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Analytical Techniques for Pesticides Detection in Food Commodities

Benjamin[1]

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Abstract:

Pesticides, as the name suggests, are those substances that inhibit, destroy or resist a harmful organism (pest), from any disease and protect the plant and crops during the production. The use of pesticides are increasing worldwide due to large population and their needs. Small quantity of the pesticides is used to kill or control the pest whereas, left pesticides remain in environment or absorbed by the food material, water is harming the health of humans, and aquatic life. Thus, the screening of these pesticides is important to ensure legally acceptable quantity 'MRLs' of pesticides that should be used in controlling the pests or disease. Different advanced techniques such as Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS), High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS), Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) and so on have been developed to detect the pesticides. These techniques have high sensitivity, high accuracy, reliability and less time consumption capability but some techniques have drawbacks i.e., HPLC has a low sensitivity for pesticides in food. This review paper studies different analytical techniques for the detection of pesticides in food.

Keywords: *Pesticides, MRLs, Chromatography*

Authors:

1. *International Fund for Agricultural Development, NIGERIA.*

Introduction

Chemical substances are those substances which are used in agricultural field to increase the production with high quality by controlling the pests is known as pesticides. These pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, disinfectants and various other substances. The mechanism of pesticide is that it attacks on the targeting system or enzymes in the pests. This mechanism is also followed in the case of humans because of the indistinguishable or much related system or similar enzymes present in human beings. The presence of pollution in air, soil and water is increasing by the greater use of pesticides. The health of humans are at very high risk, not only by misuse or accidental ingestion but also by the traces of chemicals left into the environment that is affecting the health. Pesticides not particularly target pests, it also affect the non-target plants and animals. According to the researchers, only 0.1% pesticides reach to the targets while left pesticides contaminate the surrounding environment (Elhag *et al.*, 2017).

Generally, all creatures, human and environment are facing the problems related to the pesticides but the high risk of exposures is seen in cases of agriculture worker and family members of pesticides applicators. There are different reason of pesticides exposure with the humans which are as follows:

- Spillage from the packaging
- Applying too much pesticides product
- Accidentally, exposure the chemicals during aerial treatment or from spray drift.
- Incorrect use of equipments.
- Failure to follow the label instructions
- Storage of pesticide in unsecured places (Darcin and Darcin, 2016)

Classification of Pesticides

Pesticides are classified on the basis of their use such as insecticides, herbicides, nematicides, miticides, molluscicides, fungicides and rodenticides due to large amount of chemicals and pesticides combination of amalgams. Another classifications of pesticides were given by World Health Organization (WHO) on the basis of their health risk. Most important and useful classification is based on the chemical structures which can broadly be divided into four major groups.

Organochlorine: These are the compounds that are stable in nature and they persist in the surrounding and have a tendency to gather in fatty tissues. It is basically used in destruction of illness vectors, like dengue and malaria. For the preservation of tomato, lettuce, corn, alfalfa, cotton, sorghum, grapes, wood and rice Organochlorine pesticide is put in use during cultivation. These pesticides or their metabolites directly act on Central Nervous System (CNS) of human that alter the electrophysiological properties and enzymatic neuronal membranes due to which there is a change in the kinetic energy of the sodium and potassium flow through the membranes of the nerve cells causing symptoms like, seizures and respiratory arrest.

Organophosphates: These are the esters of phosphoric acid. The mechanism of these compounds are as they strike on the Central Nervous System (CNS) and inhibit the release of acetyl cholinesterase enzyme due to which amount and level of neurotransmitter acetylcholine is modulated and nerve impulse is disrupted by the active serine phosphorylation of the hydroxyl groups in the active enzyme sites. This mechanism creates many symptoms such as dizziness, loss of reflexes, headache, convulsion, nausea, sometimes coma and even death. Organophosphorous compounds are used in agricultural field such as grains, vegetable crops, cotton, fruit trees, sugarcane, etc.

Carbamates: These esters are the derivatives resulted from the acids or dimethyl N-methyl carbamic acid. Carbamates are generally used in the form of insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and nematicides. They have less value in comparison to organophosphates and Organochlorine but have the same effect as the organophosphate act on acetyl cholinesterase. But the action in Carbamates is very fast, the carbamylation of the enzyme is done through the kinetics of blocking because of the covalent bondage of electrophilic groups steric carbamoyl sites of the respective enzyme.

Pyrethroids: These pesticides are originated from the natural insecticides which are basically the derivatives obtained from pyrethrum extract of chrysanthemum flowers (pyrethrins**).** They are known to act on the Central Nervous System (CNS) and then make sudden alterations in the nerve cell by altering the dynamics of the sodium channels that cause the increment in the opening time of nerve cell due to which sodium current flows for a long time

throughout the membrane in both, insects as well as vertebrates (Garcia *et al.*, 2012).

Pesticide Remains

The accumulation of a pesticide's active ingredient, metabolites, and breakdown products of pesticides exist in the components such as food grains, fruits and vegetables, soil and water are known as pesticide residues. This residue analysis gives an idea about the nature and level of the presence of any possible chemical contamination in the surroundings. Extensive efficiency, environmental and toxicological testing of the various pesticides should be recorded by Governments for lawful use in certain definite applications. Regulatory bodies set the basic types and amount of residues should be present legally in the food articles is called Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). These MRLs are also called as 'tolerances' in the United States of America (Dasika, Tangirala and Naishadham, 2011).

Analytical Techniques

In determination of pesticides from analytical techniques, sample preparation is the main step in which the extraction of analytes from the matrix substance is performed, and then they clean-up the contents from any of the co-extractives present in the matrix. There are different methods for the extraction of Pesticides form the matrix such as Matrix solid-phase dispersion (MSPD), Solid-phase extraction (SPE), Liquid-liquid extraction (LLE), Solid-phase microextraction (SPME), quick easy cheap effective rugged and safe (QuEChERS), and so on. After the extraction and clean-up of the sample from the matrix, next step is the detection of targeted pesticides. For the recent multi-residue objective pesticide analysis, the most common techniques are High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Tandem Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS/MS, LC-MS/MS) with triple quadrupole mass analyzers, Liquid Chromatography coupled to Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS, LC-MS) and Gas Chromatography. Other progressive techniques are optical sensor, electrochemical sensors and immunosensors and enzymatic biosensor for the analysis of pesticides (Samsidar, Siddiquee and Shaarani, 2018).

Review of Literature

Dasika, Tangirala and Naishadham (2012) proposed a combination of Liquid Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LCMS/MS) in their paper for a thorough analysis of pesticides in fruits and vegetables and gave a conclusion about speedy and hassle-free qualitative screening of target pesticides within 45 minutes of LCMS/MS.

Bresin *et al.* (2015) discussed about the analytical technique of 'Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry' along with the extraction process QuEChERS for caffeine removal from the extract. GC-MS have a high sensitivity and less time consuming for the detection of pesticides. Same benefits are achieved with the liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS).

Rani and Dhiraj (2015) studied on water to detect the pesticide 'organ phosphorous' by High Performance Liquid Chromatography. This method showed accuracy, linearity, precision and robustness. And this method can be used without sample preparation (separation of pesticides from the aqueous phase).

Stachniuk and Fornal (2016) concluded that the combination of liquid chromatography with selective mass spectrometry is a change in the analytical field. From this technique, detection of many compound with trace amount has been easy. He also discussed about the high performance liquid chromatography together with QQQ tandem mass spectrometer that have a very short duration of analysis by the determination of a number of compounds in a solo analytical cycle. But this HPLC/MS has a limitation of sensitivity to the associated matrix components.

Tette *et al.* (2016), In their paper, they found out the quantity of pesticides in honey using modified QuEChERS for sample preparation and, the Ultra high performance liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (UHPLC-MS/MS) for a general detection and concluded that this method is fast efficient and reliable.

According to Rimawi (2016), High performance liquid chromatography is a simple, accurate, precise and selective method for determining the pesticides in water. In this study, the detection and quantification of pesticides in water was possible at low concentration. This method is suitable for real water samples such as groundwater, surface water, and waste water**.**

Chang, Hsieh and Chiu (2016), after the analysis of pesticides in environmental sample by Capillary Electrophoresis Mass Spectrometry, they concluded

that Capillary Electrophoresis has high versatility, high efficiency and selectivity due to which it has become more powerful technique for the screening of pesticides.

Djue Tea, Sabarudin and Sulistyarti (2017) analyzed the pesticides Diazinon and Chlorantranilipole in soil sample from High performance liquid chromatography with ultra violet detector in their study and concluded that both pesticides were detected in real sample above 85%. And in the suspected sample there was not diazinon as well as chlorantranilipole.

Elhag *et al.* (2017) in their paper, they detected the Organophosphorous pesticides in the vegetables by Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry and gave a conclusion that it is a very influential technique to determine the pesticides in minimal quantities. And gave a suggestion of periodic monitoring programs to decrease the exposure, deposition and toxicity of the pesticides.

Nazir, Rafique and Ahad (2017) analyzed a pesticides in honey sample by micro-extraction technique with Gas chromatography-Electron coupled plasma. GC-µECD is a best technique for the pesticides analysis. GC and LC with mass spectrometry are also suitable technique for the detection of accaricides and neonicotinoid pesticides in honey. **Samsidar, Siddiquee and Shaarani (**2018) discussed several analytical techniques such as GC and HPLC with selective sensors or detectors like ECD, MS DAD, NPD and fluorescent detectors for the detection of pesticides in the matrix because of the high sensitivity. But these techniques are time consuming and expensive. To overcome from this limitation, new advanced techniques enzymatic biosensor has been developed to detect the pesticide residues. This device is ecofriendly and have low cost compare to other analytical devices.

Conclusion

Pesticides that are used to kill or control the pests, also have an adverse effect on the humans, aquatic life and plants. These pesticides produce the different types of diseases such as cancer, endocrine disease, asthma, learning disability etc. Different types of technique are used to detect the pesticides in matrix such as GC-MS, LC-MS/MS, HPLC, ELISA etc. This review concludes that the analytical technique 'Liquid Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS)' is one of the best technique for the detection of pesticides in a given matrix (grains, fruit, vegetable, water and soil) as it is reliable, have high sensitivity, and consumes less time.

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