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Review Article

A Review On: Spirulina Platensis: Unveiling The Multifaceted Marvel Of A Nutrient – Rich Microalga For Human Health

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ABSTRACT

Spirulina platensis, a blue-green microalga, has garnered significant attention in recent years due to its remarkable nutritional profile and potential health benefits. This review aims to elucidate the multifaceted marvel of Spirulina platensis as a nutrient-rich microalga for human health. Spirulina is rich in essential nutrients such as proteins, vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds, making it a valuable dietary supplement. Its unique composition, including high protein content and the presence of antioxidants like phycocyanin and beta-carotene, contributes to various health-promoting properties, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and neuroprotective effects. Furthermore, Spirulina exhibits potential in managing various health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and hyperlipidemia. Additionally, Spirulina's safety profile and sustainable production make it an attractive option for addressing malnutrition and food insecurity globally. However, further research is warranted to fully understand its mechanisms of action and optimize its utilization in preventive and therapeutic interventions. In conclusion, Spirulina platensis stands as a promising natural resource with diverse health benefits, holding immense potential for improving human health and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in exploring natural sources of nutrition and health-promoting substances to combat the rising burden of chronic diseases and malnutrition worldwide. Among these, Spirulina platensis, a blue-green microalga, has emerged as a subject of

intense scientific scrutiny due to its exceptional nutritional content and potential health benefits. Spirulina has been consumed for centuries by various cultures around the world, but it is only in recent decades that its therapeutic potential has been extensively studied and appreciated. Spirulina platensis is renowned for its rich

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composition of essential nutrients, including proteins, vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds. This nutrient-packed microalga has earned its reputation as a “superfood” due to its ability to provide a wide array of essential nutrients in a highly digestible form. Moreover, Spirulina’s unique biochemical composition, characterized by high protein content and the presence of potent antioxidants such as phycocyanin and beta-carotene, sets it apart as a valuable dietary supplement with diverse health-promoting properties. The multifaceted marvel of *Spirulina platensis* lies not only in its nutritional richness but also in its potential therapeutic applications. Research has shown that *Spirulina* possesses antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and neuroprotective effects, making it beneficial for a variety of health conditions. From supporting cardiovascular health and managing diabetes to combating obesity and hyperlipidemia, *Spirulina* demonstrates promising outcomes in both preventive and therapeutic interventions. Furthermore, *Spirulina*’s safety profile and sustainable production make it an attractive option for addressing malnutrition and food insecurity, particularly in resource-limited settings. Its cultivation does not require arable land and can thrive in diverse environmental conditions, offering a scalable and environmentally friendly solution to nutritional challenges. However, despite the growing body of research supporting the health benefits of *Spirulina*, there remains a need for further investigation to fully elucidate its mechanisms of action and optimize its utilization in clinical practice. This review aims to unveil the multifaceted marvel of *Spirulina platensis* as a nutrient-rich microalga for human health, exploring its nutritional composition, health-promoting properties, potential therapeutic applications, and future directions in research and development.

SPIRULINA PLATENSIS

Spirulina platensis, a microscopic cyanobacterium commonly referred to as spirulina, has garnered considerable attention in recent years for its remarkable nutritional content and potential health benefits. Belonging to the phylum Cyanobacteria, *Spirulina* is one of the oldest life forms on Earth and has been consumed by various cultures for centuries due to its nutritional value and therapeutic properties. This blue-green microalga thrives in warm, alkaline waters and is characterized by its spiral-shaped, filamentous structure. *Spirulina*’s nutritional profile is truly impressive, boasting high levels of protein, essential vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds. Notably, it is one of the richest plant sources of protein, containing all essential amino acids in an easily digestible form, making it an ideal dietary supplement for vegetarians, vegans, and individuals seeking alternative protein sources. Beyond its nutritional content, *Spirulina* harbors a plethora of bioactive compounds with potential health-promoting effects. These include phycocyanin, a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory pigment unique to *Spirulina*, as well as beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, and other carotenoids known for their antioxidant properties. *Spirulina* also contains polysaccharides, glycolipids, and other bioactive molecules that contribute to its diverse physiological effects. Research on *Spirulina* has revealed a wide range of potential health benefits, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective, and hepato-protective effects. These properties make *Spirulina* a promising candidate for the prevention and management of various diseases and health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, and metabolic disorders. Furthermore, *Spirulina*’s safety profile, ease of cultivation, and minimal environmental footprint make it an attractive option for addressing malnutrition and food



insecurity, particularly in developing countries. Its ability to thrive in diverse environmental conditions and its rapid growth rate make it a sustainable source of nutrition for populations facing food shortages and limited access to nutritious foods. In this review, we aim to explore the multifaceted marvel of *Spirulina platensis*, delving into its nutritional composition, health-promoting properties, potential therapeutic applications, and future directions in research and development. By shedding light on the diverse benefits of *Spirulina*, we hope to underscore its importance as a nutrient-rich microalga for human health and well-being.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS OF SPIRULINA PLATENSIS

Spirulina platensis contains a diverse array of chemical constituents, contributing to its nutritional and therapeutic properties. Some of the key chemical components found in *Spirulina platensis* include:

1. Proteins:

Spirulina is exceptionally rich in protein, comprising around 50-70% of its dry weight. It contains all essential amino acids, making it a complete protein source.

2. Vitamins:

Spirulina contains various vitamins, including vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine), vitamin B9 (folate), and vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin). It is also a good source of vitamin A (as beta-carotene) and vitamin K.

3. Minerals:

Spirulina is rich in minerals such as iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, zinc, copper, and selenium.

4. Pigments:

Spirulina's characteristic blue-green color comes from pigments such as chlorophyll, phycocyanin (a blue pigment with antioxidant properties), and

carotenoids (including beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, and lutein).

5. Polysaccharides:

Spirulina contains various polysaccharides, including glycogen, which serves as a storage form of energy, and other complex carbohydrates with potential health benefits.

6. Fatty acids:

Spirulina contains omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, including gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), which has anti-inflammatory properties.

7. Antioxidants:

In addition to phycocyanin and carotenoids, *Spirulina* contains other antioxidants such as tocopherols (vitamin E) and superoxide dismutase (SOD), which help protect cells from oxidative damage. These chemical constituents contribute to *Spirulina*'s diverse health-promoting properties, including its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and neuroprotective effects. *Spirulina*'s nutritional richness and bioactive compounds make it a valuable dietary supplement with potential applications in supporting overall health and well-being.

USES OF SPIRULINA PLATENSIS

Spirulina platensis has a wide range of uses, thanks to its nutritional richness and potential health benefits. Some of the key uses of *Spirulina platensis* include:

1. Dietary supplement:

Spirulina is commonly consumed as a dietary supplement due to its high protein content, essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. It is often used by vegetarians, vegans, and individuals seeking alternative protein sources to supplement their diets.

2. Nutritional support:

Spirulina is used to provide nutritional support for individuals with nutrient deficiencies, malnutrition, or those who require additional nutrients due to certain health conditions or dietary restrictions.



3. Athletic performance:

Athletes may use Spirulina as a natural source of energy and protein to support muscle growth, endurance, and recovery. Its high protein content and bioavailability make it a popular choice among athletes and fitness enthusiasts.

4. Weight management:

Spirulina is sometimes included in weight management programs due to its potential appetite-suppressing effects and ability to support metabolism. It is often consumed as part of a balanced diet and exercise regimen to aid in weight loss or weight maintenance.

5. Immune support:

Spirulina contains bioactive compounds with immunomodulatory properties, such as phycocyanin and polysaccharides, which may help support the immune system and enhance immune function.

6. Antioxidant protection:

The antioxidants found in Spirulina, including phycocyanin and beta-carotene, help protect cells from oxidative damage caused by free radicals. Regular consumption of Spirulina may contribute to overall antioxidant protection and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

7. Skin health:

Spirulina is sometimes used topically or consumed orally to support skin health. Its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties may help reduce inflammation, promote collagen production, and improve the overall appearance of the skin.

8. Detoxification:

Spirulina has been suggested to have detoxifying effects, helping to eliminate toxins and heavy metals from the body. Its ability to bind to and remove toxins may support overall detoxification processes in the body.

9. Potential therapeutic applications:

Research suggests that Spirulina may have therapeutic potential in managing various health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases,

diabetes, obesity, allergies, and inflammatory disorders. However, further clinical studies are needed to confirm these effects and determine optimal dosages. Overall, Spirulina platensis is a versatile natural resource with diverse uses, offering potential benefits for overall health and well-being. However, individuals should consult with a healthcare professional before incorporating Spirulina into their diet or health regimen, especially if they have underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

MEDICINAL USES OF SPIRULINA PLATENSIS

Spirulina platensis has several potential medical uses, supported by scientific research and traditional use in various cultures. Some of the medical uses of Spirulina platensis include:

1. Cardiovascular health:

Spirulina may help support cardiovascular health by reducing blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglycerides. Its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties may also help protect against heart disease and improve overall cardiovascular function.

2. Diabetes management:

Studies suggest that Spirulina may have beneficial effects in managing diabetes by improving insulin sensitivity, reducing blood sugar levels, and lowering HbA1c levels. It may also help prevent complications associated with diabetes, such as diabetic nephropathy and retinopathy.

3. Allergy relief:

Spirulina has been studied for its potential to reduce allergy symptoms, particularly those related to allergic rhinitis (hay fever). Its anti-inflammatory properties may help alleviate nasal congestion, sneezing, and other allergic reactions.

4. Immune support:

Spirulina contains bioactive compounds that can modulate immune function and enhance the body's defense mechanisms. Regular consumption of Spirulina may help strengthen the



immune system, reduce the frequency of infections, and promote overall immune health.

5. Anti-inflammatory effects:

Spirulina's anti-inflammatory properties may help reduce inflammation in the body, which is implicated in various chronic diseases such as arthritis, asthma, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It may also help alleviate symptoms associated with inflammation, such as pain and swelling.

6. Detoxification:

Spirulina has been shown to have detoxifying effects, helping to remove heavy metals and toxins from the body. Its ability to bind to and eliminate toxins may support overall detoxification processes and promote liver health.

7. Neuroprotection:

Some studies suggest that Spirulina may have neuroprotective effects, protecting against neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. Its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties may help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation in the brain, preserving cognitive function.

8. Wound healing:

Spirulina extracts have been investigated for their potential to promote wound healing and tissue regeneration. Its growth-promoting and antioxidant properties may help accelerate the healing process and improve skin health. While Spirulina platensis shows promise for various medical uses, more research is needed to fully understand its mechanisms of action, optimal dosages, and potential interactions with medications. Individuals interested in using Spirulina for medical purposes should consult with a healthcare professional to ensure safe and appropriate use.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

In conclusion, Spirulina platensis emerges as a versatile and promising natural resource with a

multitude of potential health benefits. Its exceptional nutritional composition, rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, positions it as a valuable dietary supplement and functional food. Spirulina's unique biochemical profile, including high protein content and potent antioxidants like phycocyanin, contributes to its diverse therapeutic properties, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and neuroprotective effects.

Research suggests that Spirulina platensis may have medical applications in managing various health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, allergies, inflammatory disorders, and neurodegenerative diseases. Additionally, Spirulina shows potential in supporting immune function, promoting detoxification, and accelerating wound healing.

Furthermore, Spirulina's safety profile, sustainable production, and minimal environmental footprint make it an attractive option for addressing malnutrition and food insecurity globally. Its cultivation does not require arable land and can thrive in diverse environmental conditions, offering a scalable and environmentally friendly solution to nutritional challenges. While Spirulina platensis holds immense promise, further research is needed to fully elucidate its mechanisms of action, optimize its utilization in preventive and therapeutic interventions, and ensure its safety and efficacy. Additionally, regulatory standards and quality control measures are necessary to ensure the purity and potency of Spirulina products. In summary, Spirulina platensis stands as a multifaceted marvel of nature, offering a wealth of nutritional and health-promoting benefits. With continued scientific exploration and responsible utilization, Spirulina has the potential to play a significant role

in improving human health and well-being worldwide

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