

Streptomyces - Bacterial Interaction: The Possible Control of Soft Rot Disease of Melon by *Streptomyces* Species

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ABSTRACT. Screening for the antimicrobial activity of the culture filtrates of *Streptomyces venezuelae*, *S. rubiginosus* and *S. recifensis* showed that the Gram positive bacterium, *Clostridium acetobutylicum* was completely resistant whereas *Bacillus subtilis*, *B. licheniformis* and *Mycobacterium phlei* while insensitive to the filtrate of either *S. venezuelae* or *S. rubiginosus* were very sensitive to *S. recifensis* filtrate. Coupling the filtrates of *S. venezuelae* with *S. recifensis* reduced or even nullified the latter's potency whereas coupling *S. rubiginosus* with *S. recifensis* lowered the latter's effects. Of the Gram negative bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, *Aerobacter* sp., *Shigella flexneri*, *Pseudomonas putida* and *Erwinia toxica* were totally resistant to the antibiotics produced by the three *Streptomyces* species. *Erwinia carotovora* var. *carotovora*, *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* and *Serratia marcescens* were sensitive only to the filtrate of *S. recifensis*. *Salmonella typhimurum* was sensitive only to *S. venezuelae* filtrate.

The mixed culture filtrates of *S. rubiginosus* with *S. recifensis* were highly potent against *E. coli* and *Pseudomonas putida*. Growth of *E. toxica* was highly suppressed by the filtrate of the mixed culture of *S. venezuelae* and *S. rubiginosus* but the sensitivity of *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* to *S. recifensis* was abolished by mixed cultures with the other two *Streptomyces* species whereas that of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* was only attenuated.

Supplementation with nickel noticeably increased whereas supplementation with cadmium or lanthanum slightly decreased the sensitivity of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* to *S. recifensis* filtrate. Nickel-fed cultures of *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* or *E. toxica* were completely resistant to *S. recifensis* and *S. venezuelae* + *S. rubiginosus* filtrates respectively. Nickel-feeding, in combination with lanthanum and/or cadmium had the same effect on *E. toxica* but the high sensitivity of nickel-treated *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* to *S. recifensis* filtrate was abolished by addition of lanthanum and reduced by replacement or further addition of cadmium.

The toxins produced by *E. toxica* had a broader spectrum than those of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* and *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis*; particularly on Gram positive bacteria. Of the tested Gram negative bacteria, only *Serratia marcescens* and *Shigella flexneri* were sensitive as well as *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* and *E. toxica*.

There has been considerable interest in the possibility that antagonism among microorganisms could be made to play a significant part in controlling plant diseases: *e.g.* antagonism has been found among fungi (Hartley 1921, Machacek 1935, Christensen 1936, Katser 1938, Tervet 1938, Tadashi and Mikami 1969) and among bacteria and actinomycetes (Henry 1931, Mikio and Kaziro 1966, Hans *et al.* 1966, Korotyayev 1966, Omura *et al.* 1982).

Meredith (1946) employed actinomycetes for the control of infection of banana plants by *Fusarium oxysporum cubense*. One method proposed was the addition to the soil of an organism known to produce an antibiotic active against the plant pathogen (Machacek 1935, Tervet 1938). Greig-Smith (1917) showed that actinomycetes could be a factor in the control of the bacterial content of soil, but the "toxin" produced was not elucidated.

Slechta *et al.* (1978) found that the macrolide antibiotic albocycline, when added to a *Streptomyces venezuelae* UC-2560 (WC-3627) fermentation underwent a gradual loss of antimicrobial activity. This inactive product was identified as 2,3-dihydroalbocycline. Ewersmeyer-Wenk *et al.* (1981) isolated a new antibiotic produced by *S. venezuelae*. This new compound could inhibit Gram + ve and to a lesser extent Gram - ve bacteria. Chatterjee and Vining (1981) showed that *S. venezuelae* contains intracellular alpha-glucosidases, induced during growth on certain carbohydrate sources. Such induction was arrested by rifampicin and suppressed by chloramphenicol or streptomycin. Poetsch *et al.* (1985) isolated four new and two known peptide antibiotics containing amicelnomycin (Acm) from a culture of *S. venezuelae*. These di- and tri-peptides exhibited antimicrobial activity against Gram - ve bacteria that could be reversed by the addition of biotin. Also Kern *et al.* (1985) isolated six peptide antibiotics from a culture filtrate of *S. venezuelae* To 2460. All antibiotics inhibited growth by blocking biotin biosynthesis.

In this investigation we have studied the efficacy of culture filtrates of three *Streptomyces* species as antagonists to pathogenic bacteria particularly those causing soft rot disease of melons.

Material and Methods

Three species of *Streptomyces* viz. *S. venezuelae* (S_1); *S. rubiginosus* (S_2) and *S. recifensis* (S_3) were used. These were kindly provided by the Microbiological Research Centre (MIRCEN), Cairo.

The antagonistic potential of the broth of each test species as well as that of the mixed cultures of the three species, were tested against twenty different

bacterial species. Of these 11 species were Gram negative including:

Aerobacter sp. (MIRCEN).

Escherichia coli (Amin 1986); Enteric bacteria.

Erwinia carotovora var. *carotovora* (Saleh *et al.* 1984); causing soft rot of melon plants in Egypt.

E. carotovora var. *citrullis* (Saleh *et al.* 1985); causing wilt and rotting of melon plants in Egypt.

E. toxica (Saleh 1977); toxigenic bacterium infecting the vascular system of melon and water melon plants in USSR.

Proteus vulgaris (MIRCEN); found in fecal matter in many animals, sewage and soil.

Pseudomonas putida (MIRCEN); found in soil and water.

Salmonella typhimurum (Amin 1986); causing food poisoning to man. A natural pathogen for all warm-blooded animals.

Serratia marcescens (MIRCEN) found in water, soil and food.

Shigella flexneri 1 (Amin 1986); the most common cause of dysentery epidemics and sometimes of infantile gastro-enteritis.

Yersinia enterocolitica (Amin 1986); found in the feces and lymph nodes of both sick and healthy animals and man.

The remaining nine species were Gram positive bacteria:

Bacillus licheniformis (MIRCEN); found in soil and water.

B. subtilis (MIRCEN); found in soil and water.

Clostridium acetobutylicum (Sugar and Distillation Company Egypt); a fermenting bacterium.

Micrococcus luteus (MIRCEN); common in soil, dust, water and skin of man and other animals.

M. roseus (MIRCEN); found in dust, water and salt-containing foods.

Mycobacterium phlei (MIRCEN); widely distributed in nature.

Sarcina sp. (MIRCEN); isolated from soil, mud, diseased human stomach and the surface of cereal grains.

Staphylococcus aureus (MIRCEN); found on skin and mucous membranes.

Staphylococcus sp. (MIRCEN).

The *Streptomyces* species were cultured by inoculating 1 ml of spore suspension in 50 ml starch - nitrate medium (starch, 20 g; KNO₃, 2 g; K₂HPO₄, 1 g; MgSO₄ · 7H₂O, 0.5 g; NaCl, 0.5 g; CaCO₃, 3 g; all constituents were dissolved in one litre distilled water and pH adjusted to 7.0) and incubated for 7 days at

28°C. The mixed cultures were prepared by inoculating 1 ml of a mixed spore suspension (1:1 or 1:1:1 ratio) from $S_1 + S_2$; $S_1 + S_3$; $S_2 + S_3$; $S_1 + S_2 + S_3$.

The antibiotic potential of the filtered broth (by centrifugation at 5000 rpm for 15 minutes) was biologically assayed by the diffusion plate method according to the following procedure: 0.5 ml aliquots of the filtrate were transferred to wells (10 mm diameter) bored in 10 cm - diameter plates, freshly inoculated with 24-h cultures of the test bacterial suspension containing 5×10^8 cells/ml. The diameter of the inhibition zone, if any, was measured after 24 h at 28°C. Five replicate plates were measured for each treatment.

Since it has been established, in this laboratory, that the virulence and/or potency of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* depends, among other factors, on the presence of lanthanum, nickel and/or cadmium, in the culture medium (Khalil and Saleh 1987; Saleh and Khalil 1987), it was thought to elucidate the possible effect of such treatment using 10^{-6} M of the elements and their mixtures, on the resistance of the experimental *Erwinias* to the *Streptomyces* antibiotics. The resistance of the test bacteria and *Streptomyces* species to the toxins produced by the *Erwinias*, if any, was also investigated.

Results and Discussions

Fig. 1 shows that the antibiotics produced by each of the three *Streptomyces* species alone or in mixed cultures were basically potent against the Gram positive *Staphylococcus*, *Micrococcus* and *Sarcina* species. $S_2 + S_3$ mixed culture differed by showing a very high potency only against *M. roseus*. Of the remaining Gram positive organisms, *Clostridium acetobutylicum* was totally resistant to the *Streptomyces* species in all their combinations whereas *B. subtilis*, *B. licheniformis* and *Mycobacterium phlei* were totally insensitive to S_1 or S_2 but very sensitive to S_3 antibiotic(s). The broth of the mixed culture of $S_1 + S_2$ inhibited the growth of these bacilli and *Mycobacterium* to a lesser extent than S_3 alone; a phenomenon that was slightly, if at all, affected (Bacilli) or very highly intensified (*Mycobacterium*) by the addition of S_3 to the mixture. Coupling S_1 with S_3 reduced the potency of the latter's antibiotic(s) to almost the same level as that produced by $S_1 + S_2$ (Bacilli) or even totally nullified the inhibitory effects on *Mycobacterium*; a phenomenon that was completely reversed when S_2 was coupled with S_3 where the bacilli were totally insensitive but the growth of *Mycobacterium* was severely suppressed to the same extent as in the mixed culture of $S_1 + S_3$.

These observations indicate that *Streptomyces venezuelae* partially, if not completely, repressed the antagonistic properties of *Streptomyces recifensis* against the Gram positive bacteria whereas *Streptomyces rubiginosus* was totally

repressive (except for *Micrococcus roseus* and *Mycobacterium phlei*). It appears that mixing *S. venezuelae* with *S. rubiginosus* would have initiated the formation of new antibiotic(s) capable of retarding or inhibiting the growth of the bacilli and *Mycobacterium*. Synergism between the antibiotic(s) produced by $S_1 + S_2$ might be the possible explanation for the observed results.

According to Smith (1952) the decomposition products of chloramphenicol, produced by the action of certain bacteria have either a growth-stimulatory effect on bacteria or interfere with the growth inhibitory action of the antibiotic. Kitano and Tomasz (1979) and Leduc *et al.* (1982) have shown that chloramphenicol inhibited the lysis of growing bacterial cultures. Patel (1985) showed that lysis triggered by cell wall active antibiotics is inhibited by chloramphenicol at a concentration of 20 $\mu\text{g/ml}$.

Fig. 1 further shows that of the Gram negative bacteria *Aerobacter* sp., *Shigella flexneri* 1, *Pseudomonas putida* and *E. coli* were totally resistant to the antibiotics produced by each of the *Streptomyces* species. Both varieties of *E. carotovora* and *Serratia marcescens* were sensitive to S_3 antibiotic(s) whereas *S. typhimurum* was sensitive only to S_1 antibiotic(s). *Proteus vulgaris* and *Yersinia enterocolitica* were sensitive to S_2 antibiotic(s); the former was less sensitive to S_1 and insensitive to S_3 antibiotics whereas the latter was remarkably sensitive to S_3 and totally resistant to S_1 antibiotic(s).

Mixed culture filtrates of the *Streptomyces* species did not affect the resistance of *Aerobacter* or *Shigella* but the mixed culture of $S_2 + S_3$ was highly potent against *E. coli*; more prominently in the absence of added S_1 . This adds further support to the previous suggestion regarding the effect of these mixtures on *Micrococcus* and *Mycobacterium*. Similar observations were noted for the mixed cultures against *Pseudomonas* where the insensitivity of the organism was severely broken by the $S_2 + S_3$ mixture and to a lesser extent by the other mixtures but the three organisms in a mixture seemed ineffective.

The presence of S_3 in any mixture seemed to restore the resistance of *E. toxica* to the antibiotics produced by the other two species but $S_1 + S_2$ mixture was highly inhibitory. On the other hand, the sensitivity of *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* to S_3 was totally abolished by any of the mixtures whereas that of *Serratia marcescens* was slightly attenuated. Coupling S_1 with S_3 abolished the latter's potency against *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* whereas coupling with S_2 was less effective. Coupling S_1 with either S_2 or S_3 did not affect the potency of the former against *S. typhimurum* but the remaining mixtures abolished its potency. Similarly, the potency of S_3 against *Yersinia enterocolitica* disappeared when mixed with the other organisms whereas that of S_2 was considerably raised when coupled with S_1 . Again, S_3 abolished the potency of S_1 against *Proteus*, a phenomenon that was restored by the presence of S_1 that suppressed the potency of S_2 when mixed with it.

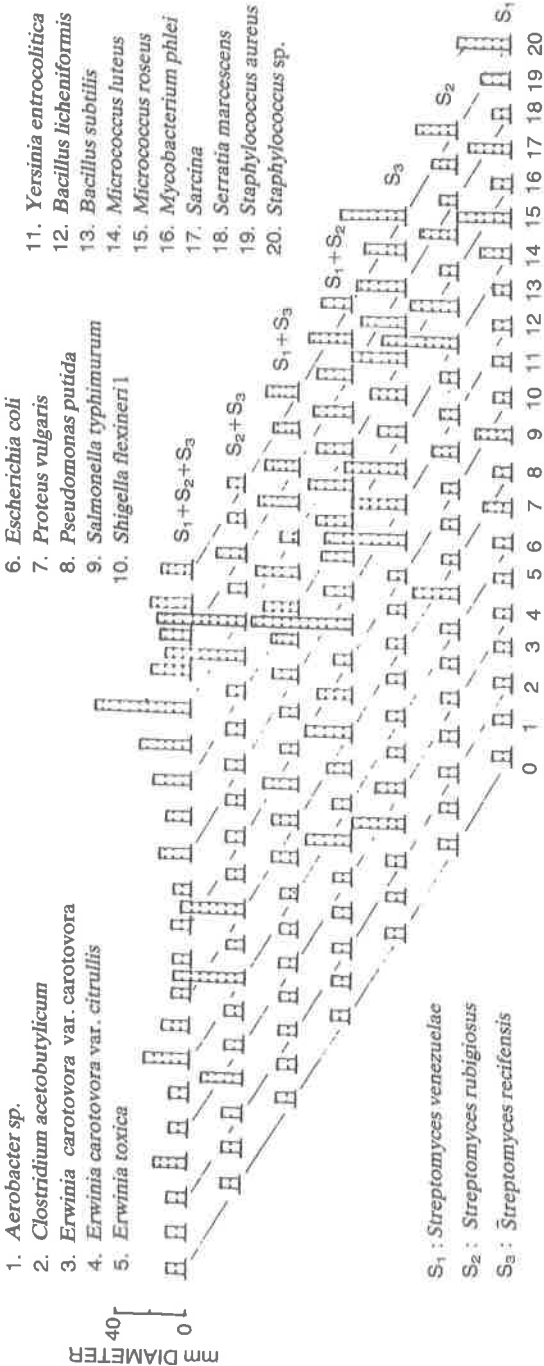


Fig. 1. Antagonistic properties of three *Streptomyces* species against selected members of Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria using 0.5 ml of the broth in 10 mm diameter wells.

These observations indicate that S_3 seemed to be capable of producing antibiotic(s) other than $A \times -18$ reported by Falcao de Moraes *et al.* (1957), that were highly potent against several Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria including the plant pathogen *E. carotovora*. $A \times -18$ was reported by Waksman and Lechevalier (1962) as an antifungal antibiotic with slight activity against *Staph. aureus* and *B. anthracis*.

In this connection it may be mentioned that Sabath (1969) found that 15% of *E. coli*, 55% of *Klebsiella*, 47% of *Enterobacter* and 60% of *Serratia* sp. were chloramphenicol resistant. Urban (1972) found that 18% of 94 *Shigella flexneri* and *S. sonnei* strains were also chloramphenicol resistant. Poetsch *et al.* (1985) and Kern *et al.* (1985) were able to isolate four new and two known peptide antibiotics containing amiclenomycin, from a culture of *S. venezuelae*. These were all active against Gram negative bacteria. A synergistic enhancement of the antibiotic activity was found by a polypeptide isolated from the same broth.

Fig. 2 shows that apart from the variations in the rate of growth and/or virulence of the *Erwinias*, nickel noticeably increased whereas cadmium or lanthanum slightly decreased the sensitivity of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* to S_3 antibiotics. Nickel - treated *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* or *E. toxica* were completely resistant to S_3 and $S_1 + S_2$ antibiotics respectively. Lanthanum or cadmium hardly affected the sensitivity of the *citrullis* variety but slightly lowered (lanthanum) or even abolished (cadmium) the sensitivity of *E. toxica* to S_3 and $S_1 + S_2$ respectively. The sensitivity of the carotovora variety to $S_2 + S_3$ or $S_1 + S_2 + S_3$ was totally alleviated by adding lanthanum or nickel to its media. Cadmium had similar effects regarding the sensitivity towards $S_2 + S_3$ but exerted no effect toward the sensitivity to $S_1 + S_2 + S_3$. Lanthanum seemed to break down the resistance of the *carotovora* variety of *Erwinia* and the *toxica* species to $S_1 + S_3$ and that of the *citrullis* species to $S_1 + S_2$; a similar phenomenon was also observed for nickel (*citrullis* variety) and cadmium (*toxica* species). Again, nickel or cadmium broke the resistance of the *citrullis* variety to $S_1 + S_3$ and of the *toxica* species to the mixtures containing S_2 .

These observations indicate that such elements had disturbed in one way or the other, the physiological activities of the cells that resulted in the unusual sensitivity to the mixed culture broth of the *Streptomyces* species.

It is interesting to note that the presence of nickel in combination with lanthanum and/or cadmium totally protected the *citrullis* variety against these *Streptomyces* species. Lanthanum mixtures had the same effect on *E. toxica* except against the mixture of $S_2 + S_3$. The high sensitivity of nickel-treated *carotovora* variety to S_3 antibiotics was totally abolished by addition of lanthanum to the former's medium but was only reduced with the replacement or the further

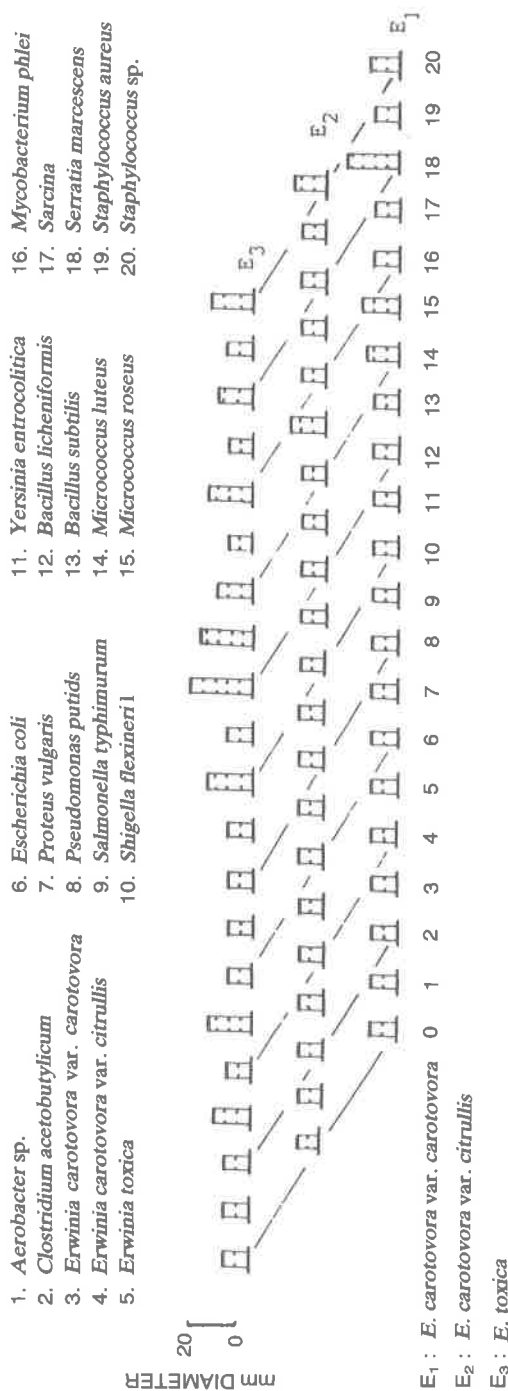


Fig. 2. Antagonistic properties of three *Erwinia* species against selected members of Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria using 0.5 ml of the broth in 10 mm diameter wells.

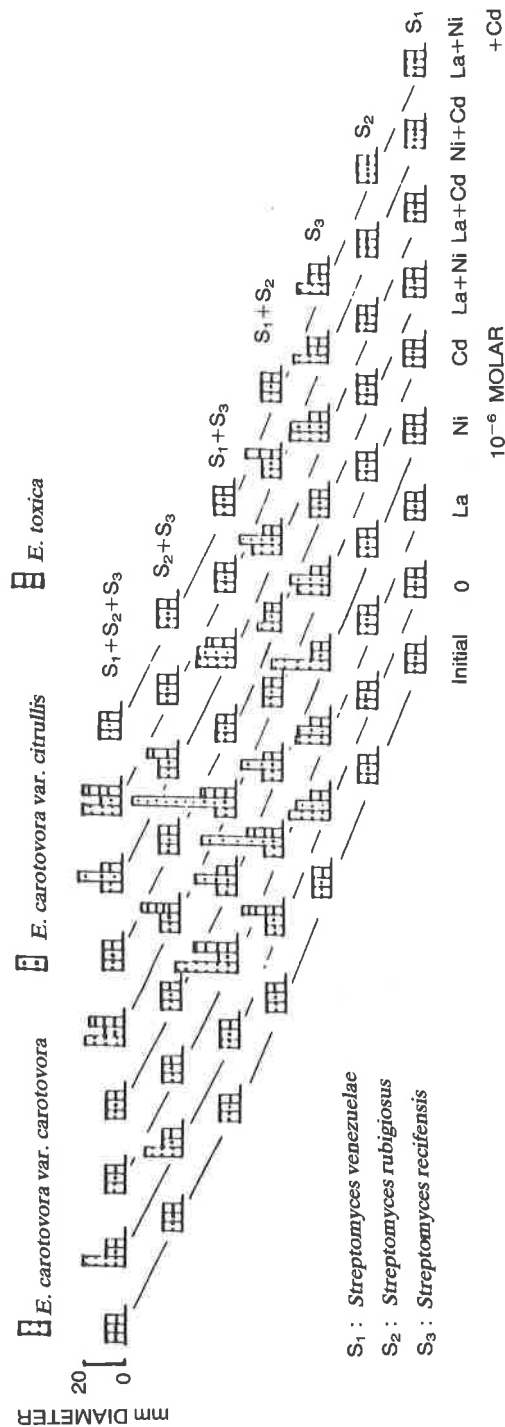


Fig. 3. Effect of various combinations of lanthanum, nickel and cadmium on the resistance of three *Erwinia* species to the antibiotics produced by the three *Streptomyces* species using 0.5 ml of the broth in 10 mm diameter wells.

addition of cadmium to the nutrient medium. Cadmium + lanthanum only slightly altered the sensitivity compared to single metal treatment, but broke the sensitivity of the organism to $S_1 + S_2$ or $S_1 + S_3$ mixed culture broth. A similar phenomenon was also observed for the *citrullis* variety with further sensitivity to the mixture of the three *Streptomyces* species.

Changes in cell wall formation (Tomasz *et al.* 1970) might give a clue to these observations. These observations further show that the mixed elements - with the synergy or antagonism between them (Saleh and Khalil 1987, Khalil and Saleh 1987) - had a more intrinsic effect on the physiology of the test bacteria, leading in most cases to higher resistance and/or tolerance to the antibiotics produced by the *Streptomyces* species.

In previous investigations, Cerataneana and Popova (1948), Petrovich and Shustova (1951) and Gnytenko (1966, 1968) reported that *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* had a toxic effect on warm blooded animals including man. Similarly, *E. toxica* was reported by Korobko (1973) as a toxin producer. Accordingly it was thought to screen the possible effects of such toxins on various bacteria including the producing organisms (the *Erwinias*).

Fig. 3 shows that the toxins of *E. toxica* had a broader spectrum than that of the test varieties of *E. carotovora*, mostly on Gram positive bacteria including *Micrococcus luteus*, *Bacillus licheniformis*, *B. subtilis* and *Mycobacterium phlei*. Of the Gram negative bacteria, only *Serratia marcescens* and *Shigella flexneri* were sensitive to *E. toxica* as well as *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* and *E. toxica*. The broth of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* slightly inhibited the growth of both *Staphylococcus* species and the two *Micrococcus* species but was more effective on *Serratia marcescens*. The three filtrates had no effect on the three *Streptomyces* species or their mixed cultures.

These observations point to the fact that the virulence of these organisms is not correlated with the toxins they produced. *E. carotovora* var. *citrullis* (with the least effective toxins) is known to be a well adapted, well developed, more virulent form species of *E. carotovora* var. *carotovora* (Kryvets 1975). *E. toxica* is not yet reported in Egypt.

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تداخل البكتيريا والأستربتومييسيتات

١ - دراسة أولية على امكانية مقاومة

مرض العفن الطرى للشمام بواسطة

أنواع من الأستربتومييسيتات

ماري صبحي خليل و محمد إبراهيم نجيب و يسري السيد صالح

قسم النبات - كلية العلوم - جامعة القاهرة - مصر

في دراسة لتأثير نشاط راشح كل من الأستربتومييسيس فينزويلي والأستربتومييسيس روبيجينوزس، الأستربتومييسيس راسيفنسيز فقد أظهرت البكتريا الموجبة لصبغ جرام والكلوستريديام اسيتوبوتيريكم مناعة كاملة في حين كانت بكتيريا باسيلس ساتيلي والباسيلس ليكينوفورميس والميكوباكتريام فلاي غير حساسة لراشح كل من ستربتومييسيس فينزويلي وستربتومييسيس روبيجينوزس ولكنها أظهرت حساسية واضحة مع راشح الأستربتومييسيس راسيفنسيس فقد وجد أن قدره النوع الأخير قد قلت أو أختفت نهائياً. كذلك عند خلط كلا من نوعي الأستربتومييسيس روبيجينوزس على الأستربتومييسيس راسيفنسيس قد عمل أيضاً على خفض القدرة التأثيرية للنوع الأخير.

ومن البكتريا السالبة لصبغ جرام مثل الأشيريشيا كولاي والأيروباكتري وشيجيلا فلا كسنيرى وبسيدوموناس بيوتيدا واروينيا توكسيكا فقد كانت لها درجة مقاومة كاملة لأنواع المضادات الحيوية التي تفرز بواسطة الثلاثة أنواع من استربتومييسيتات. أما بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا وبكتريا أروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف سينتروليس وسيراشيامرسيسنس فقد كانت حساسة لراشح الأستربتومييسيس راسيفنسيس فقط.

أما بكتريا السلمونيلا تيفيموريام فقد أظهرت حساسية فقط مع راشح

الاستربتومايسيس فينزويلي .

وفي خليط لمزرعة من الاستربتومايسيس رويجينوزس وستربتومايسيس راسيفنسيس فقد كانت لها قدرة واضحة ضد الأشيريشيا كولاي والبسيد وموناس بيوتيدا . أما نمو بكتريا الأروينيا توكسيسكا فقد أحبط بنسبة كبيرة بواسطة راشح خليط من مزرعة من الاستربتومايسيس فينزويلي وستربتومايسيس رويجينوزس . أما حساسية بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف سيتروليس للاستربتومايسيس راسيفنسيس فقد أضحلت عند خلطه مع النوعين الآخرين من الاستربتوميستات . أما مع بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا فقد ضعف هذا التأثير فقط .

كذلك فقد وجد أن استجابة بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا لراشح الاستربتومايسيس راسيفنسيس تتأثر بإضافة بعض العناصر الثقيلة حيث ان اضافة عنصر النيكل يزيد هذه الحساسية بدرجة ملحوظة في حين أن عنصري الكادميوم واللاتانام فهما يقللان إلى حد ما هذه الحساسية . أما عند إضافة النيكل إلى مزرعة من بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف سيتروليس وبكتريا الأروينيا توكسيسكا فقد أبدت هذه البكتريا مناعة واضحة لراشح كل من الاستربتومايسيس راسيفنسيس ومخلوط من الاستربتومايسيس فينزويلي والاستربتومايسيس رويجينوزس على التوالي .

أما إضافة عنصر النيكل إلى اللانثانام مع / أو الكادميوم فقد أبدت نفس التأثير على الأروينيا توكسيسكا .

أما شدة حساسية بكتريا الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا المعاملة بالنيكل لراشح الاستربتومايسيس راسيفنسيس فقد اختفت هذه الحساسية عند اضافة عنصر اللانثانام وقلت أيضاً عند احلاله بالكادميوم أو بإضافة زيادة منه .

أما السموم التي تتكون بواسطة بكتريا الأروينيا تولسيكا فقد أبدت مجالاً تأثيراً واسعاً أكثر من الأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا والأروينيا كاراتوفورا

صنف سيتروليس خاصة البكتريا الموجبة لصبغ جرام فقد كانت بكتريا السيراشيا مرسيسنس والشيجيلا فلاكسنيري والأروينيا كاراتوفورا صنف كاراتوفورا حساسة لهذه السموم.

هذا بالإضافة إلى حساسية بكتريا الأروينيا توكسيكا نفسها لهذه السموم.