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Maximizing Biotic Food as Nutraceuticals: A Comprehensive Exploration

Olatomiwa O. Ariyo * and Tolulope Q. Akinyemi
Department of Microbiology, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
*Corresponding Author (*olatomiwa.ariyo@fuoye.edu.ng*, +2347036708565)

Abstrac*t*
The quest for optimal health and nutrition has led to a paradigm shift in our approach to food, with an increasing emphasis on harnessing the potential of biotic components as nutraceuticals. This study investigates the concept of maximizing biotic food as nutraceuticals, exploring the intersection of nutrition, medicine, and sustainable agriculture, and to unravel the diverse array of health-promoting compounds inherent in natural, living organisms. . Biotic foods, including fruits, vegetables, and fermented products, possess a rich tapestry of bioactive components, ranging from phytochemicals and antioxidants to probiotics and enzymes. Biotic foods encompass a spectrum of living organisms such as probiotics, prebiotics, and beneficial microorganisms that confer health benefits beyond basic nutrition. By unlocking the intricate interplay between the human microbiome and biotic foods, this study seeks to unravel the therapeutic potential inherent in these living entities. As scientific understanding advances, there is a growing recognition of the significance of biotic foods as potent sources of nutraceuticals. Nutraceuticals, a portmanteau of "nutrition" and "pharmaceuticals," refer to bioactive compounds in food that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition.
Keywords: *Probiotics, Prebiotics, Nutrition, Health-promoting foods, Sustainable agriculture.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the intersection of nutrition and health has garnered substantial attention, leading to a growing awareness of the importance of food not only as a source of sustenance but also as a potential therapeutic agent. There has been an escalating global interest in exploring the potential of biotic food sources as nutraceuticals, owing to their unique nutritional composition and purported health benefits The concept of nutraceuticals, a term coined from "nutrition" and "pharmaceutical," by Dr. Stephen DeFelice in 1989, refers to bioactive compounds present in food items that exhibit health-promoting properties and offer physiological benefits beyond their basic nutritional value. This emerging field intersects nutrition, medicine, and health, and as the field of nutraceuticals continues to evolve, researchers and nutritionists alike are increasingly focusing on biotic foods, exploring the vast potential of living organisms as sources of potent bioactive compounds maximizing biotic foods for their nutraceutical potential.

The current paradigm shift towards preventive healthcare has intensified the investigation into dietary patterns and their impact on well-being. Numerous studies have underscored the importance of incorporating biotic foods into daily diets for their role in preventing disease and health promotion. The Mediterranean diet, renowned for its emphasis on plant-based foods, has gained recognition for its potential to mitigate chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disorders and diabetes (Martínez-González *et al*., 2019). Additionally, research has shown that bioactive compounds found in certain biotic foods possess anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-cancer properties (Chiva-Blanch and Visioli, 2018). The significance of maximizing biotic food as nutraceuticals lies in the multifaceted benefits these natural sources can offer. Biotic foods encompass a wide array of plant-based and microbial sources that have been integral to traditional medicine systems across diverse cultures. Such foods not only provide essential nutrients but also harbor bioactive compounds, such as polyphenols, flavonoids, prebiotics, and probiotics, which have been linked to various health-promoting effects (Schwingshackl *et al*., 2017).

This burgeoning interest in biotic foods as nutraceuticals stems from the realization that a significant portion of the human diet relies on these resources, and harnessing their inherent bioactive potential may contribute to improved overall health. Biotic foods include an array of plant-based and animal-derived sources, encompassing fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs, and certain microbial entities. The integration of these foods into the diet has been linked to enhanced immune function, gut health, and cognitive well-being (Gómez-Gallego *et al*., 2018; Grosso *et al*., 2017). In the realm of plant-based biotic

foods, the research of Boyer and Liu (2004) elucidates the potential of phytochemicals derived from fruits, vegetables, and herbs in preventing chronic diseases by acting as antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents. Furthermore, the work of Liu (2017).underscores the importance of incorporating diverse plant species in the diet to maximize the spectrum of bioactive compounds, promoting overall health and well-being.

Microbial sources of biotic foods, such as fermented products, have gained attention for their contribution to gut health. A research by Marco *et al*. (2017) delved into the impact of fermented foods on the gut microbiota, emphasizing their potential in modulating the microbial composition and enhancing nutrient absorption. The symbiotic relationship between the human gut and microbial communities highlights a novel avenue for understanding the intricate interplay between biotic foods and health.

As the world grapples with an increasing burden of lifestyle-related diseases, there is a growing need to identify sustainable and natural solutions that can be easily incorporated into daily dietary practices. The exploration of biotic foods as nutraceuticals not only aligns with this imperative but also taps into traditional knowledge systems that have long recognized the therapeutic potential of certain foods (Kumar and Pandey, 2013). In addition to their nutritive and bioactive qualities, biotic foods offer sustainable solutions for addressing global health challenges. The integration of plant-based diets aligns with the principles of sustainable nutrition, as highlighted by Johnson (2002), contributing to both personal well-being and environmental conservation. This interdisciplinary approach, integrating nutritional science, medicine, and ethnobotany, holds promise for unveiling novel bioactive compounds and mechanisms of action within biotic foods.

THE NUTRACEUTICAL PARADIGM

The field of nutraceuticals has evolved significantly over time, embodying a fascinating intersection between nutrition and pharmaceuticals.

Shifting Trends in Modern Nutrition

Modern nutrition trends reflect a paradigm shift towards a proactive approach to health maintenance. Consumers are increasingly seeking natural alternatives to traditional pharmaceuticals, driving the surge in interest and demand for nutraceutical products. The appeal lies in the perceived safety and holistic health benefits of incorporating bioactive compounds from food sources into one's diet (Roberfroid, 2002).

The emergence of functional foods, fortified with vitamins, minerals, and other bioactive compounds, exemplifies this trend. Additionally, the advent of personalized nutrition, enabled by advances in genomics, allows for tailored dietary recommendations based on individual genetic profiles (Ordovas, 2004). These trends underscore the dynamic nature of the nutraceutical paradigm and its integration into contemporary health-conscious lifestyles.

Nutraceuticals vs. Traditional Pharmaceuticals

The distinction between nutraceuticals and traditional pharmaceuticals is crucial for understanding their respective roles in healthcare. While pharmaceuticals often focus on treating specific diseases, nutraceuticals encompass a broader spectrum, emphasizing preventive and holistic approaches to health (Gehring *et al*., 2014). Nutraceuticals leverage the synergy of bioactive compounds within whole foods, aiming to optimize physiological functions and promote overall well-being. The growing body of evidence supporting the health benefits of nutraceuticals has spurred interest in their integration into conventional medical practices. Collaborative efforts between pharmaceutical and nutraceutical industries are exploring synergistic approaches that harness the strengths of both paradigms, heralding a new era in integrative medicine (Chopra *et al*., 2017).

Importance of Biotic Sources in Nutraceutical Development

The vast diversity of biotic sources, including plants, fungi, and marine organisms, plays a pivotal role in nutraceutical development. These sources serve as reservoirs of bioactive compounds with therapeutic potential. For example, the antioxidant-rich polyphenols found in green tea and berries have demonstrated anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties (Prior and Cao, 1999). Marine-derived omega-3 fatty acids have been found to be associated with cardiovascular health (Kris-Etherton *et al*., 2002).

Harnessing the potential of biotic sources requires interdisciplinary collaboration between nutritionists, pharmacologists, and environmental scientists. Conservation efforts and sustainable practices are essential to ensure the long-term availability of these resources. Additionally, advancements in biotechnology offer innovative avenues for the synthesis and extraction of bioactive compounds from biotic sources, further expanding the repertoire of nutraceutical options (Selvam, 2019).

BIOTIC FOODS: A TREASURE TROVE OF NUTRACEUTICALS

Biotic foods encompass a wide range of natural products, including vegetables, fruits, herbs, spices, probiotics, and animal-derived sources.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Antioxidant Properties

Fruits and vegetables are well-known for their antioxidant properties, playing a crucial role in neutralizing free radicals within the body. Antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, carotenoids, and flavonoids, found in abundance in fruits like berries, citrus fruits, and vegetables like spinach and kale, contribute significantly to overall health (Smith *et al*., 2018). These compounds scavenge free radicals, protecting cells from oxidative stress and reducing the risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers (Dreher and Junod, 2012).

Polyphenols and Their Health Benefits

Polyphenols, a diverse group of compounds found in fruits and vegetables, have garnered attention for their potential health benefits. These bioactive compounds exhibit antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer properties (González-Gallego *et al*., 2010). Sources rich in polyphenols, such as green tea, apples, and grapes, have been associated with improved cardiovascular health, reduced inflammation, and enhanced cognitive function (Scalbert *et al*., 2020).

HERBS AND SPICES

Medicinal Properties

Herbs and spices have been utilized for centuries not only for culinary purposes but also for their medicinal properties. Turmeric, with its active compound curcumin, exhibits potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects (Hewlings and Kalman, 2017). Similarly, ginger has been recognized for its anti-nausea and anti-inflammatory properties and its potential in lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels (Marx *et al*., 2015). The medicinal properties of herbs and spices make them valuable additions to both traditional and modern medicine.

Culinary and Therapeutic Applications

Beyond their medicinal properties, herbs and spices have found applications in culinary practices and therapeutic interventions. For instance, rosemary and thyme not only enhance the flavor of dishes but also contribute to improved digestion and antimicrobial effects (Raal *et al*., 2012). Understanding the dual role of herbs and spices in culinary and therapeutic contexts provides a holistic perspective on their potential health benefits.

PROBIOTICS AND FERMENTED FOODS

Gut Health and Beyond

Probiotics, live microorganisms with potential health benefits, are commonly found in fermented foods. These microorganisms positively influence the gut microbiota, promoting digestive health and nutrient absorption (Hill, 2014). Probiotics have also been associated with mental health benefits, showcasing the intricate connection between the gut and the brain (Cryan and Dinan, 2012).

Immune System Modulation

Fermented foods, such as yogurt and kimchi, not only contribute to gut health but also modulate the immune system. The fermentation process enhances the bioavailability of nutrients and produces bioactive compounds that positively impact the immune response (Marco *et al*., 2017). This immune-modulating potential highlights the broader health implications of including probiotics and fermented foods in the diet.

ANIMAL-DERIVED NUTRACEUTICALS

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, primarily found in fatty fish like salmon and mackerel, are essential for cardiovascular health and cognitive function (Kris-Etherton *et al*., 2002). The anti-inflammatory properties of omega-3 fatty acids contribute to the prevention of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular diseases and arthritis (Calder, 2015).

Bioactive Peptides

Animal-derived nutraceuticals also include bioactive peptides derived from proteins in milk, eggs, and meat. These peptides exhibit various health-promoting effects, such as antioxidant, anti-hypertensive, and anti-inflammatory activities (Chakrabarti *et al*., 2014). The bioavailability of these peptides makes them potential substances for functional foods with therapeutic benefits.

Maximizing Nutraceutical Potential Through Dietary Patterns

Dietary Patterns and Nutraceuticals
Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet, characterized by a high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and olive oil, has gained recognition for its nutraceutical-rich profile. A meta-analysis by Estruch (2018) revealed the cardiovascular benefits of this dietary pattern, attributing its success to the synergistic effects of various bioactive compounds present in biotic foods. The inclusion of olive oil, abundant in monounsaturated fats and phenolic compounds, exemplifies how a holistic dietary approach can maximize the nutraceutical potential of biotic foods.

Plant-Based Diets

Plant-based diets, whether vegetarian or vegan, emphasize the consumption of biotic foods and have garnered attention for their potential in preventing chronic diseases. A study by Satija (2017) highlighted the association between plant-based diets and a reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain cancers. By focusing on plant-derived nutraceuticals, such as those found in fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts, individuals can harness the health benefits of these bioactive compounds. . The inclusion of plant-based nutraceutical sources, such as phytochemicals and antioxidants, has been linked to reduced inflammation and a lower risk of chronic diseases (Satija, 2017).

DASH Diet

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, contributing to the intake of various nutraceuticals. Research by Appel (1997) has shown that the DASH diet effectively lowers blood pressure, highlighting its potential in promoting cardiovascular health.

Traditional Asian Diets

Traditional Asian diets, such as the Japanese or Chinese diet, are characterized by high consumption of fish, vegetables, and fermented foods. These dietary patterns have been associated with longevity and a lower incidence of age-related diseases (Yamori, 2001). The presence of bioactive compounds in these diets contributes to their nutraceutical potential.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Challenges and Opportunities in Maximizing Biotic Food as Nutraceuticals

Bioavailability and Absorption

Despite the abundance of nutraceuticals in biotic foods, challenges related to bioavailability and absorption must be addressed. For instance, the bioavailability of certain phytochemicals may be influenced by factors such as cooking methods and food matrix (Manach, 2004). Strategies to enhance bioavailability, such as food pairing and processing techniques, need further exploration.

Food Matrix and Processing

The bioavailability of nutraceuticals is influenced by the food matrix and processing methods. For instance, the presence of certain nutrients enhances the absorption of others, as seen in the case of vitamin C facilitating the absorption of non-heme iron (Hurrell, 2003). Understanding these interactions is crucial for optimizing dietary patterns.

Personalized Nutrition

The concept of personalized nutrition recognizes individual variations in response to dietary interventions. A study by Celis-Morales (2017) demonstrated the impact of genetic factors on the effectiveness of the Mediterranean diet in cardiovascular risk reduction. Tailoring nutraceutical-rich diets based on genetic, metabolic, and microbiome profiles presents an exciting avenue for optimizing health outcomes.

Gut Microbiota

The gut microbiota plays a pivotal role in the metabolism of dietary compounds, impacting their bioavailability. Research by David (2014) highlights the intricate interplay between gut microbiota composition and the absorption of specific nutraceuticals, underscoring the importance of a healthy gut microbiome.

Regulatory Framework and Consumer Awareness

Regulation of Nutraceuticals

As the interest in nutraceuticals grows, the need for a robust regulatory framework becomes imperative. Governments and regulatory bodies must establish clear guidelines for the labeling, safety, and efficacy of nutraceutical products. The work of DeFelice (2002) on the regulatory aspects of nutraceuticals provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in ensuring the quality and integrity of these products.

Consumer Education and Awareness

Maximizing the nutraceutical potential of biotic foods requires a well-informed consumer base. Educational initiatives, both at the individual and community levels, can empower people to make informed dietary choices. The role of healthcare professionals and nutritionists in disseminating accurate information about the health benefits of biotic foods is pivotal in shaping dietary behaviors (Robinson, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The maximization of biotic foods as nutraceuticals is a multifaceted endeavor that encompasses bioactive compounds, dietary patterns, personalized nutrition, regulatory considerations, and ongoing research frontiers. By exploring the existing literature and real references, this article provides insights into the potential of biotic foods to serve as natural sources of health-promoting compounds.

As we navigate the complexities of modern lifestyles and health challenges, the integration of nutraceutical-rich biotic foods into daily diets stands as a tangible and sustainable approach toward enhancing overall well-being. From phytochemicals and antioxidants

to probiotics and personalized nutrition, the journey towards maximizing the nutraceutical potential of biotic foods is an exciting and evolving narrative that intertwines science, nutrition, and public health.

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