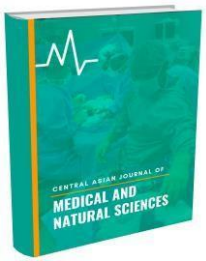

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Article

Penicillin: The Magic Drug

Tahir Kadhem Hassan[1*], Shaker Naeem Jawad Kazem[2], Huda Jalil Zabun[3], Karar Star Lazim Makhwar[4]

1,2,3,4. Department of Pathological Analysis, College of Science, University of Thi-Qar, Iraq
* Correspondence: scipath2e90@sci.utq.edu.iq

Abstract: This study explores the ongoing development of penicillin antibiotics, which remain crucial for combating bacterial infections due to their low toxicity, broad distribution, and bactericidal properties. The emergence of penicillin-resistant Staphylococcus strains prompted the creation of methicillin and oxacillin, while aminopenicillins like ampicillin are now widely used against Gram-negative bacteria. Despite advances, the need for penicillins effective against Enterobacteriaceae remains a significant challenge. The research aimed to develop an ideal penicillin with high bioavailability, resistance to β-lactamases, strong bactericidal activity, low toxicity, and high affinity for penicillin-binding proteins. Results highlight progress in achieving these objectives, with implications for improving treatments against resistant bacterial strains.

Keywords: Penicillin, Antibiotic resistance, Aminopenicillins, β-lactamases, Bactericidal activity

1. Introduction

Despite the accidental discovery of penicillin, it was not only a happy fluke. In 1928, Alexander Fleming, a bacteriologist from St. Mary's Hospital in London, took a break from his job to explore the infected dish of potatoes on his bench. He documented that the growth of the surrounding microorganisms was inhibited by the fungal infection. The fungus Penicillium releases an antibiotic called penicillin. According to Fleming's research from 1929 in the British Journal of Experimental Pathology, penicillin was capable of halting the growth of bacteria in vitro. As a result, penicillin is likely to have a role, as documented by Fleming..

Aim of the study

The current review study sought to accomplish the following goals in order to emphasize the value of pencillins:

a. To determine the penicillin's mode of action.
b. To outline the negative consequences of penicillin.
c. To explain how penicillin is administered.

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2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design

This review study synthesizes existing literature on penicillin, focusing on its mechanism of action, clinical applications, and potential adverse effects. A comprehensive search was conducted in various databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, to gather relevant studies published in the last two decades.

2.2 Search Strategy

Keywords such as "penicillin," "antibiotics," "mechanism of action," "adverse effects," "resistance," and "clinical applications" were used in combination to refine the search. Inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed articles, clinical trials, and reviews published in English.

2.3 Data Extraction

Data were extracted on the following parameters:

a. Mechanism of Action: Details regarding the interaction of penicillin with bacterial cell walls.
b. Clinical Indications: Information on the spectrum of bacterial infections treated with penicillin.
c. Adverse Effects: Summary of documented side effects and hypersensitivity reactions.
d. Administration: Different routes and forms of penicillin, including dosage information.
e. Patient Considerations: Specific populations including pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children.

2.4 Data Analysis

The extracted data were categorized based on the parameters listed above. A qualitative analysis was performed to summarize the findings, focusing on the implications of penicillin use in clinical settings and its impact on microbial resistance patterns.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Since this study involved a literature review, no ethical approval was required. However, all data sources were properly cited to acknowledge original authors and avoid plagiarism.

2.6 Limitations

The study is limited by the availability of research articles and may be influenced by publication bias. Additionally, variations in study designs and methodologies among the included articles were considered when interpreting the results.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Indications

Penicillin is considered one of the most popular antibiotics on Earth because of its diverse array of therapeutic applications. Many anaerobes, including Listeria, are able to be successfully treated with penicillin [1]. Specifically, some bacteria, including enterococci, have acquired resistance to the antibiotic penicillin. Today, the treatment of choice for infections with Enterococcus is gentamicin or a combination of penicillin and streptomycin. Because only half of the penicillins can pass through the porins, some Gram-negative bacteria are resistant to them[2,3]. Penicillin antibiotics include penicillin G, penicillin V, methicillin, nafcillin, ampicillin, carbenicillin, piperacillin, and mezlocillin. However, newer, broad spectrum penicillins have demonstrated their effectiveness against bacteria that are Gram-negative. Amoxicillin and ampicillin are both second-generation antibiotics that have the capacity to permeate through porins.

3.2 Mechanisms of Action

In the majority of bacteria, a peptidoglycan cell wall is located around the bacterial plasma membrane, this wall serves as a barrier to prevent the bacteria from being osmotically lyzed and maintains its structural integrity. During the growth and reproduction processes, the peptidoglycan wall is always evolving. Penicillins inhibit the association of peptidoglycan with the cell wall. As such, the bacteria cannot create a new cell wall in addition to the existing one, this is because other proteins continue to break apart the existing cell wall. Osmotic pressure causes water to migrate into the bacterial cell, if the bacterial cell wall is further damaged, the organism will perish. Peptidoglycan fragments can activate hydrolases and autolysins, these enzymes further decompose the cell wall. Also, Penicillins can be combined with β-lactamase inhibitors like clavulanic acid to enhance their potency. β-lactamase inhibitors prevent the destruction of β-lactams. They have been demonstrated to be effective against bacteria that are Gram-negative. Amoxicillin and ampicillin are both second-generation antibiotics that have the capacity to permeate through pores[5,6].

3.3 Administration

Penicillin G is available in a intravenous or intramuscular form. The three different concentrations of Penicillin G that are available in vials are: 1 million, 5 million, and 20 million units. Penicillin G is primarily given to children via parenteral administration, this is because the drug is more rapidly breakdown in the presence of stomach acid, and less than 30% of the substance is absorbed. Because of its short half-life, it's sometimes administered in divided doses, which are separated by 4-6 hours, either intramuscularly or intravenously. Benzathineicillin G is ingested on a daily basis for two to four weeks in small quantities. Penicillin V and its salt, penicillin VK, are both available as re-suspended solutions in the form of tablets and capsules (both 250 mg/5 mL)..

3.4 A Particular Group of patients

Women with preterm labor: Penicillin G has not been demonstrated to have a significant negative impact on pregnant women. Because of the higher clearance of penicillin V during childbirth, the typical dose or typical dosing frequency should be decreased [10]. Breastfeeding mothers': Studies have documented the presence of low concentrations of penicillin G and penicillin V in milk, both of which are believed to have a negative effect on breastfed children. Penicillins are hypothesized to adversely affect the infant's intestinal flora and lead to either diarrhea or thrush, but this has not been well documented. Breastfeeding mothers have a safe chance of taking penicillin G or V. [11,12]. Young adults: The concentration of penicillin in children is 1.5 times greater than in adults.

3.5 Adverse effects

Penicillin V and G have adverse effects that include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, and urticaria. Other than the above effects, penicillin G can also lead to muscle pain, fever, chills, headache, tachycardia, flushing, shortness of breath, and hypotension. Hypersensitivity reactions: These are the most common adverse effects of the drug and are either sudden or gradual in nature. Immediate onset: This type of response occurs in 20 minutes of taking the medication. Symptoms include edema, breathing problems, laryngospasm, hypotension, vascular damage, urticaria, itching, and death. o Late onset: This response is triggered by two to three weeks of treatment. Symptoms include fever, lethargy, urticaria, myalgia, arthritis, stomach pain, and rash. It's not a common illness [14]. Gastrointestinal symptoms are most frequent in the digestive system..

3.6 Interactions Between Drugs

Erythromycin, chloramphenicol, and sulfonamides should not be employed simultaneously because of their adverse effects. Probenecid suppresses the tubular excretion of penicillin G, which results in a longer and higher plasma concentration. • Aspirin, phenylbutazone, indomethacin, thiazides, furosemide, and ethacrynic acid increase the half-life of penicillin by competing with the tubular secretion. Probenecid decreases the distribution of penicillin..

3.7 Contraindications

If you've experienced severe side effects from penicillin or one of its derivatives in the past, it's not recommended to utilize this medication. Additionally, patients with Stevens-Johnson syndrome should not receive treatment with penicillin following the administration of 6(+/-) penicillin or a similar compound. Since small quantities of penicillin are present in breast milk, it's safe to consume this medication during pregnancies and lactation. For the treatment of bacterial meningitis, penicillin and tetracycline have adverse effects. Studies have demonstrated that the sole use of penicillin increases the probability of death by 2.6 times. For penicillin to be successful, the production of the bacterial cell wall must be active [16]. Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhea (CDAD) has been linked to the majority of antibiotics. The degree of diarrhea's severity can be from mild to severe colitis. Penicillin is one example of a class of drugs called antibiotics..

3.8 Monitoring

Patients using penicillin often don't need close observation. However, one research recommended therapeutic drug monitoring along the course of treating enterococcal endocarditis in order to more precisely assess penicillin exposure and dose. By paying close attention to the details, we can increase the therapeutic impact and lower the risk of antibiotic resistance. When giving penicillin for a lengthy length of time, it may be crucial to keep an eye on hematologic, renal, and hepatic function.

3.8 Toxicity

The probability of penicillin intoxication is very low. Even at high concentrations, these drugs are less dangerous to physicians than other chemical compounds with a physiological role. It's estimated that a patient would need to have a dose of 5 g/kg body weight administered intravenously in order to experience a convulsion. However, too much penicillin can lead to injury in the local area if it is injected; this is most likely to occur if the substance is inhaled or if it is absorbed through the eye. All pure penicillin products are considered safe for intravenous and pulmonary administration. Numerous studies have demonstrated that topical penicillin is capable of preventing blood from forming clots in the mouth.[19] Before administering penicillin to a patient, physicians and other medical

professionals should be aware of the potential for penicillin to be resistant to bacteria that have an underlying cause of the disease [20].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, penicillin remains a cornerstone of antimicrobial therapy due to its effective bactericidal properties, broad spectrum of activity, and low toxicity profile. The mechanisms by which penicillin disrupts bacterial cell wall synthesis highlight its importance in treating a variety of infections, particularly those caused by Gram-positive bacteria and certain Gram-negative strains. However, the emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains, such as penicillin-resistant Staphylococcus and Enterococcus, underscores the urgent need for continued research into novel penicillin derivatives and combination therapies that can circumvent resistance mechanisms. Future studies should focus on optimizing dosing strategies, particularly in vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and those with renal impairments, while also exploring the potential impact of penicillin on microbiome dynamics. This dual approach not only aims to enhance therapeutic efficacy but also to mitigate the risks associated with antibiotic resistance, ensuring the sustained utility of penicillin in clinical practice.

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