

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S1350-4177(16)30196-1

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ultsonch.2016.05.046>

Reference: ULTSON 3256

To appear in: *Ultrasonics Sonochemistry*

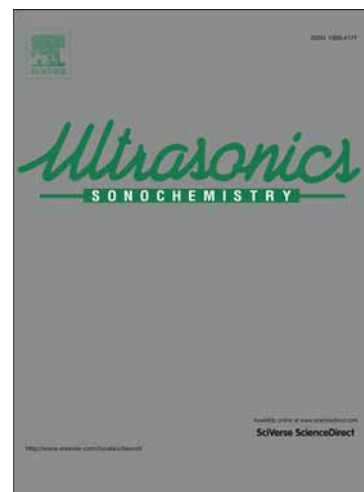
Received Date: 1 February 2016

Revised Date: 16 April 2016

Accepted Date: 28 May 2016

Please cite this article as: S. Chemat, A. Aissa, A. Boumechhour, O. Arous, H. Ait-Amar, Extraction mechanism of ultrasound assisted extraction and its effect on higher yielding and purity of artemisinin crystals from *Artemisia annua* L. leaves, *Ultrasonics Sonochemistry* (2016), doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ultsonch.2016.05.046>

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Extraction mechanism of ultrasound assisted extraction and its effect on higher yielding and purity of artemisinin crystals from *Artemisia annua* L. leaves

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Abstract

This study proposes an ultrasound-horn system for the extraction of a natural active compound “artemisinin” from *Artemisia annua* L. leaves as an alternative to hot maceration technique. Ultrasound leaching improves artemisinin recovery at all temperatures where only ten minutes is required to recover 70% (4.42 mg.g⁻¹) compared to 60 min of conventional hot leaching for the same yield. For instance, ultrasound treatment at 30°C produced a higher yield than the one obtained by conventional maceration at 40°C. Kinetic study suggests that the extraction pattern can be assimilated, during the first ten minutes, to a first order steady state, from which activation energy calculations revealed that each gram of artemisinin required 7.38 kJ in ultrasound versus 10.3 kJ in the conventional system. Modeling results indicate the presence of two extraction stages, a faster stage with a diffusion coefficient of $19 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2 \cdot \text{min}^{-1}$ for ultrasound technique at 40°C, seven times higher than the conventional one; and a second deceleration stage similar for both techniques with diffusion coefficient ranging from 1.7 to $3.1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2 \cdot \text{min}^{-1}$. It is noted that the efficient ultrasound extraction potential implies extraction of higher amount of co-metabolites so low artemisinin crystal purity is engendered but a combination with a purification step using activated charcoal and celite adsorbents produced crystals with comparable purity for conventional and ultrasound samples.

Keywords: *Ultrasound ; Artemisinin ; extraction ; diffusion coefficient ; purification ; crystallisation*

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