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Clement Agboyibor, Wei-Bao Kong, Dong Chen, Ai-Mei Zhang, Shi-Quan Niu



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Monascus pigments production, composition, bioactivity and its application: A review

Clement Agboyibor§, Wei-Bao Kong#, Dong Chen, Ai-Mei Zhang and Shi-Quan Niu

College of Life Science, Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou 730070, China

§ agbeclement@yahoo.com Tell: +86-1391-9383767

corresponding author: kwbao@163.com Tell: +86-931-7971912

Abstract

Monascus species produce useful secondary metabolite, *Monascus* pigments (MPs). They are widely used in food industry as a color intensifier, food additives and nitrite substitute in the meat product. MPs are also reported to have the potential for therapeutic use and used as a dye in cosmetic and textile industries. This paper reviews the production, composition, bioactivity, utilization of MPs, the citrinin and methods of eliminating citrinin from MPs were also discussed. MPs possess antioxidant properties, immunosuppressive properties, teratogenicity, and antimicrobial. Notwithstanding all these useful characteristics, it has been discovered that *Monascus* species co-produce citrinin and current studies on *Monascus* focus on how to minimize or eliminate citrinin from the useful pigment to improve quality and safety, several methods have been developed, including, detoxification of citrinin, regulation of gene, manipulation of fermentation conditions and use of nanoparticles for production of citrinin free MPs.

Keywords: Monascus pigments; composition; bioactivity; application; citrinin

1. Introduction

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