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# Glucomannan is a promising isoniazid's enhancer that inducing macrophage phagocytosis

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## ABSTRACT

Isoniazid (INH) is a frontline antituberculosis agent effective against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb), but the increasing challenge of avoiding multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, including INH resistance, necessitates innovative approaches. This study focused on enhancing macrophage phagocytosis to overcome INH resistance. Glucomannan, an immunomodulatory polysaccharide, emerged as a potential macrophage activator. Our objective was to characterize the glucomannan-INH mixture and assess its impact on INH efficacy and macrophage activity. Detailed examination of the glucomannan from *Amorphophallus muelleri* (0.05%–0.2%) was performed in several methods. INH sensitivity tests were carried out with the Mtb strain H37RV on Löwenstein–Jensen medium. Murine macrophage (RAW264.7) viability and activity were evaluated through MTT and latex bead phagocytosis assays. Ultraviolet-wavelength spectrophotometry was used to analyze chemical structure changes. Glucomannan (0.05%–0.2%) significantly enhanced murine macrophage viability and activity. When glucomannan was combined with INH, the IC50 value was greater compared to INH only. Phagocytosis assays revealed heightened macrophage activity in the presence of 0.05% and 0.1% glucomannan. Importantly, glucomannan did not compromise INH efficacy or alter its chemical structure. This study underscores the potential of glucomannan, particularly with a lower molecular weight, as a promising enhancer of INH, boosting macrophage phagocytosis against INH-resistant Mtb. These findings challenge the assumptions about the impact of glucomannan on drug absorption and prompt potential reevaluation. While specific receptors for glucomannan in macrophage phagocytosis require further exploration, the complement receptors are proposed to be potential mediators.

**Key words:** Characteristic profile, glucomannan, isoniazid, macrophage phagocytosis, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*

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## INTRODUCTION

Isoniazid (INH) is recognized as a first-line antituberculosis (anti-TB) agent, acknowledged for its efficacy in eradicating *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb) bacteria. INH exerts its antitubercular effects by impeding the synthesis of mycolic acids, pivotal components of the Mtb cell wall.<sup>1,2</sup>

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Glucomannan, a polysaccharide with various biological effects, plays an important role in immune modulation.<sup>[11]</sup> Glucumannan demonstrates the ability to moderately activate macrophages and increase the synthesis of proinflammatory cytokines, such as interleukin-1 (IL-1) and tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$ , enhancing phagocytosis against pathogens.<sup>[16]</sup> Glucumannan may help macrophages recognize Mtb through polysaccharide receptors. The aim of this study is to comprehensively characterize how glucumannan enhances INH efficacy and triggers macrophage viability and activity.

The glucomannan (*Amorphophallus muelleri*) used in this study was obtained from PT. AMBICO, Surabaya, Indonesia, with concentrations ranging from 0.05% to 0.2%. INH was provided from PT. Mepro, Tangerang, Indonesia. In this study, several tests were conducted.

Four-day male mice (12 weeks old; 20–25 g) were obtained from the Veterinary Farna Center, Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture in Surabaya, Indonesia. The use of four mice was determined based on an optimized experimental setup, where four mice could yield approximately  $1 \times 10^7$  peritoneal macrophages (equivalent to 40 replicates in 24-well plates). All mice were acclimatized in separate cages with 12 h of light-and-dark cycles and stable ventilation at room temperature (20°C–24°C) with 65% relative humidity.

For the preparation of INH and INH-glucomannan solutions, respective concentrations of 20 ppm, 40 ppm, 60 ppm, 80 ppm, and 100 ppm were achieved by dissolving and homogenizing the compounds. Spectra and absorbance measurements for each solution were conducted using an ultraviolet (UV)-wavelength spectrophotometer (PEAK, X-820T, US). The measured spectral pattern was used to elucidate the characteristic changes of each concentration, providing insights into the molecular interactions within the solutions. The absorbance measurements were obtained at 279 nm.

The macrophage phagocytosis assay involved incubating murine peritoneal macrophages from 4-day male mice with 0.1  $\mu$ m latex beads in RPMI 1640 medium (without phenol red, supplemented with L-glutamine and 10% FBS). After initial culture, macrophages were exposed to latex beads and varying glucamannan concentrations (0.05%, 0.1%, and 0.2%) to examine their effects on phagocytosis. Control groups included macrophages with only INH

or glucmannan, creating six cohorts with five replicates each. After incubation, modified Giemsa staining on 1% collagen-coated slides enabled the quantification of phagocytosed beads under a microscope.

### Statistical evaluation

Significance in this study was analyzed with GraphPad Prism 9.0 (San Diego, USA) using nonparametric Mann-Whitney *U* test statistical analysis. All results were considered statistically significant if  $P < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

### Glucmannan increases viability and activity of murine cell macrophages

The MTT assay [Figure 1a] revealed that glucmannan (0.05%–0.2%) enhances RAW264.7 macrophage viability, with significant increases at 0.05% ( $132.37\% \pm 2.11\%$ ,  $P = 0.0021$ ) and 0.1% ( $144.28\% \pm 2.21\%$ ,  $P = 0.032$ ) over the baseline (0%, 100% viability). Adding 0.1% glucmannan raised the IC<sub>50</sub> value for INH from 418.00 µg/ml to 468.80 µg/ml [Figure 1b,  $P = 0.032$ ], indicating improved viability. In phagocytosis assays [Figure 1d], glucmannan increased macrophage engulfment of latex beads, especially in the late phagosome (phase-III) and phagolysosome (phase-IV) formation stages. Notably, 0.05% and 0.1% glucmannan increased phase-IV phagocytosis ( $58 \pm 5$ ,  $P = 0.02$  and  $77 \pm 3$ ,  $P = 0.003$ , respectively), compared to INH alone ( $39 \pm 2$ ;  $P = 0.002$ ). Addition of 0.2% glucmannan resulted in a

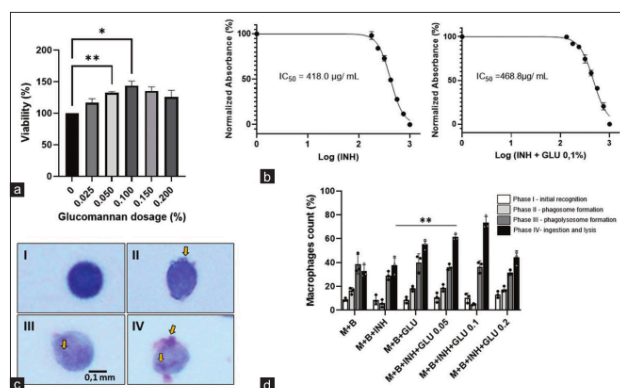
phagocytic pattern similar to controls ( $44 \pm 6$ ;  $P = 0.003$ ), suggesting optimal glucmannan concentrations for enhanced macrophage function without affecting INH activity [Figure 1c and 1d].

### Glucmannan did not alter isoniazid's efficacy and ultraviolet spectral profile

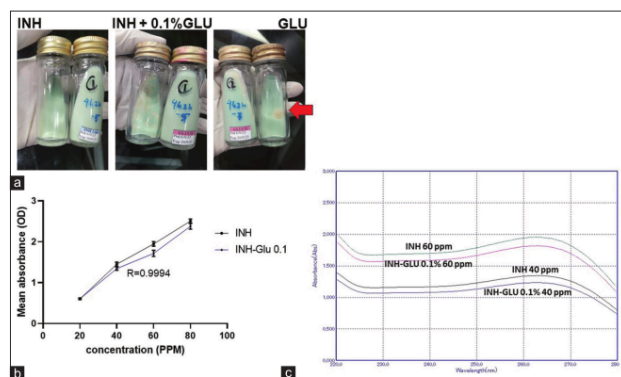
The visualization of the INH sensitivity test [Figure 2a] using Mtb strain H37RV shows that glucmannan did not affect INH efficacy in inhibiting bacterial growth (see GLU-INH compared with INH). Furthermore, glucmannan alone did not exert any inhibitory effect on Mtb growth (see GLU). Moreover, the mean UV spectral absorbance [Figure 2b] of the INH-glucmannan mixture showed a similar pattern to INH-only (see right panel), indicating that both INH (20, 40, 60, and 80 ppm) and INH-GLU 0.1% were strongly correlated ( $r = 0.9994$ ) for their concentration and absorbance without further changing the chemical structure of each other. Figure 2c indicates INH-glucmannan ( $r = 0.9998$ ) had a lower slope value and absorbance than INH only ( $r = 0.9995$ ) in 40 ppm and 60 ppm.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, we successfully demonstrated the potential of glucmannan as an enhancer of INH in promoting macrophage phagocytosis activity, providing new insights into the battle against INH-resistance Mtb infection. These



**Figure 1:** Glucmannan increases viability and activity of murine cell macrophages. Glucmannan concentrations ranging from 0.05% to 2% significantly increased the viability and phagocytic activity of murine macrophages, including both the macrophage cell line (RAW264.7) and peritoneal macrophages. (a) The MTT assay with the macrophage cell line (RAW264.7) demonstrates that glucmannan at 0.05% and 0.1% significantly elevated macrophage viability ( $P < 0.05$ ), and (b) increased the IC<sub>50</sub> (468.80 µg/ml) compared with INH alone (418.00 µg/ml). (d) The addition of 0.05%–0.1% glucmannan accelerated the end phase (Phase-IV) of macrophage phagocytic function. (c) A representative modified Giemsa stain of the four phagocytosis phases (Yellow arrows = position of latex beads, key differentiation in phase classification). \* $0.05 \geq P > 0.01$ , \*\* $0.01 \geq P > 0.001$ . ns = not significant.  $n = 3$ . INH: Isoniazid



**Figure 2:** 0.1% glucomannan did not affect INH in chemical structure and its efficacy. (a) The INH-sensitivity test shows that glucomannan did not exhibit anti-mycobacterial activity. (b) The ultraviolet spectrophotometer analysis of mean absorbance between INH alone and INH-Glucomannan in different concentrations (20, 40, 60, and 80 ppm) revealed a similar range for both compounds, and both slopes exhibited a good correlation ( $r$ ) between their concentration and absorbance. (c) A representative absorbance of INH and INH-GLU 0.1% in 40 ppm and 60 ppm. INH: Isoniazid

results challenge the conventional understanding of glucomannan's viscous nature. Despite previous studies implying that an excess of glucomannan in a "meal" dosage may hinder drug absorption due to glucomannan viscosity, this study suggests the potential for enhanced phagocytosis activity with a low concentration of glucomannan at 0.1% combined with INH in tablet form without altering the chemical structure and functionality of each component.

Macrophages act as "pathogen sensors" and are especially adept at phagocytosis. Activated macrophages (in phases III and IV) significantly increase their ability to destroy and break down intracellular bacteria. Latex beads are often used in experimental settings to mimic foreign particles or pathogens that macrophages encounter in the body.<sup>[13]</sup> When introduced to a sample containing macrophages, latex beads are recognized as foreign bodies by the macrophages' PRRs, as demonstrated by significantly higher levels in phases III and IV in our results. These receptors include scavenger receptors and toll-like receptors, among others. Similarly to the latex bead phagocytic pattern, the addition of glucomannan (0.05% and 0.1%) significantly induces phases III and IV. Moreover, the engulfment in phases III and IV was increased compared to the absence of glucomannan. This clearly indicates that low concentrations of glucomannan at 0.05% and 0.1% may improve the stability and solubility of INH, delivering it into Mtb, and increase the macrophage engulfment process, especially in phases III and IV. The finding in our manuscript potentially reevaluates the negative impact of glucomannan on drug absorption.<sup>[10,11]</sup>

In the UV spectrum, a lower difference in average absorption was observed for INH-GLU 0.1% compared to INH alone (specifically between 40 ppm and 60 ppm); these values still linearly produce a perfect correlation. This phenomenon may point us to the interaction between INH and GLU, which does not affect the response to UV light due to the similar UV spectral profiles between INH and INH-GLU. In addition, the lower linearity slope of INH-GLU than INH indicates that the UV absorption of INH-GLU is lower than that of INH. The single peak of INH-GLU indicates that the presence of glucomannan in INH does not affect the chromophore or auxochrome groups of INH, so it can still be detected by UV light<sup>[14,15]</sup>

To induce phagocytosis, specific receptors exclusively dedicated to recognizing glucomannan in murine macrophages have not been extensively documented. Macrophages typically employ various PRRs, such as scavenger receptors and toll-like receptors, to initiate the phagocytosis of foreign particles. We propose that the complement receptor, known for its distinct role in latex bead phagocytosis in macrophages, as observed in immortalized (HD11) cell lines, may function as a primary receptor, contributing to the acceleration of glucomannan-induced phagocytosis. However, further studies are needed to prove this hypothesis.

Interestingly, a higher concentration of glucomannan (0.2%) adversely affects phagocytosis ability, presenting an



## CONCLUSION

### Institutional review board statement

### Author contribution

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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