



Characterization and Evaluation of Potential Antibacterial Activity of Green Synthesized Silver Nanoparticles from *Guiera senegalensis* Leaf Extract

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 13 November 2023

Revised 28 April 2024

Accepted 30 April 2024

Published online 01 June 2024

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates *Guiera senegalensis* J.F. Gmel (Combretaceae), a widely acknowledged herb in Africa for its medicinal properties against various ailments, including fever, diarrhea, diabetes, dysentery, eczema, malaria, cough, tuberculosis, and its potential to enhance milk production in lactating women. The research focuses on utilizing *Guiera senegalensis* for synthesizing silver nano-particles (GS-AgNPs), due to its abundance in primary and secondary metabolites. The primary aim is to produce GS-AgNPs and assess their antibacterial efficacy. The synthesis of GS-AgNPs involved mixing a silver salt solution with the water leaf-extract. Characterization of the nanoparticles was conducted using Ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy with surface-plasmon-resonance (S-P-R) analysis at 390 nanometers (nm). Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (F-T-IR) investigated the identity of the phytochemicals responsible for the green reduction of silver ions. X-ray diffraction (X-RD) confirmed the face-centered-cubic crystallinity of the GS-AgNPs with a mean size (33 nm). The antibacterial potential of GS-AgNPs was evaluated against both gram-negative (*Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella typhi*) and gram-positive bacteria (*Bacillus subtilis* and *Staphylococcus aureus*) using the Agar-well method. Results demonstrated the inhibitory effect of GS-AgNPs on microbial growth, with zone-of-inhibition (Z-OI) ranging from 4-7 millimeters (mm) to 16-19 mm at concentrations of 10 mg/cm³ and 20 mg/cm³, respectively. In comparison, the aqueous leaf extract exhibited Z-OI between 1.3-6 mm. GS-AgNPs displayed superior antibacterial activity against both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria when compared to the aqueous leaf extract.

Keywords: Antibacterial, Green synthesis, *Guiera senegalensis*, Silver-nanoparticles, Gram-positive, Gram-negative

Introduction

Nano-particles (NPs) have found widespread use across various scientific fields such as pharmaceuticals, biomedicine, agriculture, textiles, electronics, and medicine, garnering significant interest in recent years.^{1,2} Notably, NPs including gold, copper, zinc, iron, and silver have gained substantial attention.^{2,3,4,5} Silver-based nanoparticles, in particular, have emerged as one of the most extensively researched nano-materials due to their diverse applications including antimicrobial, drug delivery, anti-inflammatory, and wound dressing properties.^{6,7} Previous studies have explored the antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-cancer potential of NPs.^{8,9,10} One efficient technique gaining traction is the clean synthesis method, which replaces harmful chemicals with natural compounds. Plants, including their roots, leaves, and bark, have been identified as valuable resources for nanoparticle synthesis.^{2,9,11,12} Green production of silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) using plant extracts has garnered significant attention due to their nonpathogenic, environmentally friendly, cost-effective, and straightforward synthesis process.¹⁴

Guiera senegalensis, commonly known as "Sabara" by the Hausas and other tribes in Northern Nigeria, is a shrub native to the Sahel region spanning from Mauritania to Northern Nigeria and Sudan.^{14,15} This plant is rich in phenols and flavonoid chemicals and is traditionally used to supplement breast milk in lactating women and to treat diarrhea and fever.¹⁶ In African traditional medicine, *Guiera senegalensis* leaves (GS-L) are renowned as a "cure-all" and are utilized to treat various ailments including malaria, asthma, diabetes, dysentery, eczema, cough, and tuberculosis.¹⁷ GS-L, chosen for its high content of phenols and flavonoids, holds promise for the fabrication of silver phytochemical nano-particles due to their nonpathogenic nature, ecological safety, low cost, and simplicity of production.^{14,17} However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the clean synthesis of silver nanoparticles using *Guiera senegalensis* leaf extract. Therefore, this study aims to synthesize Ag-NPs from *Guiera senegalensis* leaves and evaluate their antibacterial potential.

Materials and Methods

Materials

Dimethyl sulfoxide and silver nitrate were procured from Loba Chemie, India, and Central Drug House, India, respectively. All chemicals used were of analytical grade.

Collection and identification of Plant material

Healthy leaves of *Guiera senegalensis* were collected in Wamakko, Sokoto-Nigeria, in February 2023 and identified by Musa Magagi, a herbarium expert at the Department of Pharmacognosy and Ethnomedicine, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. A voucher specimen

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Citation: Amedu AB, Uba A, Chika M, Umar WRS. Characterization and Evaluation of Potential Antibacterial Activity of Green Synthesized Silver Nanoparticles from *Guiera senegalensis* Leaf Extract. Trop J Nat Prod Res. 2024; 8(5): 7287-7291. <https://doi.org/10.26538/tjnpr/v8i5.34>

Official Journal of Natural Product Research Group, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

(PCG/UDUS/COMB/0002) was deposited in the herbarium. The leaves were washed, shade-dried, and powdered for further use.

Preparation of the plant-extract

The preparation of the plant-extract followed the method recommended by Liaqat *et al.* and Halilu *et al.*^{20,21} with slight modifications. 30 g of the leaf powder was soaked in 300 cm³ of distilled water (1:10 ratio) and heated for 10 minutes at 60 °C in a water bath (Memmert 854, W-Germany). After 24 hours of soaking, the mixture was filtered, and the supernatant was saved for Ag-NPs production.^{20,21}

Solution of silver nitrate (1 mM)

A 1 mM (0.001 M) solution of silver nitrate (AgNO₃) was prepared by dissolving 0.085 g of AgNO₃ in 500 cm³ of distilled water in a volumetric flask.^{14,20}

Green synthesis of silver nano-particles from aqueous-leaf-extract of *Guiera senegalensis* (GS)

The formation of GS-AgNPs was carried out as per the method described by Liaqat *et al.*, with minor adjustments. 10 cm³ of the aqueous leaf extract was added dropwise to 90 cm³ of silver-nitrate solution (1 mM) and stirred continuously for 2 hours using a magnetic stirrer (SH-2, India), kept in the dark at room temperature. The change in colour of the mixture from yellow to dark-brown indicated the formation of GS-AgNPs. The particles were separated from the mixture by centrifugation (Hanil Science Industrial MF 80, Korea) for 20 minutes at 4000 revolutions per minute (r-p-m) and dried (Thermostat Oven DHG-9023A, China) for further analysis.²⁰

Characterization of GS-AgNPs

UV-vis spectrophotometer analysis of GS-AgNPs

The UV-vis spectra of GS-AgNPs were recorded using a UV-Vis spectrometer (Double Beam, ATICO-ATE 4331, India) with a wavelength range of 200-750 nm.

F-T-IR Analysis of GS-AgNPs

F-T-IR spectra (Cary 630 Agilent Technologies, Malaysia) of GS-AgNPs and *Guiera senegalensis* leaf-extract were recorded between 4000–650 cm⁻¹ for functional group identification,

X-ray diffraction analysis of GS-AgNPs

X-RD analysis (Rigaku, Miniflex 600-C, Tokyo, Japan) of GS-AgNPs was performed in the angular range of 3° and 90° with operating current of 15 mA and voltage of 40 kV to confirm crystallinity.

Antibacterial studies

Test microorganisms

Clinical isolates of Gram-positive (*Bacillus subtilis* and *Staphylococcus aureus*) and Gram-negative (*Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella typhi*) bacteria were acquired from Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital' medical microbiology laboratory at, Sokoto Nigeria.

Media preparation and growth of microorganisms

Nutrient agar (NA) and Mueller Hinton agar (MHA) plates were prepared, and bacterial cultivation was carried out as per standard protocols. Autoclaving (Dixon Surgical Instrument ST 19T, UK) for 15 min at 121 °C was performed for sterilization. Briefly, five (5) and twenty-five (25) plates were prepared by dissolving 3.8 and 28.5 g of the NA and MHA with 100 and 750 cm³ of distilled-water. The prepared microbe was placed in an incubator (Memmert DIN 12880-K1, W-Germany) for 24 hours. The growth of the various bacteria was observed. The media preparation was determined by using equation 1 below:

$$(1) \quad \frac{\text{Weigh of the medium in directions (g)}}{\text{volume of D.W in directions (cm3)}} = \frac{\text{Weigh of powder should we weight (g)}}{\text{volume of media (D.W) we need (cm3)}}$$

Preparation of McFarland turbidity standard scale and organism suspension

A McFarland standard turbidity scale number 0.5 was prepared by combining 99.5 cm³ of 1% sulfuric acid with 0.5 cm³ of 1% barium chloride solution. The organism suspension was diluted using sterile

distilled water until its turbidity matched that of the McFarland scale, achieving a concentration of approximately 1.5 x 10⁸ colony forming units (CFU/cm³). The mixture was covered with foil and stored at room temperature.²²

Determination of the antibacterial activity of *G.S* leaf extract and GS-AgNPs

The antibacterial assay was conducted using the agar well diffusion method following procedures outlined by Yusuf *et al.* and Aziz *et al.* Sterilized agar medium was poured into sterile petri dishes in two layers, inoculated with the organism suspension, and two wells were bored at the side of each inoculated medium. The wells were filled with the extract solutions using a sterile syringe and allowed to diffuse. After incubation at 37°C for 24 hours, the zones of inhibition were observed and measured. The experiments were performed 3 times, and the zone-of-inhibition (Z-OI) mean recorded.^{23,24}

Analysis of data

The mean value along with the standard error of the mean (SEM) was computed utilizing Minitab 17 software. The X-RD graph was generated using GraphPad Prism 10, whereas the Z-OI graph was created using MS Excel 16.

Results and Discussion

Synthesis of GS-AgNPs

The change in colour from yellow to dark-brown confirmed the synthesis of GS-AgNPs. The reduction of silver ions (Ag⁺) to zero-valence silver (Ag⁰) was achieved by GS leaf-extract, resulting in surface plasmon resonance (SPR) of Ag-NPs. This observation aligns with previous studies by Sarwer *et al.*,²⁵ and Veerasamy *et al.*,²⁶ The color change is depicted in Figure 1.

Characterization of GS-AgNPs

Ultra-violet visible (UV-vis) spectroscopy analysis

Analysis using ultraviolet-visible (UV-vis) spectroscopy revealed a distinct absorption peak at 390 nm in the UV spectrum, which provided confirmation of the formation of GS-AgNPs. This peak signifies the reduction of silver-ions and the existence of surface plasmon resonance (S-P-R) as documented in prior research.^{28,29} Additional details of the UV spectra can be found in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Table 1: UV-spectroscopy analysis

S/N	Sample	Wavelength (nm)
1	Plant extract	410
2	Silver nitrate solution	280
3	silver nanoparticles solution (AgNPs)	390

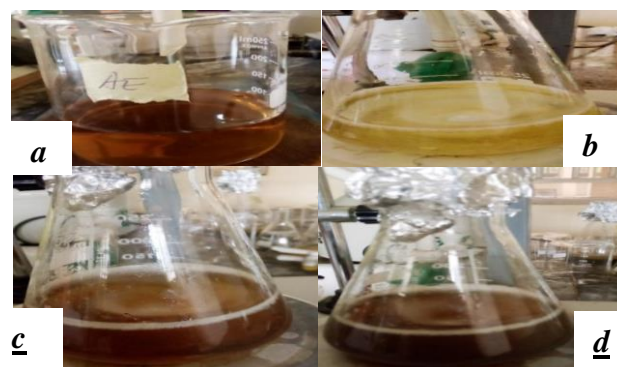


Figure 1: colour change of (a) aqueous leaf extract (AE) (b) GS-AgNPs after adding the silver-nitrate solution with the leaf-extract and (c) GS-AgNPs after 1 hour and (d) GS-AgNPs after 24 and 72 hours.

F-T-IR analysis of the GS-L-E and silver-nanoparticles (GS-AgNPs)

F-T-IR analysis of *Guiera senegalensis* leaves-extract (GS-L-E) revealed absorption peaks at 3306.1, 1634.4, and 1004.5 cm^{-1} corresponding to N-H stretch, C=C, and C-C functional groups, respectively. Conversely, the I-R peaks of the GS-AgNPs exhibited absorption bands at 3311.7, 2160, 1960.6, 1627, and 693.3 cm^{-1} attributed to N-H/O-H, C-H, C=C, and C-Cl functional groups. These peaks indicate the presence of alkyl ether and phenol groups, serving as capping and stabilizing agents. F-T-IR technique was employed to identify phyto-compounds, providing evidence of Ag-NPs capping.³¹ Upon analyzing the F-T-IR spectra of both the plant extract and GS-AgNPs, similar absorption bands were observed. Notably, the GS-AgNPs spectra exhibited O-H stretching of carbohydrates at 3311.7 cm^{-1} .³² The observed shift in different bands of the GS-AgNPs compared to the leaf extract (L-E) suggests a crosslinking between the Ag-NPs and the L-E, confirming the capping of GS-AgNPs by the organic molecules of the L-E.³³ Considering the utilization of GS-L-E, it can be inferred that flavonoids, alkaloids, and terpenoids are present. The F-T-IR data of GS-L-E and GS-AgNPs indicated that the phytochemicals were responsible for the reducing and stabilizing power of nano-particles.³⁴ Additionally, another peak was observed nearby at 693 nm, potentially indicating the initiation of Ag-NPs agglomeration.¹⁴ The FTIR spectra are illustrated in Figure 3.

X-ray diffraction (X-RD) of GS-AgNPs

X-RD analysis peaks confirmed the crystalline nature of GS-AgNPs with $2\theta = 15.34^\circ, 22.48^\circ, 27.00^\circ, 32.54^\circ,$ and 41.33° corresponding to specific planes (111), (210), (220), (222), and (3-11). The results matched those reported in the literature (COD-DB card no. 1509518 standard database),^{14,31,35} confirming the nano-crystalline form of the synthesized nanoparticles. X-RD spectrum is shown in Figure 4.

Antibacterial assay

GS-AgNPs and GS-L-E exhibited significant antibacterial activity against human pathogenic microorganisms, with higher concentrations (20 mg/cm^3) resulting in larger zones of inhibition (16.33-19.33 nm) compared to the extract (4-9 nm). The results in Table 2 indicate

promising antibacterial properties of GS-AgNPs, especially against *Escherichia coli*. The mechanism of bactericidal action of GS-AgNPs involves their interaction with bacterial cell membranes, disrupting permeability and energy functions. The bactericidal activity is influenced by factors such as particle size distribution and surface area. These findings are consistent with previous research.^{14,18,36}

Conclusion

In conclusion, silver nano-particles synthesized using *Guiera senegalensis* leaf-extract displayed antibacterial efficacy against both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria. The nano-particles exhibited superior antibacterial properties compared to the leaf extract alone. This study lays the groundwork for further exploration of *Guiera senegalensis* in nanoparticle synthesis and biomedical applications. Future research avenues include toxicity studies, antifungal activity, antioxidant properties, and in silico ADMET analysis of the synthesized nano-particles.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' Declaration

The authors hereby declare that the work presented in this article is original and that any liability for claims relating to the content of this article will be borne by them.

Acknowledgments

The authors expressed their sincere appreciation to Christiana Simon, Mal. Sabiu (Laboratory Technicians, Microbiology PG Lab), Ibrahim Nasir (Pharmaceutical Chemistry Lab technician) Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria for their immense support during the research.

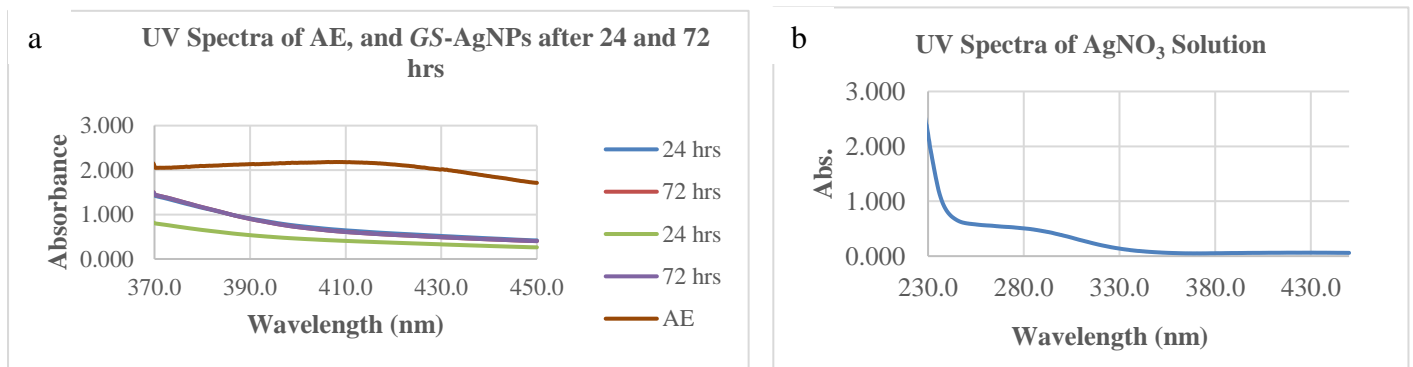


Figure 2: Graph of UV spectra of (a) silver nanoparticles from *Guiera senegalensis* (GS-AgNPs) and aqueous extract (AE) (b) solution of AgNO_3 solution

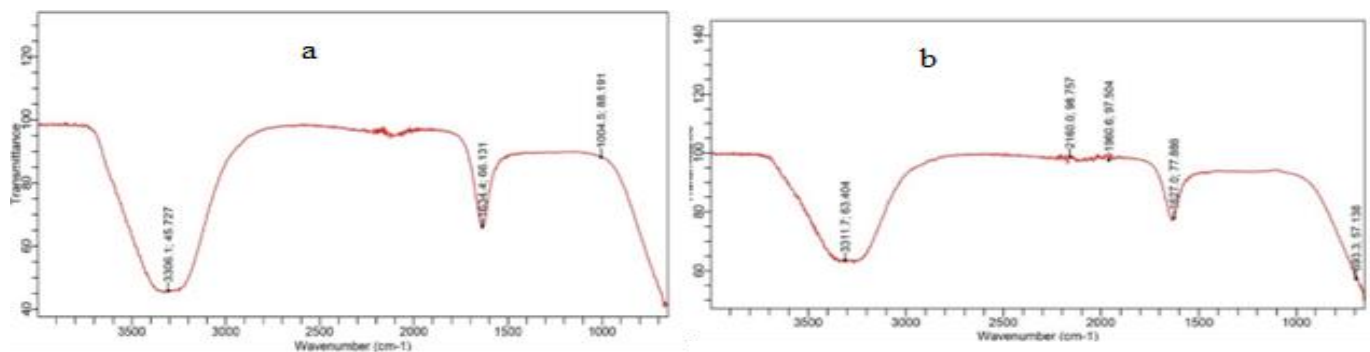
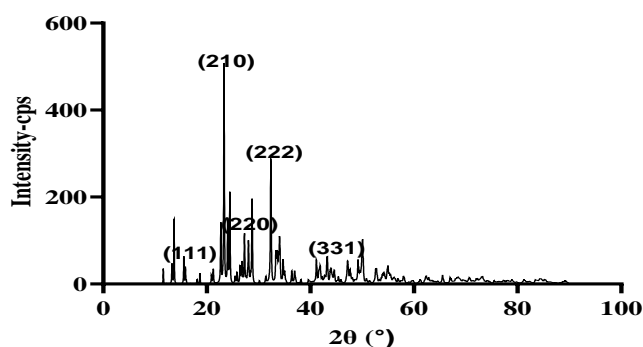
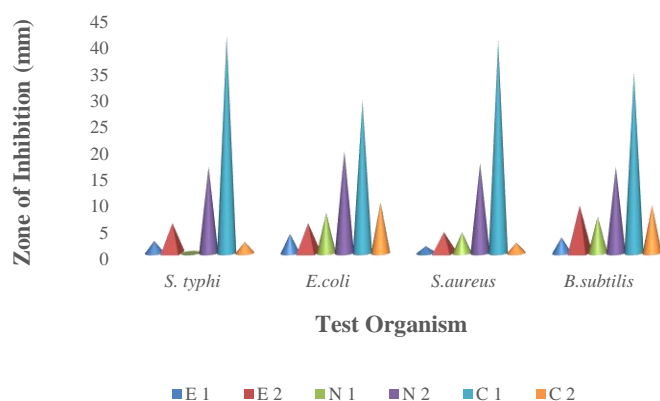


Figure 3: FTIR spectra of (a) *Guiera senegalensis* aqueous-extract and (b) silver-nanoparticles

Table 2: Mean zone-of-inhibition (Z-O-I) of growth in mm (n=3)

S/N	Test Organism	E 1	E 2	N 1	N 2	C 1	C 2
1	<i>S. Typhi</i>	2.33	5.67	ND	16.33	41.17	2.17
2	<i>E. coli</i>	3.67	5.67	7.67	19.33	28.84	9.67
3	<i>S. aureus</i>	1.33	4.00	4.00	17.00	40.17	2.00
4	<i>B. Subtilis</i>	3.00	9.00	7.00	16.33	34.17	9.17

E1: Extract (10 mg/cm³), E2: Extract (20 mg/cm³), N1: Nanoparticle at (10 mg/cm³), N2: Nanoparticle at (20 mg/cm³), C1: Ciproflaxacin, C2: Silver Nitrate solution

**Figure 4:** X-ray diffraction of GS-AgNPs**Figure 5:** Zone-of-inhibition against tested organism (mean \pm SEM, n=3)

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