

UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ
Faculty of Technology, Leskovac

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

16th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
„NOVEL TECHNOLOGIES AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT“

Leskovac, October, 17-18, 2025.

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ANTIMICROBIAL ACTIVITY OF MICROENCAPSULATED AND UNENCAPSULATED EXTRACTS FROM THE UNDERGROUND PARTS OF *GENTIANA ASCLEPIADEA* L.

Miloš S. Jovanović¹ [ID](#), Milica Milutinović¹ [ID](#), Suzana Branković² [ID](#),
Milica Randjelović¹ [ID](#), Bojana Miladinović¹ [ID](#), Nemanja Kitić³ [ID](#),
Nada Ćujić-Nikolić⁴ [ID](#), Katarina Šavikin⁴ [ID](#), Tatjana Mihajilov-Krstev⁵ [ID](#),
Dušanka Kitić¹ [ID](#)

¹ Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

² Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

³ Faculty of Medicine, University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

⁴ Institute for Medicinal Plants Research "Dr. Josif Pančić", Belgrade, Serbia

⁵ Department of Biology and Ecology, Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics, University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

Gentiana asclepiadea L. (Gentianaceae), commonly known as willow gentian, is a medicinal plant traditionally used for alleviating gastrointestinal and liver disorders. Owing to its pronounced bitterness, it is also utilized in the food industry, particularly as a flavoring component in liqueurs. This study aimed to evaluate the antimicrobial activity of an extract from the underground parts of *G. asclepiadea* and to assess the effect of microencapsulation on this property. The extract, obtained under previously optimized ultrasound-assisted extraction conditions (50 min, 65°C, 53% v/v ethanol, 40 mL/g liquid-to-solid ratio), was microencapsulated by spray-drying using 20% whey protein as a carrier. Antimicrobial activity was tested against a panel of enteropathogenic microorganisms (three Gram-positive, four Gram-negative bacterial strains, and one fungal strain). Both extract forms exhibited growth-inhibitory effects against all tested strains. Minimum inhibitory concentrations ranged from 3.13 to 25.0 mg/mL for the unencapsulated extract and from 3.13 to 50.0 mg/mL for the microencapsulated extract. *Enterococcus faecalis* was the most sensitive strain. The unencapsulated extract showed slight selectivity toward Gram-positive bacteria, whereas the microencapsulated extract exhibited no such selectivity. Microencapsulation enhanced activity against *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella enteritidis*, while in most other cases it reduced antimicrobial activity, though inhibition was still present. Mild antifungal activity against *Candida albicans* was observed for both extracts, without a fungicidal effect. The obtained results suggest that *G. asclepiadea* extract possesses antimicrobial potential, and that the microencapsulated form could be a valuable functional ingredient in pharmaceutical and food products.

Keywords: *Gentiana asclepiadea* L., antimicrobial activity, spray drying, microencapsulation