



BIODIVERSITY AND PHARMACEUTICALLY ACTIVE SECONDARY METABOLITES OF MARINE ACTINOMYCETES

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ABSTRACT

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Actinomycetes (Actinobacteria) are gram-positive bacteria having a filamentous structure similar to that of fungi. They may thrive in many different environments. It is thought that marine actinomycetes may produce distinctive bioactive compounds due to the significant variations between terrestrial and marine settings. According to recent studies employing both culture-dependent and culture-independent approaches, native marine actinomycetes are discovered in the oceans and are widely distributed in many marine ecosystems. It has become easier to isolate new actinomycetes from samples collected in different marine environments. Numerous new types of secondary metabolites are produced by these marine actinomycetes. Many of these metabolites are physiologically active and could one day be applied to medicine. Marine actinomycetes are a rich and underutilized resource that can be used to identify novel secondary metabolites. Marine actinomycetes are one of the most significant producers of diverse groups of secondary metabolites and provide a huge scope for pharmaceutical and other industries.



Introduction

Actinobacteria are the richest suppliers of secondary metabolites, as evidenced by previous research, and have been considered as possible sources of bioactive chemicals. Because of their diversity and demonstrated capacity to generate novel metabolites and other compounds of pharmacological significance, they are frequently used as targets in screening procedures⁽¹⁾. Actinobacteria have been shown to generate a wide range of pharmaceutically useful substances, anticancer medicines, and industrially important enzymes since the discovery of actinomycin⁽²⁾. Growing evidence of the potential importance of marine sediments as sources of actinobacteria that generate beneficial bioactive metabolic products has surfaced in recent years⁽³⁾. More than just invertebrates like sponges, corals, and echinoderms are associated with marine actinomycetes. Vertebrates like pufferfish are also associated with these organisms. Secondary metabolic pathway evolution may be influenced by these interactions, which may promote distinct chemical ecologies. Apart from interacting with other species, marine actinomycetes can inhabit planktonic and biofilm habitats; nonetheless, the bulk of strains have been identified from sediments⁽⁴⁾.

The manufacture of antibiotics is largely derived from a wide group of free-living, saprophytic, filamentous, Gram-positive bacteria known as actinomycetes⁽⁵⁾. Their classification is Actinomycetales (Super kingdom: Bacteria, Phylum: Firmicutes, Class: Actinobacteria, Subclass: Actinobacteridae). They can be found in freshwater, marine, and soil habitats⁽⁶⁾. Their DNA has a high G+C content (>55%). They produce around two third of naturally occurring antibiotics, including those of medicinal value, making them the best common source of antibiotics⁽⁷⁾. Originally seen as a group in between bacteria and fungus, actinobacteria have since gained recognition for their own unique role⁽⁸⁾. The majority of secondary metabolites that have been found are produced by actinomycetes, which are the most valuable prokaryotes in terms of both biotechnology and economics. Their physiologically potential secondary metabolites have been successfully harnessed in recent decades. Actinomycins, tetracyclins, polyenes, polyketides, betalactams, glycopeptides, and aminoglycosides are among the many antimicrobial metabolites they create.

Role of Actinomycetes in Marine Environment

Beyond their ability to produce antibiotics, actinomycetes are important components of the marine ecosystem^(9, 10). Numerous bacteria play a mediated role in the ongoing breakdown and turnover of different materials⁽¹¹⁾. There is conjecture that variations in the abundance or scarcity of a specific enzymatic microbe could reveal information about the amount of natural substrate present and the environmental circumstances. Actinomycete taxa have been found in significant numbers by a metagenomic study of the seawater column. Additionally, they are important for the mineralization of organic matter, the fixation of nitrogen, the solubilization of phosphate, the immobilization of mineral nutrients, the enhancement of physical parameters, and the preservation of the environment⁽¹²⁾. There



have been reports on the cellulolytic, proteolytic, amylolytic, lipolytic, chitinolytic, and phosphate-solubilizing properties of marine actinobacteria. Actinobacteria have also been shown to aid in the decomposition and recycling of organic substances ⁽¹³⁾.

Research Methods of Marine Actinomycetes

The diverse physiological traits and genetic metabolisms of marine actinomycetes are a result of the environment's novelty. It becomes vitally important to choose the right research techniques in order to examine their metabolites. These days, marine actinomycetes produce round half of the active compounds derived from marine microorganisms ^(14, 15, 16). Research on secondary metabolites from marine actinomycetes involves a number of different areas of expertise and technology, including extraction and sampling, purification and separation, structural identification, and activity assessment. High-performance liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry are just two of the many techniques and technological instruments needed for this process. The examination of metabolite research procedures is extremely important since it serves as the basis and source for discovering lead compounds ^(17, 18).

Synthesis of Bioactive Secondary Metabolites

A group of prokaryotes that include *Streptomyces*, *Actinomyces*, *Arthrobacter*, *Corynebacterium*, *Frankia*, *Micrococcus*, and several more, actinomycetes are the most economically viable and biologically useful prokaryotes. With a wide range of biological activities, actinomycetes are among the most potent and dynamic makers of secondary metabolites ^(19,20,21,22). A large number of compounds with biological activity can be found in the species *Streptomyces* alone. *Streptomyces* produces a variety of secondary metabolites, each of which has a distinct biological activity, as illustrated in Figure 1. Many different secondary active metabolites could be obtained from this genus, which has enormous promise. As the likelihood of isolating new compounds from *Streptomyces* originating from terrestrial environments has gradually decreased, the resulting improved resistance to diseases has been seen ^(23,24). Marine actinomycetes have the potential to serve as a platform for the manufacture of novel drugs, which could provide an exceptional weapon for battling a variety of resistant bacteria ^(25,26).

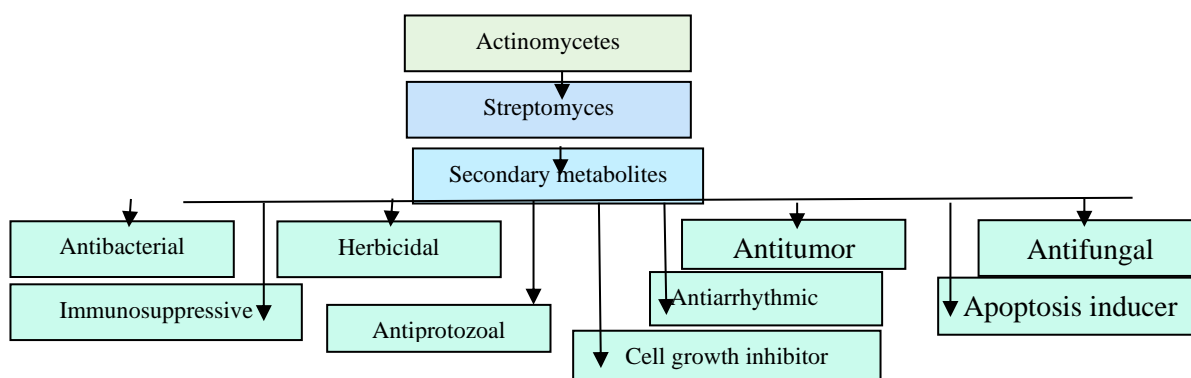


Figure 1: Different biological activities of secondary metabolites produced by the genus *Streptomyces*



Continuous research is being conducted in an effort to identify new marine actinomycetes that have not yet been isolated. Numerous marine actinomycetes species remain unidentified, undiscovered, and uncultivated despite ongoing advancements in the isolation and cultivation of these rare bacteria^(27,28). The ability of marine actinomycetes to produce unique bioactive secondary metabolites with a broad spectrum of biological activities, such as antibacterial, antifungal, anticancer, and antitumor properties, is well recognized. A variety of secondary metabolites produced by marine actinomycetes are shown in Fig. 2⁽²⁹⁾.

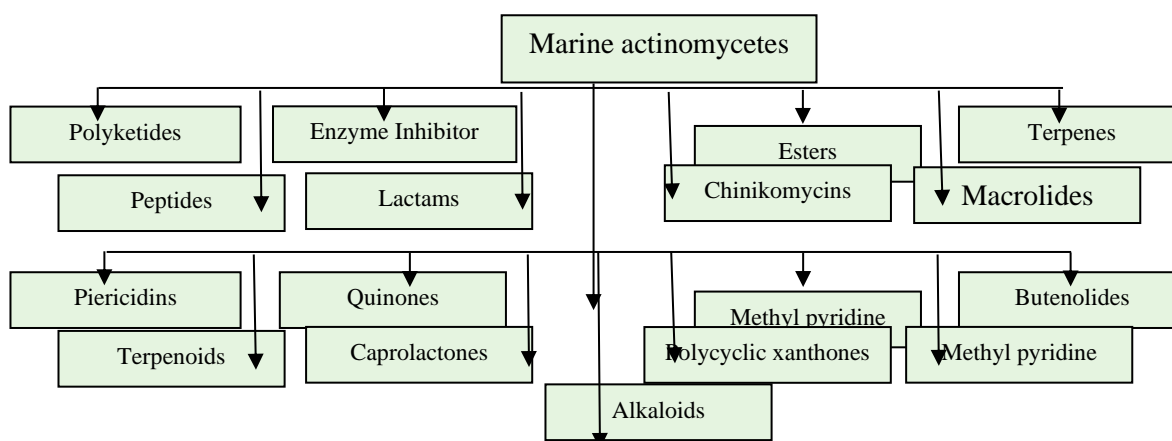


Figure 2: Different Secondary Metabolites Produced By Marine Actinomycetes

Pharmacological application of the actinomycetes: Production of antibiotics

The primary benefit of actinomycetes is their extensive variety of applications in various fields. Actinomycetes are the source of two-thirds of the antibiotics that are currently being researched. Among the antibiotics that are used are tetracyclines, anthracyclines, vancomycin, erythromycin, nucleosides, and chloramphenicol. Numerous human illnesses, such as leprosy, tuberculosis, respiratory conditions, and other fatal illnesses, are treated with these antibiotics⁽³⁰⁾. Because of their remarkable capacity to synthesize both secondary metabolites and antibiotics, actinomycetes of the genus *Streptomyces* have the ability to manufacture a broad range of antibiotics⁽³¹⁾. Apart from this, the genus *Streptomyces* was the only source of antibiotics that were actinomycete-derived until 1974⁽³²⁾.

The potential of marine actinomycetes as new antibiotic manufacturers has been extensively researched. Marine actinomycetes are producing a variety of new antibiotics. The marine *Verrucospora* strain that produces the novel antibiotic abyssomicin C has the capacity to function as a potent antibacterial agent against gram-positive bacteria when combined with clinical isolates of vancomycin-resistant and multi-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It has been demonstrated that a unique species of marine *Streptomyces* is capable of producing new antibiotics called chlorinated



dihydroquinones. Essramycin is a new antibiotic that has been discovered in *Streptomyces* sp. and is effective against both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria. Other novel antibiotics with antibacterial action against different bacterial species include caboxamycin, bisanthraquinone, gliapiyrroles, Himalomycins A and B, and others⁽³³⁻³⁶⁾.

In addition to producing a range of new antibiotics with antibacterial properties, research is being done on marine actinomycetes to find out if they can also produce antibiotics that work against pathogenic fungi. In addition to possessing antialgal action against *Chlorella vulgaris* and *Chlorella sorokiniana*, chandanin A, a new antibiotic isolated from *Actinomadura* species, possesses the potent property of functioning as an antifungal agent against *Mucor michei*. *Bacillus subtilis* and *Staphylococcus aureus* have both shown antibacterial activity against chandananimycin A. There is evidence that this new antibiotic has anti-cancer properties as well⁽³⁷⁾.

Production of Enzyme Inhibitors:

Actinomycetes are able to produce inhibitors of low molecular weight enzymes. Up to 60 enzyme inhibitors have been reported since Umezawa's discovery of the first enzyme inhibitor from a *Streptomyces* strain. Leupreptines, for instance, block the actions of plasmin, papain, and trypsin. A further inhibitor that inhibits papain, chymotrypsin, trypsin, and cathepsin B is antipain. These actinomycete inhibitors play a role in the therapy of cancer because they have the capacity to block a wide range of enzymes. As an illustration, it has been reported that a strain of *Streptomyces* produces the enzyme inhibitor revistin, which inhibits reverse transcriptase. Another illustration is the inhibitor alistragin, which is found in *Streptomyces roseoviridis* culture filtrates⁽³⁸⁾.

Actinomycetes and Cancer:

Cancer is still regarded as the deadliest illness and a major health issue. Furthermore, breast cancer ranks as the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths among women. Today's cancer treatments include surgical procedures, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and immunotherapy. These treatments, either alone or in combination, can be beneficial, depending on the patient's circumstances. While in-depth research on anti-cancer chemicals produced from marine actinomycetes is lacking, several compounds from these microorganisms have been found to exhibit anti-cancer activity⁽³⁹⁻⁴²⁾.

The marine actinomycetes *Salinispora tropica* have been used as a source of purified bioactive chemicals that showed minimal inhibitory effects in different types of cancer cells. It has been reported that Salinosporamide A, a unique bicyclic beta-lactone gamma-lactam, can be isolated from the obligate marine actinomycetes *Streptomyces tropica*. This substance has been implicated in multiple myeloma cell apoptosis induction. Unlike the currently marketed anticancer medication bortezomib, this molecule is an oral active proteasome inhibitor⁽⁴³⁻⁴⁶⁾. Recently, *Streptomyces* sp. has been used to



identify antibiotics known as caprolactones, which have demonstrated some phytotoxic and anticancer activity ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Antiviral Activity

Actinomycetes are also used to extract antiviral compounds, and numerous reports on antiviral agents derived from marine actinomycetes have been documented. Fish nodavirus (FNV) is antagonistically affected by the metabolite furan-2-yl acetate (C₆H₆O₃), which was produced by *Streptomyces* sp. VITSDK1. Furan-2-yl acetate, at a concentration of at least 20 µg/ml, was found to effectively inhibit the replication of the virus in studies conducted on SIGE (Sahul Indian Grouper Eye) cells infected with the aforementioned virus ⁽⁴⁸⁾. According to another study, a protease inhibitor that was isolated from *Streptomyces chromoporus* 341 exhibits antiviral properties against influenza viruses. The virus-induced cytopathic effect, the expression of the viral haemagglutinin on the surface of infected cells, and the infectious virus yield were all decreased to non-toxic concentrations depending on the dosage. The identical outcome was obtained when the experiment was conducted in vivo. Thus, this protease inhibitor demonstrated potential in a variety of pharmacological and medical fields ⁽⁴⁹⁾. White spot syndrome virus in shrimps can be efficiently inhibited at a level of 85% by *Streptomyces* spp. AJ8, which was isolated from Kovalam salt pans ⁽⁵⁰⁾. Many antiviral drugs derived from actinomycetes are still being studied, and many of these compounds are currently undergoing clinical trials.

Antiparasitic Activity

The compounds known as antiparasitic compounds are the ones that stop the growth of the parasites or their larvae. *Anopheles stephensi*, *Hippobosca maculata*, *Haemaphysalis bispinosa*, *Rhipicephalus microplus*, and *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* are all susceptible to the antiparasitic effects of *Actinomycetes* strain LK1 ⁽⁵¹⁾. In order to determine their larvicidal effectiveness against the three different mosquito genera *Culex quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes aegypti*, and *Anopheles stephensi*, various actinomycetes strains from the salt pan of the Tuticorin coast were tested. Regarding *Anopheles stephensi*, ISO2 showed the lowest activity, whereas ISO7 showed the highest activity ⁽⁵²⁾.

Pigment Production

The creation of pigment is mostly dependent on marine actinomycetes, which have unique structures with extra antibacterial, antioxidant, anticancer, and anti-inflammatory qualities. F1, F2, and F3 of *Streptomyces* sp. were isolated from a sample of sea sand and were found to produce melanin. Additionally, an antagonistic activity of the pigment on pathogenic strains was discovered ⁽⁵³⁾. *Streptomyces bellus* MSA1, isolated from Kovalam Beach, Chennai, developed an intercellular pigment with antioxidant properties ⁽⁵⁴⁾.



Cardiac Arrhythmia

Cardiac arrhythmias are a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, contributing between 10% and 15% of fatalities (55). The marine substance known as tetrodotoxin (TTX), which is beneficial for cardiac arrhythmia, is produced by actinomycetes of maritime sediments. It is commonly known as the puffer fish toxin in excitable neurons (56).

Anti-Inflammatory

The marine actinomycetes produce two anti-inflammatory compounds: lipomycin and saphenic acid. It's also been demonstrated that *Micromonospora* sp. produces bioactive compounds with antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Another *Streptomyces* species produces the anti-inflammatory metabolites cyclomarin A and C, the latter of which have anti-tuberculosis and anti-malarial properties. Furthermore, topical or intraperitoneal administration of cyclomarin A reduces inflammation (57).

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