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Exploiting the INH Pharmacophore: Synthesis and Study of its Transition Metal Complexes for Biological Applications

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Abstract: A novel Schiff base ligand incorporating the isoniazid (INH) pharmacophore was synthesized and utilized to prepare a series of paramagnetic transition metal complexes, characterized using spectroscopic techniques (IR, UV-Vis, ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR). Potentiometric studies revealed the stability constant order: Zn(II) > Co(II) > Ni(II) > Mn(II) > Cu(II). Biological evaluation demonstrated that the synthesized metal complexes exhibited superior antimicrobial and antifungal activity compared to the organic ligand, with the Nickel(II) complex showing promise as an antifungal agent. These findings underscore the synergistic potential of metal coordination in enhancing the pharmacological applications of the INH pharmacophore.

Keywords: INH pharmacophore, potentiometric complexation, stability constant, antifungal

I. INTRODUCTION

The rational design and synthesis of novel metal complexes incorporating bioactive pharmacophores, such as isoniazid (INH) within a Schiff base scaffold, has garnered significant attention in coordination chemistry [1-4]. Schiff bases, known for their ability to modulate enzyme activity and stabilize metal oxidation states, offer exceptional advantages as complexing ligands due to their structural resemblance to biological molecules, facile synthesis, and structural tunability for targeted bioactivity. Beyond their catalytic applications in organic transformations like ketone reduction [5], Schiff base metal complexes are increasingly recognized for their potential to enhance drug precision, solubility, and catalytic efficiency [5]. The broad pharmacological relevance of organic scaffolds bearing donor groups has been extensively documented [6-9], with Schiff bases and their metal complexes occupying a pivotal role across healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and biochemistry. Their diverse therapeutic applications, including antibacterial, anticancer, antifungal, antimalarial, antioxidant, and antiviral activities [10-12], alongside their catalytic utility in reactions like hydrolysis and oxygenation [13-14], underscore their importance. The thermal stability and strong chelating ability of Schiff base complexes [16] are advantageous in various applications, including sensing and catalysis [17-20]. Furthermore, their role in polymerization catalysis [21] and as components in solar cells [22] highlights their broader impact. Understanding the thermodynamics of metal complex formation [23] and their magnetic properties [24] is crucial for elucidating their behavior. Given the substantial potential of Schiff base metal complexes as medicinal agents [25-35], this study focuses on the Synthesis and Bio-evaluation of novel transition metal complexes derived from a new Schiff base incorporating the INH pharmacophore.

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II. MATERIAL AND METHODS Synthesis of Organic Ligand:



Scheme 1: Synthesized Organic Ligand

In our prior work [36-37], we established a protocol for the efficient synthesis of a series of novel INH-based Schiff base conjugates with potential antimicrobial activity, starting from readily available materials. The organic ligands for this study were synthesized through a straightforward condensation reaction between INH and various substituted aromatic aldehydes, catalyzed by glacial acetic acid in ethanol, yielding the desired products with high efficiency (95%).

The formation of the INH-incorporated Schiff base (3) was verified by physical data and a suite of spectroscopic techniques: IR, ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR, and high-resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS). The purity of the synthesized organic ligand was confirmed by a single spot on TLC using EA:DMSO (5:5) as the eluent. Elemental composition was determined via LECO CHNS-932 microanalysis. Spectroscopic characterization involved UV-Vis (190-1100 nm), FT-IR (KBr disc), and NMR (¹H at 300 MHz, ¹³C at 75 or 100 MHz) in CDCl₃/DMSO-d₆.

Complexation of biologically active organic ligands with transition metal ions: The pharmacologically active INHincorporated organic ligand (3), possessing N and O donor atoms for strong metal complex formation, was used for complexation studies. Freshly prepared ligand solutions were crucial to prevent degradation. pH metric titration, a widely accepted and reliable technique due to its ease, accuracy, and robust proton change data, was employed to evaluate the stability constants of the metal complexes. Careful consideration and control of experimental factors, including apparatus, temperature, pH electrode calibration, solution concentrations (ligand, metal ions, acid, alkali, buffer), buffer type, and solvent (freshly prepared double distilled water with pH 6.40-6.80 using KMnO4), were essential for obtaining accurate stability constant values.

Experimental Procedure: Transition metal complexes were synthesized by reacting aqueous metal salt solutions (MnCl2.4H2O, Co(NO3)2.6H2O, Ni(NO3)2.3H2O, Cu(NO3)2.3H2O, and ZnCl2) with the organic ligand in a 1:1 molar ratio in a 30% water/70% ethanol solution (Scheme 3). The pH was adjusted to basic conditions using NH4OH,

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and the mixture was refluxed for 4-5 hours, yielding a colored precipitate. After cooling, the solid complex was filtered, washed with distilled water, dried, and weighed. The synthesized complexes were analysed using IR spectroscopy (KBr disc, Bruker FT-IR) to observe changes in functional group frequencies.



M⁺: Zn(II), Co(II), Ni(II), Mn(II), Cu(II)

Scheme 3. Synthesis of metal complexes of INH incorporated Schiff.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

	III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION										
Co	omplexation	:									
	Table. 1. l	Potention	netrically	titration data fo	r N-[(E)-(2-Hyd	roxyphenyl) m	ethylen] isonico	otinohydrazid :			
$\mathbf{N}=0.2$				$\varepsilon^0 = 0.02 \mathrm{N}$	$V_0 =$	= 50ml					
$\gamma = 1$		$T_L^0 = 0.002 N$		$T_M^0 = 0.002 N$							
$T = 27 \pm 1$		Solvent = 35% Ethanol and 15% water									
	Vol. of	pН									
	Alkali	Α	A+L	A+L+Mn+2	$A+L+Co^{+2}$	$A+L+Ni^{+2}$	$A+L+Cu^{+2}$	$A+L+Zn^{+2}$			
	Added			7 1 • 1 • 1 1 1	RIE CU		A E Cu				
	0.6	2.13	2.15	2.05	2.07	2.01	2.02	2.05			
	1.2	2.25	2.22	2.08	2.10	2.07	2.08	2.11			
	1.8	2.41	2.38	2.14	2.16	2.13	2.14	2.15			
	2.4	2.61	2.50	2.17	2.22	2.21	2.18	2.20			
	3	3.05	2.80	2.29	2.27	2.28	2.27	2.24			
	3.6	10.60	3.95	2.33	2.33	2.47	2.37	2.38			
	4.2	11.12	7.95	2.44	2.52	3.11	2.58	2.74			
	4.8	11.30	9.90	2.73	3.01	3.27	3.09	3.18			
	5.4	11.42	10.18	3.35	3.50	3.87	4.01	3.79			
	6	11.50	10.70	7.84	7.21	7.56	7.19	7.53			
	6.6	11.57	10.83	8.32	8.19	8.69	7.86	8.20			
	7.4	11.64	11.11	8.66	9.10	9.77	9.19	9.13			
	8	11.70	11.25	9.01	9.57	10.12	9.47	9.63			

A representative system of pH-metric titration curve for N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl) methylen] isonicotinohydrazid (25d) with transition element Mn^{+2} , Co^{+2} , Ni^{+2} , Cu^{+2} and Zn^{+2} :

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Fig .1: pH-metric titration curve

0	
Table 2: Proton – ligand constant (Pro	otonation constant) of N-I(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl) methylen
	······································
	isonicotinohvdrazid:

isomeounony ut uziut									
Ph	V ₁	V_2	$\Delta \mathbf{V} = \mathbf{V}_1 - \mathbf{V}_2$	\overline{n}_A	рК				
2.20	2.57	2.44	0.15	0.675516224	2.518442797				
2.40	2.75	2.48	0.2734	0.418972179	2.257988258				
2.59	2.99	2.51	0.48	-0.009174312	0.558607315				
2.79	2.87	2.55	0.3544	0.259844314	2.345390137				
3.00	3.06	2.84	0.2264	0.529402872	3.051137021				
3.2	3.42	3.09	0.16	0.668388159	3.504398718				
3.4	9.47	3.74	0.108	0.776641768	3.941218779				
3.6	10.62	3.92	0.1527	0.684298962	3.935969872				
3.8	10.87	6.48	0.25532	0.472195808	3.751649291				
4	11.03	7.65	0.388856	0.196237321	3.387653769				
4.2	11.14	7.92	0.398496	0.176404363	3.530795287				
4.4	11.22	8.87	0.408136	0.156575877	3.668678835				

Table 3: Metal-Ligand Stability Constant of N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl) methylen] isonicotinohydrazide:

Metal	рК	Stability Constant (logK)	
Cu(II)	5.24	4.0703	
Ni(II)	5.24	3.9038	
Zn(II)	5.24	4.2121	
Co(II)	5.24	3.4314	
Mn(II)	5.24	3.6133	

Physical, elemental and Spectral Interpretation:

N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl) methylen]isonicotinohydrazide (Organic Ligand): The novel organic ligand, N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)methylen]isonicotinohydrazid, was synthesized with a 98% yield and a melting point of 245°C. Elemental analysis closely matched the calculated values. The UV-Vis spectrum showed a λ max at 317 nm, indicating a shift to a longer wavelength. Key functional groups were confirmed by FT-IR bands at 3861 cm⁻¹ (N-H), 1622 cm⁻¹ (C=O), 1679 cm⁻¹ (aliphatic C=N), 1389 cm⁻¹ (aromatic C=N), 3162 cm⁻¹ (C-OH), and 1554 cm⁻¹ (Ar-C=C). [38] ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra provided detailed structural elucidation, with characteristic signals for the δ 12.268 (s, N-H,

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1H)[39] δ11.152(s, OH, 1H) [40-41], δ8.639 (s, Aliphatic-H, 1H), δ8.759-8.751 (d, Pry-H, 2H, J= 3.2Hz), δ7.834-7.830 (d, Pry-H, 2H, J=1.6Hz) δ7.520-7.51 (d, Ar-H, 2H, J=1.6Hz), δ7.501-7.497 (t, 2H, Ar-H, J =1.6 Hz), δ116.86, 118.83, (Benzene C), 121.87, (pry-carbon), 130.03, 132.01(Benzene C), 140.28 (Carbon next to carbonyl carbon), 149.94 (aliphatic N=CH), 150.66 (Pry-Carbon next to N), 158.06 (Carbon next to OH), 161.72 (carbonyl carbon).

FT-IR of transition metal complexes of ligands: In the synthesized transition metal complexes, IR spectroscopy revealed the ligand's coordination mode. The ligand's NH and C=N hydrogen bonds (3646-3444 and 2657-2332 cm⁻¹) were present. The v(C=N) imine band (1617-1605 cm⁻¹) shifted to lower intensity upon complexation, indicating nitrogen coordination to the metal ion. New bands in the 731-751 cm⁻¹ and 670-690 cm⁻¹ regions confirmed M-O and M-N bond formation, respectively.

UV-Vis of transition metal complexes of ligands: The UV-Vis spectrum of the organic ligand displayed two absorption bands at 285-287 nm and 328 nm, attributed to π - π * and n- π * electronic transitions within the ligand, respectively. Upon complexation with metal ions, an absorption band was observed in the UV region at 285-287 nm, consistent with a π - π * transition. Additionally, the complexes exhibited absorption bands around 328 nm, which are likely due to charge transfer transitions occurring between the ligand and the metal center (L \rightarrow M or M \rightarrow L).

Biological Evaluation: The superior antibacterial action of transition metal complexes compared to their Schiff base ligands is often attributed to **chelation**.[46-49] This binding mode enhances the spread of π -electrons throughout the complex, reduces the metal ion's charge density, and crucially, improves the complex's ability to pass through the fatty cell membranes of bacteria.[50-52] Consequently, Schiff base metal complexes demonstrate a broad spectrum of biological activities, including antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, antimalarial, antituberculosis, antioxidant, anticancer, anti-HIV, anti-inflammatory, and antipyretic effects.[53-57]

Antimicrobial Evaluation: The antimicrobial evaluation (Table 6) showed that complexation with Cu(II) and Zn(II) significantly enhanced the activity of N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)methylen]isonicotinohydrazid, especially against Gram-negative E. coli. Specifically, these metal complexes outperformed the ligand in their antibacterial effects. The Zn(II) complex displayed broader improvement, showing increased activity against Gram-positive B. megaterium and B. cereus, as well as all tested Gram-negative bacteria. The Cu(II) complex also exhibited enhanced activity against Gram-positive (B. megaterium, B. aureus, B. cereus) and Gram-negative (S. typhi, E. aerogenes, E. coli) strains compared to the ligand. The overall biological evaluation data (Table 6) emphasizes the vital contribution of metal complexation to the ligand's antimicrobial potency, although the tested compounds showed moderate activity when compared to the standard antibiotic tetracycline.

Type of bacteria	Species	Ligand (Schiff base)	L+ Mn ⁺²	L+ Ni ⁺²	L+ Cu ⁺²	L+ Zn ⁺²	Standard
0	B. subtilis	14	R	R	16 mm	10 mm	34 mm
Gram	B.megaterium	12	R	R	9 mm	15 mm	32 mm
positive	S.aureus	13	R	R	13 mm	10 mm	34 mm
	B.cereus	R	R	R	13 mm	16 mm	33 mm
	S. typhi	8	R	R	11 mm	13 mm	31 mm
	E. aerogenes	11	R	R	12 mm	13 mm	33 mm
Gram	P. aerogenosa	14	R	R	13 mm	14 mm	30 mm
negative	S.abony	12	R	R	R	15 mm	30 mm
	E.Coli	16	R	R	20 mm	16 mm	34 mm
	S.boydii	12	R	R	R	12 mm	30 mm

 Table 6: MIC value for complex of N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl) methylen] isonicotinohydrazid against bacteria, Standard = Pathogens-tetracyclin

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Antifungal Activity: Antifungal testing (Table 7) revealed that the Ni(II) and Zn(II) complexes of N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)methylen]isonicotinohydrazid displayed moderate activity against C. albicans, A. niger, and S. cerevisiae with respect to Standard (Pathogens-nystatin) [58] while other complexes were ineffective. Importantly, the Ni(II) complex showed a remarkable enhancement in its antifungal properties compared to the organic ligand.

 Table 7: MIC value for complex of N-[(E)-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)methylen] isonicotinohydrazid against fungi. Standard = Pathogens-nystatin

Tungi, Standard – Tathogens-hystatin							
Fungi	Ligand	$L4 + Mn^{+2}$	$L4 + Ni^{+2}$	$L4 + Cu^{+2}$	$L4 + Zn^{+2}$	Standard	
C. albicans	11	R	14 mm	8 mm	9 mm	30 mm	
S. cerevisiae	14	R	14	R	13 mm	29 mm	
A. niger	18	R	19 mm	R	13 mm	30 mm	

IV. CONCLUSION

Novel transition metal complexes of an INH-based Schiff base were successfully designed, synthesized, and bioevaluated. Stability constants followed the order Zn(II) > Co(II) > Ni(II) > Mn(II) > Cu(II), indicating their relative stabilities. Antimicrobial tests showed Cu(II) and Zn(II) complexes exhibited superior antibacterial activity, especially against *E. coli*, compared to the ligand. Notably, the Ni(II) complex demonstrated a remarkable improvement in antifungal application. Metal complexation effectively modulated the ligand's bioactivity. The enhanced antibacterial and antifungal properties highlight the potential of these complexes as novel therapeutic candidates. Further research into their mechanisms and in vivo efficacy is crucial for translational applications.

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Conflict of interest: Authors state no conflict of interest.

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