

Nutrition and Dietetics MSc

An Evaluation of the Antioxidant and
Antimicrobial Properties of Bee Products
Commercially Available in the UK

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Abstract

Bee products such as honey and propolis have been used medicinally for centuries. More recent research has seen specific types of honey such as manuka honey used in wound healing and propolis as a constituent of mouthwashes and throat lozenges. The present study determined the antioxidant and antimicrobial activities of a number of widely available bee products in the UK. The disc diffusion method was utilised to assess the antibacterial activity of the bee products using a range of bacteria known to cause infection in humans. The ferric-reducing antioxidant power (FRAP) assay was utilised to assess the antioxidant activity of the bee products. The results demonstrated that bee products had antibacterial and antioxidant capacity but with considerable variation.

The most potent effect was observed using manuka 30+ against *S.epidermidis* (33mm mean zone of inhibition when applied undiluted compared to 11mm when using standard honey). Other bee products were of much less potency including propolis which demonstrated no significant antimicrobial activity.

However, the antioxidant capacity of propolis tablets was 95 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ per 1mg/ml (95,000 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ per 1 gram tablet). The most potent honey tested was manuka 30+ which was 9.0 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ per 1mg/ml (4500 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ for a 5g portion) compared with standard honey 5.0 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ per 1mg/ml (2500 $\mu\text{mol/l}$ for a 5g portion).The antioxidant activity of propolis was also demonstrated in human saliva. The FRAP value of the saliva from a single human subject was evaluated following the intake of propolis containing lozenges compared with a control (boiled sweet). These biological effects may be significant *in vivo* and have particular relevant in the prevention in disease in humans. However, further work is needed in the form of randomised controlled trials.

Declaration of original work

“I hereby declare that work contained herewith is original and is entirely my own work unless otherwise indicated. It has not been previously submitted in support of a Degree, qualification or other course”.

Signed:

Laura Ross

Contents

Title Page	1
Acknowledgements:.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Declaration of original work.....	4
Contents	5
List of Figures.....	5
List of Tables	6
List of Abbreviations	7
Chapter One: Introduction	8
Chapter Two: Methods	29
2.1 Design	29
2.2 Materials and Procedures.....	29
2.2.1 Materials.....	29
2.2.2 Procedures.....	31
2.3 Data management and data analysis	35
Chapter Three: Results.....	36
3.1 Antioxidant properties of bee products.....	36
3.1.1 Ten fold dilutions.....	36
3.1.2 Percentage Dilutions.....	38
3.2 Antibacterial properties of bee products using disc diffusion assay.....	42
3.2.1 Photographs.....	42
Chapter Four: Case Study.....	47
Evaluation of the antioxidant and antibacterial activity of human saliva before and after consumption of a propolis lozenge.....	47
Chapter Five: Discussion	54
Chapter Six: Conclusion	68
Chapter Seven: Further Studies	69
References.....	70
Appendices.....	84
Appendix One: Additional Methodology	84
A1.1 Disc Diffusion.....	84
Appendix Two: Standard Curve	87
Appendix Three: Example of Raw Data (FRAP)	88

List of Figures

Figure 1. The generic structure of flavonoids.....	9
Figure 2. Structure of the main subclasses of flavonoids.....	10
Figure 3. Mean FRAP values of honeys at 25% dilution.....	39
Figure 4. Dose response of mean FRAP values of manuka 30+.....	41

List of Tables

Table 1. Mean FRAP values ($\mu\text{mol/l}$) of products and pure compounds.	36
Table 2. Comparison of mean FRAP values of bee products and pure compounds at 1.0 mg/ml.	37
Table 3. Mean FRAP values ($\mu\text{mol/l}$) of honeys at different dilutions.	38
Table 4. Antioxidant activity (FRAP values) of honeys at different dilutions.	40
Table 5. Mean Zones of inhibition (mm) of bee products against <i>E.coli</i> using percentage dilutions.	44
Table 6. Mean Zones of inhibition (mm) of bee products against <i>S.aureus</i> using percentage dilutions.	44
Table 7. Mean Zones of inhibition (mm) of bee products against <i>S.epidermidis</i> using percentage dilutions.	45
Table 8. Mean Zones of inhibition (mm) of bee product against <i>S.mutans</i> using percentage dilutions.	46
Table 9. Antioxidant activity of saliva (FRAP).	51
Table 10. Antioxidant activity of saliva with boiled sweet (FRAP).	51
Table 11. Antioxidant activity of saliva with propolis lozenge (FRAP).	52
Table 12. Mean viable count at 24 hours and 72 hours.	52

List of Abbreviations

- Oxidative stress (OS)
- Reactive oxygen species (ROS)
- Superoxide anion (O_2^-)
- Hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2)
- Hydroxyl radical (OH^\cdot)
- Peroxynitrite radical ($OONO^\cdot$)
- Superoxide dismutase (SOD)
- Ferric- reducing antioxidant power (FRAP)
- Ethanol extracts (EEP)
- 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH)
- Minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC)
- *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S.aureus*)
- *Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*)
- *Staphylococcus epidermidis* (*S.epidermidis*)
- *Streptococcus mutans* (*S.mutans*)
- Tea Tree Honey 12+ (TT12+)
- Tea Tree Honey 16+ (TT16+)
- Tea Tree Honey 18+ (TT18+)
- Manuka 5+ (M5+)
- Manuka 30+ (M30+)
- Standard Honey (SH)
- Artificial Honey (AH)
- Royal Jelly (RJ)
- Bee Pollen (BP)
- Quercetin (QU)
- Naringenin (NAR)
- Cinnamic Acid(CA)
- Propolis Resin (PR)
- Propolis Tablet (PT)