



Extraction, characterization and antioxidant activity of fenugreek (*Trigonella-Foenum Graecum*) seed oil

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 September 2018

Revised 3 December 2018

Accepted 21 December 2018

Available online 28 December 2018

Keywords:

Fenugreek seed oil

Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry

Unsaturated essential fatty acid

Antioxidant

Total phenolic content

DPPH

ABTS

ABSTRACT

Fenugreek (*Trigonella-Foenum Graecum*) is known as one of the traditional and most promising medicinal herbs belongs to the leguminous family. The seeds of fenugreek have been extensively studied for the treatment of inflammation, cancer and diabetes. In this study, fenugreek seed oil was extracted and evaluated for its chemical compositions and bonding through gas chromatography coupled to mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR) analysis, respectively. The antioxidant activity against 2,2-diphenyl-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) and 2,2'-Azino-bis-3-ethylbenzothiazole line-6-sulfonic acid (ABTS^{••}) radicals, total phenolic content (TPC) and total flavonoid content (TFC) of the oil were also studied. The capacity of antioxidants detected by ABTS was stronger than that by DPPH. A total number of 23 chemical compounds were detected and identified in fenugreek seed oil comprising of 99% of the total oil through GC-MS analysis. The major compounds of the extracted oil were linoleic acid (54.13%), palmitic acid (16.21%), pinene (4.56%), 4-Pentyl-1-(4-propylcyclohexyl)-1-cyclohexene (3.87%) and linoleic acid methyl ester (3.19%). FTIR analysis confirmed the presence of carboxyl group in the oil which were more dominated by unsaturated essential fatty acids. Moreover, the oil of fenugreek seed indicated a strong antioxidant radical scavenging activity against both DPPH and ABTS assays with an IC₅₀ of 172.6 ± 3.1 and 161.3 ± 2.21, respectively. The TPC and TFC of the oil were 38.97 ± 0.34 mg GAE/g, oil and 14.417 ± 0.23 mg QE/g.oil. Thus, this study suggests that the fenugreek seed oil could be used for pharmaceutical purposes.

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1. Introduction

Fenugreek (*Trigonella-Foenum Graecum*) is known as one of the traditional and most promising medicinal herbs belongs to the leguminous family. Historically, this plant has been widely used for more than 2500 years due to its food and medicinal properties as an herbal remedy [1]. Basically, it is reported to be native to West Africa and now extensively cultivated in Asia and Latin America as well [1,2]. The seeds and leaves of this plant are extensively employed in medicinal purposes as an anti-diabetic [3–5], anti-

microbial [6] anti-inflammation [7], anti-cancer [8] and antioxidant agent [9–11]. Moreover, the seeds of fenugreek have also been reported to have strong free radical scavenging activity [12,13].

Free radicals are naturally produced in human body as a result of normal metabolism, different endogenous processes or exposure to some environmental pollutants. These radicals play an essential role in the biological functions of the entire body. However, due to their high reactivity as an oxidant and inhibitor of enzymes, they lead to the biomolecules oxidation such as protein, lipids, DNA and amino acids which finally result into cell damage and consequently cell death [14,15]. Thus, for a proper physiological function in the body, free radicals and antioxidants need to be balanced to avert oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is defined as the lack of balance between oxidants and antioxidants which could be linked to wide variety of diseases in human such as cancer, inflammation and diabetes [7]. Previous studies had reported that the dietary antioxidants are useful for protecting human body and preventing chronic illnesses [14]. Generally, there are two types of antioxidants used in health-related industries: natural and synthetics.

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The very known synthetic antioxidants including butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylhydroxytoluene (BHT) are potentially suspected to have harmful effects to human health, they can result in liver damage and also possess carcinogenic effects [16]. Recently, interests have been increased in natural antioxidants produced from many species of fruits, seeds, cereals, vegetables and plants [17–20]. Natural antioxidants are well known for their protective capacity in living organisms and cells against free radical attacks [21]. Natural antioxidants could be advantageous over synthetic antioxidants as they do not contain chemicals and also been components of human diet for thousand years.

The use of essential fatty acids and oils as promising and natural antioxidants are achieving a growing interest in food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical products because of their potential health benefits and harmless effects. The evaluation of their antioxidant performance made them a valid alternative to synthetic antioxidants such as BHA and BHT [16]. Essential fatty acids are unsaturated lipids that cannot be synthesized in the body and must be acquired from external sources. The two essential polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) namely linoleic acid (omega-6 fatty acids) and alpha-linolenic acid (omega-3 fatty acids) are considered very important for human body to survive. Studies have shown that essential fatty acids can treat certain diseases such as cancers and diabetes [22]. Particularly, linoleic acid is recognized as the essential nutrient for humans. Linoleic acid is mostly found in walnut oil, sunflower oil, cottonseed oil, pumpkin seed oil, coconut oil and many leafy vegetables [22,23]. In fact, essential fatty acids and oils can be produced from several parts of the plants such as leaves, fruits, roots, seeds, wood, stems, and shells using different solvents (n-hexane, chloroform, diethyl ether, acetone and ethanol). Commonly, n-hexane has been extensively used to extract the essential oils of plants [24,25]. In essence, plant extracts and oils have not only used for the purpose of antioxidant stability in foods, drinks, cosmetics creams and other goods, but they are also used as multi-purpose additive such as flavouring, anti-microbial and anti-fungal agents [26–28]. To date, one of the plants that is well known for its medicinal values and have been used since the ancient time as a food source or herbal remedy is fenugreek. Different studies have reported the potential of antioxidant capacity and other phytochemical activity in fenugreek seed extracts [10,13]. However, a little is known about the capacity of antioxidant activity and total phenolic content of its extracted oil. Therefore, this study is undertaken to determine the chemical properties of the oil extracted from fenugreek seed and to evaluate its antioxidant activity based on DPPH and FRAP assays, total phenolic content and total flavonoid content as well.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Procurement of fenugreek seed

Seeds of fenugreek were purchased from local retail market in Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia. The seeds were cleaned before drying it in oven at 50 °C for 24 h. Then, the dried seeds were ground using a mill with ultra-centrifugal (Retsch ZM-200, Germany) equipped with ring sieve owning trapezoid holes sized 0.5 mm. The moisture content of the seed was (5.51 ± 0.14% d.w basis). The powdered seeds were kept in dark airtight container before extraction.

2.2. Analytical reagents and chemicals

Methanol (99% purity), n-hexane (99% purity), 2,2-diphenylpicrylhydrazyl (DPPH), sodium carbonate, Folin-Ciocateu reagent and gallic acid (GA) were obtained from Sigma Aldrich (M) Sdn.

Bhd, Selangore, Malaysia. All chemicals used for the extraction process were analytical grade with high purity.

2.3. Extraction process

A 100 g of crushed fenugreek seed was extracted using n-hexane (600 mL) and a Soxhlet extractor for 3 h at (65–70 °C). Then, the mixture of solvent-oil was filtered through a No.1 paper filter (Whatman). The extract was transferred into a round flask and solvent was evaporated using rotary evaporator, (Rotavapor R-200, Büchi, Germany) at 40 °C. Finally, the oil extract was stored at 4 °C to prevent degradation of the compounds for further analysis. The yield of extraction was calculated using Eq. (1).

$$\text{Extraction yield } \left(\frac{v}{w}\%\right) = \frac{\text{Amount of oil extracted (mL)}}{\text{Weight of dry sample used (g)}} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

2.4. GC-MS analysis of the oil

The GC-MS analysis of extracted oil was accomplished using a GC-MS (Agilent 5973-model, USA) with C-18 column (30 mm diameter of tubular column, 0.25-mm internal diameter and 0.25- μm thickness of film). Initially, the oven temperature was kept stable at 60 °C for 4 min and then allowed to rise at a rate of 6 °C/min to 230 °C. The temperatures of injector and detector were set at 230 °C and 260 °C, respectively. Helium gas was applied as carrier at a flow rate of 1 mL/min. The oil sample was filtered using micro-filter 0.45 μm and mixed with n-hexane at ratio of 1:10 then injected by split injection. The identification of the chemical compounds of the oil was determined by matching the obtained mass spectra of the sample with the mass spectra report provided by the library of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST05.LIB).

2.5. Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR)

The determination of functional groups and bonding structure of fenugreek seeds oil were determined using Thermo Scientific Nicolet iS5 spectrometer equipped with deuterated triglycine sulfate (DTGS) as a detector and using Potassium bromide (KBr) methods. IR spectra were measured in the range of 400 to 4000 cm^{-1} at 4 cm^{-1} selected resolution and room temperature 25 °C. Approximately, one drop of oil was placed on the surface of the diamond crystal to form a thin film for analysis of infrared spectrometry and measured directly.

2.6. DPPH free radical scavenging activity

Antioxidant activity of fenugreek seed oil was measured using the method explained by Alara *et al.* [29] with slight modifications. Concisely, 0.2 mL of various concentrations of extract in methanol were separately added to 2 mL of DPPH (0.1 mM) solution. The mixture was vigorously shaken and then incubated for 30 min in a dark drawer at room temperature. Then the absorbance of the sample was measured at a wavelength of 517 nm using a UV-Vis spectrophotometer (Hitachi U-1800, Japan). Methanol was applied as the blank. The scavenging activity on DPPH was calculated using Eq. (2). The half maximal inhibitory concentration (IC_{50}) of the sample was also calculated to find the inhibition percentage against oil concentration.

$$\text{DPPH radical scavenging activity } (\%) = \frac{A_{\text{control}} - A_{\text{sample}}}{A_{\text{control}}} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

where A_{control} shows the absorbance of DPPH and methanol solution without sample, and A_{sample} represents the mixture of sample (extracted oil) and solution of DPPH.

2.7. ABTS free radical scavenging activity

The radical scavenging capacity of fenugreek oil was also examined using ABTS assay. This assay, followed the procedure described by Zielinski *et al.* [30] with some modifications. Initially, the stock solutions of 7 mM ABTS and 2.45 mM potassium persulfate ($K_2S_2O_8$) were separately prepared by dissolving them in distilled water. Then, the working solution was prepared by mixing the equal quantities of the two stock solutions and allowed to rest for 12–16 h in a dark place at room temperature. Further, a fresh working solution was prepared by mixing 1 mL of ABTS solution diluting in 60 mL of methanol to obtain a constant absorbance of 1.1 ± 0.02 at wavelength of 734 nm using a UV-vis Spectrophotometer (Hitachi U-1800, Japan). Thereafter, 150 μ L of the fenugreek seed oil was mixed with 2.85 mL of ABTS solution and the absorbance was taken at 734 nm after incubating in a dark place for 2 h. Methanol was used as the blank and the free radical scavenging activity of the oil was calculated using Eq. (3).

$$\text{ABTS radical scavenging activity (\%)} = \frac{A_{\text{control}} - A_{\text{sample}}}{A_{\text{control}}} \times 100 \quad (3)$$

where A_{control} shows the absorbance of ABTS and methanol solution without sample, and A_{sample} represents the mixture of oil and ABTS solution.

2.8. Total phenolic content (TPC) of the oil

The determination of TPC of the extracted oil was carried out based on the methods explained by Sarikurkcu *et al.* [26] and Iness *et al.* [31] with slight modifications. Concisely, 1 mL of the oil was mixed with 0.2 mL of Folin-Ciocalteu reagent and 2 mL of methanol was shaken thoroughly, before allowing to rest for 5 min in the dark place at room temperature. Then, 1 mL of 20% (w/v) solution prepared from sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) was added and incubated in a drawer for the next 2 h. Thereafter, the absorbance of the sample was measured at 765 nm using UV-Vis spectrophotometry (Hitachi U-1800, Japan). The concentration of sample was calculated and obtained from the standard curve of gallic acid (100–500 mg/mL) equation ($Y = 0.0003x + 0.0391$; $R^2 = 0.9662$) equation and the results were expressed as mg gallic acid equivalent per gram of oil (mg GAE/g. oil). The total phenolic content of the extract was obtained based on Eq. (4). Methanol was used as blank versus the prepared sample.

$$\text{TPC} = \frac{c \times V}{m} \quad (4)$$

where in the above equation c represents the concentration of the sample taken from the gallic acid calibration curve (mg/mL), V is the solvent (n-hexane) volume used for the extraction of oil (mL), and m indicates the weight (g) of the extracted oil.

2.9. Total flavonoid content (TFC) of the oil

The determination of total flavonoid content in fenugreek seed oil was performed based on the methods described by Dahmoune *et al.* [32] and Alara *et al.* [18] with some modifications. concisely, 1 mL of extracted oil was added into a glass test tube. Then, 1 mL of 2% ethanolic $AlCl_3$ was added and incubated in the dark for 30 min at room temperature. The absorbance was measured at 415 nm using a UV-vis Spectrophotometer (Hitachi U-1800, Japan). The concentration of total flavonoid content of the oil was then measured using quercetin standard curve (100–600 mg/mL) plotted with the equation of ($y = 0.0006x + 0.1523$; $R^2 = 0.9923$). Where y shows the absorbance at 415 nm and x indicates the sample concentration in mg/mL. The results were expressed in mg quercetin equivalent (QE) per g of dry sample (mg QE/g d.w). The total flavo-

noid content of the oil was determined based on Eq. (5). Methanol was used as blank versus the prepared sample.

$$\text{TFC} = \frac{c \times V}{m} \quad (5)$$

where in this equation c indicates the concentration of the sample taken from the quercetin calibration curve (mg/mL), V is the solvent volume used for the extraction of oil (mL), and m indicates the weight (g) of the extracted oil.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Extraction and GC-MS characterization of fenugreek seed oil

The oil of fenugreek seed was extracted using Soxhlet extraction technique and n-hexane as the extraction solvent. The seeds were yielded $5.55 \pm 0.05\%$ (v/w) oil having a yellowish colour. The extracted oil was characterized through the GC-MS analysis. A total number and 23 compounds were identified with a total of 99% compositions. Table 1 represents the detected constituents along with their molecular formula, retention time (RT), percentage of composition and pharmacological activities obtained from PubChem. Fig. 1 displays the GC-MS characterization of fenugreek seed oil with respect to retention time (min) and abundance of compounds. These results indicated that the major compounds in fenugreek seed oil were linoleic acid (54.13%), palmitic acid (16.21%), pinene (4.56%), 4-Pentyl-1-(4-propylcyclohexyl)-1-cyclohexene (3.87%), and linoleic acid methyl ester (3.19%). The chemical composition of the extracted oil obtained in this study was slightly different from the previous studies, which can be attributed to the type of extraction method and the type of solvents used to extract the oil. However, some compounds detected in this study were similar to the previous findings. For example, Gu *et al.* [33] obtained linoleic acid as the dominated compound in the oil, contributing approximately 42% of the total oil composition, similar to this study that also obtained linoleic acid (54.13%) as the major compound in the oil. Similarly, Sulieman *et al.* [34] extracted the oil of fenugreek seed by homogenizing the seed powder with 2:1 chloroform-methanol (v/v), which also reported linoleic acid (43.2%) as the dominated compound in the oil. Overall, the derived oil of fenugreek seed consisted of the compounds such as esters, alkanes, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, glycerides and other related compounds such as phenols, flavonoids and alkaloids.

Fig. 2 shows the extracted fenugreek seed oil possessed two main constituents found in the oil, linoleic acid and palmitic acid. Linoleic acid is known as polyunsaturated omega-6 fatty acid, having 18-carbon chain with twin bonds in cis configuration. Studies revealed that linoleic acid has been recognized as an important diet in human body due to its strong anticancer activity especially in terms of breast cancer treatment [35,36]. The second highest compound (palmitic acid) is known for its biological and antioxidant activity. Palmitic acid is known as one of the most common saturated fatty acid with 16 carbon backbone found in plants, animals, and microorganisms. It has been also used as a food additive and anti-inflammation, its daily intake may lead to a healthier life [37]. The other compounds with similar biological activity such as pinene, linoleic acid methyl ester, pentadance and phytol have a wide range of pharmacological activities as an antioxidant, anti-asthmatic, and also used as drug for sexual and urinary disorders [38–41]. The presence of these compounds along with palmitic acid could be a possible reason for antioxidant activity of fenugreek seed oil [42]. In addition, most of the identified compounds of the extracted oil exhibited antiasthmatic, and considerable effects against sexual and urinary disorders. Therefore, it could be suggested that the oil extracted in this study could be used in pharmaceutical industries for various medical purposes.

Table 1
GCMS chemical composition of fenugreek seed oil with their pharmacological activities referenced from PubChem.

Peak #	Constituents	Molecular formula	R. time	Composition (%)	Pharmacological activity/Application	PubChem CID	References
1	2-Methylpyrrolidine	C ₅ H ₁₁ N	9.768	0.42	Have a wide range of biological activity	13,003	[43]
2	Dodecane	C ₁₂ H ₂₆	14.004	0.22	Cosmetic solvent, bioactive, also used to assess lipid peroxidation in asthmatic patients	8182	[44,45]
3	α -terpinene	C ₁₀ H ₁₆	14.854	0.32	Antioxidant, antiasthmatics, antibacterial agents, for wound treatment, food, flavouring agent, also used for urinary and sexual disorder, bioactive	7462	[46,47]
4	α -Terpinyl acetate	C ₁₂ H ₂₀ O ₂	17.63	0.41	Antioxidant, antibiotic, antiseptic, drug for disorders of the nervous system, also used as food additive, bioactive	111,037	[48,49]
5	Tetradecane	C ₁₄ H ₃₀	18.63	0.33	Antioxidant, antiasthmatics, drugs for sexual and urinary disorders, also used for throat disorders, bioactive	12,389	[40,50]
6	Caryophyllene	C ₁₅ H ₂₄	19.63	0.32	Essential oil, used in food products, bioactive	5,281,515	[51]
7	Pentadecane	C ₁₅ H ₃₂	21.973	2.06	Antioxidant, antiasthmatics, antibacterial, used in food products, also used for urinary system and sexual disorder in both male and female	12,391	[40,50,52]
8	Trichloroacetic acid, pentadecyl ester	C ₁₇ H ₃₁ C ₁₃ O ₂	27.798	1.45	Used in cosmetic treatments	522,535	[53]
9	Pinene	C ₁₀ H ₁₈	29.317	4.56	Antioxidant, antiasthmatics, antibacterial, for sexual and urinary system disorders, and also used for enhancing fertility, bioactive	10,129	[38,54]
10	Phytol	C ₂₀ H ₄₀ O	30.14	1.78	Antioxidant, antiasthmatics, anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer, antibacterial, used in body care products and making synthetic forms of vitamin E and vitamin K1, also used for sexual and urinary system disorder, bioactive	5,280,435	[41,55,56]
11	Nonadecane	C ₁₉ H ₄₀	30.6	1.31	No activity was recorded	12,401	
12	Palmitic acid or n-Hexadecanoic acid	C ₁₆ H ₃₂ O ₂	31.847	16.21	Antioxidant, anticancer, food additive, anti-inflammation	985	[57,58]
13	Eicosane	C ₂₀ H ₄₂	32.505	1.61	Antioxidant, anticancer, antitumor, antibacterial agents	8222	[52,59]
14	Linoleic acid methyl ester	C ₁₉ H ₃₄ O ₂	33.804	3.19	Antioxidant, antibacterial agent, also useful for sexual and urinary system disorder	5,284,421	[39]
15	Linoleic acid	C ₁₈ H ₃₂ O ₂	35.04	54.13	Antioxidant, used for cancer treatment, anti-diabetes, antibacterial agent, essential fatty acid, also used for increasing sex hormone in men	3931	[23,60,61]
16	4-Pentyl-1-(4-propylcyclohexyl)-1-cyclohexene	C ₂₀ H ₃₆	36.174	3.87	No activity was recorded	557,007	
17	1-Piperidinepropanenitrile	C ₈ H ₁₄ N ₂	37.436	2.76	Antibiotics, also used for DNA studies	18,338	[62,63]
18	Palmitrol	C ₁₈ H ₃₇ NO ₂	38.158	0.68	Free radical scavengers or antioxidants, antiallergic agent, anti-inflammation, skin treatment, anticancer, drugs for disorders of the urinary system, also used for genital or sexual disorders, bioactive	4671	[64,65]
19	Arachidic Acid or Eicosanoic acid	C ₂₀ H ₄₀ O ₂	38.8	0.84	Saturated fatty acid, antiasthmatics, antibacterial agents, antioxidants, anticancer, also used for urinary or sexual disorders treatment.	10,467	[66–68]
20	Glyceryl 2-linoleate	C ₂₁ H ₃₈ O ₄	39.506	1.11	Antioxidant, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory agent, also used as emulsifier.	5,365,676	[69]
21	(R)-(-)-(Z)-14-Methyl-8-hexadecen-1-ol	C ₁₇ H ₃₄ O	40.667	0.64	Plant growth regulator, also used as Pheromones	12,487,634	[70]
22	Quinoline	C ₉ H ₇ N	41.71	0.75	Antitussive agent, antiasthmatic and Antibacterial agent, also used for urinary disorder, bioactive.	7047	[71,72]
23	Tetratriacontane	C ₃₄ H ₇₀	42.581	0.03	Antioxidant, antimicrobial agent, bioactive	26,519	[73]

3.2. Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy of the oil

The functional groups of fenugreek seed oil were obtained by FTIR spectra as shown in Fig. 3. The strong absorption peaks at 2853.16–3009.19 cm⁻¹ are assigned to both symmetric and asymmetric stretching of methyl (-CH₃) and methylene (-CH₂) groups which can be attributed to the existence of fatty acids and their methyl esters within the carboxyl groups (COOH). The peaks at 1743.61 cm⁻¹ corresponds to the saturated fat aldehyde. The unique band at 1460.30 cm⁻¹ represents the alcoholic (C-OH) group. The aromatic acid esters (C-O-C) and the stretching vibration of phenolic compounds (C-OH) were observed at 1098.14 to 1236.89 cm⁻¹, they can also be referred to amide groups. Finally, the peak at 721.15 cm⁻¹ can be assigned to a benzene ring [74]. Based on the FTIR spectral result obtained, different functional groups were existed in seed oil of fenugreek such as carboxyl, hydroxyl, fats, alcohols, amides and phenolic compounds.

3.3. DPPH radical scavenging activity of the oil

The potential of antioxidant activity in fenugreek seed oil was determined using DPPH scavenging assay. The DPPH radical-scavenging test is a commonly employed assay in antioxidant studies. The antioxidant effects of plant extracts on DPPH radical scavenging may be due to their hydrogen-donating abilities, which reduce the stable violet DPPH radical to the yellow DPPH-H. The potential of free radical scavenging can be indicated by the degree of discolouration of the sample or extract. In the present study, the degree of antioxidant activity of oil is given based on the 50% inhibition concentration (IC₅₀). The fenugreek seed oil indicated an IC₅₀ equal to 172.6 ± 3.1 µg/mL (Table 2). This value shows a good antioxidant activity due to the existence of palmitic acid and phytol detected by GC-MS analysis as they are well known for their antioxidant and some other biological activities. Moreover, the oil of fenugreek seed has also shown some compounds with anti-inflammation activities [37,75].

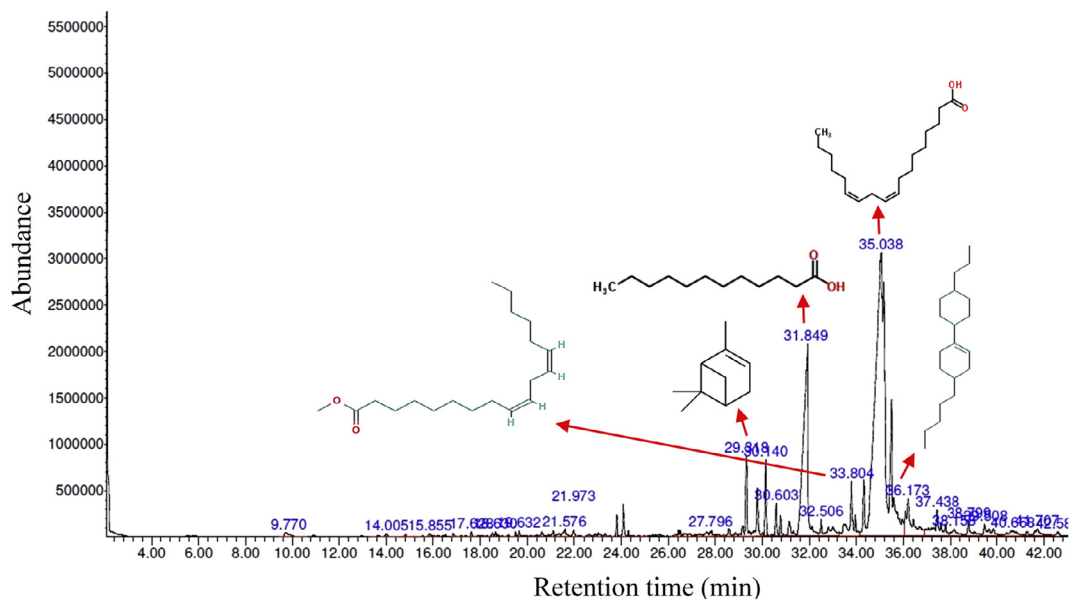


Fig. 1. GC-MS characterization of fenugreek seed oil.

3.4. ABTS radical scavenging activity of the oil

The antioxidant activity of the oil was also examined using ABTS assay. As it can be seen in Table 2 that antioxidant capacity of the oil by ABTS assay ($IC_{50} = 161.3 \pm 2.21 \mu\text{g/mL}$) was stronger than that by DPPH assay ($IC_{50} = 172.6 \pm 3.1 \mu\text{g/mL}$). Lower IC_{50} value means higher antioxidant activity. Both DPPH and ABTS compounds have proton free radicals that significantly decreased when exposed to proton radical scavengers [76]. It can be suggested that most of plant compounds show better antioxidant activity against ABTS radicals than DPPH radicals. This is due to more sensitivity of ABTS assay in identifying antioxidant activity which makes the kinetic reaction faster and hence results into the higher antioxidant activity [76,77].

3.5. Total phenolic content of fenugreek seed oil

The determination of TPC in plant seeds oil are considered necessary as one of the important indicators of oil quality is phenolic compound. These compounds are responsible for the capacity of free radical scavenging and peroxidation of lipids. In this study, TPC was determined using Folin-Ciocalteu assay and the result expressed as gallic acid equivalent. The fenugreek seed oil showed phenolic content of $38.97 \pm 0.34 \text{ mg/g}$ equivalent to gallic acid (Table 2). Whereas, this result is in a good agreement with that found by Arora and Pandey-rai [75]. The results indicated a positive relevance between antioxidant activity of the oil and its total phenolic contents.

3.6. Total flavonoids content of fenugreek seed oil

Beside the major contribution of phenolic compounds in antioxidant capacity of the foods, flavonoids have also shown to have free radical scavenging activity that can be considered significant in human diet. In this study, the total flavonoid content of fenugreek seed oil was measured using spectrophotometric method. Quercetin was used as a standard for total flavonoid content measurement. Fenugreek seed oil indicated a total flavonoid content of $14.417 \pm 0.23 \text{ mg QE/g.oil}$ as shown in Table 2. These results support the good antioxidant capacity of fenugreek seed oil. High content of phenolic and flavonoid compounds means higher antioxidant activity of the plants [78].

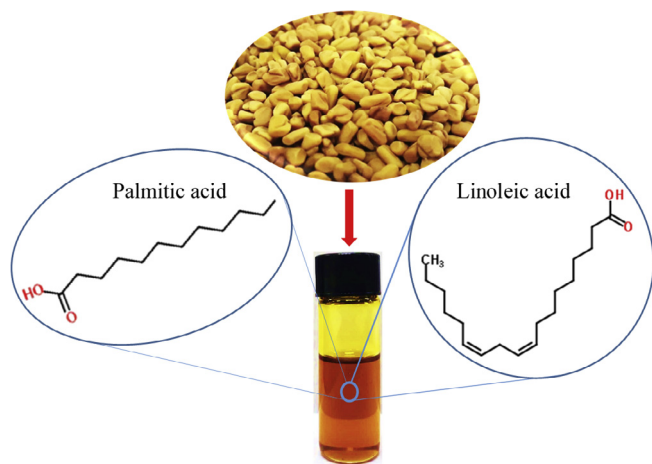


Fig. 2. Fenugreek seed oil with the structures of two major compounds identified in the oil.

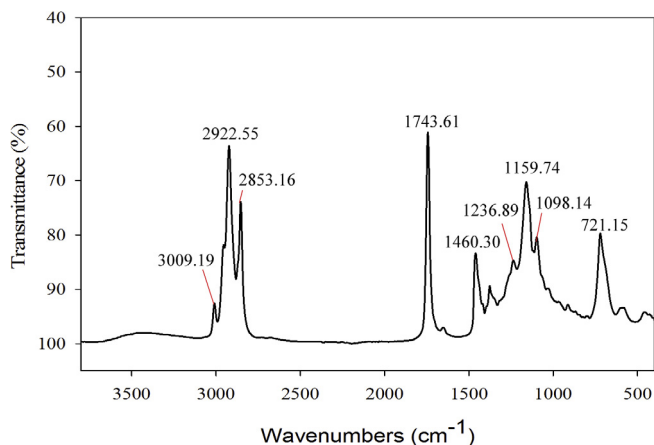


Fig. 3. FTIR spectrum of fenugreek seed oil.

Table 2
Summary of extraction yield, DPPH, ABTS, TPC and TFC of fenugreek seed oil.

Sample	Extracted Yield/oil (%)	IC ₅₀ of DPPH (µg/mL)	IC ₅₀ of ABTS (µg/mL)	TPC (mg GAE/g.oil)	TFC (mg QE/g.oil)
Fenugreek seed	5.55 ± 0.05	172.6 ± 3.1	161.3 ± 2.21	38.97 ± 0.34	14.417 ± 0.23

Values are expressed as the mean standard deviation (±SD) where (n = 3).

4. Conclusion

In this study, fenugreek seed oil was extracted using Soxhlet extraction technique and n-hexane as extraction solvent. The GC-MS and FTIR analysis of fenugreek seed oil revealed that the oil is rich in essential omega-6 fatty acids (linoleic acid), which are highly effective for prevention of coronary heart diseases, inflammation and cancer. In addition, the main constituents of the oil namely, linoleic acid, palmitic acid, pinene and other components with lower portions were found to be very useful in reducing free radicals due to their natural antioxidant properties. This study also demonstrated that ABTS radical scavenging assay was more useful as compared to DPPH assay. Overall, based on the results obtained in this study it could be suggested that fenugreek seed oil could be effective against many diseases such as cancer, inflammation, asthma, sexual disorder and urinary infections.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no financial interest in this manuscript.

Acknowledgements

All authors are grateful to Faculty of Chemical and Natural Resources Engineering for the laboratory and financial supports provided by Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) internal grant (PGRS 1803105) in this project.

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