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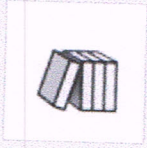

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Chitosan effect on the survival of microbial isolates from selected fresh fruits and vegetables in Indonesia

Sulistiyaningsih Sulistiyaningsih, Fitrah Muchammad, Sri Agung Fitri Kusuma*

ABSTRACT

Aim: The objectives of this study were to determine the antimicrobial effectivity of chitosan against microbial isolates that obtained from fresh fruits and vegetables. **Methods:** The isolation of bacteria and fungi on fruit and vegetable samples was conducted by soaking the samples in sterile physiological saline for 10 min. The antimicrobial activity test was done using the pour plate method followed by determining the killing time contact. **Results and Discussion:** The chitosan showed antimicrobial activity against both the bacterial and fungal isolates obtained from fruit and vegetable samples. The chitosan concentration of 4% w/v was the effective concentration because it showed the reduction percentage in bacterial and fungal isolates colonies number until 99%. At a concentration of 0.2% w/v, the chitosan produces the same antimicrobial effect as triclosan. Interestingly, the activity of chitosan was higher than commercial sanitizer products that contain of nectarol and lime. The triclosan as the control test has taken less time for 2.5 min in killing time contact as compared with chitosan at the same concentration. **Conclusion:** It could be concluded that the chitosan has proven as natural sanitizer candidates in the future.

KEY WORDS: Chitosan, fruit, sanitizers, triclosan, vegetables

INTRODUCTION

Many fruits and vegetable are rich sources of vitamins, such as Vitamin C, folic acid (useful in the synthesis of DNA), and Vitamin A including minerals such as calcium and iron. They also contain dietary fibers which add bulk to intestinal content and useful in preventing constipation.[1] Consumers now demand products that are fresh, high quality, and safe to eat. However, recently, the outbreaks of human infections associated with the consumption of raw fruits, vegetables, and unpasteurized fruit juices has been increased.[2]

The microbial existence on fresh fruits and vegetables must be considered by consumers. The range of microorganisms associated with spoilage or contamination of fruits and vegetables includes bacteria, parasites, protozoa, and viruses. These are often associated with contaminated water and/or food handlers.[3] Outbreaks with identified etiology were predominantly of bacterial origin, primarily *Salmonella, Shigella,* and *Escherichia coli*.[4] The majority of bacteria found on the surface of plants is usually the Gram-negative, which belong to the *Pseudomonas* spp. or to the Enterobacteriaceae.[5] Moreover, other bacterial pathogens have been isolated from a wide variety of fresh fruits and juices, such as *Listeria monocytogenes, Clostridium botulinum, Bacillus cereus, Aeromonas, Campylobacter jejuni, Staphylococcus,* and *Vibrio cholera*.[2] These data are important because the presence of *Salmonella* and *E. coli* on vegetables and fruit can cause infections of the digestive tract and acute gastroenteritis since both of these bacteria produce enterotoxin.[6] In addition, changes in production and processing methods, sources of products, and the emergence of pathogens not previously associated with raw products have enhanced the potential for the outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with raw fruits and vegetables.[7] However, it could give negative impact in increasing of infection problem which correlated with contamination by human pathogens.[2]

More strategies and interventions are needed to minimize risks of future outbreaks. Although washing with a wide range of available disinfecting agents can reduce microbial load, none can eliminate the

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