

REVIEWING ANTAGONISTIC ACTINOMYCETES IN THE ERA OF DRUG RESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT:

Actinomycetes are the limitless source of newer chemical scaffolds and proved its effectiveness in diverse clinical applications. More than 10,000 structurally defined and experimentally proved antimicrobials are from the Actinomycetes. Among actinomycetes, approximately 55 % of the antimicrobial agents are obtained from the genus *Streptomyces*. Importance of Actinomycetes derived antibiotics is largely ignored because of its tedious process of isolation from various natural habitats leading to the discovery of previously explored genera. However, newer techniques are to be explored for effective isolation of Actinomycetes producing novel antibiotics. Enhanced cultivation methods proved beneficial in the detection and cultivation of novel bioactive Actinomycetes and modern molecular biology techniques proved beneficial in the target-specific search of antimicrobial Actinomycetes. Discovery and development of antibiotics from the Actinomycetes are of significant interest due to the mounting necessity of newer antibiotics. This review focuses on the diverse sources of antibiotics from Actinomycetes and its isolation.

INTRODUCTION:

The emergence of drug-resistant pathogens with the emergence of antibiotic era has increased many folds. The overuse and inappropriate consumption and application of antibiotics are the main driving factors for drug resistance amongst pathogens. There is an overall threat to the global health scenario due to the ever-increasing antimicrobial resistance of the pathogenic organisms (Levy and Marshall, 2004). Cross-resistance development with the newer antibiotics at the fast pace, is another cause of public health concern. Microorganism's resistance development can be occurred due to resistant gene and alteration in the phenotypic expression as a result of environmental and genetic factors. The difficulty of treating bacterial infections and reversing antimicrobial drug resistance to susceptibility in the modern era of pharmaceuticals has overburdened scientists and pharmaceutical companies to develop new antimicrobials effective against the untreatable multidrug-resistant pathogens. As majority of the antibacterial substances come from the well-known terrestrial or aquatic isolates of actinomycetes and the disease-causing bacterial agents are developing resistance to such drugs, the focus has shifted to rare genera of actinomycetes from unexplored or underexplored habitats as sources of novel bioactive secondary metabolites which can efficiently act against pathogenic bacterial strains. A variety of rare actinomycetes belonging to genera viz., *Actinoplanes*, *Catenuloplanes*, *Amycolatopsis*, *Kineospora*, *Micromonospora*, *Microbispora*, *Dactylosporangium*, *Nonomuraea*, *Nocardia* etc. are now being isolated worldwide from previously uninvestigated diverse natural habitats, using different selective isolation methods. These isolation strategies include methods to enhance growth of rare actinomycetes by enrichment, and eliminate unwanted microorganisms by pretreatment.

Streptomyces produces a large number of antibiotics along with clinically active anti-tumor agents like anthracyclines viz. aclarubicin, daunomycin, and doxorubicin, peptides viz. bleomycin and actinomycin D, aureolic acids viz. mithramycin, enediynes viz. neocarzinostatin, and antimetabolites such as pentostatin (Newman and Cragg, 2007). Other than *Streptomyces*, certain other genera of Actinomycetes like *Micromonospora*, *Nocardia*, *Actinomadura*, *Verrucosipora*, *Kocuria*, *Actinoplanes*, *Amycolatopsis*, and *Saccharopolyspora* exhibited biological importance (Sujatha et al. 2005). Non-*Streptomyces* actinomycetes are known to produce diverse antibiotics like abyssomicins, erythromycin, gentamicin, micromonosporin, PM181104, ramoplanin, telithromycin, teicoplanin, tigecycline, thiolactomycin, and vancomycin. Therefore the focus has now shifted to the Non-*Streptomyces* actinomycetes from unexplored or underexplored habitats as source of novel bioactive secondary metabolites.

1.1 Actinobacteria:

Actinomycetes or Actinobacteria are Gram-positive aerobic bacteria that form branching filaments or hyphae and sexual pores. Actinomycetes exhibit characters on fungus and bacteria (Das *et al.*, 2008); hence, its name derived from 'atki's meaning a ray and 'mykes' meaning fungus. Unlike fungi, Actinomycetes possess delicate and thin hyphae (0.5 – 2 μm). Actinomycetes contain coiled gene derived particles inside the free DNA. Henceforth, these are considered as the prokaryotic organisms. Actinomycetes are high in Guanine-Cytosine (GC) (>55 mol %) base pairing content in DNA.

1.2 Occurrence and growth:

The Actinomycetes, particularly Streptomycetes are saprophytic, soil-inhabiting organisms that possess semi-dormant spores which help them in surviving, especially under nutrient-limited conditions (Mayfield *et al.*, 1972). However, the phylum has been able to withstand to a wide range of ecological environments like soils, fresh and salt water and the air. They form an important part of microbial population and are abundant in alkaline soils, rich in organic matter. Actinomycetes can be found both on the soil surface and at depths of more than 2 m below the surface (Goodfellow and Williams, 1983). The thread-like fine filaments formed by the actinomycetes is found abundant in soil. Their growth is quite similar to fungal hyphae and they produce the characteristically "earthy" smell of freshly turned healthy soil. The actinomycetes exist in various habitats in nature and represent a ubiquitous group of microbes widely distributed in natural ecosystems around the world (Srinivasan *et al.*, 1991). They are known to be primarily soil dwellers but are found abundant in aquatic ecosystems as well. The population density of Actinomycetes depends on their habitat and the prevailing climate conditions. They are typically present at densities on the order of 10^6 to 10^9 cells per gram of soil. The dominance of the genus *Streptomyces* amongst soil populations is revealed and it accounts for over 95% of the Actinomycetes strains isolated from soil. Other factors, such as temperature, pH, and soil moisture, also influence the growth of Actinomycetes. Most of the Actinomycetes grows on common bacteriological media like trypticase agar, starch casein agar, nutrient agar, brain heart diffused agar along with blood agar. Actinobacteria in more numbers grow under aerobic conditions while very few like *Actinomyces israelii* grow under anaerobic conditions.

1.3 Biological uses of *Streptomyces actinomycetes*:

Streptomyces proved to be the biologically important actinomycetes and synthesize chemically diverse compounds. Approximately 75% medicinally useful and numerous agriculturally significant compounds were produced from the *Streptomyces*. *Streptomyces* exhibited the potential to produce biologically active compounds like antibacterial, antifungal, insecticidal, antitumor, anti-inflammatory, anti-parasitic, antiviral, antifouling, anti-infective and plant-growth-promoting and herbicidal compounds. *Streptomyces* produces antibacterial compounds like AZ-AR-262, antimycin-A, abyssomicins, bonactin, chandrananimycins, frigocyclinone, glaciapyrroles, helquinoline and tunicamycins (Berdy 1980, 2005; Ramesh and Mathivanan 2009). Antifungal compounds like Streptomycin, blasticidin S, kasugamycin, polyoxins, validamycins, bafilomycin K, elaiomycins B, and reveromycins were obtained from the *Streptomyces* (Berdy 1980, 2005; Prabavathy *et al.* 2006; Prapagdee *et al.* 2008). Insecticidal compounds like indolocarbazole alkaloid staurosporine, cyclic depsipeptide valinomycin, and butanolide were obtained from the *Streptomyces* (Pimentel-Elardo *et al.* 2010). Anticancer compounds like caprolactones, chandrananimycins, chinikomycins, chloro-dihydroquinones, diazepinomicin (ECO-4601), 3,6-disubstituted indoles, IB-00208, mechercharmycins, salinosporamide A (NPI-0052) and trioxacarcins were isolated from *Streptomyces* (Lam 2006; Hong *et al.* 2009). Three new cyclic heptapeptides, cyclomarins A–C (1–3) were isolated as anti-inflammatory compounds from the *Streptomyces* species (Pimentel-Elardo *et al.* 2010). Fattiviracins were obtained as the antiviral compounds from the *Streptomyces* species (Sacramento *et al.* 2004). Compounds with straight alkyl side chains with 2-furanone ring isolated (Xu *et al.*, 2010) from the *Streptomyces* species were proved to be effective as antifouling compounds.

1.4 Commercial application of Actinomycetes:

Actinomycetes are capable of degrading a wide variety of hydrocarbons, pesticides, aliphatic and aromatic compounds. Actinobacteria play a significant part in the microbial transformation of organic compounds which is having significant commercial value. Actinobacteria are useful in the bioconversion of underutilized urban and agricultural wastes into high quality and high-value useful products. Marine actinomycetes exhibit numerous enzyme activities and these catalyze diverse biochemical reactions through enzymes like amylase, lipase, deoxyribonuclease, lipase, and protease. Actinobacteria are important sources of enzymes that can be produced at an industrial scale. Actinobacterial systematics has been explored through chemotaxonomic,

molecular systematic and numerical taxonomic methods (Goodfellow and Cross 1984; Stackebrandt and Schumann 2006). Actinobacteria is being considered and concluded by the presence of branching (Ludwig and Klenk 2005) by observed insilico based 16srRNA. Phylogenetic relationships of the taxa in Actinobacteria above the genus level is merely depending on the taxon-specific 16S rRNA signatures (Zhi et al. 2009). Actinobacteria term is relevant to all while actinomycetes specifically designated to order Actinomycetales. Currently used classification of the actinobacteria exhibits significant improvement in comparison to the earlier classification of analysis (Zhi et al. 2009). Gram-positive bacteria are placed in the phylum Actinobacteria, Class Actinobacteria, subclass Actinobacteridae, order Actinomycetales. *Actinomycetes* comprise of 10 suborders, greater than 30 families, and over 160 genera.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Actinomycetes

	Domain
	Bacteria
	Phylum
	Actinobacteria
	Class
	Actinobacteria
	Subclass
	Actinobacteridae
	Order
	Actinomycetales
	Suborder
1.	Actinomycineae
2.	Micrococcineae
3.	Catenulisporineae
4.	Micromonosporineae
5.	Propionibacterineae
6.	Actinopolysporineae
7.	Pesudonocardineae
8.	Streptomycineae
9.	Streptosporangineae
10.	Frankineae
11.	Kineosporiineae
12.	Glycomycineae

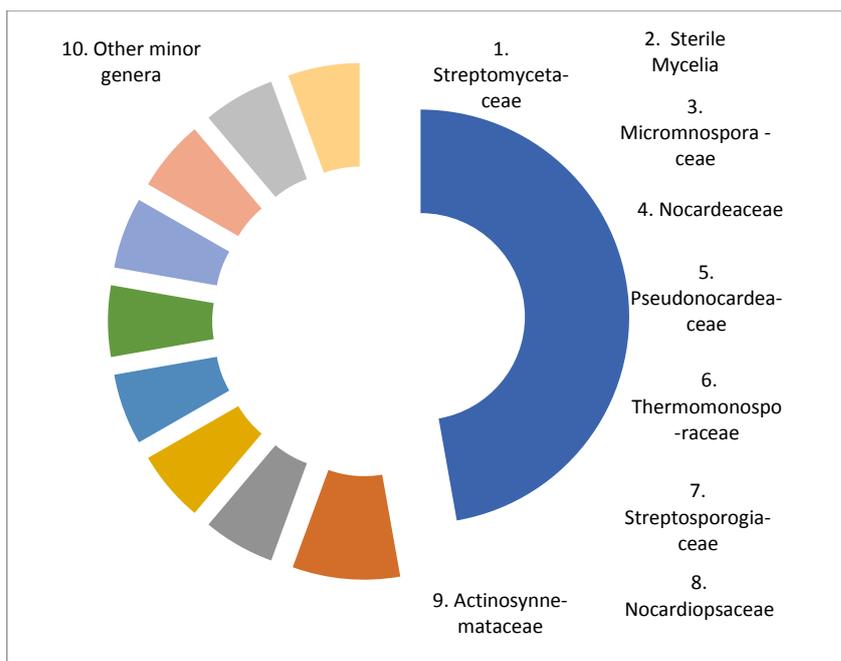


Figure 1: Taxonomic diversity of Actinomycetes

2.1 Exploiting Structural diversity and antagonistic activity:

Structural diversity is important in the case of antibiotics because most of current antibiotics are over used leading to drug-resistance which ultimately causes life-threatening infectious diseases. Actinomycetes comprise of the diverse chemical scaffolds; they have a huge possibility of synthesizing primary as well secondary metabolites. Actinobacteria can produce commercially useful and structurally diverse chemical compounds because of the extra-large DNA complement in these bacteria. Secondary metabolites with varied chemical scaffolds have the potential to act as antimicrobial compounds for diverse group of resistance causing microorganisms. As the new set of diverse chemical structures exhibits a newer mechanism of action against the infectious microorganism, the possibility to eliminate the problem of resistance thereby increases. Moreover advanced techniques like high-throughput fermentation and screening and combinatorial biosynthesis proved beneficial in generating diverse chemical scaffolds. It resulted in numerous antibiotic compounds with varied chemical diversity (Baltz 2008). Diverse chemical scaffolds produced by Actinobacteria are peptides, polyketides, polyesters, beta-lactams, anthracyclines, chloramphenicol, aminoglycosides, tetracyclines, nucleosides, polyenes, glycopeptides, and macrolides.

2.2 Isolation of Actinobacteria:

Several generalized and technically advanced methods are being developed and followed for the isolation of actinobacteria from diverse sources like soil, marine, and plant origin. Existing methods comprise of pre-treatment, enrichment, antibiotics, membrane filter, different media compositions, and integration for isolation of novel genera of the actinomycetes from soil. Conventional isolation techniques are not advantageous for the isolation of rare actinomycetes; hence, advanced isolation methods were being developed for these actinomycetes. The pre-treatment method facilitates isolation by promoting the growth of actinomycetes or removing unnecessary Gram-negative bacteria (Matsukawa et al., 2007 and Hong et al., 2009). Pre-treatment methods of isolation include physical, chemical, and a combination of physical and chemical pre-treatment. Physical pre-treatment methods like moist incubation using radiation, pollen baiting followed by drying, glycerol, centrifugation, air dry, dry heat, and cellulose infiltration are the most regularly used methods for the isolation of actinomycetes. Actinomycetes like *Streptomyces*, *Spirilliplanes*, *Actinomydura*, *Microbispora*, and *Spirilliplanes* are being isolated applying the physical-pre-treatment method (Hayakawa et al., 1991a, Tamura et al., 1997). Chemical pre-treatment methods like calcium carbonate and chitin treatment, Chloramine-T, SDS, yeast extract, calcium chloride, Phenol, Germicide, and Chemotactic agents are being applied for the isolation of actinomycetes. *Micromonospora*, *Streptomyces violaceusniger*, *Herbidospira*, *Microbispora*, *Microtetrasporea*, *Nonomuraea*, and *Streptosporangium* are being isolated using chemical pre-treatment method e (Hayakawa et al., 2004, 1997, 1991a and 1989). It has been established that combined physical and chemical pretreatment

methods are the most appropriate methods for the isolation of actinomycetes. Combined dry heat treatment of soil with chemicals like phenol and benzethonium chloride proved beneficial in the isolation of actinomycetes. *Actinomadura viridis*, *Microbispora*, *Streptosporangium*, *Dectylosporangium*, and *Microtetraspora* are being isolated using combined physical and chemical pretreatment methods (Hayakawa et al., 1995a, 1991a, 1991b, and 1996b). Enrichment treatment like coal-vitamin medium, Rehydration, and centrifugation (RC) method and pre-treatment with peptone (6%) and lauryl sulfate (0.05%) are being applied for the isolation of actinomycetes. Actinomycetes like *Thermomonospora*, *Saccharopolyspora rectivirgula*, *Actinokineospora*, *Catenuloplanes*, *Kineosporia*, and thermophilic *Streptomyces* spp are being isolated using enrichment treatment method (Kurtboke et al., 1993, Hayakawa et al., 1991c). Membrane filter methods are being used for the specific isolation of the actinomycetes. It includes an overlap of nutrient agar medium on the 0.22 to 0.45 μm pore size cellulose ester membrane. Following inoculation and during incubation, actinomycetes penetrate the filter pores through its branched mycelial networks (Hirsch et al., 1983).

All these methods are generalized methods for the isolation of actinomycetes from the geographically diverse sediment samples. However, it is essential to implement taxon definite isolation procedures for the selective isolation of the actinomycetes from the geographically diverse habitats. Isolation of specific or selective actinomycete taxa is possible using glucose-yeast extract agar supplemented with rifampicin and streptomycin (Athalye et al. 1981), starch-casein-nitrate agar (Kuster and Williams 1964), humic acid-vitamin agar (Hayakawa and Nonomura 1987), SM3 agar (Tan et al. 2006), M3 agar (Rowbotham and Cross 1977) and raffinose-histidine agar (Vickers et al. 1984). However, the effectiveness of methods established for the selective isolation actinomycetes taxa was not completely established (Goodfellow et al. 2010).

2.3 Other approaches for the search of Actinomycetes:

It has been reported that < 1 % of the microorganisms were isolated and characterized through traditional culturing techniques and diverse groups of actinomycetes are inaccessible (Kennedy et al. 2010; Rath et al. 2011). Unculturable marine bacterial and fungal strains which produce biologically useful secondary metabolites have inadequate accessibility due to its wide genetic diversity to explore the chemical diversity for various therapeutic and industrial applications (Bull et al. 2005; Fenical and Jensen 2006). These strains include complex marine sources like a sponge, tunicates, dinoflagellates, and terrestrial sources like plant-microbe, biofilm, insect-gut, and the human gut. Exploration of these chemical and biological microbial resources through newer approaches would be helpful in the discovery of newer chemical scaffolds with diverse biological activities.

Direct extraction of nucleic acid from the actinomycetes proved to be the effective culture-independent method for obtaining actinomycetes (Monciardini et al. 2002; Das *et al.* 2007; Mincer et al. 2005; Sun et al. 2010). It includes the amplification of DNA or cDNA from RNA isolated from the environmental samples using PCR (Bull et al. 2005). Subsequently, these samples can be analyzed, cloned, and sequenced to discover and count new actinomycetes (Stach et al. 2003; Riedlinger et al. 2004). Different selective primers were developed for PCR amplification of 16S rDNA from the varied Actinomycetales families like *Micromonosporaceae*, *Streptomycetaceae*, *Streptosporangiaceae*, and *Thermomonosporaceae*. Application of these primers on the different environmental samples exhibited recurrent existence of these Actinomycetes and divulged sequences were characterized as the new groups of actinomycetes. It was used as the promising prospectus for the discovery of secondary metabolites with the novel chemical scaffold (Monciardini et al. 2002). Other molecular techniques that were used for the identification of the actinomycetes were terminal restriction fragment polymorphism (T-RFLP) analysis, denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis (DGGE), and TGGE (thermal-GGE). T-RFLP is the combination of three techniques like comparative genomics/RFLP, PCR, and electrophoresis. T-RFLP is useful in the measurement of the size polymorphism of terminal restriction fragments from a PCR-amplified marker. It helps in electrophoretically resolving fragments of DNA with different sequences but with the same length (Muyzer 1999; Wawrik et al. 2005). PCR-DGGE was extensively implemented to estimate the diversity and community of actinomycetes in the environmental samples (Wawrik et al. 2005; Das et al. 2007; Nimnoi et al. 2010). Culture-dependent and metagenomic techniques proved to be promising techniques to explore complete uncultured microbe diversity and provided tools to explore the biochemical pathways of the uncultured microbes (Riesenfeld et al. 2004; Venter et al. 2004). Theoretical, technological and conceptual advances provided the basis for the application of the sequence directed metagenomic investigations of the marine actinomycetes. Random shotgun sequencing of the environmental DNA proved practicable due to recent advancements in the high-throughput sequencing technology and lower cost sequencing technologies (Kennedy et al. 2010). The most useful metagenomic investigation includes the whole metagenome shotgun sequencing method in the cloning and sequencing of the microbial DNA from marine environments (Kennedy et al. 2010). This technique is useful in providing full information on the detected gene and also exploring the individual metabolic pathways of the marine microorganisms (Rath et al. 2011). Metagenomic and metaproteomic techniques collectively proved promising newer approaches for the gene, genome, protein, and metabolic

pathways discovery of microorganisms (Rath et al. 2011). ET-743 (Yondelis) biosynthetic pathway was developed based on the meta-omic approach to explore the pathways from the invertebrate-derived microbial consortia (Rath et al. 2011). Moreover, the metaproteomic approach is useful in the expression of biosynthetic proteins. Hence, metabolic engineering which comprises of metagenomic and metaproteomic techniques would be useful in the discovery and development of new chemical entities and drugs (Rath et al. 2011). Pyrosequencing platforms are being considered as the next-generation sequencing methods for the *de novo* microbial genome sequencing (MacLean et al. 2009). Pyrosequencing is emerging as the cost-effective methodology which is applicable in the metagenomic analysis of marine microorganisms (Kennedy et al. 2010). Random shotgun sequencing and pyrosequencing don't require prior knowledge of gene sequencing; hence there is the possibility of the discovery of newer gene sequences (Kennedy et al. 2010). Molecular approaches related to the 16S rRNA analysis facilitate the exploration of marine microbial populations devoid of culturing and cultivation of microorganisms. It proved feasible for quantitative estimation of microbial diversity (Olsen et al. 1986; Amann et al. 1995; Monciardini et al. 2002). Diverse approaches of the 16S rRNA are available for exploring microbial diversity (Brinkhoff et al. 1998). The integration of different approaches is also proved useful in obtaining diverse microorganisms. Molecular approaches were being combined with the microbial approaches to the isolation of microbes (Großkopf et al. 1998). In a few of the studies, multiple techniques like molecular techniques, microbiological techniques, geochemical techniques, and microsensors were used for the exploration of novel microorganisms (Ramsing et al. 1996; Amann and Kuhl 1998; Teske et al. 1996). The integration of different technologies would be helpful in the exploration of the interaction between the microorganism and its environment. There is no technology available for the exploration of interaction among microorganisms and their environment. Exploration of this environmental interaction proved helpful in establishing an effective procedure for the isolation of microorganisms (Brinkhoff et al. 1998).

Application of genomic technologies is advantageous in the generation of the actinomycete metabolite gene clusters for the generation of known and predicted secondary metabolites (McLeod et al. 2006; Oliynyk et al. 2007; Goodfellow and Fiedler 2010). Study of *Streptomyces avermitilis* revealed that secondary metabolite gene cluster is feasible through searching for homology to a polypeptide of known function which is responsible for secondary metabolism. It was evident that *S. avermitilis* comprises of 25 secondary metabolite clusters (Ōmura et al. 2001; Ikeda et al. 2003). Information about the secondary metabolites can be obtained from the genetic information of DNA libraries. It results in the discovery of gene clusters of both new and known secondary metabolites (Van Lanen and Shen 2006). Biochemical studies on the natural-product biosynthetic enzymes resulted in the exploration of new enzyme pathways and uncommon chemical conversions. The Discovery of novel enzymes is helpful in the implementation of full-fledged genomics-based natural-product discovery (Van Lanen and Shen 2006). Genome mining is also advantageous in the generation of secondary metabolites through the activation of silent clusters by the manipulation of the pathway-specific regulatory genes (Challis 2008). Gaudimycins were identified as two silent types II polyketide synthase systems in *Streptomyces* spp. (Palmu et al. 2007; Challis 2008). Genome mining also provides useful information to understand chemical or environmental signals which are necessary for the expression of tapped biological activity in the hidden natural-product diversity. It also provides information related to the new biosynthetic mechanisms and its genetic-hardware (Wilkinson and Micklefield 2007).

Other than molecular and microbial methods; optimization of fermentation technology also proved beneficial in increasing several-fold productions of secondary metabolites (Martin and Demain 1980; Sanchez and Demain 2002; Bode et al. 2002; Sujatha et al. 2005; Fourati et al. 2005). Secondary metabolites production from the actinomycetes depends on the various fermentation parameters like nutrients (Augustine et al. 2004; Fourati et al. 2005), metal ions (Gesheva et al. 2005), the partial pressure of oxygen (pO₂) (Iwai and Omura 1982), inhibitors (Bibb 2005), pH (Sujatha et al. 2005), inducers (Martin and Demain 1980; Doull and Vining 1990; Cheng et al. 1995), temperature (Sujatha et al. 2005), precursors (Martin and Demain 1980; Omura and Tanaka 1986), mineral salts (Wang et al. 2003) and agitation (Bode et al. 2002). It has been established that alteration in these parameters proved advantageous in augmenting the quality and quantity of secondary metabolites (Bode et al. 2002). Most of the earlier studies were directed towards the alteration in the cultivation parameters and very few studies were conducted through alteration in the stress conditions like rheology and aeration. It has been established that alteration in the three or four conditions is optimum for improving the production of secondary metabolites. It indicates molecular biology and microbiological tools proved helpful in improving access to the new gene pool and fermentation technologies proved beneficial in producing newer chemical scaffolds. The integration of molecular biology and microbiology methods with fermentation technologies would be helpful in the identification of the biologically active druggable targets. Work in this direction is underway and it improved the rate of discovery from the microbial origin.

3.1 Analysis of the secondary metabolites:

Analysis of the isolated secondary metabolites using hyphenated techniques like HPLC-diode array screening and HPLC-UVvisual database (Huber and Fiedler 1991). Unknown metabolites were obtained by excluding the known metabolites from the database containing the primary and secondary metabolites. UV-Visible properties and retention times provided valuable information for the characterization of the new metabolites. Presumptive novel metabolites were confirmed using HPLC-MS analysis. Subsequently, scale-up fermentation of strains and isolation and structural elucidation of the secondary metabolites was carried out. This strategy has resulted in the isolation of a large number of secondary metabolites from the actinobacteria (Fiedler 2010). It is also beneficial in the selective separation of secondary metabolites and application of diode array proved advantages in the detailed analysis of the individual extract. This method is applicable in the analysis of the broad secondary metabolites in both culture filtrate and raw extracts of organisms. However, secondary metabolites with high molarity and metabolites without UV-Visible chromophores are unable to detect in culture filtrates and raw extracts. Integration of chemical and biological characteristics of the secondary metabolites are more valuable in the identification of secondary metabolites. These methods include target assays based on enzyme or receptor inhibition. It is useful in establishing a robust correlation between secondary metabolite, biological activity, and target (Baltz 2005). These methods are based on the advances in chemical biology which explore the biological relevance of the chemicals isolated from the actinobacteria.

3.2 Actinomycetes and approved drugs:

Tigecycline is derived product of chlortetracycline which is a 9-tert-butyl-glycylamido derivative of minocycline. Tigecycline exhibits more potent antibacterial activity against tetracycline-resistant organisms (Zhanel et al., 2004). Telithromycin is obtained from the *Saccharopolyspora erythraea* and it is a semi-synthetic derivative of the 14-members macrolide, erythromycin A. It affects respiratory tract resistant pathogens resistant to macrolides. It exhibits its action by inhibiting protein synthesis through interaction with the peptidyltransferase site of the bacterial 50S ribosomal subunit (Zhanel et al., 2002). Miglustat is isolated from the *Streptomyces lavendulae* which is an analog of nojirimycin. It exhibits action by reversibly inhibiting glucosylceramide synthase which is a ceramide-specific glucosyltransferase that catalyzes glucocerebroside formation and subsequently decreases glucosylceramide (Pastores et al., 2005). Daptomycin is isolated from the *Streptomyces roseosporus* which is permitted for treatment and management of infections (cSSSIs). Daptomycin exhibits its action on the bacterial cell membranes which disrupt membrane potential. It results in the blockage of synthesis of proteins. Biapenem is thienamycin based carbapenem isolated from the *Streptomyces cattleya*. It is also active against β -lactamases producing microorganisms (Perry and Ibbotson, 2002). Ertapenem is a 1 β -methylcarbapenem class compound based on thienamycin which is isolated from the *Streptomyces cattleya*. It exhibits broad-spectrum antibacterial activity against clinically relevant Enterobacteriaceae (Sader and Gales, 2001).

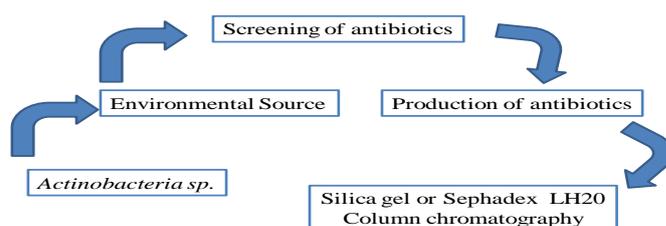


Figure 2: Scheme for the isolation of Actinobacteria antibiotic

Table 2: Number of *Actinomycetes sp.* producing bioactive microbial metabolites

Actinomycetes species	No.	Actinomycetes species	No.
Streptomycetaceae		Streptosporangiaceae	
Chainia	- 36	Kutzneria	- 5
Kitasatosporia	- 44	Planomonospora	- 3
Microellobosporia	- 21	Planobispora	- 12
Nocardioides	- 14	Spirillospora	- 14
Streptoverticillium	- 278	Streptoalloteichus	- 52
Streptomyces	- 8056	Streptodporangium	- 82
Micromonosporaceae		Thermomonosporaceae	
Actinoplanes	- 272	Actinomadura	- 357
Ampullariella	- 10	Actinosynnema	- 54
Catellatospora	- 2	Microbiospora	- 56
Catenuloplanes	- 5	Microtetraspora	- 28
Dactylosporangium	- 65	Micropolyspora	- 15
Glycomyces	- 6	Nocardiosis	- 43
Micromonospora	- 832	Saccharothrix	- 72
Pseudonocardiaaceae		Thermoactinopolyspora	- 2
Actinopolyspora	- 2	Thermopolyspora	- 1
Amycolata	- 14	Thermoactinomyces	- 16
Kibdellosporangium	- 37	Thermomonospora	- 21
Nocardia	- 365	Mycobacteriaceae	
Pseudonocardia	- 31	Arthrobacter	- 25
Saccharomonospora	- 4	Brevibacterium	- 17
Saccharopolyspora	- 127	Mycobacterium	- 57
		Nocardia	- 357
		Proactinomyces	- 14
		Rhodococcus	- 13

3.3 Antagonistic activity of *Actinobacteria*:

New drug discovery reports demonstrated that screening of plant extracts and microorganisms for the novel chemical skeletons for compounds (Shadomy, 1987; Lacey, 1978). Widely used antibiotics like macrolides and tetracyclines are obtained from various *Streptomyces aureofaciens* strains (White et al., 2001; Stryzhkova et al., 2002). Based on the source of the soil, these actinobacteria exhibit specificity to certain microorganisms. Actinobacteria obtained from the pepper-field soil proved effective against *Alternaria mali*, *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*, *Fusarium oxysporum* and *Rhizoctonia solani*. Actinobacteria obtained from the radish – filed soil proved effective against *Magnaporthe grisea* and *Phytophthora capsica* (Lee and Hwang, 2002). Fifteen isolates exhibited effectiveness against Coagulase-negative Staphylococcus. Basilio et al. (2003) demonstrated phenotype diversity in Actinobacteria based on their studies. Basilio et al. (2003) screened 335 isolates for categorizing under salinity. 230 strains exhibited antimicrobial activity with 77 % *Streptomyces* species and 49 % actinomycetes from other taxa exhibited antimicrobial activity. This study supported the idea of isolating actinomycetes with alteration in the pH and salinity. Active secondary metabolites were produced from the actinomycetes which were isolated in the saline conditions. 563 different types of actinomycetes were evaluated for antimicrobial activity using susceptibility disk assay method. 286 actinomycetes produced compounds with antifungal activity. It was evident that soil rich in minerals produced compounds with maximum antifungal activity and most of the isolated antifungal compounds were polyene macrolide antibiotics. Nathan et al. (2004) reported 102 isolated actinomycetes from the subtidal marine sediments collected from the Bismarck Sea and the Solomon Sea off the coast of Papua New Guinea. These Actinobacteria were evaluated for antimicrobial activity against four pathogenic bacteria. Tested microorganisms were *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, *Erwinia amylovora*, *Pseudomonas viridiflova*, *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *michiganensis*, *Bacillus subtilis*, and *Sarcina lutea*. Isolated strains of Actinobacteria were *Streptomyces* (64), *Micromonospora* (8), *Nocardia* (5), *Streptoverticillium* (7), and *Saccharopolyspora* (4). Out of 64 strains of *Streptomyces*, 44 exhibited antibacterial activity. Out of 25 Actinobacteria, 56 % exhibited antimicrobial activity against bacteria and 8 % exhibited antimicrobial activity against fungi. Isolated Actinobacteria were identified using universal PCR. It was observed that 93 % were belonging to the *Streptomyces* genus and *Actinomadura* genus. Out of 94

Actinobacteria, 87 % were from *Streptomyces* genus and the remaining was from *Micromonospora* genus. 51 % Actinobacteria exhibited activity against pathogenic *Vibrio* spp. It was reported that *Streptomyces* could be promising biocontrol agents in aquaculture. Augustine et al. (2005) isolated 312 Actinobacteria from soil and water samples. MAR01 was also active against Gram-positive and *Candida albicans*. It was designated as Meroparamycin. Srivibool and Sukchotiratana (2006) isolated 495 Actinobacteria from the 45 soil samples. Preliminary antimicrobial activity was performed on *Micrococcus luteus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Escherichia coli*. Out of 495 isolated Actinobacteria; 58 exhibited promising antimicrobial activity. Out of 21 Actinobacteria, 12 were active against microorganisms like *Mycobacterium phlei*, *Candida albicans* and *Fusarium moniliforme*.

Osaky et al. (2004) isolated 50 different strains of actinomycetes from the soil. They demonstrated that 34 %, 16 %, 6 %, and 12 % isolated actinomycetes exhibited broad-spectrum, against Gram-positive, against Gram-negative and both Gram-positive and negative bacteria respectively. Rabah et al. (2007) isolated 19 strains of actinomycetes from the Egyptian soil and demonstrated that 68 % *Streptomyces* spp. demonstrated activity against Gram-positive and negative bacteria, fungi, and yeasts. The authors also optimized the method of production of antibiotics and reported that the use of the ISP-4 medium produces a maximum amount of antibiotics. Ceylan et al. (2008) isolated 15 different strains of *Streptomyces* spp. from different soil samples of Turkey. Five promising *Streptomyces* spp. were subjected for detailed study and it was demonstrated that *Streptomyces albovinaceus* was most effective against both bacteria and fungi. Awad et al. (2009) isolated 60 different *Streptomyces* species from the different regions of Egypt. Further characterization revealed that *Streptomyces* sp. NRC-35 exhibited prominent antimicrobial activity through β -lactamase inhibition. Dehnad et al. (2010) isolated 150 actinomycetes from the different soil samples of Iran. Singh et al. (2012) demonstrated antimicrobial activity of 7 Actinomycetes strains against Methicillin-Resistant *Staph. aureus* (14 mm) and Vancomycin-resistant *Enterococci*. Bizuye et al. (2013) isolated 30 Actinomycetes spp. from samples soil of Ethiopia. Among them, three isolates exhibited promising antimicrobial activity against pathogenic microorganisms like *Klebsiella pneumonia* ATCC7000603, *E. coli* ATCC25922, methicillin-resistant *Staph. aureus* strains 2 (MRSA2) and MRSA4. Sriprechasak et al., (2014) isolated 31 Actinomycetes spp. from the 6 soil samples of Thailand. Among them 9, 8, 6, 2, and 5 Actinomycetes spp. exhibited activity against *B. subtilis*, *Kocuria rhizophila*, *Mucor racemosus*, *E. coli* and *Xanthomonas campestris* respectively.

Subramani and Narayanasamy (2009) showed approximately 40 species exhibited antimicrobial activity human pathogens and 55 % species exhibited activity against plant pathogens. Kumar et al. (2010) isolated 117 Actinomycetes spp. from India and demonstrated that 10 % Actinomycetes spp. exhibited activity against bacteria. Duraipandiyar et al (2010) demonstrated twelve isolated samples from the Himalayan soil. ERIH-44 isolated from the genus *Bacillus* exhibited promising antagonistic activity. MIC values of < 15.62 μ g/ml, < 15.62 μ g/ml, 125 μ g/ml, 500 μ g/ml, 500 μ g/ml and 1000 μ g/ml respectively against *B. subtilis*, *Staph. aureus*, *E.coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *Botrytis cinerea*, and *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* respectively. Sharma et al. (2010) isolated 134 Actinomycetes from different soil samples of India. Isolated Actinomycetes acts antagonistic activities against a wide spectrum of microorganisms including multidrug-resistant methicillin-resistant *Staph. aureus* (MRSA) and *E. coli*. 38 % isolates exhibited growth of microorganisms while six isolates exhibited broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity.

Table 3: Diverse antibiotic compounds from Actinomycetes

Antibiotics	Actinomycetes source	Chemical class	Mechanism of Action
Abyssomicins	<i>Verrucospora</i> AB-18-032	Natural polycyclic polyketide	PABA pathway inhibitor
Beknamycin	<i>Streptomyces kanamyceticus</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibiting protein synthesis and increasing translation errors
Biapenem	<i>Streptomyces cattleya</i>	Carbapenem	It exhibits its action by inhibiting bacterial cell wall synthesis.
Bonactin	<i>Streptomyces</i> sp. BD21-2	Ester	
Carbomycin	<i>Streptomyces halstedii</i>	Macrolide	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
Chloramphenicol	<i>Streptomyces venezuelae</i>	Acetamide	Inhibits protein biosynthesis by impairing translation on the 50S ribosomal

			subunit at the peptidyl transferase step
Chlortetracycline	<i>Streptomyces aureofaciens</i>	Tetracyclines	Inhibits protein synthesis (elongation) by preventing binding of aminoacyl-tRNA to the 30S subunit.
Clindamycin	<i>Streptomyces sp</i>	Galactooctopyranoside	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
Daptomycin	<i>Streptomyces roseosporus</i>	Lipopeptide	Bactericidal activity by disrupting plasma membrane function without penetrating the cytoplasm
Erythromycin	<i>Saccharopolyspora erythrea (Streptomyces erythreus)</i>	Macrolide	Inhibits elongation at transpeptidation step of protein biosynthesis
Ertapenem	<i>Streptomyces cattleya</i>	Thienamycin	It exhibits its action by inhibiting cell wall synthesis and is mediated through ertapenem binding to penicillin-binding proteins (PBPs).
Framycetin	<i>Streptomyces fradiae</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibition of bacterial protein synthesis via binding to ribosomal subunits.
Gentamicin	<i>Micromonospora purpurea</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibits protein synthesis by binding to L6 protein of 50S ribosomal subunit
Grisein (Albomycin)	<i>Streptomyces griseus</i>	Cyclic hexapeptide (Sideromycin group)	Inhibits seryl-t-RNA synthetase and impairs protein biosynthesis
Kanamycin	<i>Streptomyces kanamyceticus</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibiting protein synthesis and increasing translation errors
Lincomycin	<i>Streptomyces lincolnensis</i>	Galactooctopyranoside	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
Micromonosporin	<i>Micromonospora sp</i>	Polyene lactam macrolide antibiotic	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis.
Miglustat	<i>Streptomyces lavendulae</i>	Nojirimycin.	It exhibits action by reversibly inhibiting glucosylceramide synthase.
Neomycin	<i>Streptomyces fradiae</i>	Aminoglycoside	It binds the 30S and in some cases, the 50S subunit causing miscoding; inhibits initiation and elongation during protein synthesis
Novobiocin	<i>Streptomyces niveus/ S. spheroides</i>	Aminocoumarin	Inhibits DNA synthesis by inhibiting the DNA polymerization
Oleandomycin	<i>Streptomyces antibioticus</i>	Macrolide	Inhibits bacterial

			protein synthesis
Oxy tetracycline	<i>Streptomyces rimosus</i>	Tetracycline	Inhibits protein synthesis (elongation) by preventing binding of aminoacyl-tRNA to the 30S subunit
Pyridomycin	<i>Streptomyces pyridomyceticus</i>	Peptide	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
PM181104	<i>Kocuria</i> sp.	Peptide	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
Ramoplanin (INN)	<i>Actinoplanes</i> sp ATCC 33706	Glycolipodepsipeptide	Inhibits transglycosylation in peptidoglycan synthesis
Rifamycin	<i>Amycolatopsis rifamycinica</i>	Naphthalene containing subclass of ansamycins	Inhibits bacterial DNA-dependent RNA-polymerase
Spectinomycin	<i>Streptomyces spectabilis</i>	Aminocyclitol	Disrupts bacterial protein synthesis
Spiramycin	<i>Streptomyces ambofaciens</i>	Macrolide	Inhibits protein biosynthesis by the rapid breakdown of polyribosomes by binding 50S unit
Streptocin	<i>Streptomyces griseus</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis
Streptogramin A	<i>Streptomyces virginiae</i>	Polyketide-Streptogramin	Inhibits protein biosynthesis by binding to the 50S ribosome unit.
Streptomycin	<i>Streptomyces griseus</i>	Aminoglycoside	Inhibits prokaryote protein synthesis by binding to S12 protein of the 30S ribosomal subunit, causing miscoding or inhibiting initiation.
Streptothricin	<i>Streptomyces lavendulae</i> , <i>Streptomyces noursei</i>	Imidazo pyridine-4-one	Inhibits polypeptide synthesis via interaction with the ribosome.
Telithromycin	<i>Saccharopolyspora erythraea</i>	Macrolide	It exhibits its action by inhibiting protein synthesis through interaction with peptidyltransferase site of the bacterial 50S ribosomal subunit.
Teicoplanin	<i>Actinoplanin teichomyceticus</i>	Glycopeptide	Binds to the D-ALA-D-ALA terminal end of peptidoglycan precursors and inhibits cell-wall synthesis.
Tigecycline	<i>Saccharopolyspora erythraea</i>	Chlortetracycline	It acts as a protein synthesis inhibitor and exhibits action by binding to the 30S ribosomal subunit.

Thiolactomycin	<i>Nocardia</i> sp	Thiolactone	Inhibition of fatty acid synthesis
Thiostrepton	<i>Streptomyces azureus</i> and <i>Streptomyces laurentii</i>	Cyclic oligopeptide	Impairment of the coupling of the 30-S initiation complex to the 50-S ribosomal subunit.
Vancomycin	<i>Amycolatopsis orientalis</i>	Glycopeptide	Inhibits cell wall synthesis

CONCLUSION:

The microbes which are undiscovered and unusual or rare may contain possible cures for diseases demanding new antibiotics to combat the multidrug-resistant human pathogens and emerging deadly diseases. Application of selective isolation and enriched methods can lead to the discovery of new/novel and rare bioactive Actinomycetes from unexplored ecological niches having the potential to biosynthesize novel bioactive compounds. A combination of natural products chemistry along with modern genetics will successfully help in overcoming the demand and supply problems of the past, promote the production of natural secondary metabolites from the rare actinomycetes as well as identify various alternatives for future drug discovery programs. The microbial groups with proven track records such as the Actinomycetes in drug discovery process form a strong entity in the future. Therefore we can conclude that targeting rare and novel actinomycetes will lead to discovery of novel chemical structures with strong bioactivity combating the problem of drug-resistance and other associated complexities.

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