

Eco-Friendly Synthesis of MgO Nanoparticles and Their Antibacterial Performance

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Abstract

Nanoparticles (<100 nm in size) due to their enhanced surface area and high chemical reactivity have been a boon, ranging from micro to macro level. This has increased its applicability in various fields such as Food, textile, environment, biomedicine etc. Various metal oxides have been employed in Biomedical applications for their antibacterial, antioxidant and anticancerous activities. But MgO NPs have received much attention due to their high stability, non-toxicity and low cost. Because MgO NPs produce reactive oxygen species (ROS) and zone of inhibition (ZOI), they are thought to have exceptional antibacterial action against both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria. They can be easily synthesized by various methods such as sol gel, hydrothermal, precipitation, green synthesis, microwave assisted, micro emulsion, oxidation and sonochemical methods. Out of these, the most economical method is green synthesis of MgO NPs and is currently discussed here.

Keywords: Magnesium oxide nanoparticles, antibacterial activity, green synthesis, reactive oxygen species, biomedical applications

INTRODUCTION

Nanotechnology is becoming the base in the field of science and research in the present time. It has evolved into several branches that touch every sphere of human life and nanoparticles behave as a milestone in this field. Nanotechnology acts as an important method in the development of a clean, non-toxic, environment-friendly procedure for the synthesis of the nanoparticle [13]. Nanoparticles range from 1- 100 nm in size, are building blocks for more complex nanostructure [12]. Nanoparticles are not new to the environment, they occur naturally in various forms such as bacteria, minerals, clays. They have been used since ancient times for various purposes like as colorant for metals, but the synthetic design is starting from last few years. In 2017, Rastogi et al. Nanoparticles have gained a lot of attention in a variety of domains, including the industrial, medicinal, and environmental sectors [32]. These days, NPs are created using a green synthetic method, where the biomolecules can function as both reducing and oxidizing agents [21]. Broad approaches available for NP synthesis are bottom-up and top-down. The top-down approach is unrestricted and steady, whereas the bottom-up involves the self-build of atomic size particles to grow nano-size particles [31]. This can be attained by physical and chemical means, green synthesis is eco-friendly, economical, and generate stable NP formation [2].

It is because of their unique properties such as small particle size, large surface area to volume ratio, they are responsible for higher chemical reactivity and results in the formation of reactive oxygen species (ROS). Nanoparticles are usually prepared by various chemical methods such as hydrothermal, precipitation, micelle, pyrolysis, and sol-gel process, etc. [18]. Among all kinds of nanoparticles, metal oxide nanoparticles are indispensable, and because of their distinctive properties, they have wide applications in different fields. These days, self-cleaning coatings, sunscreens, cosmetics, and

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Received Date: December 16, 2024
Accepted Date: February 07, 2025
Published Date: February 14, 2025

Citation: Sapna Chandel. Eco-Friendly Synthesis of MgO Nanoparticles and Their Antibacterial Performance. International Journal of Advance in Molecular Engineering. 2025; 3(1): 33–41p.

fabrics all make extensive use of them. Additionally, these NPs are widely used as solar cell materials, water treatment agents, and catalytic converters for automobiles [32, 24]. The synthesis and applicability of metal nanoparticles in biomedicine will be influenced by a number of characteristics, including electrical, optical, physical, chemical, and thermal properties. While some of these qualities offer prospects for industrial and environmental applications, others are crucial for medicinal applications. Millions of cases of pathogenic diseases are caused by bacterial contamination, which continues to draw public attention. To address this issue, an efficient antibacterial agent that inhibits bacterial reproduction must be developed immediately. These days, self-cleaning coatings, sunscreens, cosmetics, and fabrics all make extensive use of them. Additionally, these NPs are widely used as solar cell materials, water treatment agents, and catalytic converters for automobiles [28, 33]. The synthesis and applicability of metal nanoparticles in biomedicine will be influenced by a number of characteristics, including electrical, optical, physical, chemical, and thermal properties. While some of these qualities offer prospects for industrial and environmental applications, others are crucial for medicinal applications. Millions of cases of pathogenic diseases are caused by bacterial contamination, which continues to draw public attention. To address this issue, an efficient antibacterial agent that inhibits bacterial reproduction must be developed immediately [14, 6]. Hence we are giving much attention to the inorganic metal oxide nanoparticles.

Among the studied inorganic metal oxides, MgO is of particular interest because of their stability under harsh conditions, and also they are regarded as safe material to human beings with strong antibacterial activity, high thermal stability, and low cost [14]. Yipping and coworkers demonstrated that MgO NPs have potent antibacterial activity against important food-borne pathogens and solve the potential mechanism of the harmful effects of MgO NPs on bacteria. Interestingly they have antimicrobial properties without photoactivation, compared with TiO₂ that requires photoactivation [41]. Magnesium can be used in various NMs in the form of MgO and MgX₂(MgF₂). In addition to inducing ROS, magnesium-containing NMs can also directly inhibit essential bacterial enzymes. It was found that MgF₂ can prevent the biofilm formation of *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. MgO is an interesting basic oxide with many uses. For example, MgO with ultra-fine, nano-sized particles and high specific surface area has proven to be a destructive adsorbent for toxic chemical reagents. MgO has unique properties optoelectronic, magnetic, thermal, mechanical, and chemical properties [34, 40] MgO is chosen, because it is one of the cheapest and most easily prepared adsorbents amongst the most metal oxide nanoparticles. MgO NPs' actual antibacterial mechanism is yet unknown, however there are a number of potential processes, including the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), nanoparticle-bacterial interaction, bacterial cell damage, and an alkaline effect [41].

Advantages

The advantages of using NPs for drug delivery is because of their two main properties 1) Their small size, which can penetrate through smaller capillaries and are taken up by cells and results in maximum drug accumulation at the target site. 2) Use of biodegradable material for NPs preparation allow to assist drug release within the target site over long period. Nanoparticles are not only important for drug delivery there are other applications such as in electronic products, nanodiodes, quantum computers and so on [20].

ANTIBACTERIAL ACTIVITY OF GREEN SYNTHESIZED MAGNESIUM OXIDE NANOPARTICLES

Green synthesized MgONPs exhibited remarkable antibacterial activity against both gram-positive and gram-negative bacterial strains. Several researchers checked the antibacterial activity of green synthesized MgONPs against different pathogenic bacterial strains as depicted in Table 1 and discussed in the following section. In a study, Umaralikhani et al. (2016) reported the antibacterial activity of green synthesized MgONPs (50-90 nm) against *E. coli* (gram-negative) and *S. aureus* (gram-positive) bacteria, which were exposed to different concentrations [42]. (1, 3 and 5 mg/mL) of MgONPs. The authors observed that MgONPs showed comparatively similar antibacterial activity against both the bacterial

strains in conc. dependent manner. They suggested that the possible mechanism behind the antibacterial activity of MgONPs was the generation of ROS and lipid peroxidation. In 2017, Sharma et al. studied the antibacterial effect of MgONPs against different gram-positive (*S. aureus*, *S. epidermidis*, *B. cereus*) and gram-negative (*E. coli*, *P. vulgaris* and *K. pneumonia*) bacterial strains [36]. The authors observed a significant decrease in the growth of all the pathogenic bacterial strains with an increase in the dose of MgONPs and maximum inhibition was observed at the dose of 40 μ l [38]. Further, Palanisamy et al. (2017) synthesized green and chemical based-MgONPs and investigated their antibacterial activity against *P. aerogenosa* and *B. subtilis* [29]. The authors observed an effective antibacterial effect of MgONPs (synthesized from both the methods) against both the pathogenic bacterial strains. However, the green synthesized MgONPs exhibited a more significant zone of inhibition (ZOI) against both the bacterial strains as compared to chemically synthesized MgONPs. Later, researchers also studied the antibacterial effect of biogenic MgONPs against various multi-drug resistant gram-negative (*E. coli*, *P. vulgaris*, *S. typhimurium*, *S. flexneri*, and *K. pneumonia*) and gram-positive (*S. aureus*, *S. pneumonia* and *B. cereus*) bacterial strains. From this study, it has been investigated that the biogenic MgONPs significantly inhibited the growth of both gram-negative as well as gram-positive bacterial strains, however, a maximum inhibition zone of 108 ± 10.53 mm was observed against *S. flexneri*. Moreover, the authors observed that 25 μ g/mL of MgONPs (average of MICs) inhibited 90% of the pathogenic bacterial cells as compared with 100 mg/mL solution of ampicillin/ sulbactam that killed 40% of the same tested bacterial cells. In another study, the antibacterial activity of biogenic MgONPs synthesized from the extracellular of *Streptomyces* sp. was checked against *B. thuringiensis* and *B. megaterium* bacterial strains. The authors observed significant antibacterial activity against both the phyto-pathogenic bacterial strains in a dose-dependent manner as indicated by ZOI values which were maximum at 20 μ g/mL [5]. In the same year, Das et al. prepared MgO nanoflakes (11 nm) from *B. purpurea* leaf extract and demonstrated their antibacterial activity against *S. aureus* by using different conc. of MgO nanoflakes such as 100, 250, 500, 750, and 1000 μ g/mL [9]. The minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) value of the synthesized MgO nanoflakes for showing significant antibacterial effect was found to be 250 μ g/mL. Moreover, SEM analysis revealed that the interaction of MgO nanoflakes (250 μ g/mL) with the bacterial cells results in damage to the bacterial cell membrane which caused leakage of intracellular components that further leads to bacterial cell death. Besides, cell viability assay demonstrated that the number of dead cells increased with a rise in the conc. of MgO nanoflakes and incubation time. Further, the authors also investigated that treatment of *S. aureus* bacterial strains with MgO nanoflakes results in the generation of ROS in a time and dose-dependent manner which also might be responsible for the significant antibacterial activity of MgO nanoflakes against *S. aureus* [9]. In another study, Vergheese et al. (2018), fabricated MgONPs using the leaf extract of *T. foenum graecum* and evaluated their antibacterial activity against three bacterial strains (*E. coli*, *S. aureus*, and *Bacillus*) [43]. The authors determined the MIC values of the as synthesized MgONPs against all the tested bacterial strains using Resazurin Microtitre Assay which were found to be 125 μ g for both *E. coli* and *S. aureus* however, towards *Bacillus* the MIC value was 250 μ g. These results demonstrated that *Bacillus* was more resistant towards green synthesized MgONPs as compared to the other two bacterial strains. Later, in 2019, Joghee et al. prepared MgONPs using *Pisonia grandis* leaf extract and evaluated their antibacterial activity against three gram-negative (*E. coli*, *S. paratyphi*, and *K. pneumonia*) and three gram-positive bacteria (*S. aureus*, *B. subtilis*, *M. luteus*). The susceptibility of all evaluated bacterial strains, both gram-positive and gram-negative, to biosynthesized MgONPs has been examined. Besides, among different gram-positive bacterial strains, the maximum ZOI was exhibited by *M. luteus* (20 mm) as compared to *S. aureus* (14 mm) and *B. subtilis* (11 mm). However, when compared various gram-negative bacterial strains *E. coli* (23 mm) showed higher ZOI as compared to *K. pneumonia* (20 mm) and *S. paratyphi* (15 mm). Hence, the synthesized MgONPs possessed better antibacterial activity against *E. coli* (gram-negative) and *M. luteus* (gram-positive) bacteria [15]. Abdallah et al. (2019) examined the antibacterial potential of MgO nanoflowers (MgONFs) synthesized from *Rosmarinus officinalis* flower extract against *X. oryzae* (Xoo strain GZ 0005) [1]. The authors compared the antibacterial activities of MgO and biosynthesized MgONFs at three different concentrations (4, 8, and 16 μ g/mL) against the Xoo strain. From this study, it has been observed that MgONFs exhibited a superior inhibitory effect against the tested bacterial strain as

compared to MgO in a dose-dependent manner. Moreover, the authors reported that the synthesized MgONFs significantly inhibited the growth, swimming motility, and biofilm formation of the tested phytopathogenic Xoo strain. Besides, TEM images of the tested bacterial cells treated with MgONFs (4 µg/mL) showed destruction of bacterial cell wall which further results in leakage of intracellular components that ultimately caused cell death. Hence, this might be considered as the possible mechanism towards the antibacterial activity of MgONFs against Xoo strain [1]. Narendhran et al. (2019) studied and compared the antibacterial activity of *S. trilobatum* and sodium hydroxide mediated MgONPs against *E. coli*, *B. subtilis*, and *S. pyogenes* [22]. They found that MgONPs synthesized from both the techniques showed significant inhibition against all the tested bacterial strains. However, *S. trilobatum* mediated MgONPs were found to be more effective against *E. coli* (ZOI, 16.66 ± 0.66 mm) and *B. subtilis* (ZOI, 16.00 ± 0.88 mm) at the conc. of 100 mg/mL as compared to sodium hydroxide mediated MgONPs and control (streptomycin). In the same year, Ogunyemi et al. examined the antibacterial activity of biosynthesized MgONPs against *A. oryzae* by using different conc. (4, 8 and 16 µg/mL) of MgONPs [26]. The authors observed a strong antibacterial effect against this pathogenic bacterial strain in conc. dependent manner. Moreover, treatment of *A. oryzae* strain with MgONPs results in suppression of its swimming motility and biofilm formation ability. Further, the authors found that small-sized (18.2 nm) MgONPs easily penetrated the bacterial cell membrane and damaged the cell membrane which further caused leakage of cellular contents that ultimately leads to cell death [26]. In 2020, Amina et al. synthesized magnesium oxide nanoparticles (MgONPs) from the root biomasses of two distinct plant types of *S. costus* (Qustal bahri and Qustal hindi) and evaluated their antibacterial activity against bacterial strains of *S. aureus*, *B. subtilis*, *E. coli*, and *P. aeruginosa* [4]. The authors observed that Qustal bahri mediated MgONPs exhibited significantly better inhibition against all the tested bacterial strains as compared to Qustal hindi mediated MgONPs in conc. dependent manner. Among all the tested pathogens, the highest antibacterial effect of MgONPs (Qustal bahri) was observed against *E. coli* and *P. aeruginosa* at the conc. of 35 µg/mL. Besides, SEM images demonstrated a change in the morphology of *E. coli* and *P. aeruginosa* after treatment with MgONPs (Qustal bahri). This was probably due to the penetration of NPs into the cell membrane that further causing its damage which consequently results in cell death due to leakage of intracellular contents [4]. Later, Khan et al. (2020) evaluated the antibacterial activity of green synthesized MgONPs against *E. coli* and *R. solanacearum* [17]. It has been observed that the MgONPs having lower Eg value possessed significantly higher antibacterial effect as compared to the MgONPs having higher Eg value. In addition, significant inhibition zones were observed against both the bacterial strains when treated with MgONPs in a dose-dependent manner. However, a superior antibacterial effect was observed against *E. coli* in comparison with *R. solanacearum*. The observed antibacterial effect of MgONPs might be attributed to the production of ROS and lipid peroxidation. In the same year, Siaw et al. studied and compared the antibacterial activity of light-mediated and conventional heat-mediated MgONPs against *E. coli* and *S. aureus* bacterial strains [35]. The authors used different doses of MgONPs (0.0, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8 and 1.0 mL) to check their antibacterial activity. It has been observed that the lethal dose of MgONPs synthesized from both the methods against *S. aureus* was 0.4 mL. However, for *E. coli* the lethal dose of conventional heat-mediated and light-mediated MgONPs was 0.4 and 0.6 mL, respectively. Moreover, MgONPs exhibited larger ZOI towards *S. aureus* in comparison with *E. coli*. Further, the authors observed that increase in the dose of MgONPs above the lethal dose resulted in a decrease in ZOI. This might be due to the fact that at higher doses the conc. of MgONPs increased that further caused agglomeration and increase in the size of NPs, thus making it difficult for the NPs to get penetrated into the bacterial cell membrane. The results demonstrated that MgONPs prepared from both the synthesis approaches exhibited comparatively similar antibacterial potential against both the tested bacterial strains [35]. Recently, Ahmed et al. (2021) fabricated MgONPs using *A. johnsonii* strain and tested their antibacterial activity at three different conc. (5, 10, and 20 µg/mL) against *A. oryzae* strain [3]. These biogenic MgONPs showed remarkable antibacterial potential against *A. oryzae* strain in a dose- dependent manner and maximum inhibition was observed at the conc. of 20 µg/mL. Moreover, SEM and TEM analysis revealed that treatment of *A. oryzae* cells with MgONPs (20 µg/mL) caused damage and change in the morphological structure of the cells which further results in leakage of nucleic material that consequently leads to cell death. Besides, some other researchers [10, 37, 16, 30,

19, 25, 7, 27] have also reported the significant antibacterial activity of green synthesized MgONPs against different pathogenic bacterial strains as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Activity of synthesized nanoparticles against different bacterial strains.

S.N.	Size (nm) / Morphology	Bacterial Strains	Dose / Concentration	Observation	References
1	50-90 nm / Cubic	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. aureus</i>	1, 3, and 5 mg/mL	Significant antibacterial activity against both bacterial strains	[17]
2	<20 nm / Spherical	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. epidermidis</i> , <i>B. cereus</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. vulgaris</i> , <i>K. pneumonia</i>	10, 20, 30, and 40 µL	Effective antibacterial activity observed against all pathogenic strains	[38]
3	<10 nm / Spherical	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i> , <i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. faecalis</i>	-	More effective against gram-positive bacteria compared to gram-negative bacteria	[12]
4	-	<i>P. aeruginosa</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i>	20, 40, 60, and 80 µg/µL	Naturally synthesized MgONPs showed higher ZOI compared to chemically synthesized MgONPs	[29]
5	25 nm / Spherical, Ellipsoidal	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. vulgaris</i> , <i>S. typhimurium</i> , <i>S. flexneri</i> , <i>K. pneumonia</i> , <i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. pneumonia</i> , <i>B. cereus</i>	5-55 µg/µL	Strong antibacterial activity against gram-negative and gram-positive multidrug-resistant pathogens	[11]
6	25 nm / Spherical	<i>B. thuringiensis</i> , <i>B. megaterium</i>	5, 10, 15, and 20 µg/mL	Remarkable antibacterial effect against both phyto-pathogenic strains	[5]
7	10.28 nm / Round	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. epidermidis</i> , <i>A. baumannii</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>E. faecalis</i> , <i>E. cloacae</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>K. pneumonia</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i>	250 µg/mL	Promising antibacterial activity, especially against <i>E. faecalis</i> (22 mm ZOI) and <i>K. pneumonia</i> (20 mm ZOI)	[10]
8	11 nm / Flake-shaped	<i>S. aureus</i>	100-1000 µg/mL	Potent antibacterial effect in a dose- and time-dependent manner	[9]
9	13 nm / Spherical	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. aureus</i> , <i>Bacillus</i>	3.9-500 µg	Superior antibacterial effect against <i>E. coli</i> and <i>S. aureus</i> compared to <i>Bacillus</i>	[8]
10	50 nm / Hexagonal	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. paratyphi</i>	-	Greater inhibition against <i>S. paratyphi</i> and <i>B. subtilis</i>	[37]
11	60-80 nm / Ball-shaped	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>M. luteus</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. paratyphi</i> , <i>K. pneumonia</i>	100 µg/disc	Higher activity against <i>M. luteus</i> (20 mm ZOI) and <i>E. coli</i> (23 mm ZOI)	[15]
12	23-24 nm / -	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. mutants</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>Pseudomonas sp.</i>	50 mg/mL (10 mg/well)	Significant antibacterial effect, with bigger ZOI observed around SA10	[16]
13	68.02 nm / Flower-shaped	<i>S. pneumonia</i> , MRSA, <i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i> , <i>A. baumannii</i>	10-30 µg/mL	Strong bactericidal activity in a dose-dependent manner	[30]
14	<20 nm / Round	<i>X. oryzae</i>	4, 8, and 16 µg/mL	Higher inhibitory effect in a concentration-dependent manner	[1]
15	29 nm / Rod-	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. typhi</i> , <i>P.</i>	200-500 mg/mL	Highest antibacterial	[19]

	shaped	<i>aeruginosa</i>		effect at 500 mg/mL against <i>E. coli</i> (21.75 mm ZOI), <i>S. typhi</i> (22.75 mm ZOI)	
16	30 nm / Spherical	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>S. pyogenes</i>	25-100 mg/mL	Excellent activity against <i>E. coli</i> and <i>B. subtilis</i>	[22]
17	4-8 nm / Flower, Spherical, Flake	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>K. pneumonia</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i>	0.0025-25 µg/mL	Stronger effect against <i>S. aureus</i> and <i>K. pneumonia</i>	[25]
18	18.2 nm / Disc-shaped	<i>A. oryzae</i>	4, 8, and 16 µg/mL	Potent antibacterial effect causing bacterial cell death by membrane damage	[26]
19	70 nm / Rod-shaped	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. aureus</i>	10-40 µL	Significant inhibition against both strains	[7]
20	20-50 nm / Hexagonal, Spherical	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>S. pneumoniae</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. typhi</i>	10-100 µL	Potent activity against gram-positive and gram-negative strains	[27]
21	30-34 nm / Cubic	<i>S. aureus</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i>	15-35 µg/mL	Higher inhibition in dose-dependent manner	[4]
22	<50 nm / Spherical	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>R. solanacearum</i>	1-3 mg/mL	Excellent antibacterial potential for lower <i>Eg</i> values	[17]
23	74.6 nm / Spherical	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>S. aureus</i>	0.4-1.0 mL	Significant potential in light- and heat-mediated synthesis	[35]
24	18-45 nm / Spherical	<i>A. oryzae</i>	5-20 µg/mL	Substantial effect (35.2 mm ZOI) at 20 µg/mL	[3]

CONCLUSION

Nanoparticle are become the center of attraction in the field of research nowadays , because of their enhanced properties and their applications in various fields. In this review, MgO NPs are studied for different biomedical applications such as antibacterial, antifungal, and anticancer. MgO NPs' antibacterial properties exhibit a highly notable concentration-dependent inhibition. We can conclude that MgO NPs can exhibit outstanding antibacterial properties against plant infections as well as human life. Both gram-positive and gram-negative types of bacteria have been found to be significantly inhibited by MgO NPs. It was proposed that the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), such as superoxide anion (O_2^-), may be the cause of the antibacterial action of magnesium oxide nanoparticles, with the increase in surface area of MgO NPs leads to an increase in O_2^- concentration and thus results in more effective destruction of cell wall of the bacteria which eventually results to cell death. The advantage of MgO NPs is that they are nontoxic and relatively easy to obtain. Additionally, MgO NPs exhibit antibacterial properties against plant pathogenic bacteria, making them a viable substitute for chemical pesticides in crop protection. MgO NPs have the advantage of not been genotoxic and cytotoxic to humans, it has great potential for controlling plant diseases in future.

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