	
Contraceptive	Nisin	Spermicidal	[106]	
	Lacticin 3147	Spermicidal	[107]	
Dental care	Lacticin 3147	Anti <i>Streptococcus mutans</i>	[108]	
	Nisin	Treatment of gingivitis	[109]	
	Staphylococin 1580	Anti-caries	[110]	
Skin care	<i>Lactococcus</i> sp. HY-499	Anti <i>Propionibacterium acnes</i> , <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , <i>Pseudomonas</i>	[111]	
	Enterocin ESL5	Anti <i>Propionibacterium acnes</i>	[45]	
	Enterocin AS-48	Treatment and prevention of mastitis	[112]	
	Nisin	Treatment and prevention of mastitis	[113]	
	Lacticin 3147	Treatment and prevention of mastitis	[114]	
	Tuberculose	Nisin	Anti <i>Mycobacterium</i>	[115]
		Lacticin 3147	Anti <i>Mycobacterium</i>	[116]
BacST194BZ		Anti <i>Mycobacterium</i>	[117]	
Antiviral	Enterocin CRL35	Anti-herpes simplex virus (HSV-1 and HSV-2)	[76, 118]	
	<i>Lactococcus lactis</i> subsp. <i>lactis</i> and <i>Enterococcus durans</i>	Anti-herpes simplex virus (HSV-1 and PV-1)	[119]	
	<i>Enterococcus mundtii</i> ST4V	Anti-herpes simplex virus (HSV-1 and HSV-2), anti-polio virus (PV), and anti-measles virus (MV)	[118]	
Antifungal	<i>Lactobacillus delbrueckii</i>	Anti influenza virus	[120]	
	BacTN635	Anti <i>Candida</i>	[121]	
	Nisin	Anti <i>Candida</i>	[122]	
pharmaceutical	Enterocin EJ97	Anti VRE	[123]	
	Enterocin K1	Anti VRE	[123]	
	Garvicin KS	Anti VRE	[124]	
	Nisin	Anti VRE	[125]	

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) have issued an increase in the priority on the constant climb of cases of vancomycin-resistant enterococci-associated infections obtained nosocomial [77,78].

The existence of VRE was first noted in the 1980s, and the numbers of this pathogen, strains alike, have been constantly increasing while the discovery of antibiotics has been falling behind. The development of these “super bugs” or the new era pathogens has been exacerbated by the suitable conditions that allow them to thrive and survive in various environments [78,79]. These enable them to influence the increasing colonization amplified by the selective pressure of extensive treatment with anti-anaerobic antibiotics, specifically vancomycin, which remove colonization resistance and provide a vacant niche for the VRE to proliferate and successfully invade the GIT [78]. This then facilitates possible systemic infection. Some enterococci are known to be innately resistant to many classes of antibiotics, but when they acquire additional resistance through, for example, mobile genetic elements, they become increasingly difficult to destroy [79,80]. Several factors can be involved in the virulence of VRE, including enterococcal surface protein, aggregation substance, gelatinase, and collagen adhesion

molecule; these are generally linked with their ability to colonize different tissues [81-83]. Thus, the pressing need for new classes of antibiotics or alternative antimicrobials that can be used either with antibiotics or independently against resistant pathogens such as small antimicrobial peptides or bacteriocins [59,84].

VRE can be associated with presence of different resistance phenotypes including van A, B, C, D, E, and G and generally was accepted that *vanA* and *vanB* resistances is associated with plasmid located genetic material. However, the distinction between the two (*vanA* and *vanB*) includes specific co-resistance to teicoplanin as associated only with *vanA* phenotypes, related to the associated modifications in the N-acetylmuramic acid [85,86]. However, *vanB* phenotype which is normally associated with its high resistance to vancomycin (MIC more than 250 mg l⁻¹) is usually as well located on a plasmid DNA and has increased threat regarding the possible transfer of resistance genes. Regarding the *vanC* and *vanD* resistance-associated genes, they are chromosomally located and generally low possibility transferrable and manifested by low resistance to vancomycin (16-32 mg l⁻¹) [87-89]. Additionally, vancomycin resistance genes *vanE* and *vanG* are both



characterized as non-transferrable genes and also associated with resistance to low concentrations of vancomycin [90].

The development of new antimicrobials, including new antibiotics, is an essential pharmaceutical quest; however, there is a growing need for a new type of antimicrobials, targeting pathogenic bacterial species by different mechanisms to control the ever-developing resistance. Antimicrobial peptides, including bacteriocins, often to achieve an advantage over competing bacteria in certain ecological niches [59]. Additionally, aside from the antibacterial activities of these small peptides, these molecules also have an auxiliary function of serving as a molecule for intracellular communications [29]. Bacteriocins can be produced by different bacterial species, including both Gram-positive and Gram-negative species [29,55,63,78]. New bacteriocins are frequently described in the literature, however, discovering their mechanisms of action has traditionally been more challenging [78]. Recent advances in receptor identification via, for example, genome sequencing of resistant mutants have significantly increased the ability to elucidate bacteriocin mechanisms and we need to agree that the knowledge of bacteriocins' mode of action, the way they exert their antibacterial effect is essential to apply further bacteriocins to *in vivo* treatment of infection and evaluate them as potent pharmaceutical antibacterial tools [91]. The advantages of these small peptides with the conventional antimicrobials include having both broad or narrow spectra, multiple target receptors and mechanisms of action, highly potent, and selective targets particularly those that are bioengineered [29,84,92]. Most bacteriocins are membrane-active peptides, targeting specific components, often proteins, in target cells, but in addition, some can be interrupting replication, translation processes, or interfere with protein synthesis and intracellular enzymatic activities. Additionally, bacteriocins generally do not target the same cell components as antibiotics, and therefore, often have potent activity against antibiotic-resistant strains, and more important perspective in antibiotic-resistance problems [29,59,78,84]. More bacteriocins need to be further assessed *in vivo* to promote bacteriocins as relevant treatment options. Although the use of bacteriocins as *in vivo* treatment is still limited, for now, the use of bacteriocins as additives in food has been recognized, especially with nisin [52,53].

Moreover, combined application of bacteriocins and antibiotics and/or other antimicrobial metabolites are considered as well as promising treatment options, especially against antibiotic-resistant bacterial pathogens. Recently Hayes et al. [93] reported that erythromycin and nisin can have a synergistic effect against strains of group B streptococcus; Nisin also exhibits synergistic with polymyxin B against *Acinetobacter baumannii* infections, which are serious nosocomial infections in medical practice [94]. Furthermore, several combinations of nisin and antibiotics

are effective against Salmonella, including experiments, both *in vitro* and *in vivo* in a murine model [95]. On the other hand, Chi and Holo [96] described synergy interactions between garvicin KS (bacteriocin) and farnesol or polymyxin B against a range of bacteria, indicating that nisin is not the only bacteriocin that has synergy with the traditional antibiotics. Hanchi et al. [97] investigated synergy between durancin 61A and several traditional antibiotics, such as vancomycin and tetracycline. Durancin/vancomycin was favorably synergistic against *St. aureus*, another critical antibiotic-resistant pathogen. The synergy of antibiotics, bacteriocins, and other novel antimicrobials was described in a mini-review by Wolska et al. [98], describing how combinatorial therapy has implications for many fields such as the food industry, agriculture, and medicine. Moreover, different examples of synergetic effects between bacteriocins and antibiotics in control of *L. monocytogenes* were reviewed by Todorov et al. [59]. Despite these examples, there are relatively few studies in this important area, as in other aspects of clinical bacteriocin research, which it is necessary to deal with to fully use bacteriocins and their potential.

Thus, further understanding and characterization of the underlying functional mechanisms should be investigated to fill in the knowledge gaps on the benefits of beneficial microbes obtained from these artisanal foods.

5. Antifungal properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria

Lactic acid bacteria produce a wide range of fermentation end products that are found to have antifungal properties. Some of these compounds include organic acids that are primary metabolites of fermentation, but other molecules that are attributed to be antimicrobial also exhibited antifungal properties. Aside from the major metabolites produced during homofermentative and heterofermentative sugar fermentation, some of the notable antifungal substances include hydrogen peroxide, formic acid, propionic acid, derivatives of lactic acid, acetoin, and diacetyl [29]. The application of LAB as biocontrol for both yeasts and molds has been demonstrated in various test organisms and systems [34,126-130].

The negative effect of the yeast and molds on the food industry is reflected in the loss of the food commodities due to spoilage and/or to the contaminations with different mycotoxins produced by molds [131]. Fungal growth and consequent mycotoxin release in food commodities and feed products can have a serious consequence on human health which might even, in acute cases, lead to death.

Fungal plant-associated pathogens cause spoilage of up to 30 % of crop products worldwide, and are directly responsible for toxic contamination of about one-quarter of raw materials produced by agriculture worldwide [131].



Sevgi and Tsvetelava [132] suggested that the annual economic loss caused by spoilage of bread by fungi is around more than 200 million Euros only in Western Europe. The role of the LAB in the prevention of moulds can be associated with the production of active compounds such as fatty acids, organic acids, hydrogen peroxide, peptides, bacteriocins, and low molecular antimicrobial organic molecules, including reuterin and can represent potential bio preservatives for replacing the conventional chemical antifungal preservatives with activity against spoilage, and toxigenic compounds in food [133,134]. Moreover, it was suggested that 25% of Europe's diet and 60% of the diet of many developing countries is composed of fermented foods, and LAB or *Bacillus* spp. play an essential role in the fermentation process [135,136]. Thus, showing the potential role of the LAB and *Bacillus* spp. as effective factors in the control and prevention of yeast and mould growth in the food processing industry.

Antifungal properties of LAB were employed by the food production practices based on empiric knowledge and the role of the starter cultures for conducting fermentation processes and providing the production of safe commodities with extended shelf life [137]. From industrial application and mass production of fermented food products, involvement of LAB with antifungal properties in the preparation of some fermented foods has been demonstrated and as consequence was able to reduce chemical preservative usage in the food. Axel et al. [138] pointed out that the use of sourdough fermented with specific strains of antifungal LAB resulted in the reduction of chemical preservatives typically applied in bakery products [138]. Moreover, *in situ* addition of antifungal metabolites producing LAB into food and feed was proven to delay fungal growth, and to extend the shelf life. Some examples for previous can be bio-preservation processes of fruits and vegetables, sour cream and semi-hard cheese, quinoa, and rice bread [138-140]. Bioactive components normally involved in these processes are different organic acids (lactic acid, formic acid, acetic acid, caproic acid, and phenyl-lactic acid), and/or other metabolites produced by LAB (carbon dioxide, hydroxyl fatty acids, hydrogen peroxide, diacetyl, ethanol, reuterin, cyclic dipeptides, protein compounds, reutericyclin, proteinaeous, acetoin) and volatile compounds like diacetyl are naturally antimicrobial and antifungal metabolites produced by LAB [132,140].

6. Anti-viral properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria

Research in the development of the antiviral drugs is related to follow the specificity of virus lifecycle and possibility to interfere on key stage of replication processes. Normally viruses hijack the host cells' biosynthetic

machinery with the aim to replicate themselves. Replication processes include the need for specific proteases, enzymes having a key role in the viral life cycle. The critical issue is first to determine which protease(s) are from essential priority, which of them needs to be targeted and then which inhibitor/s will be able to interfere with virus replication, however, at the same time exhibiting little or no toxicity for the host. These general principles have already been explored in the development of pharmaceutical preparations for control of a wide variety of viruses [59] with variable levels of success.

Certain antimicrobial peptides and/or other metabolites produced by LAB were also evaluated as potential candidates for the control of some viruses. Nisin, the bacteriocins produced by *Lactococcus lactis* is maybe the most extensively studied and commercially utilized of all the bacteriocins and was approved both by EFSA and the FDA [137]. In the last two decades, the research interest for the application of bacteriocins and other antimicrobial metabolites produced by LAB was focused as well on the control of viruses. The mechanisms of the reported antiviral activities of bacteriocins are still being clarified, including proposed that can be associated with inhibition of some proteases involved in viral replication [76,119]. Antimicrobial peptides, including bacteriocins from different strains of LAB, including *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, and *Enterococcus* spp., have already been shown to exhibit activity against various viruses including poliovirus, the herpes virus (HSV-1 and HSV-2), measles virus, Newcastle disease virus, coliphage HAS and HIV-1 [76,119]. Wachsmann et al. [76] have investigated and proposed mechanisms showing the interaction of an enterocin produced by *E. mundtii* CRL35 and herpes virus in terms of the blocking of replication of the viral gamma protein (glycoprotein D) during the process of virus invasion. Moreover, Serkedjieva et al. [120] reported that a *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* bacteriocin had virus-inhibitory activity. Other examples are some bacteriocins produced by LAB isolated from traditional fermented food products with moderate antiviral activity against various viruses including herpes virus [76,119]. However, it is needed to be underline that similar to the proteinase inhibitors, bacteriocins are not directly involved in the killing of the virus themselves, but rather interfere with viral replications via inhibiting some enzymes, associated and critical in the virus life cycle [76]. The entire processes are still not well understood and it has been suggested that different mechanisms are involved in these interactions (between virus and bacteriocin), and this can be relevant topic for intensive research.



7. Anti-Mycobacterium properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria

Mycobacterium tuberculosis is considered one of the most robust, antibiotic-resistant organisms, and maybe the oldest infectious agent known to humans [141]. Even with the development and application of different antibiotics, tuberculosis is still a serious medical problem. With the introduction of the BCG vaccine and an increasing quality of life in the last 70 years, tuberculosis was considered a controllable disease. However, due to increasing antibiotic resistance and the emergence of mutants of *M. tuberculosis* treatment of that disease is considered a serious medical problem. The antibiotics suggested for the treatment of tuberculosis are very strong drugs, associated with unpleasant side effects for the patient. LAB can be considered as one of the promising tools in this resurgent crusade against *M. tuberculosis*, since already traditional medicine has recommended some LAB fermented products containing metabolites inhibitory to the growth of *M. tuberculosis* [142].

As part of the different metabolites with potential activity versus *M. tuberculosis*, bacteriocins have been suggested as possible tools in these processes [141]. Carroll and O'Mahony [141] suggested that lipid II can be possible involve in these processes of inhibition even if this lipid is modified in *Mycobacterium* spp. In order to increase the killing effect of bacteriocins, some modifications (with modifications to amino-acids 21 and 22) to the structure of nisin have been generated with an aim of for development of effective biotechnologically modified/engineered bacteriocins with activity against *Mycobacterium* spp. [116]. Moreover, Todorov et al. [59] reported on the potential of some bacteriocins produced by *Lb. plantarum* ST202Ch and ST216Ch, *En. faecium* ST211Ch, and *Lb. sakei* ST153Ch and ST154Ch as anti-mycobacterial agents. Taking one step further, we can speculate that some LAB associated bacteriocin, applied as probiotics can have a potential role in decreasing *M. tuberculosis* infection, especially in countries with high infection rates [59].

However, we still need to find an answer to the question about the mode of action of bacteriocins versus *M. tuberculosis*. We can consider bacteriocins as promising pharmaceutical agents for control of not only Gram-positive pathogens but some Gram-negative bacterial representatives, fungal, viral, yeast, *Mycobacterium* spp. related infectious organisms. Under the proposed concept, we can consider that bacteriocins can be applied as singly as therapeutic agents or in combination with already existing conventional antibiotics and explore their synergistic effects.

8. Probiotic Properties

Probiotics are defined as live microorganisms applied to improve health. Such beneficial microorganisms have unintentionally been patronized by consumers for centuries by the fermented foods as part of the diet. The use and consumption of LAB probiotics have been associated with direct and indirect-mechanism-based to confer health benefits, particularly with their immunomodulatory functionalities [143]. Some of which include the application against irritable bowel syndrome [144,145], diabetes [146], lowering effect on blood cholesterol [147], and even against mental-health-associated disorders [148]. But aside from this, the application of probiotics can also be exploited for their antagonistic activities against pathogens as suggested by Kim et al. [149].

LAB have been employed as starter cultures in the production of different food products from the beginning of human civilization and still plays a principal role in the production of a diversity of fermented foods involving milk, vegetables, meats, sourdough by inducing rapid acidification of the raw material and conduction biotransformation processes [150,151]. Moreover, LAB possesses an essential preservative and detoxifying role, enhancing food safety [150]. From the perspective of 21 century, when consumed regularly, LAB fermented food can provide health benefits to humans and other animals, by improving the defense mechanisms of the consumers against pathogenic bacteria [152]. This is only one of the potential benefits of LAB as probiotics, which received considerable attention over the past few years. LAB may play an essential role in the biotransformation of different compounds in the GIT, where can be actively involved in the production of bioavailable macromolecules, such as vitamins and short-chain fatty acids [153,154]. Moreover, immune modulation, involvement in the processes of anticarcinogenic and antitumor activity, reduction of cholesterol, reducing the allergenicity of lactose, normalization of stool transit, hepatic encephalopathy, and treatment of peptic ulcers are several health benefits and safety of probiotics LAB. Furthermore, some modes of action of probiotic LAB are associated with adhesion to mucus and epithelial cells, production of antimicrobial compounds, and immune stimulation [155,156].

9. Conclusion

Although LAB are known for their functional properties in the fermentation system, where various metabolites produced during this process contribute to the safety and integrity of the fermented food products and plays an essential role in the formation of the organoleptic properties. However, the antimicrobial properties of LAB are one of the principal foci in several research projects. Different antimicrobial metabolites produced by LAB play an essential



role principally to ensure the safety of the fermented food products; however, several of them can be associated with further beneficial effects for the consumers as well. The specificity of antimicrobial metabolites produced by LAB with activity against AMR strains, including VRE and MRSA has a key role not only in ensuring food safety but already showing potential for clinical applications in human and veterinary practices. Multifunctional properties of LAB with probiotic potential and strong antimicrobial properties need to be considered as next the level not only in preventions but as well in active therapeutical practices.

10. Authors Contributions

Conceptualization, S.D.T.; writing-original draft preparation, J.I.I.F. and S.D.T.; writing-review and editing, S.D.T and W.H.H.

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12. Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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بررسی اجمالی فراورده‌های جانبی باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید مفید به‌عنوان ترکیبات ضد میکروبی نویدبخش

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واژگان کلیدی

- باکتروسینها
- ترکیبات ضد میکروبی
- باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید
- ترکیبات ضد قارچی
- زیست‌بارها

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چکیده

سابقه و هدف: صرف‌نظر از توانایی باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید در هدایت فرایند تخمیر، با تبدیل مواد اولیه به فراورده غذایی نهایی، نقش ضروری در نگهداری و همچنین تولید طعم‌های متمایز غذایی از طریق تبدیل زیستی ترکیبات و اسیدهای آلی دارند. عملکرد باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید با توانایی در تولید محدوده گسترده‌ای از ترکیبات ضد میکروبی مرتبط است که به عنوان یک دروازه‌ای برای یکپارچگی محصولات غذایی و ایمنی مصرف‌کنندگان عمل می‌کند. خواص نگهدارندگی زیستی^۱ باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید به تولید پپتیدهای ضد میکروبی (شامل باکتروسینها)، انواع اسیدهای آلی، دی استیل، رویتین، متابولیت‌های آلی با وزن مولکولی پایین، هیدروژن پراکسید، کربن دی‌اکسید، در میان بسیاری دیگر مربوط می‌شود. تفاوت ترکیبات ضد میکروبی نقش مهمی نه تنها به علت خواص ضدباکتریایی در نگهدارندگی زیستی دارد، بلکه هنگام استفاده از باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید، به عنوان ترکیب ضد میکروبی، می‌تواند عوامل کلیدی در خواص ضدکپک و متعاقب آن کاهش سموم قارچی و/یا افزایش خواص زیست‌یاری شود. در این مقاله مروری، هدف ارائه ساختاریافته مثال‌های گوناگون از کاربردهای باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید و متابولیت‌های ضد میکروبی آنها در نگهدارندگی زیستی و در بخش پزشکی در برابر باکتری‌ها و کپک‌ها، به عنوان خواص زیست‌یاری آن می‌باشد.

یافته‌ها و نتیجه‌گیری: باکتری‌های لاکتیک اسید عوامل ضد میکروبی قدرتمندی می‌باشند که قادرند فرایندهای گوناگون تخمیر را هدایت و انواع متابولیت‌های مفید با کاربرد در ایمنی زیستی مواد غذایی تولید کنند و خواص مفید برای ارتقای سلامت زیست‌یارها را موجب شوند.

تعارض منافع: نویسندگان اعلام می‌کنند که هیچ نوع تعارض منافی مرتبط با انتشار این مقاله ندارند.

^۱ Bio-preservation