

PROBIOTIC PROPERTIES OF LACTIC ACID BACTERIA ISOLATED FROM SOUR BREWING WORT

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The study of the probiotic potential of lactic acid bacteria isolated from sour brewing wort is a promising direction for developing new functional fermented products, as these strains may exhibit enhanced antagonistic activity and improved survival under stress conditions.

The work aims to isolate, identify, and determine selected probiotic properties of lactic acid bacteria derived from sour brewing wort.

Methods. The following method was used to prepare the brewing wort. Isolation of lactic acid bacteria (LAB) strains was carried out from brewing wort that had been spontaneously fermented for 12 months. Identification was performed using physiological and biochemical analyses of LAB metabolic characteristics. Antagonistic activity of the isolate was assessed using the well-diffusion method, antibiotic susceptibility by the disk-diffusion method, and adhesive properties by spectrophotometry. Enzymatic activities were determined qualitatively.

Results. A culture of *Lactiplantibacillus pentosus* isolated from brewing wort was identified. Its strong antagonistic effect against the test culture, *S. aureus*, was demonstrated, with an inhibition zone of 30.0 ± 0.10 mm. Resistance to aminoglycosides and penicillins was established, consistent with the typical antibiotic susceptibility profile of LAB. Adhesion indicators — autoaggregation and hydrophobicity — were $44.80 \pm 2.62\%$ and $46.20 \pm 3.00\%$, respectively. No studied enzymatic activities were observed.

Conclusions. *Lpb. pentosus* isolated from sour brewing wort exhibits antagonism toward *S. aureus*, resistance to aminoglycosides, penicillins, and glycopeptides, moderate autoaggregation, and high cell wall hydrophobicity. The studied enzymatic activities were not detected. The results indicate potential probiotic activity and the need for further studies on stress tolerance.

Keywords: lactic acid bacteria, sour wort, *Lactiplantibacillus pentosus*, antagonism, adhesive properties, enzymatic activity, probiotics, biotechnology.

Lactic acid bacteria (LAB) are among the most extensively studied and most numerous groups of microorganisms [1]. They are known for their antagonism toward a broad range of pathogenic organisms, including antifungal effects [2], as well as immunomodulatory,

anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and other activities [3]. This beneficial impact on the host organism makes them promising candidates for consideration as probiotic organisms [4].

Despite this, the primary role of LAB lies in their ability to ferment various

Citation: Putria, O. S., Romanenko, A. I., Marushchenko, S. A., Zubyk, P. R., Khablenko, A. D., Danylenko, S. G. (2026). Probiotic properties of lactic acid bacteria isolated from sour brewing wort. *Biotechnologia Acta*, 19(1), 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.15407/biotech19.01.027>

macromolecules, which is determined by their well-developed metabolic pathways and metabolic flexibility [5]. This characteristic encourages the consideration of different food products as sources for LAB isolation. Typical sources include spontaneously fermented dairy products [6, 7]. Publications have also reported the isolation of LAB from spontaneously fermented sausages (*Lactiplantibacillus* spp., *Pediococcus* spp.) [8–10] and seafood (*Leuconostoc* spp., *Carnobacterium* spp.) [11]. Considerable attention is likewise given to plant raw materials, particularly food-industry by-products such as pomace, pulp, press cakes, and others [12]. For example, *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* was isolated from rose hip pomace [13], while silage yielded *Leuconostoc* spp., *Lactococcus* spp., *Enterococcus* spp., *Pediococcus* spp., *Lactobacillus* spp., and others [14, 15]. Sugarcane [16], millet [17], and other herbaceous plants [18] have also been used for LAB isolation.

Beverages of various origins are considered promising sources for isolating LAB strains with probiotic properties. Traditional local low-alcohol fermented drinks are most commonly used for this purpose, such as *boza*, *pozol*, *togwa*, and others [7, 18]. From the Ethiopian cereal-fermented drink *tella*, *Pediococcus pentosaceus*, *Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*, and *Lpb. plantarum* were isolated and identified [19]. The use of the traditional African beer *Chibuku* enabled the recovery of representatives of the genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Leuconostoc*, *Streptococcus*, and *Enterococcus* [20]. Despite this, only a small number of publications address LAB isolation specifically from intermediate brewing products (mash or sour wort) [21]. Therefore, the present study aimed to isolate and identify lactic acid bacteria from sour beer wort and to assess their probiotic properties.

Materials and Methods

Isolation of lactic acid bacteria (LAB) strains was carried out from sour beer wort. Barley malt *Premium Pilsner* (Weyermann) was used to prepare the wort. The wort was prepared using the infusion mashing method, with a stepwise increase in temperature and incubation at the following temperature rests: acid rest — 35 °C for 30 min; protein rest — 45 °C for 45 min; maltose rest — 65 °C for 45 min; mash-out — 78 °C for 15 min [22]. The sugar content of the cooled wort was

determined refractometrically at 18% Brix. The cooled, hermetically sealed wort was left at room temperature (22–25 °C) for 12 months.

For LAB isolation, 5 mL of sour wort was sampled, and serial dilutions were plated on MRS agar prepared according to [23] and on acetate agar prepared according to [24]. Pure cultures were obtained by consecutive plating of serial dilutions using the pour-plate method on MRS agar, followed by transfer to liquid MRS. Cultivation was carried out at 37 °C for 24–48 hours. Culture purity was confirmed microscopically and by the absence of growth on meat-peptone agar (MPA) and Sabouraud agar.

Identification of the isolated cultures was performed by examining cell morphology and conducting standard tests used to determine affiliation with the family *Lactobacillaceae*, including catalase activity, gelatin hydrolysis, ammonia production from arginine, and carbon dioxide formation from glucose. Additionally, growth was evaluated on MRS medium supplemented with different concentrations of sodium chloride (5% and 10%) and at different initial pH values of MRS medium (4.5 and 9.0). Further phenotypic identification was carried out by assessing the isolate's ability to ferment various carbon sources: glucose, sucrose, lactose, fructose, maltose, mannose, galactose, raffinose, rhamnose, ribose, glycerol, sorbitol, inositol, mannitol, trehalose, gluconate, and D-xylose. Species identity was determined based on the obtained results by comparison with typical carbohydrate fermentation profiles described in [25] and [26]. The ABIS online service [27] was also used to determine similarity (% match) and probability (%).

Antagonistic activity was assessed according to [28] using the well-diffusion method. As opportunistic pathogens, the following strains were used: *Bacillus subtilis* UCM B-901, *Escherichia coli* UCM B-906, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* UCM B-900, *Staphylococcus aureus* UCM B-918, and the yeast strain *Candida albicans* UCM Y-1918. The experiment was performed on MPA agar for bacterial pathogens and Sabouraud agar for yeast pathogens. Antagonistic activity was evaluated after 24 hours of incubation at 37 °C by measuring the growth inhibition zones (mm).

Antibiotic susceptibility of the culture was determined by disk diffusion on Petri dishes, according to [29]. Clinically relevant antibiotics were used [30], with the antibiotic content indicated in parentheses: ampicillin (10 µg), gentamicin (10 µg), lincomycin

(15 g), vancomycin (30 µg), oleandomycin (15 µg), nystatin (100 U), streptomycin (10 µg), benzylpenicillin (10 µg), and polymyxin B (300 U). Susceptibility was evaluated according to [31], where R denotes resistance and S denotes susceptibility.

The adhesive properties of the culture were assessed by measuring auto-aggregation and hydrophobicity. For both assays, the culture was incubated in liquid MRS medium at 37 °C for 18 hours, then centrifuged at 4000 rpm for 15 minutes. The pellet was washed twice with 0.85% NaCl solution and resuspended in the same solution to obtain an optical density of 0.3–0.4 ($\lambda = 600$ nm). Auto-aggregation was measured as described in [32], namely by incubating the prepared suspension at 37 °C for 24 hours. At 4, 6, and 24 hours, samples were collected, and optical density was measured at the same wavelength. The percentage of auto-aggregation (A) was calculated using the formula:

$$A = \left(1 - \frac{A_0 - A_t}{A_0} \right) \cdot 100\%$$

where A_0 is the initial optical density, and A_t is the optical density after the given time interval.

Hydrophobicity of the cell surface was determined according to [33] by mixing the cell suspension with n-hexane, incubating the mixture for 30 minutes, and subsequently measuring the optical density of the aqueous phase at the same wavelength. The percentage of hydrophobicity (H) was calculated using the formula:

$$H = \frac{A_s - A_{hex}}{A_s} \cdot 100\%$$

where A_s is the optical density of the suspension without solvent, and A_{hex} is the optical density of the suspension after incubation with n-hexane.

The following enzymatic activities were examined qualitatively: amylolytic activity according to [34], proteolytic activity according to [35], and pectinolytic activity according to [36]. All inoculated plates were incubated at 37 °C for 48 hours. Amylolytic and pectinolytic activities were evaluated by the formation of clear zones after Lugol's solution treatment; transparent zones indicated proteolytic activity.

Statistical analysis of the results. All experiments were performed in triplicate. Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. Differences between means were assessed using

Duncan's test ($P < 0.05$). Means marked with the same letters were not significantly different.

Results and Discussion

Isolates were obtained from the described nutrient media, and their number and cultural characteristics are presented in Table 1.

All isolates demonstrated similar cultural characteristics, colonies of smaller diameter were observed on acetate medium, which may be associated with an unfavorable effect of this medium on isolate growth. The negative catalase test, positive Gram staining, and the cultural characteristics presented in Table 1 indicate the potential affiliation of the isolates with LAB representatives. All selected isolates exhibited similar morphological characteristics, shown in Fig. 1, therefore, one isolate was chosen for further investigation.

According to the presented figure, short rods or coccobacilli are observed, arranged singly or in clusters, with cells exhibiting rounded ends. These morphological features indicate a potential affiliation of the isolate with the family *Lactobacillaceae*, which is characterized by cell polymorphism, including rod-shaped and cocciform forms. Other physiological and biochemical characteristics are presented in Table 2.

A negative gelatin hydrolysis result confirms the culture's affiliation with the LAB group. The presented results indicate several specific metabolic features of the investigated LAB culture, in particular its ability to grow

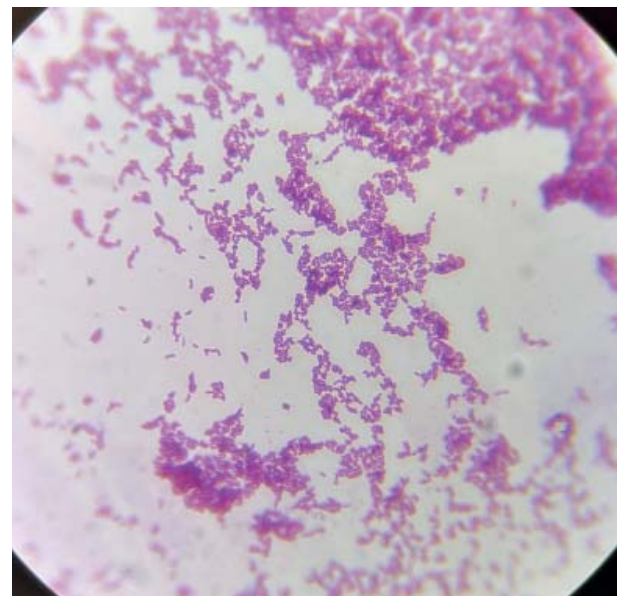


Fig. 1. Microscopy of the selected isolate ($\times 1000$)

Table 1. Morphological and cultural characteristics of the isolated strains

Nutrient medium	Number of isolates	Colony surface characteristics	Colony diameter, mm	Catalase	Gram staining
MRS	6	Round colonies with even edges, smooth, shiny surface, milky-white in color	1.5–2.0	–	+
Acetate agar	8	Round colonies, flat with a matte surface and even edges, smooth, whitish-gray in color	0.5–1.0		

Table 2. Physiological and biochemical properties of the isolate

Characteristic	Result	
Gelatin hydrolysis	–	
Arginine hydrolysis	–	
Gas production from glucose	–	
Growth at NaCl concentration, %	5	+
	10	+
Growth at pH	4.5	+
	9.0	+
Carbohydrate fermentation	glucose	+
	sucrose	+
	lactose	+
	fructose	+
	maltose	+
	mannitol	+
	glycerol	–
	sorbitol	+
	inositol	–
	mannose	+
	galactose	+
	raffinose	+
	rhamnose	+
	trehalose	+
	ribose	+
gluconate	+	
D–xylose	+	

at an alkaline pH (9.0) and in the presence of high NaCl concentrations (10%), suggesting osmotic tolerance. The negative results for arginine hydrolysis and gas production from glucose indicate the potential affiliation of the culture with the group of facultatively heterofermentative LAB [25]; the positive fermentation of pentoses such as ribose and D-xylose further supports this.

Based on the obtained metabolic profile

Table 3. Results of the antagonistic activity study of *Lpb. pentosus*

Opportunistic microorganism	Inhibition zone diameter, mm
<i>B. subtilis</i> UCM B-901	15.0 ± 0.5 ^b
<i>E. coli</i> UCM B-906	0.0 ± 0.0 ^c
<i>P. aeruginosa</i> UCM B-900	0.0 ± 0.0 ^c
<i>S. aureus</i> UCM B-918	30.0 ± 0.1 ^a
<i>C. albicans</i> UCM Y-1918	0.0 ± 0.0 ^c

and the use of the ABIS online service, the investigated culture was identified as *Lactiplantibacillus pentosus*, with a similarity of 92.6% and a probability of 98.8%. It is known that sour wort, particularly in sour beers such as lambics, is typically associated with LAB, including *Pediococcus damnosus* [37–39]. However, in [40], the authors report the presence of *Levilactobacillus brevis* and *Limosilactobacillus fermentum*. These findings do not align with the results of the present study, which may be due to differences in the raw materials and technological processes used to produce sour wort or beer. In the case of sour wort produced for sorghum beer *tchapalo*, detected LAB species included *Lpb. pentosus*, *Lpb. plantarum*, *Lvb. Brevis*, *Lmb. fermentum*, among others [21]. In [19], the authors report isolating *P. pentosaceus*, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*, and *Lpb. plantarum* from the traditional grain-based beverage *tella*. Thus, it can be concluded that isolating LAB representatives, such as *Lpb. pentosus* and *Lpb. plantarum* is related to the initial raw materials and the specific fermentation conditions of beer wort.

The studied LAB culture *Lpb. pentosus* exhibited antagonistic activity only against *S. aureus* UCM B-918 and *B. subtilis* UCM B-901, as shown in Table 3. At the same time, the isolate did not exhibit antagonistic activity against the other tested strains of

opportunistic microorganisms: *Candida albicans* UCM Y-1918, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* UCM B-900, and *Escherichia coli* UCM B-906.

According to source [41], *Lpb. Pentosus* demonstrated a low inhibitory effect against *Candida albicans*. However, study [42] indicates possible inhibition of *C. albicans*, with an inhibition zone diameter of 9.0 ± 0.65 mm. The absence of antimicrobial activity against *C. albicans* is explained by structural differences: bacteriocins produced by LAB act on bacterial membranes but are ineffective against fungal cells, which possess a chitin-based cell wall and ergosterol. Based on the findings reported in [43], the related species *Lpb. plantarum* exhibits vigorous inhibitory activity toward *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, with an inhibition zone of 17.27 ± 0.04 mm, which was not observed in the present study. The low activity against *P. aeruginosa* is due to the presence of an additional outer membrane in Gram-negative bacteria, which acts as a barrier to bacteriocins and organic acids. In study [42], the authors report low antimicrobial activity of *Lpb. pentosus* against the *E. coli* strain CECT 432, with an inhibition zone diameter of 10.0 ± 1.45 mm, which is considered a low value and aligns with our findings regarding reduced antagonistic activity.

Compared with other pathogens, the present study showed high antagonistic activity against the test strains *S. aureus* and *B. subtilis*, with growth inhibition zone diameters of 30.0 ± 0.1 mm and 15.0 ± 0.5 mm, respectively. This activity is attributed to the potential synthesis of bacteriocins, which act on Gram-positive bacteria [44]. To compare the antagonistic activity of the investigated

culture against *S. aureus*, literature data were used [45], where the most effective LAB strains demonstrated the following values: S6 (*Lpb. pentosus*) — 9.39 ± 0.09 mm, L19 (*Lpb. pentosus*) — 9.26 ± 0.06 mm. In comparison, the antagonistic activity of the studied isolate is 3.2 times higher. Regarding *B. subtilis*, the study [46] found no antagonism against pentocin ZFM94, a bacteriocin isolated from *Lpb. pentosus*. In study [47], the reported value is 8.10 ± 0.22 mm. The authors of [48] report antimicrobial activity of bacteriocins produced by *L. pentosus* CH2 against *B. subtilis*, with an inhibition zone of 15.0 ± 0.01 mm. These findings are consistent with those obtained in the present work.

Results of the antibiotic susceptibility tests are presented in Table. 4.

The isolated culture exhibited sensitivity only to the macrolide group (oleandomycin). Resistance to the penicillin group (ampicillin, benzylpenicillin) and glycopeptides (vancomycin) was established, which corresponds to the findings reported in studies [31, 49]. Resistance to the penicillin group may be caused by the production of β -lactamase enzymes, particularly penicillinase and cephalosporinase [50]. In the case of vancomycin resistance, which is typical for most LAB, the mechanism involves enzymes involved in D-alanine metabolism, such as D-alanine ligase, that alter the structure of the cell wall and reduce vancomycin's affinity for its target [51]. The isolate demonstrated resistance to aminoglycosides (gentamicin, streptomycin, kanamycin), which is consistent with the results described in [52]. These results are explained by the mechanisms typical of LAB, namely the

Table 4. Antibiotic susceptibility of the *Lpb. pentosus* culture

Group	Antibiotic	Inhibition zone, mm	Result (R/S)
Penicillins	Ampicillin	10.2 ± 0.05	R
	Benzylpenicillin	6.5 ± 0.10	R
Aminoglycosides	Gentamicin	7.0 ± 0.03	R
	Streptomycin	7.2 ± 0.08	R
	Kanamycin	8.5 ± 0.10	R
Polyenes	Nystatin	6.5 ± 0.12	R
Glycopeptides	Vancomycin	9.0 ± 0.09	R
Macrolides	Oleandomycin	15.4 ± 0.12	S
Polymyxins	Polymyxin	6.5 ± 0.05	R

Table 5. Adhesive properties of the studied *Lpb. pentosus* culture

Characteristic	Measured value	
Auto-aggregation, %	4 h	21.81 ± 2.61
	6 h	27.31 ± 1.57
	24 h	44.80 ± 2.62
Hydrophobicity, %	46.20 ± 3.00	

synthesis of enzymes (N-acetyltransferases, O-nucleotidyltransferases, O-phosphotransferases) that modify aminoglycosides. [53]. *Lpb. pentosus* exhibited resistance to polymyxin, confirming the previously established pattern of intrinsic resistance of lactobacilli to the polymyxin group of antibiotics [54]. For polyene antibiotics (nystatin), no previous studies on lactobacilli susceptibility were identified; however, according to the results obtained, resistance to this compound was observed.

The results of the auto-aggregation and cell surface hydrophobicity tests are presented in Table 5.

Lpb. pentosus demonstrated the ability to auto-aggregate with the following results: after 4 hours of incubation, the auto-aggregation level was 21.81 ± 2.61%; after 6 hours from the start of incubation, the value increased to 27.31 ± 1.57%. By the end of incubation (24 hours), the auto-aggregation level had nearly doubled compared to the 4-hour mark. In study [55], auto-aggregation values for *Lpb. pentosus* strains vary, with the highest reported value being 77.92 ± 7.22%, indicating that this trait is strain-specific. The authors of [41] report a maximum auto-aggregation level of 82.67% for *Lpb. pentosus* 68-1. For an *Lpb. pentosus* culture isolated from fermented rice, a comparable auto-aggregation value of 23% after 3 hours of incubation was reported in [56].

The mean cell-surface hydrophobicity was 46.2 ± 3.0%. Similar results were reported in a study [41], where the strain *Lpb. pentosus* 68-1, isolated from yogurt, showed a hydrophobicity level of 46.5 ± 0.38%. In contrast, for the strain *Lpb. Pentosus* MSCIN-24, isolated from the traditional fermented product mesu (fermented young bamboo shoots), the hydrophobicity level measured in *n*-hexane was only 9% [57]. This substantial difference may be associated with genetic and phenotypic characteristics of strains of different origins, particularly differences in cell-wall composition and surface proteins. The strain *L. pentosus* C22, isolated from Irish cheese,

demonstrated an intermediate hydrophobicity value of 25.26% [58].

The results of enzymatic activity assessment are presented in Fig. 2.

The isolated *Lpb. pentosus* culture showed no amyolytic activity, which is confirmed by the absence of a hydrolysis zone after the addition of Lugol's solution (Fig. 2, a). For comparison, the strain *Lpb. pentosus* N3, isolated from the Bulgarian fermented beverage *boza*, demonstrated clear cell-associated amyolytic activity [59]. According to the results presented in Fig. 2, b, no proteolytic activity was observed in the studied culture. However, study [58] reports that the strain *L. pentosus* C22, isolated from Irish cheese, exhibits proteolytic activity with a clearing zone of 25 mm. At the same time, study [60] indicates that not all *L. pentosus* strains isolated from raw Tunisian milk possess proteolytic properties. The examined *Lpb. pentosus* isolate did not show any pectin hydrolysis zones (Fig. 2, c), indicating the absence of pectinase activity. In contrast, study [61] reports the ability of strain *Lpb. pentosus* SJ65 to synthesize pectinases.

The absence of amyolytic, proteolytic, and pectinolytic activity in the studied culture correlates with its source of isolation — acidic beer wort, which is depleted in starch, protein, and pectin. Strains exhibiting hydrolytic activities are predominantly isolated from substrates enriched in the corresponding polymers: amyolytic strains — from starch-containing substrates [59], proteolytic strains — from dairy products [58, 60], and pectinolytic strains — from plant-based materials [36, 61].

The study examined the isolation and characterization of a lactic acid bacterial culture from acidic beer wort. Based on the analysis of its morphological and physiological-biochemical properties, the isolate was identified as *Lpb. pentosus*. Antagonistic activity was demonstrated against opportunistic microorganisms, including *B. subtilis* and *S. aureus*. The antibiotic susceptibility profile indicates resistance to aminoglycosides, penicillins, and glycopeptides, typical of lactic acid bacteria. The culture exhibits moderate autoaggregation and high cell wall hydrophobicity. The absence of the enzymatic activities assessed in this work is likely attributed to the source of culture isolation. The obtained results indicate potential probiotic activity of the isolated *Lpb. pentosus*, particularly its antagonistic

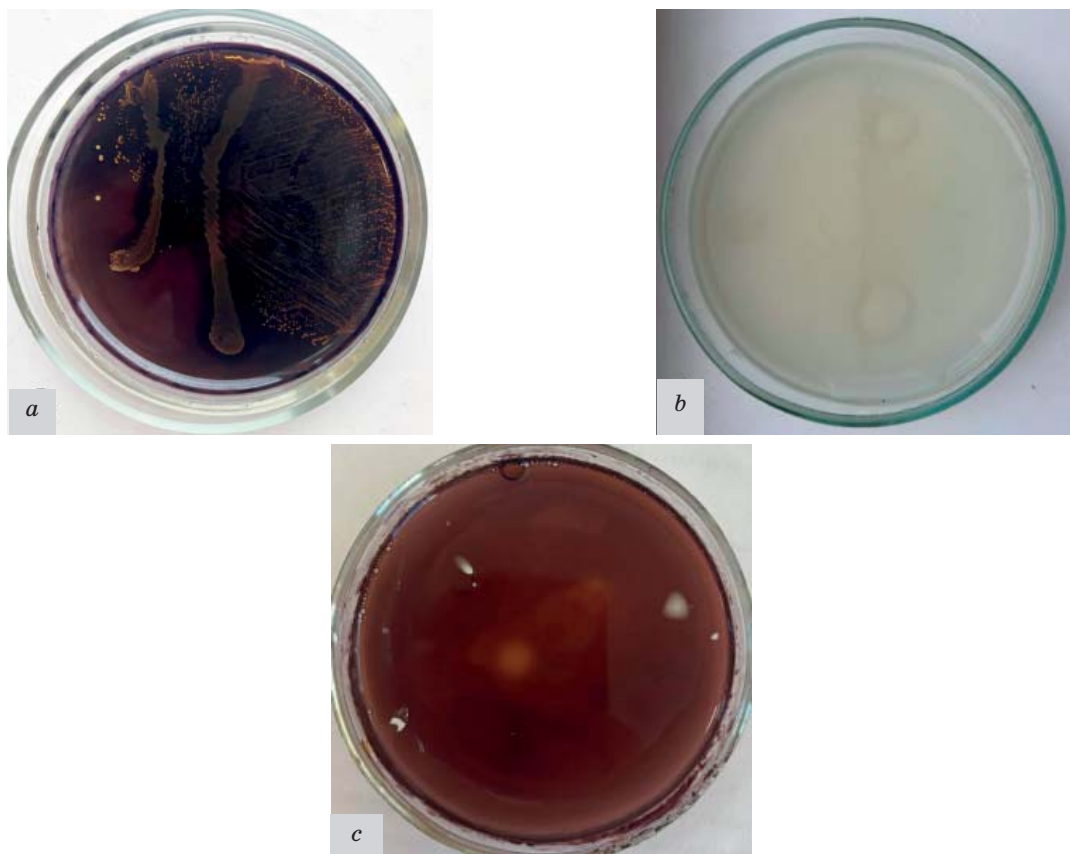


Fig. 2. Enzymatic activities of the *Lpb. pentosus* culture:
a — amylolytic; b — proteolytic; c — pectinolytic

action against the test culture *S. aureus*. At the same time, further studies aimed at determining the culture's stress tolerance are advisable, as they allow for conclusions regarding its ability to maintain the identified functional properties.

Authors' contribution

POS — experiment conduction, literature selection, data analysis, writing; RAI — experiment conduction, literature selection, writing; MSA — literature selection, data analysis; ZPR — writing, editing; KAD —

planning, writing, editing, supervision; DSG — supervision, reviewing. All authors reviewed the manuscript and approved the submitted version.

Funding

There was no external funding.

Conflict

There was no conflict of interest.

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ПРОБІОТИЧНІ ВЛАСТИВОСТІ МОЛОЧНОКИСЛИХ БАКТЕРІЙ ВИДІЛЕНИХ З КИСЛОГО ПИВНОГО СУСЛА

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Вивчення пробіотичного потенціалу молочнокислих бактерій, виділених із кислого пивного суслу, є перспективним напрямом у створенні нових функціональних ферментованих продуктів, оскільки такі штами можуть проявляти підвищену здатність до антагонізму та виживання за стресових умов.

Мета роботи полягає у виділенні, ідентифікації та визначенні окремих пробіотичних властивостей молочнокислих бактерій кислого пивного суслу.

Методи. Для приготування пивного суслу використовували такий метод. Виділення ізолятів молочнокислих бактерій (МКБ) проводили зі спонтанно ферментованого впродовж 12 місяців пивного суслу. Ідентифікацію проводили з використанням фізіолого-біохімічних досліджень метаболічних особливостей МКБ. Антагоністичні властивості ізоляту визначали лунковим методом, антибіотикочутливість — диск-дифузійним, адгезивні властивості — спектрофотометрично. Ферментативні активності визначали якісно.

Результати. Було ідентифіковано культуру *Lactiplantibacillus pentosus*, ізольовану з пивного суслу. Визначено її високий антагоністичний ефект по відношенню до тест-культури *S. aureus*, зона інгібування росту $30,0 \pm 0,10$ мм. Встановлено резистентність до аміноглікозидів, пеніцилінів, що відповідає типовому профілю антибіотикочутливості МКБ. Показники адгезії — автоагрегація та гідрофобність були $44,80 \pm 2,62\%$ та $46,20 \pm 3,00\%$ відповідно. Досліджуваних ферментативних активностей не спостерігали.

Висновки. З кислого пивного суслу виділено *Lpb. pentosus*, що проявляє антагонізм до *S. aureus*, стійкість до аміноглікозидів, пеніцилінів та глікопептидів, середні показники автоагрегації та високу гідрофобність клітинної стінки. Виявлено відсутність досліджуваних ферментативних активностей. Результати свідчать про потенційну пробіотичну активність та потребу подальших досліджень стресостійкості.

Ключові слова: молочнокислі бактерії, кисле сусло, *Lactiplantibacillus pentosus*, антагонізм, адгезивні властивості, ферментативна активність, пробіотики, біотехнологія.

Received 2025/12/02

Revised 2026/01/14

Accepted 2026/02/12