

**STUDIES ON PHYTOBIOACTIVE INHIBITORS FOR ALZHEIMER'S
DISEASE AND THEIR ENCAPSULATION IN LIPOSOMES FOR
EFFECTIVE DELIVERY**

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by

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Submitted

in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

to the



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***Dedicated to my,
Parents & Husband***

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Studies on phytobioactive inhibitors for Alzheimer’s disease and their encapsulation in liposomes for effective delivery**” being submitted by **Ms. SUKRITI SRIVASTAVA** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in Chemistry is a record of Bonafide research work carried out by her. Ms. Sukriti Srivastava has worked under my guidance and supervision and has fulfilled the requirements for the thesis submission, which, to my knowledge, has reached the requisite standard.

The results contained in this dissertation have not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date: 21st July 2025

Place: New Delhi

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I am truly grateful to have my family, who have stood by me unwaveringly throughout this journey. Many people have supported me at different phases of my Ph.D., but the reason I dreamt of becoming a researcher and working on neurodegenerative disorders was my siblings.

My younger brother, ***Mr. Ashutosh Srivastava***, who is 21 years old today, has suffered from epilepsy since he was seven and has been on medication ever since. I have witnessed people advising my parents not to send him to school because his classmates were scared of his condition. My elder sister, ***Ms. Medhavi Srivastava***, now 28 years old, has been battling depression for the past seven years and initially experienced seizures and anxiety attacks. I have seen both my parents and siblings suffer from conditions that, to this day, have no definitive cure. The limitations of medical science in dealing with brain-related disorders often lead to multiple side effects, making treatment itself another challenge. It was during my M.Tech. studies that I deeply engaged with this subject, and I decided that I wanted to contribute to this field further. Despite my dedication, there were times when my stance wavered. Relatives often told my parents that I had already studied enough and should start working. However, my father, ***Mr. Sharad Kumar Srivastava***, always reassured me, saying that I could always work after earning my Ph.D., but once I started working, I would not be able to go back and pursue a Ph.D. even if I wanted to. He joked that a Ph.D. was the best deal- I'd get paid and earn a degree, so no losses, only gains! Lastly, whatever motivation I had and still have to achieve something in life comes from my mother, ***Mrs. Mona Srivastava***. Whenever I feel like giving up or get too comfortable, I remember her childhood advice, to never rely on others because your self-worth influences how you're treated, always strive to stand out. These words continue to push me forward every single day.

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ABSTRACT

Alzheimer's disease remains one of the most challenging neurodegenerative disorders, characterized by cholinergic imbalance in neuromuscular region, amyloid-beta ($A\beta$) plaque accumulation, tau protein hyperphosphorylation, oxidative stress, and neuroinflammation. The past research on Alzheimer's was focussed on acetylcholinesterase inhibition to maintain the level of neurotransmitter, acetylcholine in the brain. The major available commercial drugs (Donepezil, Rivastigmine, Galantamine) against Alzheimer's are acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. Current therapies also focus on symptomatic relief without addressing the disease's underlying mechanisms. This necessitates a multi-target-directed approach using plant-derived bioactive compounds known for their neuroprotective properties. These compounds can modulate key pathways in disease progression, offering the potential for holistic treatment strategies.

The study began with the identification of acetylcholinesterase and beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibitors, enzymes pivotal to cholinergic dysfunction and $A\beta_{42}$ aggregation. Computational screening was employed to assess the binding affinity and pharmacological potential of various bioactive compounds, followed by enzyme inhibition assays to validate the findings. The rationale was to target these enzymes to simultaneously mitigate neurotransmitter degradation and $A\beta_{42}$ formation. Results demonstrated that selected bioactive compounds acted as dual inhibitors, paving the way for further exploration of their therapeutic potential. After *in vitro* analysis, withanolide A, obtained from *Withania somnifera* was identified to have dual role, as acetylcholinesterase and beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibitor. Withanolide A inhibited acetylcholinesterase (IC_{50} value 107 μ M) and showed mixed-type inhibition. At this concentration, it inhibited beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 activity by 57.10% and was stated most effective. Both

the compounds, as well as their crude extracts, were found to have no cytotoxic effect on the SH-SY5Y cell line.

Insoluble A β ₄₂ peptides form neurotoxic plaques that disrupt synaptic transmission and contribute to Alzheimer's disease pathology. *In vitro* aggregation studies of A β ₄₂ exhibited a sigmoidal growth curve, highlighting distinct nucleation, elongation, and fibril maturation phases. The anti-amyloidogenic potential of bacoside A and withanolide A was assessed at different aggregation stages. Docking studies confirmed that both compounds specifically interact with the KLVFFA stretch of A β ₄₂, a critical region for monomer self-association and fibril formation. A 500 ns molecular dynamics simulation to study the interaction of these compounds with disordered A β ₄₂ (2MXU.pdb) revealed stable binding to monomers, with reduced stability during fibril elongation. Bacoside A and withanolide A inhibited α -helix conversion during nucleation, preventing key intermediates required for fibril growth, leading to the formation of non-toxic amorphous aggregates. Additionally, a 100 ns simulation with native helical A β ₄₂ (1Z0Q.pdb) provided insights into their preventive action, reinforcing their early-stage aggregation inhibitory potential. These findings suggest that bacoside A and withanolide A act as promising anti-amyloidogenic agents, stabilizing A β ₄₂ monomers while preventing fibril growth, thereby offering a potential therapeutic strategy for Alzheimer's disease.

An efficient high-yielding process was developed to obtain purified bacoside A from *Bacopa monnieri*. The purification protocol constituted a sequential solvent polarity-gradient extraction method followed by gradient silica-gel column chromatography. The bacoside A content was quantified by HPTLC, and a yield of 34.6 mg bacoside A per gram of crude Brahmi extract was obtained with 93% purity. Purified bacoside A exhibited high acetylcholinesterase inhibition (IC₅₀ value 9.91 μ g/mL) and DPPH radical scavenging activity (IC₅₀ value 29.22

µg/mL). This was followed by *in vivo* experiments in a compulsive mouse model (p. T8I-VGLUT3), designed to mimic cholinergic dysfunction observed in Alzheimer's disease. The rationale was to validate bacoside A's role as an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor and its therapeutic potential in reducing compulsive behaviour. The results affirmed the compound's efficacy and safety, strengthening its candidacy as a viable therapeutic agent.

To overcome the limitations of poor bioavailability and environmental instability, nanotechnology-based delivery systems were developed. Nano-liposomes were synthesized using the thin-film hydration method to enhance encapsulation efficiency and achieve sustained release in the gastrointestinal fluid. Cholesterol was used to stabilize the liposomes and limit the release of bacoside A and withanolide A at lower pH. This approach was rationalized by the need to improve the pharmacokinetics of bioactive compounds, ensuring effective delivery across the blood-brain barrier. The liposomal formulations exhibited superior short-term storage stability at all the temperatures (-20 to 55 °C) and long-term storage stability at 4 °C. The liposomes did not exhibit any cytotoxicity on SH-SY5Y cell line as indicated by MTT assay and live cell-imaging.

In conclusion, this work integrates computational, experimental, and nanotechnological approaches to provide a comprehensive framework for the use of phytochemicals in Alzheimer's disease treatment. By addressing multiple aspects of disease pathology, the findings offer significant insights into developing effective and sustainable therapeutic strategies.

अल्जाइमर रोग सबसे चुनौतीपूर्ण न्यूरोडीजेनेरेटिव विकारों में से एक है, जिसकी विशेषता न्यूरोमस्क्युलर क्षेत्र में कोलीनर्जिक असंतुलन, एमिलॉयड-बीटा ($A\beta$) पेट्टिका संचय, टाउ प्रोटीन हाइपरफॉस्फोराइलेशन, ऑक्सीडेटिव तनाव और न्यूरोइन्फ्लेमेशन है। अल्जाइमर पर पिछले शोध मस्तिष्क में न्यूरोट्रांसमीटर, एसिटाइलकोलाइन के स्तर को बनाए रखने के लिए एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ अवरोध पर केंद्रित थे। अल्जाइमर के खिलाफ प्रमुख उपलब्ध वाणिज्यिक दवाएं (डोनेपेज़िल, रिवास्टिग्माइन, गैलेंटामाइन) एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ अवरोधक हैं। वर्तमान उपचार भी रोग के अंतर्निहित तंत्र को संबोधित किए बिना लक्षणात्मक राहत पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हैं। इसके लिए पौधों से प्राप्त बायोएक्टिव यौगिकों का उपयोग करके एक बहु-लक्ष्य-निर्देशित दृष्टिकोण की आवश्यकता होती है जो उनके न्यूरोप्रोटेक्टिव गुणों के लिए जाने जाते हैं। ये यौगिक रोग की प्रगति में प्रमुख मार्गों को संशोधित कर सकते हैं, जो समग्र उपचार रणनीतियों की क्षमता प्रदान करते हैं।

अध्ययन की शुरुआत एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ और बीटा-साइट एमिलॉयड प्रीकर्सर प्रोटीन क्लीविंग एंजाइम 1 अवरोधकों की पहचान के साथ हुई, जो कोलीनर्जिक डिसफंक्शन और $A\beta_{42}$ एकत्रीकरण के लिए महत्वपूर्ण एंजाइम हैं। विभिन्न बायोएक्टिव यौगिकों की बंधन आत्मीयता और औषधीय क्षमता का आकलन करने के लिए कम्प्यूटेशनल स्क्रीनिंग का उपयोग किया गया, इसके बाद निष्कर्षों को मान्य करने के लिए एंजाइम अवरोध परख की गई। तर्क यह था कि इन एंजाइमों को एक साथ न्यूरोट्रांसमीटर गिरावट और $A\beta_{42}$ गठन को कम करने के लिए लक्षित किया जाए। परिणामों ने प्रदर्शित किया कि चयनित बायोएक्टिव यौगिक दोहरे अवरोधकों के रूप में कार्य करते हैं, जिससे उनकी चिकित्सीय क्षमता के आगे अन्वेषण का मार्ग प्रशस्त होता है। इन विट्रो विश्लेषण के बाद, विथानिया सोम्नीफेरा से प्राप्त विथानोलाइड

ए की दोहरी भूमिका की पहचान की गई, एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ और बीटा-साइट एमिलॉयड प्रीकर्सर प्रोटीन क्लीविंग एंजाइम 1 अवरोधक के रूप में। विथानोलाइड ए ने एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ (IC50 मान 107 μM) को बाधित किया और मिश्रित प्रकार का अवरोध दिखाया। इस सांद्रता पर, इसने बीटा-साइट एमिलॉयड प्रीकर्सर प्रोटीन क्लीविंग एंजाइम 1 गतिविधि को 57.10% तक बाधित किया और इसे सबसे प्रभावी बताया गया। दोनों यौगिकों, साथ ही उनके कच्चे अर्क का SH-SY5Y सेल लाइन पर कोई साइटोटॉक्सिक प्रभाव नहीं पाया गया।

अघुलनशील $A\beta_{42}$ पेप्टाइड्स न्यूरोटॉक्सिक प्लेक बनाते हैं जो सिनेप्टिक ट्रांसमिशन को बाधित करते हैं और अल्जाइमर रोग विकृति में योगदान करते हैं। $A\beta_{42}$ के इन विट्रो एकत्रीकरण अध्ययनों ने एक सिग्मोइडल वृद्धि वक्र प्रदर्शित किया, जो अलग-अलग न्यूक्लियेशन, बढ़ाव और फाइब्रिल परिपक्वता चरणों को उजागर करता है। बैकोसाइड ए और विथानोलाइड ए की एंटी-एमाइलॉयडोजेनिक क्षमता का मूल्यांकन विभिन्न एकत्रीकरण चरणों में किया गया था। डॉकिंग अध्ययनों ने पुष्टि की कि दोनों यौगिक विशेष रूप से $A\beta_{42}$ के KLVFFA खिंचाव के साथ परस्पर क्रिया करते हैं, जो मोनोमर स्व-संयोजन और फाइब्रिल गठन के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र है। अव्यवस्थित $A\beta_{42}$ (2MXU.pdb) के साथ इन यौगिकों की परस्पर क्रिया का अध्ययन करने के लिए 500 ns आणविक गतिशीलता सिमुलेशन ने फाइब्रिल बढ़ाव के दौरान कम स्थिरता के साथ मोनोमर्स के लिए स्थिर बंधन का खुलासा किया। बैकोसाइड ए और विथेनोलाइड ए ने न्यूक्लियेशन के दौरान α -हेलिक्स रूपांतरण को बाधित किया, जिससे फाइब्रिल वृद्धि के लिए आवश्यक प्रमुख मध्यवर्ती को रोका गया, जिससे गैर-विषाक्त अनाकार समुच्चय का निर्माण हुआ। इसके अतिरिक्त, मूल हेलिकल $A\beta_{42}$ (1Z0Q.pdb) के साथ 100 ns सिमुलेशन ने उनकी निवारक कार्रवाई में अंतर्दृष्टि प्रदान की, जिससे उनके प्रारंभिक चरण के एकत्रीकरण अवरोधक क्षमता को मजबूत किया गया। इन निष्कर्षों से पता चलता है कि बैकोसाइड ए और विथानोलाइड ए आशाजनक एंटी-एमाइलॉयडोजेनिक एजेंट के रूप में कार्य

करते हैं, जो फाइब्रिल वृद्धि को रोकते हुए $\text{A}\beta_{42}$ मोनोमर्स को स्थिर करते हैं, जिससे अल्जाइमर रोग के लिए संभावित चिकित्सीय रणनीति की पेशकश होती है।

बेकोपा मोनिएरी से शुद्ध बेकोसाइड ए प्राप्त करने के लिए एक कुशल उच्च उपज प्रक्रिया विकसित की गई थी, शुद्धिकरण प्रोटोकॉल में एक अनुक्रमिक विलायक ध्रुवीयता-ढाल निष्कर्षण विधि का पालन किया गया था, जिसके बाद ढाल सिलिका-जेल कॉलम क्रोमैटोग्राफी की गई थी। बेकोसाइड ए सामग्री को एचपीटीएलसी द्वारा मात्राबद्ध किया गया था, और 93% शुद्धता के साथ कच्चे ब्राह्मी अर्क के प्रति ग्राम 34.6 मिलीग्राम बेकोसाइड ए की उपज प्राप्त की गई थी। इसके बाद बाध्यकारी माउस मॉडल (p. T8I-VGLUT3) में इन विवो प्रयोग किए गए, जिसे अल्जाइमर रोग में देखी गई कोलीनर्जिक शिथिलता की नकल करने के लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया था। इसका उद्देश्य एसिटाइलकोलिनेस्टरेज़ अवरोधक के रूप में बैकोसाइड ए की भूमिका और बाध्यकारी व्यवहार को कम करने में इसकी चिकित्सीय क्षमता को मान्य करना था। परिणामों ने यौगिक की प्रभावकारिता और सुरक्षा की पुष्टि की, जिससे एक व्यवहार्य चिकित्सीय एजेंट के रूप में इसकी उम्मीदवारी मजबूत हुई।

खराब जैवउपलब्धता और पर्यावरणीय अस्थिरता की सीमाओं को दूर करने के लिए, नैनो-प्रौद्योगिकी-आधारित वितरण प्रणाली विकसित की गई। एनकैप्सुलेशन दक्षता को बढ़ाने और जठरांत्र द्रव में निरंतर रिलीज को प्राप्त करने के लिए पतली-फिल्म हाइड्रेशन विधि का उपयोग करके नैनो-लिपोसोम को संश्लेषित किया गया था। कोलेस्ट्रॉल का उपयोग लिपोसोम को स्थिर करने और कम पीएच पर बैकोसाइड ए और विथेनोलाइड ए की रिहाई को सीमित करने के लिए किया गया था। इस दृष्टिकोण को जैवसक्रिय यौगिकों के फार्माकोकाइनेटिक्स में सुधार करने की आवश्यकता के कारण तर्कसंगत बनाया गया था, जिससे रक्त-मस्तिष्क बाधा के पार प्रभावी वितरण सुनिश्चित हो सके। लिपोसोमल फॉर्मूलेशन ने सभी तापमानों (−20 से 55 डिग्री सेल्सियस) पर बेहतर अल्पकालिक भंडारण स्थिरता और 4 डिग्री सेल्सियस पर

दीर्घकालिक भंडारण स्थिरता प्रदर्शित की। लिपोसोम ने SH-SY5Y सेल लाइन पर कोई साइटोटॉक्सिसिटी नहीं दिखाई, जैसा कि MTT परख और लाइव सेल-इमेजिंग द्वारा संकेत दिया गया था।

निष्कर्ष में, यह कार्य कम्प्यूटेशनल, प्रायोगिक और नैनोटेक्नोलॉजिकल दृष्टिकोणों को एकीकृत करता है ताकि अल्जाइमर रोग के उपचार में फाइटोकेमिकल्स के उपयोग के लिए एक व्यापक रूपरेखा प्रदान की जा सके। रोग विकृति विज्ञान के कई पहलुओं को संबोधित करके, निष्कर्ष प्रभावी और टिकाऊ चिकित्सीय रणनीतियों को विकसित करने में महत्वपूर्ण अंतर्दृष्टि प्रदान करते हैं।

TABLE OF CONTENT

Certificate	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Abstract	vii
Table of content	xiv
List of figures	xxi
List of tables	xxvii
List of abbreviations	xxix
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION 1-54
1.1	Rationale of the work 2-6
1.2	Objectives 6-7
1.3	Scope of the thesis 8-13
1.4	Review of literature 13-54
1.4.1	Causes of Alzheimer's disease 15
1.4.2	Diagnostic biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease 26
1.4.3	Phyto-therapeutics or plant-derived bioactive compounds for targeting Alzheimer's disease 28
1.4.4	Phytochemical uniqueness and their delivery challenges 34
1.4.5	Nanocarrier systems for delivering bioactive compounds 36
1.4.6	Nanomaterials in Alzheimer's disease treatment 45
1.4.7	Toxicity of nanomaterials 52
1.4.8	Future directions and challenges in nanomedicine for treating Alzheimer's disease 53
CHAPTER 2	SCREENING OF BIOACTIVE COMPOUNDS FROM INDIAN MEDICINAL PLANT SOURCES HAVING NEUROPROTECTIVE PROPERTIES, FOR ACETYLCHOLINESTERASE AND BETA-SITE AMYLOID PRECURSOR PROTEIN CLEAVING ENZYME 1 INHIBITORY ACTIVITIES 55-102

2.1	Introduction	56-58
2.2	Material and Methods	58-69
2.2.1	Instrumentation and materials	58
2.2.2	Phytochemical retrieval and preparation	59
2.2.3	Docking analysis	60
2.2.4	Pharmacokinetic properties of the selected bioactive compounds	61
2.2.5	Molecular dynamic simulation	62
2.2.6	Analysis of molecular dynamic trajectory	62
2.2.7	Molecular mechanics Poisson–Boltzmann surface area analysis	63
2.2.8	Extraction and quantification of bioactive compounds from their plant source	64
2.2.8.1	<i>Quantification of withanolide A</i>	64
2.2.8.2	<i>Quantification of limonin</i>	65
2.2.9	<i>In vitro</i> acetylcholinesterase inhibition	65
2.2.10	Enzyme kinetic study	66
2.2.11	<i>In vitro</i> beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibition	67
2.2.12	Cell viability	67
2.2.12.1	<i>Cell culture</i>	68
2.2.12.2	<i>MTT assay</i>	68
2.2.13	Statistical analysis	69
2.3	Results and Discussion	69-101
2.3.1	Screening of acetylcholinesterase and beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibitors, based on computational screening	69
2.3.1.1	<i>Docking analysis</i>	70
2.3.1.2	<i>Pharmacokinetic properties of the bioactive compounds</i>	71
2.3.2	Molecular dynamic simulation to determine the stability and strength of protein-ligand interaction	80

2.3.2.1	<i>Root-mean-square deviation and Root-mean-square fluctuation analysis</i>	80
2.3.2.2	<i>Tertiary structure analysis</i>	82
2.3.2.3	<i>Secondary structure change in the enzyme</i>	85
2.3.3	Molecular mechanics Poisson–Boltzmann surface area approach for estimating binding free energy of the protein-ligand complex	94
2.3.4	Extraction of limonin and withanolide A from their plant source	95
2.3.5	<i>In vitro</i> validation of enzyme inhibition activity of the lead compounds	96
2.3.5.1	<i>Acetylcholinesterase inhibition by the lead compounds</i>	96
2.3.5.2	<i>Beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibition by the lead compounds</i>	99
2.3.6	Cytotoxic effect of the bioactive compounds on the SH-SY5Y cell line	101
2.4	Conclusions	102
CHAPTER 3	EFFECT OF WITHANOLIDE A AND BACOSIDE A TREATMENT ON AGGREGATION BEHAVIOUR OF THE β-AMYLOID PEPTIDE Aβ₄₂	103-143
3.1	Introduction	104-107
3.2	Material and Methods	107-112
3.2.1	Materials	107
3.2.2	Preparation of A β ₄₂ solution	107
3.2.3	A β ₄₂ fibril aggregation	107
3.2.4	ThT assay to measure aggregation kinetics of A β ₄₂	108
3.2.5	Aggregation behaviour of A β ₄₂ peptide in the presence of bacoside A and withanolide A	108

3.2.6	Effect of the addition of bacoside A and withanolide A, at different stages of the aggregation pathway	109
3.2.7	Effect of bacoside A and withanolide A on the morphological evolution of the aggregates	110
3.2.8	Molecular docking studies	110
3.2.9	Molecular dynamic simulation studies	111
3.2.10	Trajectory analysis	112
3.2.11	Statistical analysis	112
3.3	Results and Discussion	113-142
3.3.1	A β ₄₂ aggregation pathway	113
3.3.2	Kinetics of A β ₄₂ aggregation	116
3.3.3	Secondary structure content of A β ₄₂ peptide aggregation	118
3.3.4	Morphological evolution of the aggregates	119
3.3.5	The interaction of bacoside A and withanolide A with disordered beta-sheet rich structure of A β ₄₂ peptide	121
3.3.5.1	Differential binding of bacoside A and withanolide A to different forms of A β ₄₂ peptide	121
3.3.5.2	Molecular dynamic simulation of A β ₄₂ peptide interaction with bacoside A and withanolide A	124
3.3.6	The interaction of bacoside A and withanolide A with native helical-structure of A β ₄₂ peptide	137
3.3.6.1	Docking analysis	137
3.3.6.2	Molecular dynamic simulation analysis	139
3.4	Conclusions	142-143
CHAPTER 4	PURIFICATION OF BACOSIDE A FROM <i>BACOPA MONNIERI</i> PLANT, AND STUDYING IT'S <i>IN VITRO</i> AND <i>IN VIVO</i> ACETYLCHOLINESTERASE INHIBITION ACTIVITY	144-167
4.1	Introduction	145-147

4.2	Material and Methods	147-153
4.2.1	Materials	147
4.2.2	Extraction of bacosides	148
4.2.3	Isolation of BA	148
4.2.4	High-Performance Thin Layer Chromatography	149
4.2.5	Characterization of purified BA	149
4.2.6	<i>In vitro</i> acetylcholinesterase assay	149
4.2.7	<i>In vitro</i> antioxidant activity assay	150
4.2.8	<i>In vivo</i> studies on p. T8I-VGLUT3 mice model	151
4.2.8.1	<i>Animal preparation</i>	151
4.2.8.2	<i>Sucrose splash test</i>	151
4.2.8.3	<i>Pharmacological treatment</i>	152
4.2.8.4	<i>Locomotion Analysis</i>	153
4.2.8.5	<i>Dark/Light test</i>	153
4.2.9	Statistical Analysis	153
4.3	Results and Discussion	154-166
4.3.1	Purification and identification of bacoside A from <i>Bacopa monnieri</i> extract	154
4.3.2	Quantification of bacoside A present in the purified extract	155
4.3.3	Characterization of the BA	156
4.3.4	Effect of bacoside A on acetylcholinesterase inhibition	158
4.3.5	Antioxidant activity	159
4.3.6	<i>In vivo</i> studies	160
4.3.6.1	<i>Effect of bacoside A treatment on the compulsive behavior of the mice and its significance in acetylcholinesterase inhibition</i>	161
4.3.6.2	<i>Side-effects of the bacoside A treatment on the mice</i>	163
4.3.6.3	<i>Effect of bacoside A treatment on the anxiety level of the mice post splash test</i>	164
4.4	Conclusions	166-167

CHAPTER 5	SYNTHESIS OF BACOSIDE A AND WITHANOLIDE A CO-LOADED LIPOSOMES FOR SUSTAINED RELEASE IN THE GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT	168-189
5.1	Introduction	169-170
5.2	Material and Methods	171-186
5.2.1	Materials	171
5.2.2	Synthesis of liposomes	171
5.2.3	Synthesis of bacoside A and withanolide A co-loaded liposomes	172
5.2.4	High-performance thin layer chromatography for bacoside A estimation	172
5.2.5	High-performance liquid chromatography for withanolide A estimation	172
5.2.6	Encapsulation efficiency and loading capacity	173
5.2.7	<i>In vitro</i> release studies	173
5.2.8	Storage stability of the liposomes	174
5.2.9	Characterization of free and loaded liposomes	174
5.2.10	Cell culture	175
5.2.11	Cell viability assay	175
	Cell Imaging	175
5.2.13	Statistical analysis	176
5.3	Results and discussion	176-188
5.3.1	Liposome synthesis	176
5.3.2	Encapsulation efficiency and loading capacity of the liposomes	178
5.3.3	<i>In vitro</i> release study	179
5.3.4	Storage stability analysis	181
5.3.5	Physicochemical characterization of liposomes	183
5.3.6	Cytotoxic effects of liposomes on SH-SY5Y cells	185
5.4	Conclusions	188-189
CHAPTER 6	SUMMARY OF THE THESIS	190-194
	Future Prospectives	195-198

References	199-249
Appendix	250-337
List of Publications	338
Conferences	339
Bio-Data	340-341

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Description	Page No.
Figure 1.1	Molecular structure of anti-Alzheimer's drugs	3
Figure 1.2	Most widely accepted causes of Alzheimer's disease	4
Figure 1.3	Graphical representation of the work plan	7
Figure 1.4	Common symptoms observed in Alzheimer's disease patients	14
Figure 1.5	Schematic representation of the cholinergic hypothesis	17
Figure 1.6	Schematic representation of the amyloidogenic and non-amyloidogenic pathways	18
Figure 1.7	Plant-derived bioactive compounds for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease: Categories, compounds, and their mechanisms	29
Figure 1.8	Stability challenges faced by bioactive compounds present in food	35
Figure 1.9	Nanocarriers for targeted delivery of bioactive compounds	37
Figure 2.1	Graphical representation of the work plan	57
Figure 2.2	The three-dimensional crystal structure of the enzymes, (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1	60
Figure 2.3	2-dimensional structure of the lead compounds (A) limonin, (B) peimisine, (C) serratanine B, and (D) withanolide A	76
Figure 2.4a	Interaction between acetylcholinesterase and limonin (A), peimisine (B), serratanine B (C), and withanolide A (D) after molecular docking	77
Figure 2.4b	Interaction between beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 and (A) limonin, (B) peimisine, (C) serratanine B, and (D) withanolide A after molecular docking	78

Figure 2.5a	Root-mean-square deviation plot of the Ca atoms of (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 in free and bound form	81
Figure 2.5b	Root-mean-square fluctuation plot of the amino acid residues of (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 in free and bound form	82
Figure 2.6a	The radius of gyration of (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 in free and bound form	83
Figure 2.6b	The solvent-accessible surface area of (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 in free and bound form	84
Figure 2.7a	Secondary structure change in (A) acetylcholinesterase and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 while interacting with the bioactive compounds	85
Figure 2.7b	DSSP plot of secondary structure change of (A) free acetylcholinesterase, and acetylcholinesterase in complex with (B) Limonin, (C) Peimisine, (D) Serratanine B, and (E) Withanolide A	90
Figure 2.7c	DSSP plot of secondary structure change of (A) free beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1, and beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 in complex with (B) Limonin, (C) Peimisine, (D) Serratanine B, and (E) Withanolide A	93
Figure 2.8a	Acetylcholinesterase enzyme inhibition in the presence of the bioactive compounds	96
Figure 2.8b	Lineweaver-Burk Plot for acetylcholinesterase enzyme inhibition by (A) Galantamine, (B) Withanolide A, and (C) Limonin	98
Figure 2.9	(A) Fluorescence spectra depicting the effect of bioactive compounds on beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 inhibition, and (B) beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 activity (%)	100

Figure 2.10	Effect of the selected bioactive compounds on the cell viability of the SH-SY5Y cells	101
Figure 3.1	Schematic representation of the amyloidogenic and non-amyloidogenic pathways	104
Figure 3.2	Chemical structures of bioactive compounds, (A) bacoside A, and (B) withanolide A	105
Figure 3.3	Graphical representation of the work plan	106
Figure 3.4	Time course of aggregation of A β ₄₂ peptide, estimated by ThT-binding assay	113
Figure 3.5	Effect of bacoside A and withanolide A on A β ₄₂ aggregation, when they were administered at different phases of its aggregation pathway, the beginning of (A) lag phase, (B) log phase, (C) stationary phase and (D) their effect on defibrillation	115
Figure 3.6	Kinetics of A β ₄₂ peptide aggregation, alone and in the presence of (A) bacoside A and (B) withanolide A	117
Figure 3.7	(A) CD spectra of A β ₄₂ peptide in the absence and presence of bacoside A and withanolide A and (B) changes in the secondary structure content of the peptide	119
Figure 3.8	TEM images showing untreated A β ₄₂ peptide aggregates at (A) 0 h, (B) 24 h, and A β ₄₂ peptide aggregates treated with (C) bacoside A, and (D) withanolide A	120
Figure 3.9a	Interaction of bacoside A with A β ₄₂ (A) monomer, (B) oligomer, and (C) fibril	122
Figure 3.9b	Interaction of withanolide A with A β ₄₂ (A) monomer, (B) oligomer, and (C) fibril	123
Figure 3.10a	Root-mean-square deviation plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ monomer	125
Figure 3.10b	Root-mean-square deviation plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ oligomer, (A) chain A, and (B) chain B	125
Figure 3.10c	Root-mean-square deviation plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ fibril, (A) chain A, (B) chain B, (C) chain C, (D) chain D,	127

	(E) chain E, (F) chain F, (G) chain G, (H) chain H, (I) chain I, (J) chain J, (K) chain K, and (L) chain L	
Figure 3.11a	Root-mean-square fluctuation plot of all the amino acid residues of A β ₄₂ monomer	128
Figure 3.11b	Root-mean-square fluctuation plot of all the amino acid residues of A β ₄₂ oligomer, (A) chain A, and (B) chain B	128
Figure 3.11c	Root-mean-square fluctuation plot of all the amino acid residues of A β ₄₂ fibril, (A) chain A, (B) chain B, (C) chain C, (D) chain D, (E) chain E, (F) chain F, (G) chain G, (H) chain H, (I) chain I, (J) chain J, (K) chain K, and (L) chain L	130
Figure 3.12	(A) Effect of bacoside A and withanolide A on the α -helix content of the A β ₄₂ peptides, and (B) the DSSP plot of the A β ₄₂ monomer with respect to time	131
Figure 3.13	Solvent-accessible surface area of the whole peptide assembly of (A) A β ₄₂ monomer, (B) oligomer, and (D) fibril, in free and in complex with bacoside A and withanolide A	133
Figure 3.14a	Radius of gyration plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ monomer	134
Figure 3.14b	Radius of gyration plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ oligomer, (A) chain A, and (B) chain B	134
Figure 3.14c	Radius of gyration plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ fibril, (A) chain A, (B) chain B, (C) chain C, (D) chain D, (E) chain E, (F) chain F, (G) chain G, (H) chain H, (I) chain I, (J) chain J, (K) chain K, and (L) chain L	136
Figure 3.15	(A) 3D representation of bacoside A (Green) and withanolide A (Orange) bound to native helical structure of A β ₄₂ peptide, yellow color denoting KLVFA (16-21) region of A β ₄₂ . Detailed interaction map of (B) bacoside A and (C) withanolide A, with A β ₄₂ , highlighting key chemical bonds and amino acid residues involved.	138

Figure 3.16	The interaction of bacoside A and withanolide A with native A β ₄₂ peptide was studied, (A) Root-mean-square deviation plot of C α atoms of A β ₄₂ peptide, alone and in complex with compounds, (B) Root-mean-square fluctuation plot of all the amino acid residues of the peptide during the last 25 ns of the simulation while interaction	140
Figure 3.17	(A) Radius of gyration and (B) solvent-accessible surface area plot of the C α -atoms of A β ₄₂ peptide, free and in complex with bacoside A and withanolide A	141
Figure 3.18	(A) Effect of bacoside A and withanolide A on the α -helix and β -sheet content of the A β ₄₂ peptides, and (B) the DSSP plot of the A β ₄₂ peptide with respect to time	142
Figure 4.1	Graphical representation of the work plan	145
Figure 4.2	Schematic representation of (A) Striatum, and (B) Vesicular synergy	147
Figure 4.3	Graphical representation of (A) the open field and (B) the splash test	152
Figure 4.4	The pictorial representation of the dark/light box used for the anxiety test	153
Figure 4.5	Derivatized TLC plate as observed at λ_{366} nm	154
Figure 4.6	(A) Fourier-transform infrared graph of purified and standard bacoside A, and (B) high-resolution mass spectrometry chromatogram of the purified bacoside A	157
Figure 4.7	Effect of purified bacoside A and other reference drugs on acetylcholinesterase inhibition	158
Figure 4.8	Antioxidant activity of the compounds	4.8
Figure 4.9	Establishment of behavioural compulsion in p.T8I-VGLUT3 mice following the splash test and effect of bacoside A treatment, on (A) the latency to first grooming behaviour, (B) total time spent grooming over the 6 mins of daily tests, (C) number of grooming over	162

	the days, (D) representation of the average duration of a grooming per episode	
Figure 4.10	Effect of bacoside A treatment on the locomotive abilities of the mice in terms of, (A) distance travelled, and (B) velocity of the movement in the open field	164
Figure 4.11	Effect of bacoside A treatment on the anxiety level of the mice in terms of, (A) latency to the first appearance, (B) total time spent, and (C) number of times mice travel to the light chamber of the dark/light box	166
Figure 5.1	Graphical representation of the work plan	170
Figure 5.2	(A) The schematic representation of the liposome, (B) the effect of cholesterol on the particle size and (C) FESEM images of the liposomes with phosphatidylcholine and cholesterol ratio (a) 2:1, (b) 4:1, (c) 9:1, and (d) 20:1	177
Figure 5.3	<i>In vitro</i> release studies of (A) all the liposomal formulations and (B) bacoside A and withanolide A (4:1) co-loaded liposomes in simulated gastro-intestinal fluids	180
Figure 5.4	The effect of (A) storage temperature, and long-term storage at (B) 4 °C and (C) 37 °C, on the retention coefficient of the liposomes	182
Figure 5.5	(A) Field emission scanning electron microscope image [scale: 100 nm] and (B) Infra-red spectra, of bacoside A and withanolide A co-loaded liposomes	184
Figure 5.6	Cell viability of SH-SY5Y cells after treatment with liposomal formulations	186
Figure 5.7	(A) Live cell imaging of liposome-treated SH-SY5Y cells after staining with calcein-AM dye [scale: 50 µm] and (B) its corresponding fluorescence intensity	187
Figure 5.8	Live cell imaging of liposome-treated SH-SY5Y cells after staining with Tritc-phalloidin and DAPI dye to visualize the cytoplasm and nucleus of the cells	188
Figure A1	Standard plot of withanolide A	250
Figure A2	Standard plot of limonin	250

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Description	Page No.
Table 1.1	Pharmacological targets for Alzheimer's disease	15-16
Table 2.1	Estimation of binding free energy of molecular interaction between acetylcholinesterase and the selected bioactive compounds by molecular docking	70-71
Table 2.2	Estimation of binding free energy of molecular interaction between beta-site amyloid precursor protein cleaving enzyme 1 and the selected bioactive compounds by molecular docking	71-72
Table 2.3	Lipinski's rule of 5 applied to the hit compounds to determine their drug-likeness	73-74
Table 2.4	ADMET properties: absorption, distribution, metabolism, and toxicity associated drug-like factors of the hit compounds	74-75
Table 2.5	Amino acid residues involved in protein-ligand interaction during molecular docking	79
Table 2.6	Binding free energy of the protein-ligand complex, obtained by molecular mechanics Poisson–Boltzmann surface area approach	94-95
Table 2.7	Enzyme kinetic parameters of acetylcholinesterase in the presence of bioactive compound inhibitors	99
Table 3.1	Binding free energy for A β ₄₂ peptide- bacoside A/withanolide A complex, and amino acid residues involved during interaction	124
Table 3.2	Binding free energy (kJ/mol) calculated by molecular docking for native A β ₄₂ peptide-bacoside A/withanolide A complex, and amino acid residues involved during interaction	139
Table 4.1	Genotype and sex-based difference in mice used for the experimentation	151

Table 4.2	Bacoside A content present in the crude and the purified extract	155
Table 5.1	The bacoside A and withanolide A content of the liposomes and their corresponding encapsulation efficiency and loading capacity	178
Table 5.2	The physiochemical characteristics of the liposomes	183
Table A1	List of plants with neuroprotective properties: Common names, geographical distribution, and key bioactive compounds	251-308
Table A2	Estimation of binding energy of molecular interaction between acetylcholinesterase and the bioactive compounds by molecular docking	309-334
Table A3	Estimation of binding energy of molecular interaction between acetylcholinesterase and the selected bioactive compounds by molecular docking	335-337

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3-(4,5-Dimethylthiazol-2-Yl)-2,5-Diphenyltetrazolium Bromide	MTT
2,2-Diphenyl-1-Picrylhydrazyl	DPPH
4',6-Diamidino-2-Phenylindole	DAPI
5,5'-Dithiol-Bis-(2-Nitrobenzoic Acid)	DTNB
50 % Inhibitory Concentration	IC ₅₀
Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Elimination & Toxicity	ADMET
Acetone Extract	AE
Acetylcholine	ACH
Acetylcholinesterase	AChE
Alanine	ALA
Ammonium Hydroxide	NH ₄ OH
Amyloid Precursor Protein	APP
Amyloid β protein, 40 Residues	A β ₄₀
Amyloid β protein, 42 Residues	A β ₄₂
Amyloid-Beta	A β
Angiotensin Converting Enzyme	ACE
Apo-Lipoprotein E	APOE E4
Arbitrary Unit	A.U.
Bacoside A	BA

Bacoside-Rich Extract	BRE
Beta-Site App Cleaving Enzyme	BACE1
Blood-Brain Barrier	BBB
Butylated Hydroxytoluene	BHT
Butyrylcholinesterase	BChE
Calcium	Ca ²⁺
Carbon dioxide	CO ₂
Catalase	CAT
Cell Division Cycle	CDC
Centimeter	CM
Central Nervous System	CNS
Circular Dichroism	CD
C-Jun N-Terminal Kinase	JNK
Coenzyme A	CoA
Cyclin-Dependent Kinase 5	CdK
Cyclooxygenase-1	COX-1
Cyclooxygenase-2	COX-2
Database Of Secondary Structure Assignments	DSSP
Dimethyl Sulfoxide	DMSO
Direct Extract	DE
Dorsomedial Striatum	DMS

Dulbecco's Phosphate-Buffered Saline	DPBS
Dynamic Light Scattering	DLS
Emission Wavelength	λ_{EM}
Encapsulation Efficiency	EE
Epigallocatechin-3-Gallate	EGCG
Equation	Eq.
Excitation Wavelength	λ_{EX}
Fetal Bovine Serum	FBS
Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope	FESEM
Fourier-Transform Infra-Red	FT-IR
Gastrointestinal	GI
Genome-Wide Association Studies	GWAS
Glutamine	GLN
Glutathione	GSH
Glycine	GLY
Glycogen Synthase Kinase	GSK
Gram	g
Hexafluoroisopropanol	HFIP
Hexane Extract	HE
High-Performance Liquid Chromatography	HPLC
High-Performance Thin Layer Chromatography	HPTLC

High-Resolution Electron Spray Ionization Mass Spectroscopy	ESI-Q-TOF-MS
High-Resolution Electrospray Ionization Mass Spectrometry	HR-ESI-MS
Histidine	HIS
Hour	H
Hydrochloric Acid	HCl
Inducible Nitric Oxide Synthase	INOS
Inositol 1,4,5-Trisphosphate Receptors	INSP3R
Interleukin 1 β	IL-1 β
Intraperitoneal	IP
Isoleucine	ILE
Leucine	LEU
Loading Capacity	LC
Lysine	LYS
Malondialdehyde	MDA
Maximum Reaction Velocity	V _{MAX}
Methanolic Extract	ME
Michaelis-Menten Constant (Substrate Concentration At Half V _{max})	K _M
Microgram	μ g
Microliter	μ L
Micrometer	μ M
Micromolar	μ M

Micro RNA	miRNA
Mili Volt	mV
Milligram	mg
Milliliter	mL
Millimolar	mm
Minute	min
Molecular Dynamic	MD
Molecular Mechanics Poisson–Boltzmann Surface Area	MM-PBSA
Molecular Weight	MW
Multi-Target Directed Ligand	MTDL
Na ⁺ /Ca ²⁺ Exchanger	NCX
Nanometer	nm
National Centre for Cell Science	NCCS
Neural Stem Cells	NSC
Neurofibrillary Tangles	NFT
Nitric Oxide Synthase	NOS
N-Methyl D-Aspartate	NMDA
Nuclear Factor (Erythroid-Derived 2)-Like 2	NRF2
Number Of Hydrogen Bond Acceptors	NOH
Number Of Hydrogen Bond Donors	NOHNH
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	OCD

Paraformaldehyde	PFA
Particle Mesh Ewald	PME
Partition Coefficient	Log P
Periodic Boundary Conditions	PBC
Phenylalanine	PHE
Phosphate Buffer Saline	PBS
Phosphodiesterase-5	PD-5
Picosecond	ps
Plasma Membrane Ca^{2+} ATPase	PMCA
Polydispersity Index	PDI
Polyethylene Glycol	PEG
Protein Data Bank	PDB
Radius Of Gyration	R_g
Reactive Nitrogen Species	RNS
Reactive Oxygen Species	ROS
Relative Fluorescence Intensity	RFI
Retention Coefficient	R_c
Root-Mean-Square Deviation	RMSD
Root-Mean-Square Fluctuation	RMSF
Rotation Per Minute	RPM
Ryanodine Receptors	RYR

Sarco/Endoplasmic Reticulum ATPase	SERCA
Second	sec
Secondary Structure Content	SSC
Serine	SER
Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor	SSRI
Sodium Hydroxide	NaOH
Sodium Hydroxide	NaCl
Solvent Accessible Surface Area	SASA
Standard Deviation	SD
Store-Operated Ca ²⁺ Entry	SOCE
Structure Data File	sdf
Structure-Based Drug Discovery	SBDD
Superoxide Dismutase	SOD
Tar DNA-Binding Protein 43	TDP-43
Thioflavin-T	ThT
Three Dimensional	3D
Transmission Electron Microscope	TEM
Tumor Necrosis Factor α	TNF- α
Two Dimensional	2D
Valine	VAL
Vesicular Acetylcholine Transporter	VACht

Vesicular Glutamate Transporter 3	VGLUT3
White Blood Cells	WBC
Wild Type	WT
Withanolide A	WA
