

Metabolomic Profiling and Hypoglycemic Potential of *Spirulina platensis* Extracts of Infusion and Decoction Techniques through *in silico* α -Amylase and α -Glucosidase Inhibition

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Abstract

Spirulina platensis contains a group of metabolomes that can inhibit glucose absorption. This study aimed to identify metabolites in the infusion and decoction of *S. platensis* and evaluate their ability as inhibitors of α -amylase and α -glucosidase through the *in silico* method. The samples were analyzed using HPLC-HRMS by untargeted method for metabolite identification while molecular docking studies were conducted using PyRx 0.8 and physicochemical properties were analyzed using SwissADME. The results showed 120 metabolites identified, with 84 from decoction and 67 from infusions. Molecular docking studies revealed that zearalenone and adenosine have a strong binding affinity for α -amylase and α -glucosidase, with an affinity energy of -8.6 kcal/mol, lower than that of acarbose.

Zearalenone forms a hydrogen bond with Ile230 residue on α -amylase while adenosine forms a hydrogen bond with His332 and Arg400 residues on α -glucosidase. Analysis of physicochemical properties according to Lipinski's rule shows that both compounds meet the criteria for good bioavailability. Further molecular and *in vivo* dynamics studies are needed to strengthen the results of this research.

Keywords: Docking study, drug-likeness, glucose absorption inhibition, metabolome, *Spirulina platensis*.

Introduction

Hypoglycemic agents are substances that can control blood glucose levels. Their mechanisms include inhibiting amylase and glucosidase activities, increasing secretion and insulin sensitivity and increasing glucose uptake. The inhibition of amylase and glucosidase activity has been linked to many health maintenance efforts⁷. Many macro- and microalgae substances are used as hypoglycemic agents¹⁵. It is known that microalgae are widely consumed and are used to prevent the increase of blood sugar levels¹². *S. platensis* has been recognized as a hypoglycemic agent in *in vitro*¹⁷, *in vivo*⁹ and clinical studies¹⁰. *S. platensis* is a microalga with many health benefits for humans. Its nutrients and metabolome provide physiological effects and prevent and treat diseases, including metabolic disorders. It is known that this microalga controls blood sugar levels by inhibiting α -

amylase¹⁸ and α -glucosidase activities²⁵. The polyphenol of *S. platensis* plays a role in inhibiting the activity of these enzymes²³.

Extraction is a process of separating metabolome in the tissue of a material using a solvent. Infusion and decoction are techniques that can be used to extract compounds. Infusion is the maceration of the target material with boiling water for a short time, while decoction is done for a long time. Both techniques are mainly aimed at obtaining water-soluble and heat-resistant materials. The results are usually in the form of an extract or a thick solution ready for oral use⁸. Natural materials as hypoglycemic agents have been developed⁷. Most previous studies have focused on the general hypoglycemic properties of *S. platensis* without examining in depth the specific compounds responsible for the inhibiting effects of amylase and glucosidase.

Further research can help to identify the main compounds in water extracts, especially infusions and decoction, that contribute to this enzymatic activity and increase its effectiveness as a hypoglycemic agent. This study aimed to identify the metabolome contained in the infusion and decoction of *S. platensis* and evaluate their metabolome's ability as α -amylase and α -glucosidase inhibitors based on the *in silico* method.

Material and Methods

Materials: *S. platensis* powder was obtained from the Brackishwater Aquaculture Development Center, Situbondo District, East Java, Indonesia. For identity analysis, water, acetonitrile and formic acid were in HPLC grade. The structure of the metabolome and acarbose selected as ligand control was downloaded from the PubChem database. α -amylase (1smd) and α -glucosidase (3wy1) were obtained from protein data bank (<http://www.rcsb.org/>).

The HPLC-HRMS Thermo Scientific Dionex UltiMate 3000 RSLCNano using a Hypersil GOLD aQ column (50 × 1 mm × 1.9 μ m particle size) was used to identify the metabolome from the sample. HP Intel® Core TMi3-5005U with a Microsoft Windows 10 operating system was used for the *in silico* analysis. This study used the Open Babel GUI version 2.4.1 to prepare the ligands and the PyRx 0.8 (Scripps Research Institute) to prepare the macromolecules and docking analysis. Biovia Discovery Studio 2019 (Dassault Systèmes Biovia Corp.) and PyMol (Schrödinger v1.7.4) were used to visualize the docking results⁵. The database in

SwissADME was used to determine the physicochemical properties of metabolome¹³.

Metabolome identification: Samples were boiled in water (1:7: w/v) for 10 min at 90 °C for infusion and 30 min for decoction. After cooling to room temperature, the filtrate was obtained and filtered with Whatmann no. 42 paper. The filtrate was diluted with water containing 0.1% formic acid, vortexed for 1 min and filtered with a 0.22 µm filter syringe. This supernatant was then poured into the vial of an HPLC-HRMS autosampler (Thermo Scientific™) and injected into this apparatus's column. Metabolome identification was performed using the untargeted method.

The solvent system used in this analysis consisted of solvent A (water with 0.1% formic acid) and solvent B (acetonitrile with 0.1% formic acid). The mobile phase flow rate of 40 µm L/min was run in a gradient ratio of solvents A and B (95:5 at minutes 0–15, 40:60 at minutes 15–22 and 5:95 at minutes 22–25). The setting temperature of the column was 30 °C. The identity of the metabolome was determined based on the similarity of detected compounds and compound information contained in the Compound Discoverer, mzCloud MS/MS Library⁶.

Docking studies: The 3D structure of *S. platensis* metabolome and acarbose was obtained from <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> in an SDF format before changing into PDB using Open Babel⁵. Ligands (metabolome and acarbose) were optimized with Open Babel and included in the PyRx software. The macromolecules were α -amylase (ID: 1smd) and α -glucosidase (ID: 3wy1), downloaded in PDB format and obtained from <http://www.rcsb.org/>¹¹. Acarbose was the inhibitor of α -amylase and α -glucosidase used as a control²².

Macromolecules in PDB format were converted into PDBQT format using the PyRx software. Before the docking process, the energies of the identified compounds of *S. platensis* and acarbose were minimized to optimize their conformation before being formatted into PDBQT using the Open Babel. Docking analysis between α -amylase and ligands was executed via a grid-box size of $x = 55.93$ Å, $y = 72.08$ Å and $z = 56.47$ Å, with a grid center of $x = 8.34$ Å, $y = 58.71$ Å and $z = 19.12$ Å.

Meanwhile, docking analysis between α -glucosidase and ligands was executed via a grid-box size of $x = 51.49$ Å, $y = 54.65$ Å and $z = 80.91$ Å, with a grid center of $x = -9.31$ Å, $y = -12.59$ Å and $z = 11.65$ Å. An exhaustiveness search parameter of 8 was used to predict the binding affinities due to the probability of finding the global minimum of the scoring functions. Each ligand was flexible, interacting with the macromolecule under rigid conditions.

AutoDock Vina was used to simulate the docking of acarbose and ligands against α -amylase and α -glucosidase¹⁶. The docking results were evaluated and the best value (ΔG

was the most negative) was observed in the area of the ligands attached to the macromolecule. Interactions in hydrogen bonds, hydrophobic bonds and electrostatic bonds and bond distances were visualized with Discovery Studio²⁴.

Physicochemical properties determination: The physicochemical or drug-likeness properties of metabolome were determined using the database available in SwissADME. The canonical SMILES descriptor metabolome contained in PubChem was used as input to obtain information about the physicochemical properties in the SwissADME database. The drug-likeness of the metabolome was determined based on Lipinski's rules¹³.

Results and Discussion

Metabolome identification: The samples contained 120 metabolomes, of which 67 were for infusion and 84 were for decoction. The decoction technique produces more compounds than the infusion. Metabolome of *S. platensis* infuse has: DL-Arginine, 3,4-Dihydroxyphenyl propionic acid, Lactamide, L-Pyroglutamic acid, Cytosine, L-Histidine, D-Serine, Inosine, Valylproline, Threonine, L-Aspartic acid, 4-Hydroxybenzaldehyde, Biopterin, Acetohydroxamic acid, Glycyl-L-leucine, Zearalenone, Diaminopimelic acid, N6,N6,N6-Trimethyl-L-lysine, L(-)-Carnitine, Glycylproline, 3-Hydroxypicolinic acid, Cytidine, Indole, Tolycaine, Salicylamide, L-Ergothioneine, L-Kynurenine, Adenosine, Cytidine 5'-monophosphate (hydrate), 3,5-di-tert-Butyl-4-hydroxy benzaldehyde, Urocanic acid, N-Desmethylselegiline, 2'-Deoxyinosine, Skatole, N1-Hydrazino[3-(methylthio) anilino] methylidene benzene-1-sulfonamide and 2-(Cyclo hexylmethylidene)-1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalen-1-one.

Metabolome of *S. platensis* decoct has: Uracil, Levetiracetam, Guanine, 1-Methylguanine, Betaine, Y-L-Glutamyl-L-glutamic acid, N6-Methyladenine, Amfepramone, L-Phenylalanine, Triethanolamine, 6-Methyl[1,2,4]triazolo[4,3-b] pyridazine-8-ol, 2,3,5,6-Tetramethyl pyrazine, 2,4-Diaminotoluene, Piracetam, 4-Hydroxy ephedrine, Eicosatetraynoic acid, 2-Hydroxyphenylalanine, DL-Stachydrine, 3-Hydroxypyridine, 4-Aminophenol, D-(+)-Camphor, Uric acid, PPG n5, 5-Hydroxyindole, Kanosamine, 3-(1-hydroxyethyl)-2,3,6,7,8,8a-hexahydro pyrrolo[1,2-a]pyrazine-1, 4-dione, PPG n4, Verrucarol, Indole-3-acrylic acid, Isoamylamine, (+/-)-C75, Coumarin, N3,N4-Dimethyl-L-arginine, DL-Lysine, 2-Aminonicotinic acid, 5-Amino-2-methyl phenol, MMAI, N1-(3-Pyridylmethyl)-3-(3,4-dichlorophenyl) acrylamide, Muramic acid, 1,2,3,4-Tetramethyl-1,3-cyclopentadiene, D-Glucosamine, Heptanophenone, DL-Leucineamide, Prolinamide, 2-Isopropyl-6-methyl-4-pyrimidinol, Propyl hexedrine, 2-Naphthylamine, Cyclo(leucylprolyl), 8-Hydroxyquinoline, 4-Phenylbutyric acid, (3aR,8R,8aR,9aR)-8-Hydroxy-8a-methyl-3,5-bis (methylene) decahydro naphtho [2,3-b] furan-2(3H)-one, DL- α -Aminocaprylic acid and N-Acetyltyramine.

Metabolome of *S. platensis* obtained both by infusion and decoction techniques has: L-Norleucine, Hypoxanthine, Pipecolic acid, Trans-3-Indoleacrylic acid, Proline, Valine, 2,2,6,6-Tetramethyl-1-piperidinol (TEMPO), L-Glutamic acid, 4-tert-Butylcyclohexyl acetate, Dibutyl phthalate, Thymine, Pyridoxamine, n-Pentyl isopentyl phthalate, 7-Methylxanthine, N,N-Diisopropylethylamine (DIPEA), (-)-Camphor, 4-Methoxycinnamic acid, Diethyl phthalate, 4-Indolecarbaldehyde, Caprolactam, Tetrnor-12(S)-HETE, Prolinamide, 1-Tetradecylamine, 6-Methylquinoline, Citral, 4-(Dimethylamino)benzophenone, Acetophenone, Choline, 4-Hydroxycoumarin, DEET and 2,6-Dimethylpyrazine.

Decoction could dissolve more compounds than infusion, which was possible because decoction was more optimal at dissolving compounds in a matrix of materials. The *Juncus acutus* rhizome was dissolved with 37.33% more decoction than dissolved by infusion¹. However, the extract from artichoke (*Cynara cardunculus* L. subsp. *cardunculus*) leaves dissolved by infusion gave more results than a decoction¹⁹. It shows that the number of compounds dissolved due to decoction or infusion depends on the thickness and complexity of the matrix of the dissolved material.

Moreover, zearalenone and adenosine have a stronger affinity bond against α -amylase and α -glucosidase. Zearalenone is a macrolide comprising of a 14-membered lactone fused to 1,3-dihydroxybenzene, a potent estrogenic metabolite. One of the biological roles of this compound is

to play as an α -glycosidase inhibitor⁴. α -amylase is an enzyme that hydrolyzes starch into glucose and is classified as hydrolase²⁰. Adenosine is a ribonucleoside composed of a molecule of adenine attached to a ribofuranose moiety via a beta-N(9)-glycosidic bond. This compound is an endogenous nucleoside found in all body cells and is a potent vasodilator in most vascular beds. In high concentrations, this compound can inhibit endothermic glucosidase activity⁴.

Docking studies: The samples comprised of five infuse metabolomes and two decoct metabolomes capable of inhibiting α -amylase and α -glucosidase activities. The energy affinity of zearalenone (-8.6 kcal/mol) is lower for α -amylase than for acarbose (-7.6 kcal/mol), indicating that zearalenone has the potential to form bonds with α -amylase. Meanwhile, adenosine (-8.6 kcal/mol) has a lower energy affinity for α -glucosidase than acarbose (-8.2 kcal/mol).

Amylase (1smd) has a ligand (pyroglutamic acid) that forms hydrogen bonds with the residues of this enzyme in Lys227 and Ile230³. Glucosidase (3wy1) has a ligand (3R, 5R, 7R)-octane-1,3,5,7-tetracarboxylic acid) that forms hydrogen bonds to the His332 and Arg400 residues of the enzyme residue⁴. Zearalenone and adenosine have the potential to bind to α -amylase or α -glucosidase receptors. It aligns with energy enthalpy theory, where the lower binding energy between a substance and a receptor (product) is exothermic than the compound itself, making it easier to form bonds between compounds and receptors³.

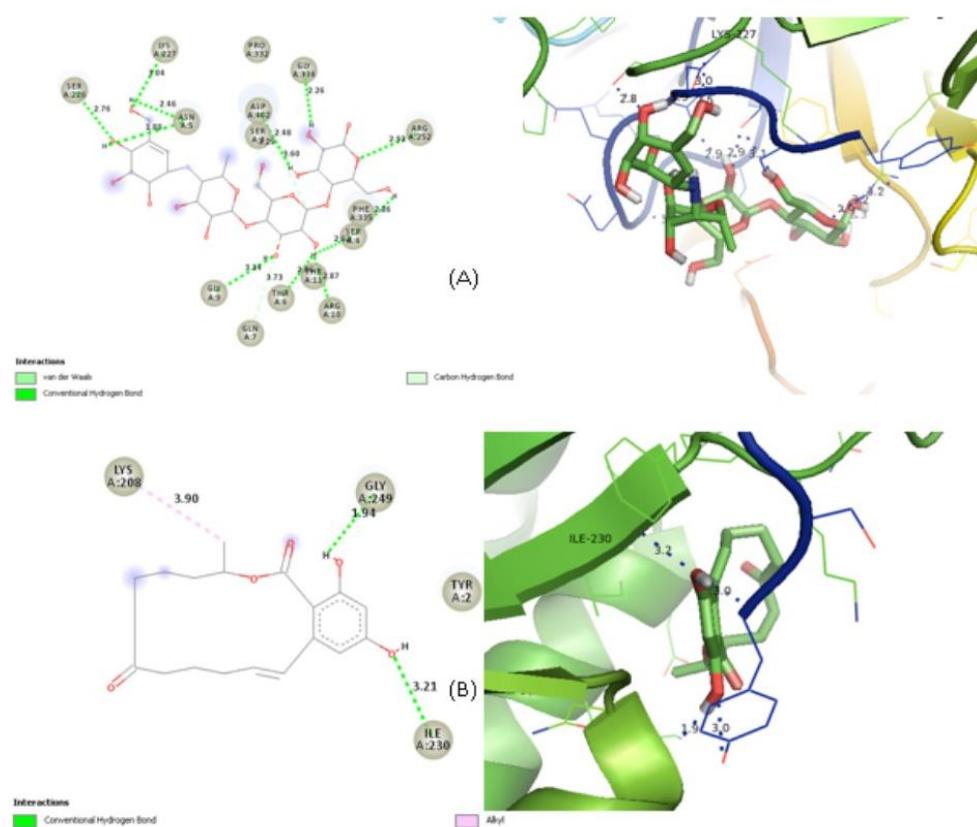


Figure 1: Interaction between amylase and (A) acarbose or (B) zearalenone

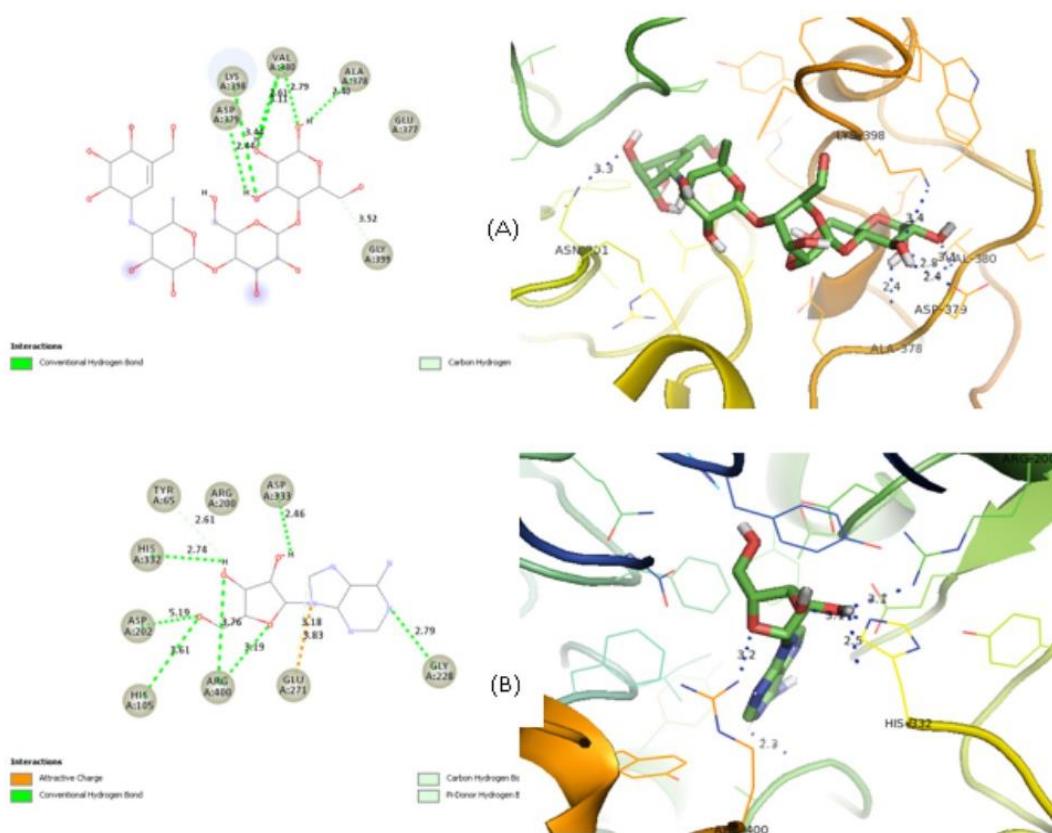


Figure 2: Interaction between glucosidase and (A) acarbose or (B) adenosine

As shown in figure 1A, acarbose has no bond in the two α -amylase residues, while zearalenone shows the presence of hydrogen bonds in Ile230 (Figure 1B). It suggests that the presence of hydrogen bonds in zearalenone with amylase residues contributes to the inhibition of enzyme activity and the similarity of this linkage indicates that zearalenone is a competitive inhibitor of amylase. The formation and strength of hydrogen bonds between ligands and residues of the enzyme's active site affect the inhibition of amylase activity¹⁴.

As shown in figure 2A, acarbose does not bind with the two residues while adenosine shows the presence of hydrogen bonds in the two α -glucosidase residues (Figure 2B). It suggests that adenosine can inhibit glucosidase activity. The formation of hydrogen bonds between ligands and glucosidase helps to inhibit this enzyme. The similarity in the formation of hydrogen bonds by adenosine and (3R, 5R, 7R)-octane-1,3,5,7-tetracarboxylic acid shows that adenosine is a potent inhibitor of this enzyme^{2, 21}.

Physicochemical properties determination: The physicochemical properties of the metabolome are determined according to Lipinski's rule. Table 1 shows the characteristics of *S. platensis* metabolome which indicate α -amylase and α -glucosidase inhibitors. As presented in table 1, the metabolome of *S. platensis* can be absorbed, distributed, metabolized and excreted by cells. These substances can penetrate the cell membrane and dissolve in

cell fluids since they have a molecular weight of < 500 Da, $\log P < 5$, < 5 hydrogen bond donors and < 10 hydrogen bond acceptors¹⁴.

Zearalenone and adenosine have a high potential for bioavailability to the body. A ligand can quickly diffuse into the cell membrane if its molecular weight is < 500 Da. Soon, the body absorbs a ligand in the direction of the target protein if the distribution ratio ($\log P$) of the ligand to the organic solvent and water is < 5 . The number of donors and acceptors of hydrogen-bonding protons are related to the stability of the conformation of the binding protein. The conformation of a protein is declared stable if there are sufficient hydrogen bonds between the ligands and the target protein²¹.

Conclusion

The decoction technique on *S. platensis* produces more metabolite compounds than the infusion technique where the decoction produces 84 metabolites while the infusion produces 67 metabolites. This is possible because the decoction process is more optimal in dissolving compounds in the material matrix. From the results of the docking analysis, it was found that zearalenone and adenosine have strong potential as inhibitors of α -amylase and α -glucosidase enzymes, shown with lower affinity energy compared to acarbose as a control. Zearalenone forms a hydrogen bond with a residue of Ile230 on α -amylase, while adenosine forms a hydrogen bond with both residues on α -glucosidase.

Table 1
Physicochemical properties of *S. platensis* metabolome

Compounds	MW (g/mol)	Log P	H bond donor	H bond acceptor
Valylproline	214.26	-0.27	2	4
Zearalenone	318.36	2.86	2	5
Adenosine	267.24	-1.61	4	7
N1-Hydrazino[3-(methylthio) anilino] methylidene benzene-1-sulfonamide	336.43	2.09	3	4
2-(Cyclohexylmethylidene)-1,2,3,4-tetrahydro naphthalen-1-one	240.34	4.20	0	1
Y-L-Glutamyl-L-glutamic acid	401.41	0.41	5	7
(3aR,8R,8aR,9aR)-8-Hydroxy-8a-methyl-3,5-bis (methylene) decahydronaphtho [2,3-b] furan-2(3H)-one	248.32	2.35	1	3
Acarbose	645.60	-6.22	14	19

Based on the physicochemical properties according to Lipinski's law, the two compounds meet the criteria to be well absorbed, distributed, metabolized and excreted by cells because they have a molecular weight of <500 Da, a log P <5, a hydrogen bond donor <5 and a hydrogen bond acceptor <10. However, molecular dynamics and *in vivo* studies need to be conducted to reinforce the results of this study.

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