Effect of Chitosan Coating Nano-emulsion Containing *Zataria multiflora and Bunium persicum* Essential Oils on *Escherichia Coli* O_{157}:H_7 in Vacuum-packed Rainbow Trout Fillet

Fatemeh Raji[a] ⓘ | **Saeid Khanzadi**[a*] ⓘ | **Mohammad Hashemi**[bc] | **Mohammad Azizzadeh**[d]

[a] Department of Food Hygiene and Aquatics, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran.
[b] Medical Toxicology Research Center, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran.
[c] Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran.
[d]Department of Clinical Science, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran.

*Corresponding author: Saeid Khanzadi
Department of Food Hygiene and Aquatics, School of Veterinary Medicine, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. Postal code: 9177948974.
E-mail address: Khanzadi@um.ac.ir

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Background: Active antimicrobial packaging is a novel method for increasing the safety and shelf life of food products. The present study aimed to investigate the inhibitory effects of chitosan coating nano-emulsion incorporated with *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* essential oils at the concentrations of 0.5% and 1%, respectively on *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 in vacuum-packed fish samples during 12 days of refrigeration.
Methods: The samples were divided into various groups, including control (no coating), 2% chitosan, 2% chitosan nano-emulsion, and chitosan coating nano-emulsion containing *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* essential oils at the concentrations of 0.5% and 1%, respectively. The samples were vacuum-packed and stored at refrigeration temperature, and bacterial counting was performed on days zero, one, two, four, six, eight, and 12.
Results: The mean bacterial count had a significant difference between the study groups during 12 days of storage ($P< 0.001$). The most significant inhibitory effect on the growth of *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 was observed with nano-emulsion of chitosan containing 1% of *Bunium persicum*.
Conclusion: According to the results, using the nano-emulsion of chitosan coating with essential oils could effectively decrease the growth of *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 in food products, especially fish.in food especially fish.

1. Introduction

Fish is most commonly consumed by humans and has several health benefits. However, fish is considered to be the most vulnerable meat and a common source of disease outbreaks across the world, which also affects its shelf life and safety [1]. The high rate of foodborne diseases outbreaks was reported by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) following the consumption of contaminated seafood products during 1990-2002 [2].

Seafood products could be a major source of foodborne pathogens, such as *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7, which has been reported to cause various diseases and severe health complication. This highlights the need for a novel approach to the thorough control and reduction of bacterial growth in these food products. These bacteria are prone to various outbreaks involving different food products due to cross-contamination, particularly through post-processing contamination [3].

Today, use of natural preservatives (mainly medical plants) has been on the rise since individuals are more conscious of the lateral adverse effects of chemical preservatives on health. In this regard, use of edible coatings and antimicrobial agents such as chitosan and essential oils has been notable [4]. Essential oils (EOs) could be extracted from the flowers, buds, seeds, leaves, bark, herbs, fruits, and roots of various plants [5]. These secondary metabolites could restrain the growth of foodborne pathogens and food spoilage bacteria [6]. Terpenoids and phenylpropanoids are the major constituents of EOs, which exert variable biological effects on food products, including antibacterial, anti-fungal, and antioxidant effects [7].

Zataria multiflora is a member of the Lamia¬ceae family, and its EO is a natural additive used in food preservation owing to its remarkable antioxidant and antimicrobial properties. Thymol and carvacrol are the two main constituents of this herbal essential oil [8]. *Bunium persicum* is a member of the Apiaceae family, which grows in different regions of Asia, such as central Asia, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India [9]. The EO of this plant contains high concentrations of various antibacterial agents due to the high levels of oxygenated monoterpenes, mainly γ-terpinene, cuminaldehyde, ρ-cymene, and limonene [10].

Active, edible coatings increase the quality of coated food products and their nutritional value. Chitosan is the deacetylated form of chitin with remarkable properties, such as biodegradability and ability to form coating films, which could be used in agriculture and food preservation [11]. Several hypotheses have been proposed regarding the antibacterial activity of chitosan, and a hypothesis has been linked to its structure [12]. Chitosan could be used for the formation of films and gels so as to improve the organo¬leptic properties of food products in terms of permeability to humidity, oxygen, and functional substances, such as flavoring additives, antioxidants, vitamins, and coloring agents. On the other hand, chitosan has been extensively applied in the biomedical membrane [13].

Nano-emulsions are among the most promising systems to improve the solubility, bioavailability, and functionality of hydrophobic compounds. Nano-emulsions have numerous applications since they could act as delivery systems for lipophilic compounds, such as nutraceuticals, drugs, flavors, antioxidants, and antimicrobial agents [14]. The nano-emulsion of coating solutions and Eos has been reported to offer higher antibacterial activity compared to conventional emulsions [15]. Nano-emulsions are produced by multiple approaches, such as low-energy and high-energy techniques. One of the high-energy methods in this regard is ultrasonic emulsification, which could be effectively applied to prepare nano-emulsions with small droplet diameters and low size distribution [16].

Vacuum packaging is packaging in rigid or flexible containers, from which substantially all the air has been eliminated before the sealing of the package. It is considered to be an efficient system for the distribution and long-term storage of fresh meat. Vacuum packaging is commonly used owing to the high public demand for fresh fish. This type of packaging could decrease bacterial growth and fat oxidation [17].

Several recent studies have been focused on increasing the shelf life and safety of food products using natural antimicrobial agents, such as edible coatings and EOs [18]. Previous studies have denoted the use of chitosan-based edible coatings and EOs in various food products [19, 20]. However, few studies have investigated the use of nano-chitosan solutions with EOs in vacuum seafood [21, 22].

The present study aimed to evaluate the effects of nano-chitosan solutions with *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* EOs on vacuum-packed rainbow trout fillet.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Experimental Materials

The EOs of *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* were purchased from the Iranian Institute of Medicinal Plants in Karaj, Alborz province, Iran. All the culture media were purchased from QUELAB (Quelab Laboratories Inc., Montreal, Canada). Chitosan with low molecular weight (LMW; 1.03×10^5) and 91% deacetylation degree was also obtained from Sigma-Aldrich Company (St. Louis, MO, USA), and *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ (NCTC 12900) was obtained from the Department of Food Hygiene at the School of Veterinary Medicine at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in Mashhad, Iran.

2.2. Preparation of the Chitosan Coatings

The chitosan solution was prepared with 2% (w/v) in 1% (v/v) acetic acid. In this process, two grams of chitosan were blended with 100 milliliters of distilled water, and the solution was mixed by a hotplate magnetic stirrer at the temperature of 40 °C for 10 minutes in order to become transparent. Afterwards, glycerol was added to chitosan at the concentration of 0.75 ml/gr as a plasticizer and stirred for 10 minutes [23].

2.3. Preparation of Chitosan Coating Nano-emulsion Containing Zataria multiflora and Bunium persicum Eos

At this stage, the EOs of *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* (concentrations of 0.5% and 1%, respectively) were added to the prepared chitosan solution using Tween 80 (0.2 g) as an emulsifier, and the solution was stirred for 30 minutes to form a transparent solution. Following that, the coating solutions were subjected to ultra turrax for three minutes at 3,000 rpm and ultrasonic emulsification sonicator (50 °C, pulse, 45 seconds, rest, and 15 seconds) for six minutes. Afterwards, the particle size of the solution was measured using the DLS device (Nanophox Sympatec GmbH, Clausthal, Germany) [24].

2.4. Preparation of Rainbow Trout Fillets and Inoculation of the Bacteria

Fresh rainbow trout fish (Oncorhynchus mykiss) with the mean weight of 700 ± 50 grams were purchased from a local fish farm (Mashhad, Iran) in summer 2017. The fish were filleted and transferred to the laboratory aseptically in a cool box. Following that, the fillets were washed, slimed, dried, cut to pieces (weight: 10 g), and burnt to exterminate

the surface microorganisms. *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ were inoculated using adjustable volume micropipettes on each side of the fillets separately to the final concentration of ~10^6 CFU/g [4].

2.5. Treatments

The samples that were inoculated with bacteria were divided into seven groups (Table 1). The treatment of the samples involved immersion in the chitosan solution (one minute), drainage (15 minutes), drying, and vacuum packaging, which was performed manually or automatically by placing the samples in a plastic film package, removing air from inside the package (low oxygen concentration: <1%), and sealing the package using a vacuum device (Henkelman, Hertogenbosch, Netherlands). Afterwards, the samples were stored at the temperature of 4 ± 1°C for 12 days to be analyzed at seven-day intervals (zero, one, two, four, six, eight, and 12) [18].

2.6. Enumeration of E. coli O$_{157}$:H$_7$

Initially, the fillets (10 g) were brought to the final volume of 90 milliliters with 0.1% sterile peptone water and homogenized using a stomacher (Seward Medical, London, UK) for three minutes. Following that, decimal dilutions were prepared, and 10 microliters of the serial dilutions of the homogenates were plated on Sorbitol-MacConkey agar (SMAC) (Quelab Laboratories Inc., Montreal, Canada) for the enumeration of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$. Afterwards, the SMAC agar plates were incubated at the temperature of 37 °C for 24 hours [25].

2.7. Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 21. The process of the changes in the logarithmic bacterial count was analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA within a 12-day period. The paired comparison of the study groups was carried out using Bonferroni post-hoc test. In all the statistical analyses, P-value of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Enumeration of E. coli O1$_{57}$:H$_7$

Figure 1 depicts the effect of the treatments on the growth of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ during 12 days of storage. The initial count of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ was 6.69 ± 0.13 log CFU/g, which decreased during storage in all the samples, especially in the nano-chitosan+1% *Zataria multiflora* EO samples (4.06 ± 0.15 log CFU/g) and nano-chitosan+1% Bunium persicum EO samples (3.81 ± 0.06 log CFU/g). This finding is consistent with the results of the previous studies in this regard [18,26]. In another research, Ehsani and Hashemi reported that the combined treatment of antimicrobial coating, gamma irradiation, and MAP led to the reduction of microbial populations to undetectable levels [27]. In the present study, the reduction of the bacterial counts was considered significant in nano-chitosan+1% Zataria multiflora EO and nano-chitosan+1% Bunium persicum EO samples due to great impact of the nano-chitosan solution and EOs.

During the 12-day period in the current research, the bacterial count in the vacuum samples in the control group decreased from 6.69 ± 0.13 to 5.30 ± 0.15 since this bacterium is mesophilic, and the vacuum conditions restrained its growth [28]. Comparison of the chitosan and nano-chitosan treatments in the present study indicated the more significant reduction of the bacterial count in the nano-chitosan treatment compared to the chitosan treatment [29]. In general, it could be stated that the use of combinational antimicrobial agents was more effective against microbial growth compared to their separate use. This finding has been confirmed in several previous studies [27,30] confirmed; however, antagonistic, synergistic or additive effects may be involved depending on the type of antimicrobial agents and microorganisms.

Table 2 shows the mean reduction rate of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ counts in the comparison of the treatments. In fact, almost all the treatments caused a significant difference in the mean rate of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ counts in comparison (*P*< 0.001).

Table 1: List of treatments in the present study

Treatment		Description
1	CON	Control: vacuum Samples without any coating solution
2	CS	Vacuum Samples coated with chitosan solution
3	Nano-CS	Vacuum Samples coated with Nano-chitosan solution
4	Nano-CS+ ZMEO0.5%	Vacuum samples coated with Nano-chitosan solution containing 0.5% (w/v) *Zataria multiflora* essential oil
5	Nano-CS+ BPEO0.5%	Vacuum Samples coated with Nano-chitosan solution containing 0.5% (w/v) *bunium persicum* essential oil
6	Nano-CS+ ZMEO1%	Vacuum Samples coated with Nano-chitosan solution containing 1% (w/v) *Zataria multiflora* essential oil
7	Nano-CS+BPEO1%	Vacuum Samples coated with Nano-chitosan solution containing 1% (w/v) *bunium persicum* essential oil

Table 2: Average reduction rate of *E. coli* O$_{157}$:H$_7$ counts among treatments when compared together during storage

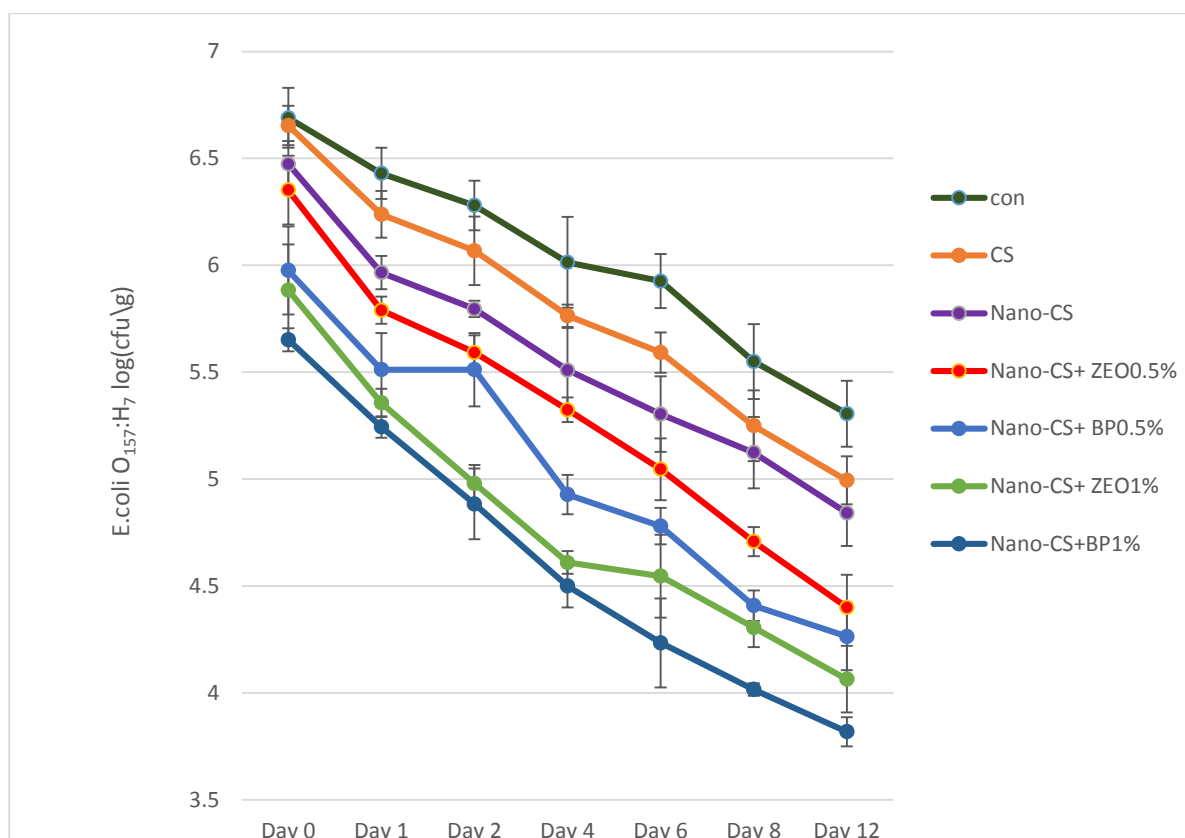| Mean Difference	CS	Nano-CS	Nano-CS+ZMEO0.5%	Nano-CS+BPEO0.5%	Nano-CS+ZMEO1%	Nano-CS+BPEO1%
CS	0.23*	0.45**	0.71**	0.97**	1.20**	1.40**
Nano-CS		0.22*	0.47**	0.74**	0.97**	1.17**
Nano-CS+ZMEO0.5%			0.25	0.51**	0.75**	0.95**
Nano-CS+BPEO0.5%				0.26*	0.49**	0.69**
Nano-CS+ZMEO1%					0.23*	0.43**
Nano-CS+BPEO1%						0.19

* P < 0.05, ** P < 0.001.

Figure 1: Effect of treatments on the growth of *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 during storage

As can be seen, the highest reduction rate of *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 (1.4 log CFU/g) was observed in the nano-chitosan+1% Bunium persicum EO samples compared to the control samples.

Comparison of the EOs used in the present study indicated that Bunium persicum exerted significant antibacterial effects against *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 at the concentration of 1%, while the EO of *Zataria multiflora* had similar effects against *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 at the concentration of 1% ($P > 0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that the higher concentration of the EOs was associated with their increased antimicrobial effects.

4. Conclusion

According to the results, use of the nano-emulsion of chitosan solution with the EOs of *Zataria multiflora* and *Bunium persicum* had potential antimicrobial effects against foodborne pathogens, such as *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7. Moreover, this effect could be improved by using the higher concentration of the EOs (1%). Our findings also demonstrated that the treatments with nano-chitosan+1% *Zataria multiflora* EO and nano-chitosan+0.5% *Bunium persicum* EO exerted the optimal effects against bacterial growth. In the control group, the bacterial counts were also observed to decrease, which could be due to the application of vacuum packaging to control the growth of *E. coli* O_{157}:H_7 in the fish fillets.

Authors' Contributions

F.R., performed laboratory works, S.Kh., designed the study as M.H., revised the manuscript, and M.A., performed statistical analysis.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

References

1. Oussalah M, Caillet S, Saucier L, Lacroix M. Inhibitory Effects of Selected Plant Essential Oils on the Growth of Four Pathogenic Bacteria: *E. coli* O_{157}: H_7, Salmonella Typhimurium, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Food control*. 2007; 18(5): 414-20.

2. Ozer NP, Demirci A. Electrolyzed Oxidizing Water Treatment for Decontamination of Raw salmon Inoculated with *Escherichia coli* O_{157}: H_7 and *Listeria monocytogenes* Scott A and Response Surface Modeling. *J Food Eng*. 2006; 72(3): 234-41.

3. Djenane D, Yangüela J, Amrouche T, Boubrit S, Boussad N, Roncalés P. Chemical Composition and Antimicrobial Effects of Essential Oils of Eucalyptus Globulus, Myrtus Communis and Satureja Hortensis against *Escherichia coli* O_{157}:H_7 and *Staphylococcus aureus* in Minced Beef. *Food Sci Technol Int*. 2011; 17(6): 505-15.

4. Raeisi M, Tabaraei A, Hashemi M, Behnampour N. Effect of Sodium Alginate Coating Incorporated with Nisin, Cinnamomum Zeylanicum, and Rosemary Essential Oils on Microbial Quality of Chicken Meat and Fate of *Listeria monocytogenes* during Refrigeration. *Int J Food Microbiol*. 2016; 238: 139-45.

5. Mechergui K, Coelho JA, Serra MC, Lamine SB, Boukhchina S, Khouja ML. Essential Oils of Origanum Vulgare *L. subsp. gandulosum* (Desf.) Ietswaart from Tunisia: Chemical Composition and Antioxidant Activity. *J Sci Food Agric*. 2010; 90(10): 1745-9.

6. Callaway TR, Carroll JA, Arthington JD, Edrington TS, Anderson RC, Ricke SC, et al. Citrus Products and their Use against Bacteria: Potential Health and Cost Benefits. *Nutrients, Dietary Supplements, and Nutriceuticals*: Springer; 2011. p. 277-86.

7. Carson CF, Hammer KA. Chemistry and Bioactivity of Essential Oils. Lipids Essent Oils Antimicrob Agents. 2011; 25: 203-38.

8. Sajed H, Sahebkar A, Iranshahi M. *Zataria multiflora* Boiss.(Shirazi thyme)—an Ancient Condiment with Modern Pharmaceutical Uses. *J Ethnopharmacol*. 2013; 145(3): 686-98.

9. Aminzare M, Amiri E, Abbasi Z, Hassanzadazar H, Hashemi M. Evaluation of in Vitro Antioxidant Characteristics of Corn Starch Bioactive Films Impregnated with *Bunium persicum* and *Zataria multiflora* Essential Oils. *Annual Res Review in Biology*. 2017; 15(5): 1-9.

10. Agah S, Taleb AM, Moeini R, Gorji N, Nikbakht H. Cumin Extract for Symptom Control in Patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome: a Case Series. *Middle East J Dig Dis*. 2013; 5(4): 217-22.

11. De Reuck K, Sivakumar D, Korsten L. Effect of Integrated Application of Chitosan Coating and Modified Atmosphere Packaging on Overall Quality Retention in Litchi Cultivars. *J Sci Food Agric*. 2009; 89(5): 915-20.

12. Je Jy, Kim SK. Chitosan Derivatives Killed Bacteria by Disrupting the Outer and Inner Membrane. *J Agric Food chem*. 2006; 54(18): 6629-33.

13. Hirano S, Hirochi K, Hayashi KI, Mikami T, Tachibana H. Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Uses of Chitin and Chitosan. *Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Applications of Polymers: Springer*; 1991. p. 95-104.

14. Weiss J, Decker EA, McClements DJ, Kristbergsson K, Helgason T, Awad T. Solid Lipid Nanoparticles as Delivery Systems for Bioactive Food Components. *Food Biophys*. 2008; 3(2): 146-54.

15. Oh YA, Oh YJ, Song AY, Won JS, Song KB, Min SC. Comparison of Effectiveness of Edible Coatings Using Emulsions Containing Lemongrass Oil of Different Size Droplets on Grape Berry Safety and Preservation. *LWT*. 2017; 75: 742-50.

16. Salvia Trujillo L, Soliva Fortuny R, Rojas Graü MA, McClements DJ, Martin Belloso O. Edible Nanoemulsions as Carriers of Active Ingredients: A Review. *Annu Rev Food Sci Technol*. 2017; 8: 439-66.

17. Shabanpoor B, Zolfaghari M, Falahzadeh S, Alipoor GH. Effect of Extract of Zararia Multiflora Boiss on Shelf-life of Salted Vacuum Packaged Rainbow Trout Fillet (Oncorhynchus Mykiss) in Refrigerator Conditions: Microbial, Chemical and Sensory Attributes Assessments. *Iran J Food Sci Technol*. 2012; 8(33): 1-11.

18. Sharifi F, Khanzadi S, Hashemi M, Azizzadeh M. Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Escherichia coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$ Inoculated on Fish Fillets Using Alginate Coating Containing Lactoperoxidase System and *Zataria multiflora* Boiss Essential Oil. *J Aquat Food Prod Technol*. 2017; 26(9): 1014-21.

19. Noori S, Zeynali F, Almasi H. Antimicrobial and Antioxidant Efficiency of Nanoemulsion-based Edible Coating Containing Ginger (Zingiber Officinale) Essential Oil and Its Effect on Safety and Quality attributes of Chicken Breast Fillets. *Food control*. 2018; 84: 312-20.

20. Severino R, Ferrari G, Vu KD, Donsì F, Salmieri S, Lacroix M. Antimicrobial Effects of Modified Chitosan Based Coating Containing Nanoemulsion of Essential Oils, Modified Atmosphere Packaging and Gamma Irradiation against *Escherichia coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$ and *Salmonella Typhimurium* on Green Beans. *Food Control*. 2015; 50: 215-22.

21. Yuan G, Chen X, Li D. Chitosan Films and Coatings Containing Essential Oils: The Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Activity, and Application in Food Systems. *Food Res Int*. 2016; 89: 117-28.

22. Vieira JM, Flores López ML, De Rodríguez DJ, Sousa MC, Vicente AA, Martins JT. Effect of Chitosan–Aloe Vera Coating on Postharvest Quality of Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) Fruit. *Postharvest Biol Technol*. 2016; 116: 88-97.

23. Ojagh SM, Rezaei M, Razavi SH, Hosseini SMH. Effect of Chitosan Coatings Enriched with Cinnamon Oil on the Quality of Refrigerated Rainbow Trout. *Food chem*. 2010; 120(1): 193-8.

24. Ghosh V, Mukherjee A, Chandrasekaran N. Ultrasonic Emulsification of Food-Grade Nanoemulsion forMulation and Evaluation of its Bactericidal Activity. *Ultrason Sonochem*. 2013; 20(1): 338-44.

25. Shin JH, Chang S, Kang DH. Application of Antimicrobial Ice for Reduction of Foodborne Pathogens (*Escherichia coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$, *Salmonella Typhimurium*, *Listeria monocytogenes*) on the Surface of Fish. *J Appl Microbiol*. 2004; 97(5): 916-22.

26. Khanjari A, Akhondzadeh Basti A, Bokaie S, Cheraghi N, Fayazfar S, Ghadami F. Evaluation of the Antimicrobial Effect of Chitosan and Whey Proteins Isolate Films Containing Free and Nanoliposomal Garlic Essential Oils against *Listeria monocytegenes*, *E. coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$ and *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Iran J Med Microbiol*. 2016; 10(5): 45-51.

27. Ehsani A, Hashemi M, Naghibi SS, Mohammadi S, Khalili Sadaghiani S. Properties of *Bunium persicum* Essential Oil and Its Application in Iranian white Cheese against *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Escherichia coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$. *J Food Saf*. 2016; 36(4): 563-70.

28. Elliot R, McLay J, Kennedy M, Simmonds R. Inhibition of Foodborne Bacteria by the Lactoperoxidase System in a Beef Cube System. *Int J Food Microbiol*. 2004; 91(1): 73-81.

29. Zarei M, PourmahdiI BM, Keshavarz Z. Sensitization of *Escherichia Coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$ to Acidic Conditions by Chitosan and Nanochitosan. *Vet Res (Garmsar Branch)*. 2016; 12(1): 47-59.

30. Shahbazi Y, Shavisi N, Mohebi E. Effects of Z Iziphora Clinopodioides Essential Oil and Nisin, Both Separately and in Combination, to Extend Shelf Life and Control *Escherichia coli* O$_{157}$: H$_7$ and *Staphylococcus aureus* in Raw Beef Patty during Refrigerated Storage. *J Food Safe*. 2016; 36(2): 227-36.