Optimization of silver nanoparticle biosynthesis process using cell-free filtrate of *Aspergillus niger*.

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الخلاصة

ازداد في الاونة الاخيرة اهتمام الباحثيين بتقنية النانو و المواد النانوية. وانصب الاهتمام بشكل واضح على ايجاد طرق اكثر فعالية لتخليقها. و يعد التصنيع الحيوي من افضل الطرق البديلة والواعدة لانتاج جزيئات النانو. اثبتت الدراسة الحالية انتاج جسيمات الفضة النانوية بواسطة تقنية فعالة من حيث التكلفة و الامان و صديقة للبيئة وذلك باستخدام راشح فطر رشاشيات النيجر(*Aspergillus niger*) كعامل مختزل لنترات الفضة. و قد تم اختبار الظروف المثلى لعملية التصنيع الحيوي و التي شملت الوسط الزرعي، تركيز ايون الهيدروجين، درجة الحرارة، تركيز نترات الفضة و عامل الوقت من اجل الحصول على افضل النتائج من حيث الحجم والشكل والثباتية اضافة الى زيادة كمية الجسيمات المنتجة. اظهرت نتائج التحليل الطيفي للاشعة فوق البنفسجية ان اعلى ذروة للامتصاص كانت عند الطول الموجي 420 نانومتر. كما تم قياس وجود البروتينات كعوامل مختزلة مسؤولة عن عملية التصنيع الحيوي و ثباتية الجسيمات المصنعة وذلك باستخدام التحليل الطيفي للاشعة تحت الحمراء. وبينت نتائج الفحص باستخدام المجهر الالكتروني الماسح وجود جسيمات نانوية كروية متناثرة بشكل جيد وبقطر يتراوح بين 15-50 نانومتر. كما تم قياس العناصر المتواجدة كميا ونوعيا وذلك باستخدام تحليل طاقة التشتت للاشعة السينية. وقد سجل اعلى انتاج لجسيمات الفضة النانوية بواسطة فطر رشاشيات النيجر في وسط مرق البطاطا و الدكستروز وبدرجة حامضية 9 لمدة 120 ساعة في 30 ^{o}م مع وجود نترات الفضة بتركيز 1 ملي مول .

Abstract

Nanotechnology and nanoparticle (NPs) research has attracted a lot of interest in recent decades, and there is growing attention to find more effective ways for their synthesis. The use of biological organism as bionanofactories provides a clean and promising alternative process for the fabrication of silver nanoparticles. This study confirmed the production of silver nanoparticles (SNPs) by a cost effective, safe and environment-friendly technique using silver nitrate and cell free filtrate of the fungus *Aspergillus niger* as the reducing agent. The optimization of different parameters, including the culture media, pH, reaction temperature, concentration of silver nitrate solution and reduction time, were carried out to achieve better control of size, shape, stability, and to increase the yield of SNPs production. The UV-visible spectrophotometric analysis of the biosynthesized silver nanoparticles by *Aspergillus niger* cell-free filtrate showed characteristic surface plasmon absorption peak at 420 nm. The presence of proteins as viable reducing agents for the formation and stability of SNPs was recorded using Fourier transform infrared spectroscopic analysis (FTIR) .Further scanning electron microscopy (SEM) micrograph showed the formation of spherical, well-dispersed nanoparticles with size ranging between 15 and 50 nm in diameter. The element composition of the mixture sample was obtained from the Energy Dispersive Analysis of X-ray (EDX). It concluded that the optimum condition

for biosynthesis of SNPs were the use of Potato dextrose broth medium at pH 9, 30°C for 120 h with 1mM silver nitrate.

Key Words: Silver nanoparticles, *Aspergillus niger*, Optimization, extracellular biosynthesis.

Introduction

Currently, the nanotechnology undergoing explosive development and provide an excellent platform for promising applications in various fields of life (1). In the rapidly growing area of nanomaterial research, SNPs have entered into a new arena, opening new possibilities in medicine, biological product development, agricultural field, cancer drug delivery system, combating cancer and antimicrobial activity (2). The major methods used for conventional synthesis of SNPs are the physical and chemical methods. The problem with these methods is that the synthesis is energy and capital intensive and often employ toxic chemicals, as well as some chemically toxic substances being absorbed on the surface of NPs raising the toxicity issues and can hinder their usage in medical applications(3). Moreover, chemical synthesis of silver colloids mostly leads to aggregation as the period of storage increases (4). These facts create an emergence in developing toxicity-free synthesis techniques, which would be inexpensive, greener and larger-scale. The biological methods regard the best choice to obtain these advantages. There are three major sources of biological synthesis of SNPs: plant extracts, bacteria and fungi (5). Fungi have some distinct advantages when used as bio factories for NPs production, in comparison with bacteria, fungi can produce larger amounts of NPs because they can secret larger amounts of proteins which directly translate to higher productivity of NPs (6). Moreover, fungi have an additional advantage that downstream processing and handling of the fungal biomass would be much simpler. In addition, the biotransformation of NPs by bacteria involves the use of complicated equipment for obtaining clear filtrates from the colloidal broths, while fungal broths can be easily filtered by simple equipment, therefore saving considerable investment costs (7). The present study was focused on the biosynthesis of SNPs using *A. niger* and characterization of synthesized NPs. Biosynthesis of SNPs by using a fungus Aspergillus (8), Trichoderma (9), Penicillium (10) and Fusarium (11) has been reported. Since physiochemical parameters impact the growth and developments of an organism in its environment. Thus the metabolic activity of an organism is influenced by these external circumferences. In case of extracellular synthesis of SNPs by *A. niger*, the production of enzyme is highly affected by the condition in which the fungus is cultivated. Therefore, the first aim of this work is to find a cost effective and environment-friendly technique for synthesis of SNPs using cell-free filtrate of *A. niger*. And the second is to optimize the physioculture conditions such as culture medium, pH, incubation temperature, substrate concentration and time to improve the yield of SNPs production.

Materials and methods:

Fungal strains and their maintenance:

The fungal strain of *A. niger* was obtained from Agriculture College / Al-Kufa university (kindly provided by prof. Dr. Majeed M. Dewan) and it previously isolated from soil sample and diagnosed by PCR technique. The fungus was subcultured on Potato Dextrose Agar (PDA) (Oxoid, India) at 28C° for 96hours and then refrigerated at 4C° until used for biosynthesis of SNPs.

Fungal biomass production

In order to prepare the fungal biomass for NPs biosynthesis, the *A. niger* was cultured aerobically in PDB. The broth was supplemented with chloramphenicol (50 µg/mL) as an antibacterial agent. The flasks containing above media were incubated at 28 C° for 7 days in shaking incubator (Lab Tech, India) and agitated at 100 rpm. Then , fungal mycelia were separated from broth by filtration with sterile Whatmann filter paper No. 1 and the settled mycelia were washed thrice with sterile distilled water to remove any medium components from the biomass that might interact with metal ions. Twenty grams of fungal biomass were inoculated in 200 ml deionized water for 72 hours and agitated as earlier described. After the incubation, the cell filtrate was separated by filtration. The filtrate was further used for biosynthesis of NPs (12).

Biosynthesis of nanoparticles

For biosynthesis of SNPs, 50 ml of cell –free filtrate was mixed with 50 ml of 1mM $AgNO_3$ in 250 ml Erlenmeyer flask and kept in shaking incubator at 150 rpm at 28°C for 24 hours. Simultaneously, a positive control of cell filtrate without metal salts and a negative control containing only metal salts solutions were run along with the experimental flasks (13). All reaction mixtures were kept in dark to avoid any photochemical reactions during the experiment.

Characterization of biosynthesized SNPs:

UV-Vis spectroscopy analysis

The detection of SNPs was primarily carried out by visual observation of color change of the fungal filtrate after treatment with silver nitrate. Appearance of dark brown color of fungal cell filtrate indicates the formation of SNPs due to reduction of pure silver ions. Further, the formation of SNPs were confirmed with the help of dual beam UV-Visible spectrophotometer (SPEKOL1300, Germany) ,through sampling of 1cm3 of reaction solution at different time intervals and scanning the absorbance spectra in 300–700 nm range of wavelength at a resolution of 1nm.

Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR)

The interaction between the biosynthesized SNPs and biomolecules, which responsible for reduction, capping and stabilization of the SNPs in colloidal solution; was analyzed using FTIR spectrophotometer (Bruker Tensor 27, Germany) in the range of 500 - 4000 cm-1.

Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) studies.

The biosynthesized SNPs were also subjected to SEM analysis (Inspect S50, Netherland) to evaluate their size and morphological characteristics. The elemental structure of powdered specimen was evaluated using SEM equipped with an EDS detector.

Optimization of SNPs biosynthesis

Different parameters such as culture media, temperature, hydrogen ion concentration (pH), concentration of silver nitrate and time were standardized for the optimum and maximum synthesis of SNPs. The experiments were done in triplicate for reproducibility. The UV-Visible spectrophotometer was used to monitor the resulting solutions with varying reaction parameters.

Effect of Different culture Media

Five different media ,namely, PDB (, containing potatoes infusion 200g, dextrose 20g and distilled water 1000mL), GPYB (glucose 50 g, peptone 10 g, yeast extract 10 g PH 7), Czapek broth (sucrose 30g, NaNO3 3 g, K2HPO4 1 g, MgSO4 0.5 g, KCl 0. 5 g, and FeSO4 0. 01 g /1000 mL, pH 7.3) , MYPG (malt extract 3g , yeast extract 3g, peptone 5g and glucose 20g ,PH 7) and SB (peptone 10g and dextrose 40g ,PH 5.6) were tested . The fungal mycelia

were grown for 7 days in 500 mL Erlenmeyer flasks, each containing 250 mL of test medium. The synthesis of SNPs was carried out as mentioned above.

Effect of PH

Hydrogen Ion Concentration has an important influence on fungal growth and enzyme production which is required for the biosynthesis of NPs. In order to study the effect of pH concentration, the biomass was transferred to distilled water with different pH, namely, pH 5, pH 7and pH 9. To get the required pH, the distil water adjusted by 0.1 N NaCl and 0.1 M NaOH and the final pH measured by using electrical pH meter before incubation for 72 hours at 28 ºC.

Effect of temperature

Temperature is an essential factor affecting NPs production. The effect of different temperatures is carried out by suspending the fungal biomass in de-ionized water and incubated at different temperature 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60º C for 3 days. The biosynthesis of NPs at different temperature was analyzed by UV.Visible spectrophotometer.

Effect of different concentrations of AgNO3

One of the major factors making the reaction more economical and effective is finding out the maximum concentration of substrate which could be turn into the final product. Therefore, we investigated different concentrations of silver nitrate (1mM, 2mM, 3mM, 4mM and 5mM) in the reaction solutions in order to obtain the optimum concentration of the substrate for SNPs production.

Effect of time

The effect of incubation time on the biosynthesis of SNPs was carried out. The fungal filtrate was obtained and treating with 1mM $AgNO_3$ for preparation of SNPs as prescribed. Then it monitored at different duration by UV.visible spectroscopy for synthesis of SNPs (after 1, 24, 48, 72, 120 hours and 2 months).

Results

Biosynthesis, characterization and optimization of SNPs were successfully accomplished in present study. The biological synthesis of SNPs was carried out by reduction of aqueous silver ions (Ag+) using cell-free filtrate of *A. niger*.

Characterization of biosynthesized SNPs:

After the end of growth period of *A. niger*, the cell-free filtrate was used for biosynthesis of SNPs. The filtrate was initially pale yellow in color. When the filtrate challenged with AgNO3, the color of the mixture was turned to yellowish brown at first and then the intensity of the color was increased with the period of incubation, so the color was changed to dark brown on completion of the reaction with Ag+ ions. Color change was noticed only in the test flask and it a clear indication for the formation of SNPs in the reaction mixture. The remaining two control flasks i.e., aqueous solution of AgNO3 and fungal filtrate without AgNO3 showed no change in color when incubated in the same condition (Figure 1).

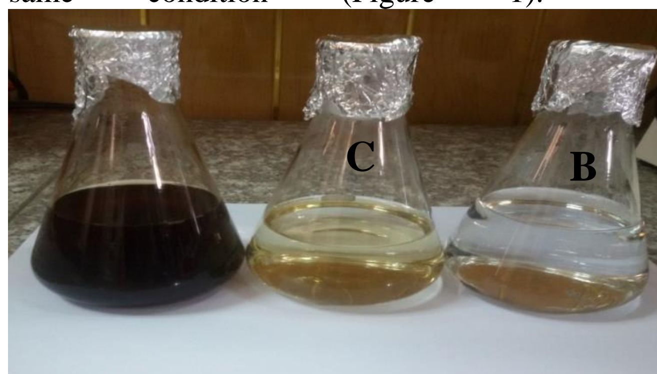


Figure 1: Culture flasks containing (A) 1mMAgNO3 solution, (B) Fungal cell-free filtrate and (C) Mixture of fungal cell-free filtrate with 1mM AgNO3.

The formation and stability of the reduced SNPs in colloidal solution was detected and monitored by using UV-visible absorption spectrum (Figure 2). The analysis was evaluated at different times after the start of the reaction. The λ max 420 nm was observed only in the test flask which confirmed the production and indicating the specific surface Plasmon resonance of SNPs. The scanning was continued and absorbance was recorded every 24 hours

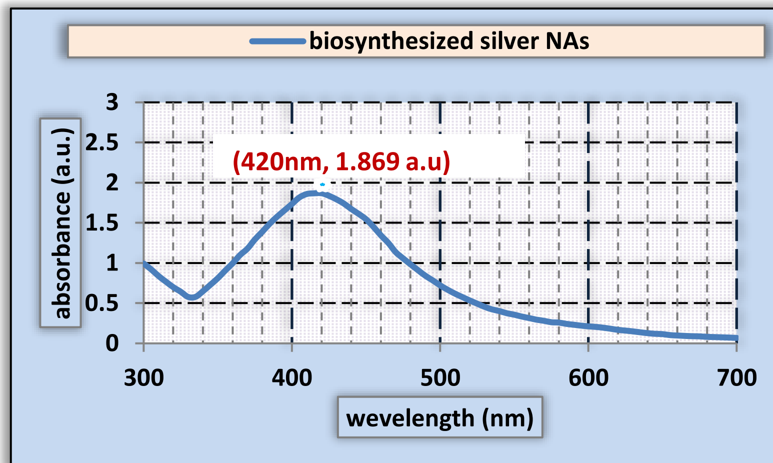


Figure (2): UV-Vis spectrophotometer analysis of biologically synthesized SNPs.

Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy spectrum of biosynthesized SNPs revealed the presence of different distinct peakslocatedat3421,2962,2926,2854,1638,1554,1428,1410,1333,1276,1256,1239,1073,1048,782,467 cm-1 (Figure 3). The peak at 3421cm-1 is ascribed to the N-H stretch vibration of primary amides of protein. The peaks at 2926 cm-1 and 2961 cm-1could be due to the C-H stretch of the methylene groups of protein and to N-H stretching of amine salt. The absorption peak at 2854 cm-1may be assigned to the C-H symmetrical stretch vibration of alkenes. The peak at 1638 cm-1 corresponds to the presence of amide I and amide II, which arises due to the carbonyl stretch and N-H stretch vibration while the band at 1554 cm-1 refers to C=C stretch corresponding to an aromatic ring. Peaks located at 1410 cm-1 and 1428 cm-1 may be related to COO− symmetrical stretch from carboxyl groups of the amino acids residues. The peak at 1333 cm-1 corresponds to carbon hydrogen (CH3) bending vibration. The peak located at 1276, 1256 and 1239 cm-1represent C-O stretching of primary alcohol and P=O stretching respectively. The bands at 1073cm-1 and 1048 cm-1 refer to C-O bonds of aliphatic amines while the peaks at 782cm-1 and 467 cm-1 can be assigned to the aromatic C-H out of plane bending vibration of aromatic primary amines.

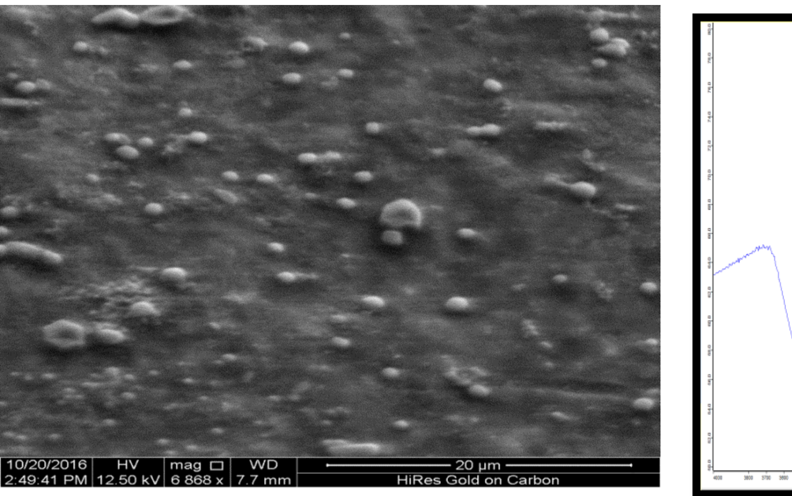


Figure (4): SEM micrograph of biosynthesized SNPs. The image shows size and spherical shape of monodisperse SNPs.

Figure (3): FTIR spectrum of SNPs, synthesized by *A. niger*, with distinct peaks.

Scanning electron microscopy has been employed to determine the shape and morphology of biosynthesized SNPs. Figure (4) reveals SEM micrograph of SNPs obtained by the reduction of AgNO3 solution with cell-free filtrate of *A.niger* after 120 hours of reaction. The morphology of NPs was spherical in shape, uniformly (monodispersed) without significant aggregation. The particle size was ranged from 15-50 nm.

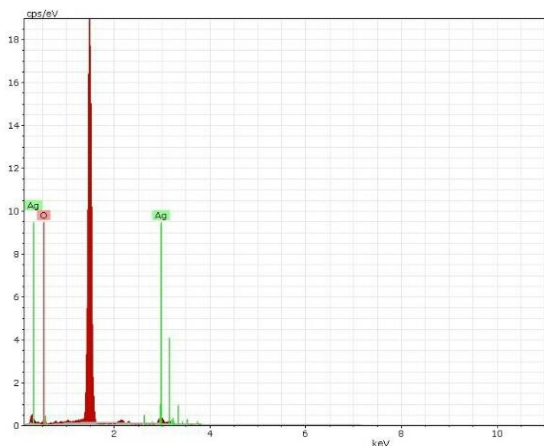


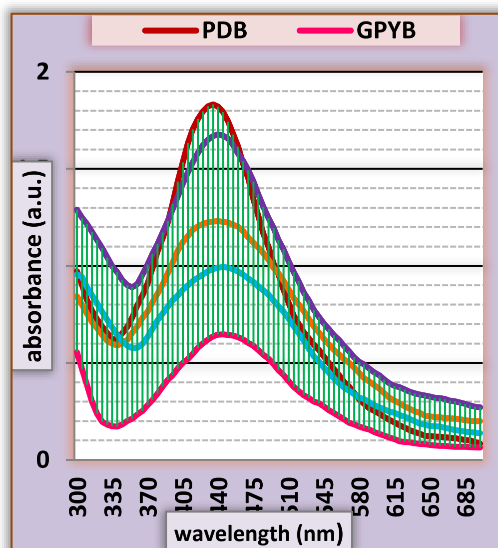
Figure (5): EDX analysis of biosynthesized SNPs. The vertical axis shows the number of X-ray counts, whereas the horizontal axis shows the energy in KeV.

The EDX analysis was established to detect the elements that may be involved in the formation of SNPs. Figure (5) reveals a strong signals for metallic NPs. Powerful signals from Ag atoms in the NPs were observed. The optical absorption peak was noticed at approximately 3 KeV, which is typical for the absorption of mineral silver nanocrystalites. In addition, another peak for oxygen was observed on the left part of the spectrum at ~0.5 KeV. It is clear from Table (1) that the weight percentage of silver is 62.49 %.

Table (1): The elements composition in biosynthesized SNPs solution of EDX spectra.

Spectrum:Acquisition					
Element	Series	unn.(wt.%)	C norm. (wt.%	C Atom. (at.%)	Sigma (wt.%)
Oxygen	K-series	4.78	37.51	80.19	2.07
Silver	L-Series	7.96	62.49	19.81	0.56
Total		12.75	100.00	100.00	

Optimization of physical and chemical parameters will not only support good growth but also enhance the product yield. It is evident from Figure (6-A) that the highest SNPs production was recorded in PDB medium followed by MYPGB medium. Samples obtained from these culture media have high absorption intensity, with peaks at 435nm, 440 nm respectively, resulting from high levels of reduced silver ions; in addition the sharp and smooth curves represent small and uniform size distribution (Figure 6-B). Symmetry in graph indicates the monodispersity and stability in synthesized NPs. The GPYB medium showed minimum surface plasmon intensity with peak at 445nm, whereas CzapekB and SDB medium showed peaks at 440 nm and 445 nm respectively. All GPYB, CzapekB and SDB media gave low surface Plasmon intensity with broad peaks but symmetry in spectrum indicates the monodispersity of SNPs



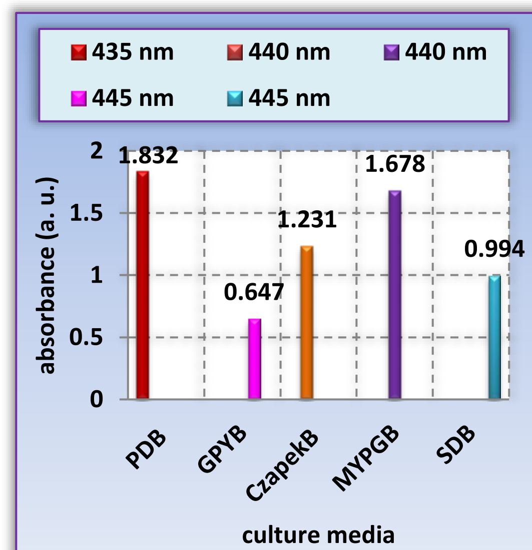


Figure (6): A: UV-vis absorption spectra of SNPs using different culture media. B: Comparison the absorbance of SNPs obtained with different culture media

In order to standardize the pH of the reaction mixture of extracellular enzyme with precursor compounds, the biosynthesis process carried out at various pH levels ranging between 5 and 9 with an increment of 2. When the fungal filtrate was challenged with 1mM $AgNO_3$ at different pH, all the test flasks showed variable change in color of reaction mixture from pale yellow to brown color and the intensity of Plasmon surface resonance bands have been varied as depicted in figure (7 -A) by UV-visible absorption spectra. pH 9 was found to provide optimal conditions for maximal biosynthesis of SNPs with maximum peak at 425 nm which indicate the presence of SNPs with size range between 10-100nm. On the other hand, absorbance decreased with decreasing in pH value. Figure (7- B) show the relationship between the maximum absorption and the pH value which is almost directly proportional. Particles aggregation were observed in acidic pH after few days from reaction, while there is no evidence for any aggregation in alkaline pH up to the end of experimental period which indicates the stability and monodispersity of SNPs at alkaline pH suggesting that an alkaline environment was more suitable for SNPs biosynthesis.

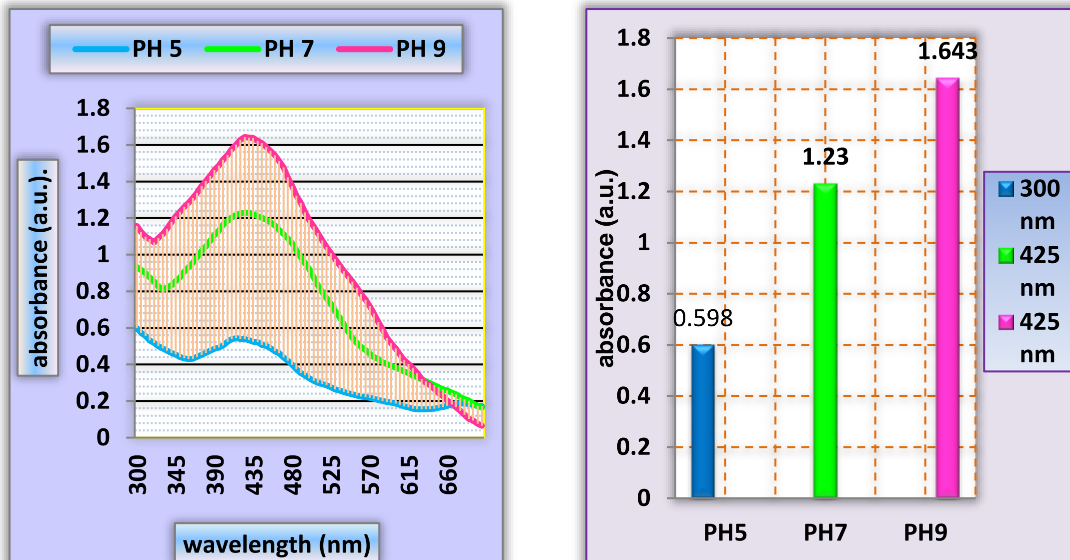


Figure (7):A: UV-Vis spectrum of biosynthesized SNPs at different PH (p = 0.01). B : UV-vis spectrum showing maximum SNPs synthesis at PH 9.

Temperature is an essential factor affecting NPs production. Thus, the effect of varying temperature on the SNPs production by the fungus *A.niger* was carried out. Figure (8- A) detected significant differences in absorbance among different temperature degrees. The optimal temperature for silver bioreduction was 30Cº as demonstrated by color change and absorbance measurements by UV-visible spectroscopy with a sharp peak at 420nm, followed by 25Cº. As we increased the temperature, the absorbance intensity of surface Plasmon resonance was decreased (Figure 8- B). This result clearly indicates the reduction in SNPs biosynthesis with shifting in temperature of the reaction solution for 30Cº.

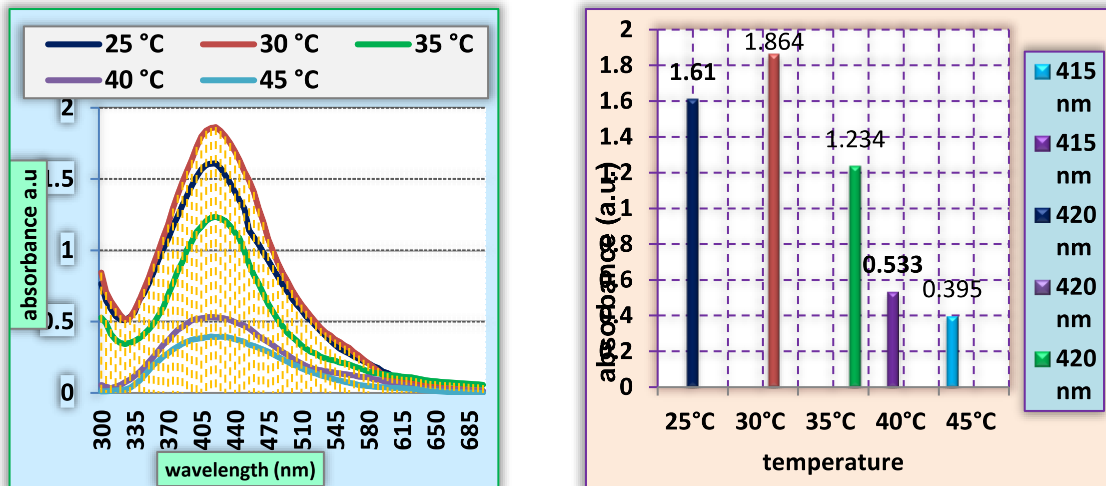


Figure (8) A: UV- Vis spectrum of biosynthesized SNPs at different temperature (p = 0.044). B : Higher absorption at 30 °C indicate the optimum temperature for synthesis of SNPs.

The results exhibited that the concentration of $AgNO_3$ added strongly affects the reactions. As shown in figure (9- A and B) the absorbance intensity decreases with increase in concentration as recorded by UV-vis. Spectroscopy. A general trend is that the surface plasmon resonance peak shifts toward the short wavelength region as well as becomes narrower when the concentration value decreases. The concentration of 1mM showed maximum absorbance with a characteristic SPR band around 420nm indicating efficient production of SNPs. The smooth and Symmetry curves represent small and uniform size distribution, in addition indicates the monodispersity and stability of biosynthesized NPs. From the graph, it is obvious that the yield of SNPs decreased by gradual increase in the concentration of AgNO3, the highest concentration (5mM) showed the least bio-reduction of silver ions to NPs and the reaction mixture appear unstable with aggregation and precipitation at the bottom of flasks. The results clearly indicate that the relationship between the formation of SNPs and concentration value is inversely proportional.

It was also observed that increase in precursor compounds more than 1mM neither increase the biosynthesis rate nor was economical to harvest appreciable yields.

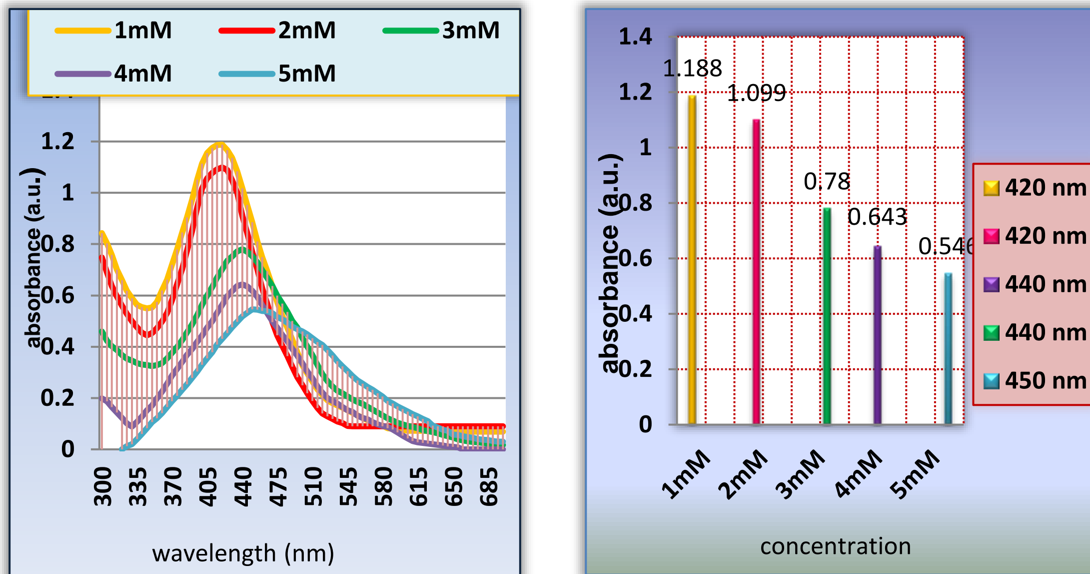


Figure (9):A: UV-Vis spectra of SNPs obtained with different concentration of AgNO3 solution ($p < 0.05$). B: Comparison the absorbance of SNPs obtained with various AgNO3 concentration.

Time consider a major factor in the biosynthesis of NPs. The change in color of reaction solution from pale yellow to dark brown was detected only after 24h of incubation. It was also observed that the biosynthesis rate increased with increase in time (figure 10- A). The highest absorbance value was recorded after 2 months with broad peak at 440nm. The increase in the absorbance indicates the increase in the number of NPs or increase in size of individual SNPs. whereas after 120 h of incubation, the peak was recorded at 420 nm. Figure (10- B) is showing positive relationships between time and absorbance at different wavelength. From the statistical analysis there was no significant difference between the values obtained at 2 months and 120 hours. Thus, optimum period for reduction of silver ions by *A.niger* was 120 hours to reduce time consumption.

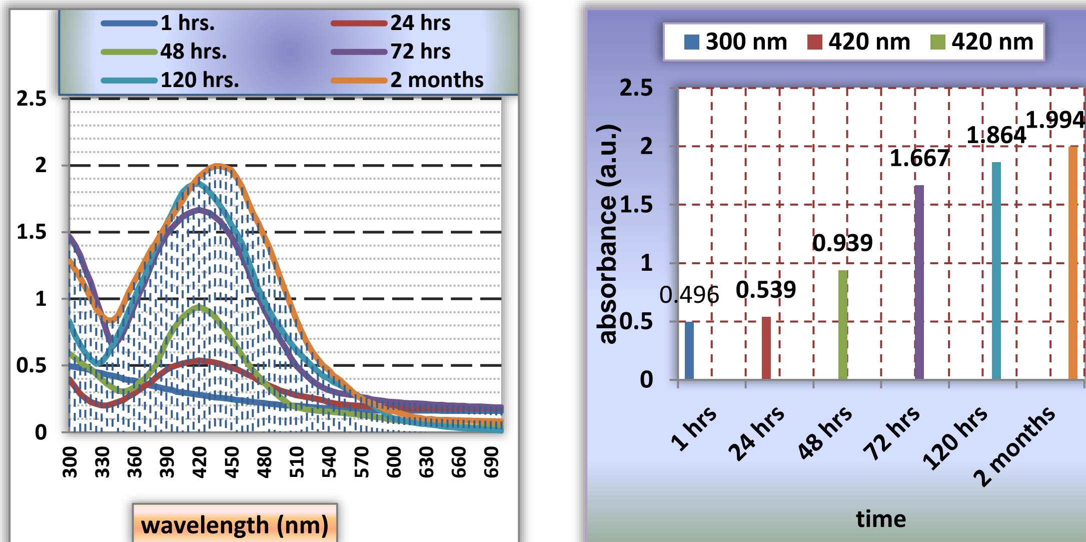


Figure (10): A: UV – Vis spectrum of biosynthesized SNPs at different time duration (p< 0.038). B: Comparison the absorbance of SNPs obtained at different time intervals

Discussion

Silver nanoparticles had been utilized in various aspects like energy production, optical receptors, consumer product, tissue engineering, biolabelling and antimicrobial agents (1). Application of SNPs in these fields is dependent on the ability to synthesize particles with different chemical composition, shape, size and mono-dispersity. Development of simple and ecofriendly method would help in developing further interest in the synthesis and application of metallic NPs. In this respect, nature has provided exciting possibilities of utilizing biological systems such as microorganism for this purpose. Microorganism can synthesize metal NPs through metal bioreduction to remove soluble metals from the surrounding environment, thus decreasing their toxicity and bioavailability (14). In general, fungi tolerate higher metal concentrations than bacteria and secrete abundant extracellular redox proteins to reduce soluble metal ions to their insoluble form and eventually to nanocrystals (15). Therefore, we have successfully demonstrated an easy, rapid and efficient route for extracellular synthesis of SNPs by employing the cell- free filtrate of *A.niger*. This type of synthesis has prefer on the intracellular synthesis as the later demands an additional steps of releasing the NPs from the biomass by certain chemical methods or ultrasound treatment and purification of it. It was observed that after addition of the silver ion (1 mM) into the flask containing the cell filtrate, the color of the medium changed from pale yellow to brown, which indicates the formation of colloidal SNPs in the medium. The brown color of the medium could be due to the excitation of surface plasmon vibrations, typical of the SNPs (16). The results of UV-Visible spectrophotometer showed strong and characteristic surface plasmon resonance centered at 420 nm. Many studies confirmed that the fungal cell filtrate treated with AgNO3 solution gave a peak around 420 nm (17; 18), which supports our finding and indicating the biosynthesis of SNPs by *A.niger*. FTIR spectrum indicted that *A.niger* cell-free filtrate contain active biomolecules which may be responsible

for the biotransformation of silver ions to SNPs. The IR spectra reveals presence of NH group as well as the carbonyl group which attributed to the peptide linkage of the fungal filtrate and many other functional groups most of them resulted from amino acid residue and peptide protein. Thus, The presence of the signature peaks of amino acids supports the presence of proteins in cell-free filtrate and revealed that secondary structure of proteins have not been affected as a consequence of reaction with silver ions or binding with SNPs. In addition, these results confirmed that amino acid residues and peptides of proteins have a stronger ability to bind with metal and capping it to prevent agglomeration of the particles and stabilizing in the medium (13). These finding resembles with the results of Gole et al. (19). The nanostructural studies of SEM micrograph showed SNPs to be spherical in shape and are uniformly distributed (mono dispersed) without significant agglomeration. The monodispersity of NPs attributed to the capping agents which provide stability of NPs and prevent agglomeration of it. These results were compatible with Elgorban *et al* .(20) who obtained spherical SNPs by extracellular synthesis of SNPs using *Aspergillus versicolor*. The elemental structure of powdered specimen was evaluated using SEM equipped with an EDS detector. The energy dispersive X-ray analysis displayed the strong signal at about 3 keV of the Ag regions. In general, metallic silver nanocrystals show a typical optical absorption peak at approximately 3keV due to their surface plasmon resonance (21).Thus this result reveals the presence of pure metallic SNPs along with the O signatures. Same result of EDS optical absorption peak at 3kev was also reported by Elgorban *et al* (20). The results from UV–visible absorption spectroscopy, FTIR, EDX, and SEM all demonstrate that SNPs were biosynthesized from extracellular filtrate. Therefore, we used a simple process to complete biosynthesis of SNPs, which required very little complex equipment compared with chemical and physical methods. Although the exact mechanism of NPs biosynthesis by fungi is not yet clearly defined but several hypothesis have been proposed by many research scientists. It is stated that certain extracellular proteins released into the filtrate could play a role in the synthesis and stability of the SNPs. The biosynthesis of SNPs may be attributed to the reductase enzyme, one of the most important extracellular enzymes produced by endophytic fungi like *A.niger*. The nitrate reductase enzyme is produced and released in the solution, so it present in the culture filtrate. This enzyme is induced by nitrate ions and reduces silver ions to metallic SNPs (7). Zomorodian *et al* (22) showed a reasonable relationship between nitrate reductase activity and the efficiency of *A.niger* in the production of SNps. Another possible mechanism that may involve in the reduction of silver ions is the electron shuttle enzymatic metal reduction process. In the process, NADH acted as an electron carrier, and the silver ions obtained electrons from NADH via the NADH-dependent reductase, and then were reduced to Ag (23).

Size, shape, highest yield and mono-dispersity of NPs depend on the physical and chemical factors. In this context, optimization study was conducted for biosynthesis of SNPs by *A.niger*. It is well known that in different culture media compositions microbial cell responds differently and as a result it secretes different metabolites. In addition, the biological synthesis of SNPs is mainly enzymes catalyzed reaction (24). In the present study, fungal biomass grown in PDB has shown enhanced SNPs synthesis. This may be due to presence of ingredients in PDB

stimulating better growth of fungi and help in producing augmented level of reducing agent and hence enhance the synthesis of SNPs (25). There are a few reports on the effects of culture media on the biosynthesis of metal NPs. Birla *et al*. (25) showed that MGYP medium may promote the extracellular nitrate reductase secretion by *F. oxysporum* and enhance the synthesis of SNPs. Similar study by Saxena *et al.* (26) revealed that PDB was the optimum medium for biosynthesis of SNPs by *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* . Our finding indicates that PDB provide high growth rate and low cost requirement for biosynthesis of SNPs by *A.niger*.

Concentration of hydrogen ion of the reaction medium plays an important role for NPs formation. Result clearly indicated that absorbance increased with pH, suggesting that an alkaline environment was more suitable for SNPs biosynthesis. Moreover, at acidic pH aggregates were appearing within few days from reaction. Birla *et al* (25) showed the formation of larger particles at acidic PH due to aggregation, while at alkaline (pH 9 and pH 11) monodispersed and stable SNPs were found. Our results correlate with Xue *et al*. (17) who reported that the alkaline pH was more favorable for production of SNPs by the fungus *Arthroderma fulvum* and disagreement with Soni& Prakash (27) who reported increase in absorption with decrease in pH. The availability of OH- ions in alkaline medium is very important for reduction of metal ions. At lower pH, protein structure gets affected and the protein becomes denatured and loses its activity (28). While studying the effect of temperature, it was found that maximum production of SNPs was recorded at 30°C. This may be due to the 30°C was the optimum temperature for enzymatic activity while high temperature resulting in denaturation or inactivation of enzymes and active molecules which are involved in biogenesis of SNPs. This result was in contrast with the results of many workers such as Saxena *et al* (26) who reported that maximum synthesis of SNPs by *S. sclerotiorum* was observed at 80 °C. This may be attributed to the difference in biosynthesis mechanism between the two fungi. While our finding is in complete correlation with the work reported based on exracellular biosynthesis of SNPs by *Chrysosporium tropicum* and *Fusarium oxysporum* (27), where the maximum rate of formation was recorded at 30°C. The results of present study clearly indicate that the relationship between the biosynthesis of SNPs and concentration value of AgNO3is inversely proportional. The maximum synthesis of nanoparticles occurred at 1 mM AgNO3 in the reaction mixture, and the production was reduced with increase in the concentration. This can be interpreted on the basis of enzyme-substrate kinetics; i.e. the active site in the key biomolecule responsible for reduction of NPs is already saturated with the silver ions, and no site is available for excess ions to get reduced, so there is no further increase in biosynthesis of SNPs despite the addition of more salt (29). Our result was agreed with a lot of researcher such as (30, 29). On the other hand, it is inconsistent with other workers who indicated that the production of NPs increased with increasing in substrates concentration (31).

The synthesis of SNPs by the fungus had been enhanced with the reaction time. The increase in the absorbance with the reaction time means that the concentration of biosynthesized SNPs increases. With the passage of time, the intensity of SPR band increased without any shift in peak wavelength. When the reaction time reached 2 months the absorbance increased slightly, and the λ max value was shifted to toward long wavelength. This phenomenon indicating that the size of particles was increased

which may be resulted from the aggregation of particles. Similar result was obtained by many workers (32; 26). The results of our optimization experiments were suggesting that yield and stability of SNP biosynthesis can be affected by several different parameters. Thus, these parameters can be manipulated to get the highest NP yield.

Conclusion

The obtained results established the fact that SNPs can be synthesized in ecofriendly, inexpensive and promising technique by fungal strain of *A.niger*, and the qualities of these NPs. can be controlled by monitoring the environmental factors such as culture media, pH, temperature, substrate concentration and contact time.

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