MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI NAȚIONALE UNIVERSITATEA "VALAHIA" DIN TÂRGOVIȘTE IOSUD – ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE ȘTIINȚE INGINEREȘTI DOMENIUL FUNDAMENTAL *ȘTIINȚE INGINEREȘTI* DOMENIUL *INGINERIA MATERIALELOR*

NANOMATERIALE PE BAZĂ DE EXTRACTE NATURALE CU APLICAȚII BIOMEDICALE

-REZUMATUL TEZEI DE DOCTORAT-

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În *rezumatul tezei de doctorat*:

figurile și tabelele selecționate păstrează numerotarea din teza de doctorat;
** bibliografia indicată este selectivă păstrând numerotarea din teza de doctorat.

Cuvinte cheie: extracte naturale, Salvia officinalis, Sapindus mukorossi, nanoparticule de argint, hidrogeluri compozite cu nanoparticule de argint, sintez in-situ, UV-VIS, XRD, FTIR, SEM-EDS, activitate antimicrobian, Staphiloccocus aureus, Escherichia coli, examen microbiologic.

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1. INTRODUCERE

Problematica abordat în cadrul tezei de doctorat, legat de o serie de aspecte fundamentale din domeniul nanomaterialelor pentru aplica ii biomedicale, se înscrie între direc iile principale de ac iune (Strategia na ional de cercetare, dezvoltare i inovare 2014 ó 2020) ale programelor de cercetare de excelen prin care se promoveaz cunoa terea tiin ific în domeniul nanomaterialelor în vederea dezvolt rii i integr rii agen ilor economici la nivel de consor iu CEEX i al cerin elor Uniunii Europene i rilor europene dezvoltate. Dezvoltarea de nanomateriale biocompatibile, cu func ionalitate ridicat i efecte secundare reduse în cazul aplica iilor medicale, permi ând terapii performante i tratamente de succes, reprezint un domeniu important prin prisma poten ialului lucrativ dar i a s n ta ii popula iei.

Eco-nanotehnologia (nanotehnologia verde), rezultat prin combinarea nanotehnologiei cu principiile i practicile chimiei verzi (chimia verde are la baz un set de principii sau mai degrab o filozofie care încurajeaz devoltarea unor produse i procese care reduc sau elimin utilizarea i generarea unor substan e poten ial nocive), ar putea constitui un element important în dezvoltarea unei societ i durabile din punct de vedere ecologic în secolul 21. Procesele i procedeele aplicate curent în domeniul eco-nanotehnologiei implic utilizarea de surse naturale, solven i nontoxici i procese eficiente energetic în ob inerea nanomaterialelor [1]. Extractele din plante constituie una din cele mai studiate categorii în prezent fiind privite ca una din cele mai promi toare surse de agen i reduc tori naturali. Un domeniu aparte de succes îl reprezint sinteza nanoparticulelor metalice, cu aplica ii medicale i în electronic, cu utilizarea extractelor de plante ca i agen i reduc tori [2].

În primele trei decenii ale secolului 21 societatea a fost pus în fa a unui num r mare de produse nano. Conform raportului NCPI (Nanotechnology Consumer Products Inventory), în anul 2016, 622 companii din 32 de ri produceau împreun 1814 nanoproduse. Exist o serie de expresii asociate nanotehnologiei îns doi dintre cei mai utiliza i termeni sunt õnanomaterialö i õnanoparticul ö. De i uneori ambii termeni sunt folosi i ca sinonime, American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) [4] precizeaz c õnanoparticula (NP) constituie o subclasificare a unei particule ultrafine bi- sau tridimensionale mai mari de 0.001 μ m (1 nm) i mai mici de 0.1 μ m (100 nm) ce poate sau nu prezenta o proprietate intensiv legat de dimensiuneö. Pe de alt parte Uniunea European a definit nanomaterialul (NM) ca un õmaterial natural, incidental sau fabricat con inând particule într-o stare nelegat sau sub agregat sau aglomerat, pentru care peste 50% din distribu ia dimensional a form particulelor, a uneia sau mai multor dimensiuni, se afl în domeniul 1 ó 100 nmö [5]. Conform unor publica ii recente [3, 6, 7, 8] dezvoltarea sintezei verzi a nanomaterialelor dincolo de scara de laborator trebuie s aib în vedere clarificarea aspectelor privitoare la: cuantificarea produc iei de nanomaterial / nanoparticule, stabilirea unei durate de producere pentru un anumit volum de nanoparticule, standardizarea condi iilor pentru ob inerea de particule monodisperse specifice, stabilitatea nanoparticulelor ob inute prin sintez verde, identificarea materialelor derivate din plante cele mai adecvate pentru sinteza unor nanomateriale / nanoparticule specifice, clarificarea mecanismelor biochimice i moleculare implicate în formarea de nanoparticule specifice.

Studiile efectuate, care au stat la baza elabor rii prezentei teze de doctorat, au inten ionat s valorifice poten ialul unor extracte din plante în vederea sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint i respectiv ob inerea de nanomateriale tip hidrogeluri compozite cu nanoparticule de argint, printr-o metod de sintez õverdeö, cu poten iale aplica ii biomedicale.

1.1. Scopul și obiectivele tezei de doctorat

Scopul tezei de doctorat îl reprezint cercetarea posibilit ilor de a sintetiza un anume tip de nanomateriale, respectiv hidrogeluri compozite, cu matrice polimeric hibrid (pe baza a doi componen i, un polimer sintetic i unul natural), func ionalizate cu nanoparticule de argint (sintetizate prin intermediul extractelor vegetale de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi*). Pentru un studiu relevant într-o prim faz a fost experimentat sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extractele vegetale men ionate iar ulterior sinteza hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint generate *in situ* prin intermediul acelora i extracte. Într-o faz final a fost evaluat activitatea antimicrobian a nanomaterialelor sintetizate prin teste *in vitro* i teste preliminare *in vivo* în vederea evaluarii poten ialului acestora pentru aplica ii biomedicale. Rezultatele ob inute pe durata elabor rii tezei pot constitui, în perspectiv , subiectul unor noi cercet ri.

Obiectivul general al prezentei teze de doctorat îl constituie sinteza õverdeö a unor nanomateriale tip hidrogeluri compozite cu nanoparticule de argint prin metoda de formare a nanoparticulelor reactive în cadrul unui gel preformat (generarea nanoparticulelor realizânduse in situ), reticulat fizic (congelare - decongelare) i respectiv prin iradiere.

Objective specifice:

- Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de Salvia officinalis implicând un num r redus de reactivi i echipamente tehnice specifice, cu implica ii minimale de ordin economic i logistic; studiul influen ei raportului de combinare extract / precursor sare ionic, pH-ului i temperaturii asupra procesului de sintez.
- Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de Sapindus mukorossi implicând un num r redus de reactivi i echipamente tehnice specifice, cu implica ii minimale de ordin economic i logistic; studiul influen ei raportului de combinare extract / precursor sare ionic, pH-ului i temperaturii asupra procesului de sintez.
- Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte (Salvia officinalis i Sapindus mukorossi) pentru punerea în valoare a poten ialului reduc tor al extractului de Salvia officinalis i respectiv a celui de agent de stabilizare pentru extractul de Sapindus mukorossi.
- Ob inerea hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint, generate *in situ* prin intermediul extractelor de Salvia officinalis, Sapindus mukorossi i amestecului de extracte, reticulate fizic (congelare - decongelare) i prin iradiere.
- Studiul propriet ilor antibacteriene ale hidrogelurilor func ionalizate cu nanoparticule de argint, determinate calitativ i semicantitativ prin stabilirea concentra iei minime bactericide i bacteriostatice relativ la dou tulpini de bacterii patogene (*Escherichia coli* i *Staphylococcus aureus*) din seria celor implicate deseori în infec iile intraspitalice ti.

1.2. Descrierea capitolelor tezei de doctorat

Teza de doctorat este structurat în 7 capitole, primele trei capitole fiind dedicate studiului documentar referitor la stadiul actual al cunoa terii în domeniul complex al nanomaterialelor / nanoparticulelor metalice, iar urm toarele patru capitole cercet rilor experimentale i contribu iilor proprii.

Capitolul 1 al tezei este unul introductiv fiind prezentat o scurt incursiune în problematica abordat i o serie de aspecte privitoare la stadiul sintezei verzi a nanomaterialelor precum i scopul i obiectivele generale i specifice ale tezei.

În **capitolul 2** al tezei este inclus o descriere am nun it a nanomaterialelor / nanoparticulelor metalice la modul general i cu prec dere a celor cu nanoparticule de argint pornind de la modalit i de sintez, clasificare i aplica iile lor biomedicale. În cadrul acestui

capitol s-a pus accent în special pe sinteza verde a nanoparticulelor de argint prin intermediul extractelor de plante, a nanomaterialelor cu nanoparticule de argint cu matrice polimeric i respectiv a hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint.

Capitolul 3 cuprinde o serie de informa ii legate activitatea antimicrobian a nanoparticulelor de argint / nanomaterialelor cu nanoparticule de argint asupra microorganismelor patogene precum i unele aspecte referitoare la toxicologia acestora.

Partea experimental a tezei de doctorat debuteaz cu **capitolul 4** dedicat unei prezent ri succinte a tehnicilor de investiga ie aplicate în studiul nanoparticulelor / nanomaterialelor sintetizate i a extractelor vegetale utilizate.

În **capitolul 5** sunt prezentate aspecte referitoare la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extracte de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi* prin prisma raportului de combinare extract / precursor sare ionic , pH-ului i temperaturii de sintez , precum i investiga ii realizate asupra nanoparticulelor sintetizate, fiind discutate rezultatele ob inute.

Capitolul 6 include sinteza hidrogelurilor compozite (cu matrice polimeric alcool polivinilic ó hidrolizat de colagen i respectiv poliacrilamid ó amidon) cu nanoparticule de argint generate *in situ* cu ajutorul extractelor de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi* precum i investiga iile realizate asupra acestor nanomateriale. În cadrul aceluia i capitol este prezentat i evaluarea activit ii antibacteriene a nanomaterialelor ob inute.

Capitolul 7 al tezei de doctorat prezint concluziile i contribu iile proprii.

În finalul tezei de doctorat sunt incluse notele bibliografice consultate pe parcursul anilor de desf urare a tezei, lista de lucr ri publicate în domeniul tezei de doctorat precum i anexele structurate în 11 p r i i care cuprind o serie din datele ob inute în urma cercet rilor experimentale efectuate în cadrul tezei.

PARTE EXPERIMENTALĂ

4. TEHNICI DE INVESTIGAȚIE UTILIZATE ÎN STUDIU

Metodele de analiz fizico-structural a materialelor constituie elementele de baz în determinarea rela iei dintre structur ó proprietate ó procesare pentru orice domeniu al tiin ei materialelor. Ele furnizeaza date despre comportarea i propriet ile acestora legate de structura, natura for elor de interac iune, organizare structural. Cum fiecare domeniu din tiin a materialelor are metode de investigare specifice, ele se pot subclasifica în metode structurale, fizice i analitice comune pentru orice tip de material.

4.1 Spectroscopia de absorbție în ultraviolet-vizibil

Spectroscopia de absorb ie UV-VIS a permis: 1) identificarea prezen ei nanoparticulelor de argint în solu ie coloidal / nanomaterialul tip hidrogel (de regul prezen a nanoparticulelor de argint în proba analizat este eviden iat de existen a unui maxim spectral în domeniul 400 ó 480 nm); 2) aprecieri cu privire la: dimensiunea, distribu ia granulometric , aglomerarea / agregarea nanoparticulelor (deplasarea batocrom respectiv hipsocrom a maximului de absorb ie asociat cre terii respectiv sc derii dimensiunii nanoparticulelor; efectul hipercrom coroborat cu îngustarea benzii de absorb ie asociat reducerii distribu iei dimensionale i unei dispersii avansate i respectiv efectul hipocrom coroborat cu l rgirea benzii de absorb ie i deplasarea batocrom în cazul l rgirii distribu iei dimensionale i agreg rii nanoparticulelor).

Înregistrarea spectrelor de absorb ie în ultraviolet-vizibil s-a realizat cu ajutorul unui spectrofotometru de absorb ie tip Thermo-Evolution-260Bio în domeniul 200-375 nm (utilizând cuve de cur ca suport pentru probe) i respectiv 375-700 nm (utilizând cuve de sticl ca suport pentru probe) la interval de 2 nm. Prelevarea probelor de material s-a realizat în diferite stadii ale procesului de sintez sau la intervale de timp dup ob inerea produsului final. Probele de hidrogel au fost diluate în prealabil pentru înregistrarea spectrului folosind ca solvent ap bidistilat ; ca prob martor s-a folosit dup caz ap bidistilat i extracte vegetale în acela i raport de dilu ie cu al probelor analizate.

4.2 Spectroscopia în infraroșu cu transformată Fourier (FTIR)

Sistemul de spectroscopie FTIR pentru cercetare avansat , utilizat pentru analiz , a fost constituit dintr-un spectrometru FT-IR Vertex 80 în modul de operare ATR ó reflexie total atenuat (attenuated total reflection). Probele analizate (solu ii coloidale de nanoparticule, componen i ai matricilor polimerice, matrici polimerice i hidrogeluri compozite cu nanoparticule de argint) au fost evaporate la sec în prealabil (uscare la etuv timp de 72 ore / 30°C) f r pastilare cu bromur de potasiu sau cu pastilare în unele cazuri. De regul este preferat analiza probelor cu o manipulare cât mai redus posibil pentru evitarea contamin rii acestora [49], reactivii chimici utiliza i pentru fixare, legare sau elu ie putând duce la relocarea elementelor în urme i schimbarea compozi iei chimice nativ i structurale a probelor [183]. Rezultatele ob inute au fost intercomparate cu date din articole din literatura de specialitate referitoare la tipuri de extracte vegetale apoase i matrici polimerice similare; absorb ia radia iei IR s-a înregistrat în coordonate transmitan (T) ó num r de und (v, cm⁻¹) sau absorban (A) ó num r de und , în domeniul 4000 ó 400 cm⁻¹ la o rezolu ie spectral de 2 cm⁻¹.

Interpretarea spectrelor FTIR a avut în vedere identificarea maximelor de absorb ie care sufer modific ri în mediile analizate (extract vegetal brut, componen i ai matricii polimerice i hidrogeluri cu nanoparticule de argint). Modific rile pozi iei maximelor spectrale pot fi asociate adsorb iei [184, 185, 186, 187, 188] constituen ilor extractului vegetal pe suprafa a nanoparticulelor de argint, leg turilor care pot apare în urma reticul rii matricii polimerice i interac iei dintre aceasta i / sau nanoparticulele de argint respectiv extractul vegetal.

4.3 Difracția de raze X (XRD)

Caracterizarea structural a nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate, matricilor polimerice i nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel, s-a realizat cu un difractometru model Rigaku Ultima IV. Fazele cristaline din structura pulberilor de nanoparticule au fost identificate prin compararea difractogramelor ob inute cu liniile de difrac ie existente în bazele de date interna ionale ICDD (International Centre for Diffraction Data) [189]. Fi ele ICDD ó PDF2 studiate pentru identificarea fazelor cristaline au fost: 00-031-1238 pentru clorura de argint, 00-030-1137 pentru fosfatul de argint i 00-004-0783 pentru argintul metalic.

Analiza XRD a avut în vedere evaluarea cristalinit ii nanomaterialelor investigate precum i confirmarea prezen ei compu ilor argintului fiind analizate nanomaterialele tip hidrogel ob inute cu extracte de *Salvia officinalis*, *Sapindus mukorossi* i amestec de extracte, respectiv matricile polimerice corespunz toare. Datele ob inute din scan rile XRD au fost importate în programul PDXL fiind efectuat analiza Rietveld pentru rafinarea cristalografic . Modelele cristaline au fost constituite pe baza cardurilor ICDD pentru argint (ICDD-PDF 04-003-7118), oxidul de argint (ICDD-PDF 04-007-1374) i respectiv azotatul de argint (ICDD-PDF 01-074-4790).

4.4 Microscopia electronică de baleiaj și spectroscopie de raze X cu dispersie după energie (SEM-EDS)

Dispozitivul utilizat la analiz a fost constituit dintr-un microscop electronic de baleiaj cu emisie de câmp (FESEM) model Carl Zeiss ó Auriga, dedicat studiului structurilor microscopice i al suprafe elor diferitelor tipuri de materiale: probe organice i anorganice (polimeri, materiale policompozite, mase plastice) conductive sau neconductive magnetic. Pentru analiza nanoparticulelor (din solu ille coloidale) sintetizate în prima faz a studiului experimental s-a utilizat un dispozitiv constituit dintr-un microscop electronic de baleiaj cu emisie de câmp model Hitachi SU-70 cuplat cu spectrometru cu dispersie dup energie (EDS) i lungimea de und (WDS); tensiune de accelerare variabil 0.1÷30 kV, domeniul de m rire 30X÷800.000X i 1 nm rezolu ia la tensiunea de accelerare de 15 kV.

Spectrometrul de raze X cu dispersie dup energie (EDX sau EDS) este un instrument capabil s realizeze analiza compozi ional a razelor X caracteristice, generate în urma interac iunii dintre fascicolul electronic incident i suprafa a probei. Printre caracteristicile / avantajele i dezavantajele metodei EDS comparativ cu metoda spectrometriei de dispersie dup lungimea de und (WDX sau WDS), pot fi men ionate: analiza simultan a numeroase elemente într-un timp scurt, senzitivitate la detec ie ridicat , limit de detec ie redus (0.3%) comparativ cu WDX, deteriorare minim a probei analizate.

Ca i avantaj al tehnicii SEM poate fi men ionat rezolu ia înalt în caracterizarea formei i dimensiunii nanoparticulelor îns trebuie avute în vedere o serie de limit ri cauzate de efectele de înc rcare (datorate acumul rii câmpurilor electrice statice), incompatibilit ii cu probele lichide sau umede, operarea în condi ii de vid precum i un grad de incertitudine de 10% în analiza cantitativ [9, 190, 191].

4.5 Tehnici microbiologice utilizate în studiu

Poten ialul biocid, respectiv *investigarea proprietăților antimicrobiene, ale nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel*, s-a realizat în laboratorul de microbiologie al Direc iei Sanitar Veterinare i Siguran a Alimentelor Târgovi te, Dâmbovi a. Laboratorul, echipat standard din punct de vedere al dot rilor tehnice (condi ii de lucru sterile ce includ sterilizarea instumentarului, materialului de lucru i incintei), utilizeaz tehnica aseptic pentru evitarea oric rei contamin ri încruci ate a culturilor de microorganisme, mediilor de cultur, materialului i instrumentarului, etc.

Propriet ile antimicrobiene ale nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel cu nanoparticule de argint au fost investigate printr-un studiu microbiologic pe dou culturi pure de bacterii din categoria tulpinilor Gram-negative (*Escherichia coli*) i respectiv Gram-pozitive (*Staphylococcus aureus*); selectarea bacteriilor men ionate având în vedere inciden a acestora în cadrul infec iilor nosocomiale (infec ia nosocomial sau infec ia intraspitaliceasc, este acea infec ie care nu este prezent sau care nu se afl în perioada de incuba ie în momentul în care pacientul s-a internat în spital i care se supraadaug afec iunii pentru care pacientul s-a internat).

Tulpinile bacteriene au fost cultivate pe medii nutritive specifice i / sau selective, în prezen a unor doze variabile de hidrogel cu nanoparticule de argint, incubate la temperaturi optime pe durate standard, iar ulterior s-a recurs la num rarea indirect a unit ilor formatoare de colonii (UFC). Capacitatea antimicrobian a tipului de hidrogel i doza minim bactericid se poate stabili prin corelarea num rul de colonii dezvoltate cu doza de hidrogel din prob . Stadiul de multiplicare al microorganismelor sau aprecierea gradului de infectare al probei se poate stabili prin num rarea microorganismelor sau a UFC. Pentru o num r toare cât mai exact se procedeaz de regul la o diluare, într-o prim etap înainte de îns mân are, a probei de analizat (hidrogelul cu poten ial antimicrobian) sau inoculului de microorganisme utilizat întru-un mediu steril; uzual se aplic dilu ia decimal în ap peptonat steril (acest mediu este recomandat de ISO Committee prin specifica ia ISO 6579:1993), ser fiziologic - solu ie 9% NaCl sau ser fiziologic peptonat) [192].

În cazul studiului efectuat pe probele de hidrogeluri s-a folosit metoda indirect de num rare a microorganismelor, respectiv metoda cultural Koch (metoda cultural în plac) ce se bazeaz în principiu pe îns mân area unui volum cunoscut de suspensie de celule microbiene pe mediu de cultur, în pl ci Petri care con in o anumit cantitate de prob de analizat ó ca atare sau eluat ; dup o perioad optim de incubare se realizeaz num rarea coloniilor, considerând c fiecare colonie apare ca rezultat al multiplic rii unei singure celule.

În paralel a fost realizat o *testare a activității antifungice pe tulpină de Penicillium* (*Penicillium glaucum*), deoarece numeroase specii ale acestui gen sunt agen i de putrezire, fiind frecvent întâlnite în microhota aerului; testarea activit ii s-a realizat la U.S.A.M.V. ó Facultatea de Medicin Veterinar , laboratorul clinic din cadrul Colegiului Medicilor Veterinari. Tehnica de testare precum i protocolul de lucru aplicat în cazul probelor de hidrogeluri compozite cu nanoparticule de argint s-a realizat cu respectarea normelor în vigoare conform metodelor standardizate existente [200, 201, 202].

Pentru o prim *evaluare a gradului de toxicitate acută*, nanomaterialele tip hidrogel sintetizate au fost supuse unei serii de teste farmacologice preliminare (testarea s-a realizat la U.S.A.M.V. Bucure ti ó Facultatea de Medicin Veterinar , laboratorul clinic din cadrul Colegiului Medicilor Veterinari). În experimentul de testare a toxicit ii acute au fost folosi i oareci albi rasa Swiss (în greutate de 20±2 g) i obolani albi rasa Wistar (în greutate de 140±20 g) cu reparti ie uniform pe sexe (20 animale, 10 masculi i 10 femele pe fiecare lot i doz), proveni i de la biobaza U.S.A.M.V. - Bucure ti. În cursul experimentelor *in vivo*, în

manipularea animalelor s-a inut seama de aprobarea Comisiei de Etic a U.S.A.M.V. -Bucure ti, în strict concordan cu reglement rile etice interna ionale.

4.6 Metode de caracterizare a extractelor vegetale utilizate în studiu

Extractele vegetale ob inute au fost caracterizate prin m surarea pH-ului (valoarea înregistrat fiind de 6.8 pentru *Salvia officinalis* i respectiv 4.2 pentru *Sapindus mukorossi*) i evaluarea spectrofotometric a speciilor fitochimice implicate în procesul de sintez.

Activitatea antioxidant (AA, %) a fost evaluat utilizând 2,2-difenil-1-picrilhidrazil (DPPH) i înregistrarea absorban ei la 517 nm pe baza metodei descrise în literatur [207]. Con inutul total de flavonoide a fost determinat pe baza testului cu clorur de aluminiu la 510 nm [208] rezultatele fiind exprimate în mg catehin / ml. Testul cu vanilin [209, 210] la 500 nm a fost aplicat pentru a determina con inutul total de taninuri; rezultatele au fost exprimate în mg catehin / ml. Pentru con inutul total de terpenoide s-a aplicat metoda descris în literatur [211] la 608 nm, rezultatele fiind exprimate în mg linalol / ml. Extractele vegetale au fost caracterizate de asemenea în vederea determin rii con inutului total de fenoli prin aplicarea metodei Folin-Ciocâlteu, în acord cu standardul interna ional ISO 14502-1:2005(E) [212], adaptat condi iilor de lucru; pentru trasarea dreptei de etalonare s-au utilizat solu ii de concentra ie diferit de acid galic, standardele i probele fiind m surate la 765 nm iar con inutul total de fenoli fiind exprimat în mg acid galic / ml extract.

Metodele spectrofotometrice uzuale pentru determinarea *concentrației critice micelare* (CMC) apeleaz la aditivi a c ror modificare a absorban ei în UV-VIS sau a emisiei de fluorescen, indic formarea miceliilor.

Metoda micelizării unui colorant, propus de Patist i colaboratorii [58], a fost adaptat condi iilor de lucru pentru determinarea CMC a extractului prin utilizarea unei solu ii apoase de albastru de metilen ($C_{16}H_{18}CIN_3S$) de concentra ie $10^{-4}M$. Spectrele de absorb ie în vizibil au fost înregistrate în domeniul 500 ó 800 nm, pe interval de scanare de 1 nm, înregistrându-se lungimea de und corespunz toare maximului de absorb ie (λ_{max}). Din reprezentarea grafic a λ_{max} în func ie de concentra ia extractului în solu ie, CMC a fost determinat corespunz toare punctului de intersec ie al celor dou aproxim ri / tendin e liniare ale segmentelor corespunz toare curbei ob inute.

Metoda bazată pe corelarea semnalului datorat rezonanței plasmonice de suprafață a nanoparticulelor de argint cu concentrația surfactantului. Pentru determinarea CMC pe baza r spunsului plasmonic al nanoparticulelor, s-a apelat la amestecuri de extract vegetal i solu ie stabil de nanoparticule de argint, testele fiind realizate la temperatura camerei prin înregistrarea absorban ei probelor la o lungime de und fix (418 nm), corespunz toare maximului de absorb ie înregistrat pentru solu ia stabil de nanoparticule de argint. Valorile absorban ei au fost reprezentate în func ie de concentra ia calculat de extract la fiecare m surare, CMC fiind determinat ca valoarea corespunz toare punctului de inflexiune identificat din reprezentarea varia ia maximului absorban ei (A_{max}) în func ie de con inutul de extract vegetal din solu ia test.

Ca i variant a metodei aplicate anterior s-a realizat i *determinarea CMC pe baza* variației lungimii de undă asociate maximului de absorbție (λ_{max}) cu conținutul de extract aditivat soluției de nanoparticule de argint, valoarea CMC ob inut (2.53 ± 0.19 %, v/v) fiind apropiat de valorile înregistrate prin aplicarea celor dou metode descrise mai sus. Varia ia lungimii de und asociat maximului de absorb ie în spectrul UV-VIS a avut în vedere faptul c nu exist o singur valoare a maximului absorban ei, maximul de absorb ie fiind aplatizat; inând cont de acest aspect a fost selectat valoarea lungimii de und la care s-a înregistrat prima valoare a absorban ei maxime în domeniul 650 - 300 nm).

CONTRIBUȚII PROPRII

5. SINTEZA NANOPARTICULELOR DE ARGINT UTILIZÂND EXTRACTE DE SALVIA OFFICINALIS ȘI SAPINDUS MUKOROSSI

5.1 Obținerea extractelor vegetale de Salvia officinalis și Sapindus mukorossi

Ca i procedur de extrac ie s-a optat pentru extrac ia cu solvent în vederea ob inerii extractelor din plante datorit rapidit ii, facilit ii i eficien ei costurilor. Extractele au fost ob inute prin extrac ie static la temperatura camerei în recipient acoperit, raportul de extrac ie (material vegetal uscat / volum de solvent, g / ml) fiind men inut în toate procedurile de extrac ie. Dup terminarea extrac iei amestecul a fost filtrat i centrifugat pentru ob inerea unui extract limpede iar supernatantul a fost stocat la 4°C pentru utilizarea ulterioar în determin rile experimentale. Aceea i solu ie stoc din fiecare extract a fost utilizat în toate determin rile aferente [218, 219].

5.2 Caracterizarea extractelor vegetale de Salvia officinalis și Sapindus mukorossi

Testele pentru identificarea unor componenți activi în extractele apoase de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus* mukorossi au fost realizate pe baza unor proceduri standard [231, 232, 233] permi ând identificarea prezen ei saponinelor, terpenoidelor, steroidelor, taninurilor i flavonoidelor.

Indicator Tip extract	Activitate antioxidantă (%)	Flavonoide (mg/ml)	Taninuri (mg/ml)	Terpenoide (mg/ml)	Polifenoli (mg/ml)			
Salvia officinalis	28.92±0.88	304.60±3.40	188.00±2.35	95.61±0.89	170.92±2.44			
Sapindus mukorossi	27.01±0.92	182.54±1.66	83.31±1.12	251.00±2.21	168.88±2.78			
*fiecare valoare constituie media valorilor ob inute pentru trei analize (probe în triplicat) + devia ia standard								

Tabelul 5.1 Indicatori ai con inutului fitochimic al extractelor apoase de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi* [218, 219]

În cadrul demersului experimental ce a vizat influen a capacit ii reduc toare fitochimice asupra sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extracte vegetale, ale c rui rezultate au fost publicate [218], ce au inclus i extractul de *Salvia officinalis*, a fost realizat i o corelare între indicatorii con inutului fitochimic al extractelor vegetale i capacitatea reduc toare a acestora.

A a cum a fost precizat anterior extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* a fost remarcat îndeosebi pentru pentru calit ile sale de surfactant natural datorit con inutului ridicat în saponine. O proprietate aparte a acestora este modul de aranjare al moleculelor în agregate moleculare organizate, micelii, atunci când concentra ia surfactantului atinge o anumit valoare numit *concentrație critică micelară* (CMC ó critical micelle concentration) [245]. Este general acceptat faptul c CMC nu este definit de o valoare bine definit ci de un domeniu de concentra ie asociat form rii miceliilor [248, 249].

Metoda micelizării unui colorant, propus de Patist i colaboratorii [58], a fost adaptat condi iilor de lucru pentru determinarea CMC a extractului prin utilizarea unei solu ii apoase de albastru de metilen ($C_{16}H_{18}CIN_3S$) de concentra ie $10^{-4}M$.



Figura 5.4 Determinarea concentra iei critice micelare (CMC = 2.71 ± 0.11 %, v/v) pentru extractul apos de *Sapindus mukorossi* prin metoda miceliz rii unui colorant (albastru de metilen 10^{-4} M) [213].

Metoda bazată pe corelarea semnalului datorat rezonanței plasmonice de suprafață a nanoparticulelor de argint cu concentrația surfactantului a fost studiat printre al ii i de Salem i colaboratorii [61] care au publicat o serie de studii referitoare la utilizarea deplas rii spectrale a benzilor de rezonan plasmonic pentru o serie de surfactan i de sintez la determinarea concentra iei critice micelare.



Figura 5.5 Determinarea concentra iei critice micelare (CMC = 2.68 ± 0.13 %, v/v) pentru extractul apos de *Sapindus mukorossi* pe baza senzitivit ii benzii asociate rezonan ei plasmonice de suprafa a nanoparticulelor de argint (418 nm) [213].

Ca i variant a metodei aplicate s-a realizat i *determinarea CMC pe baza variației* lungimii de undă asociate maximului de absorbție (λ_{max}) cu conținutul de extract aditivat *soluției de nanoparticule de argint*, valoarea CMC ob inut $(2.53 \pm 0.19 \%, v/v)$ fiind apropiat de valorile înregistrate prin aplicarea celor dou metode descrise mai sus.



Figura 5.6 Determinarea concentra iei critice micelare (CMC = 2.53 ± 0.19 %, v/v) pe baza varia iei lungimii de und asociat maximului de absorb ie pentru solu ia coloidal de nanoparticule de argint cu adaos de extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*.

Metodele spectroscopice aplicate au condus la ob inerea unei corela ii bune între valorile determinate pentru concentra ia critic micelar $(2.71 \pm 0.11 \text{ \%}, \text{v/v} \text{ i respectiv } 2.68 \pm 0.13 \text{ \%}, \text{v/v}).$

5.3 Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de Salvia officinalis

5.3.1 Dinamica procesului de creștere a nanoparticulelor de argint. Influența raportului de combinare precursor sare ionică : extract

Dinamica form rii i cre terii nanoparticulelor coloidale metalice a fost descris de diferite teorii care stabilesc modele pentru nuclea ia i cre terea nanoparticulelor. O abordare diferit fa de aceste teorii este f cut de Jorg Polte [215] care prezint modele de cre tere a nanoparticulelor folosind ca fundament stabilitatea coloidal a acestora. Modelul de formare al nanoparticulelor propus de Polte cuprinde patru etape în care reducerea i coalescen a se desfa oar simultan dar cu viteze diferite.

Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând extract de *Salvia officinalis* se poate încadra în modelul propus de Polte în categoria a doua de sintez (cuprinde procesele în care reducerea i coalescen a au loc în acela i timp i se desf oar concomitent pe toat durata pân la ob inerea nanoparticulelor coloidale stabile) judecând dupa compozi ia amestecului de extrac ie a a cum este prezentat în literatur , care include specii slab reduc toare. Cu toate acestea modificarile condi iilor de lucru ar putea conduce la diferite dinamici ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor.

Prin corelarea modific rilor spectrale în UV-VIS, ca indicator al schimb rilor morfologice ale nanoparticulelor de argint, cu parametrii experimentali (pH, raportul de amestecare ini ial azotat de argint / extract *Salvia officinalis*) se pot trage concluzii referitoare la cre terea nanoparticulelor i parametrii de lucru optimi în vederea sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând extracte din plante [92, 258, 259].



Figura 5.9 Aria relativ asociat r spunsului plasmonic al nanoparticulelor de argint calculat din spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru extractul vegetal i respectiv solu ia coloidal de nanoparticule.

Reprezentarea grafic a ariei relative în func ie de timp a fost preferat reprezent rii valorilor asociate maximului de absorb ie în timp datorit faptului c benzile de absorb ie prezint caracteristici diferite (intensitate maxim , l rgime de band , form) în func ie de rapoartele de amestecare azotat de argint / extract de salvie. Domeniul lungimii de und selectat a avut în vedere faptul c în aceast zon apar principalele modific ri plasmonice ale nanoparticulelor de argint în spectrele UV-VIS [261]. Motivul select rii ariei relative în locul maximului de absorb ie a fost i acela c r spunsul plasmonic al nanoparticulelor metalice este influen at de mediul de reac ie.. În etapa de cre tere procesul este dinamic, înso it de rupere i formare de leg turi, cu efect asupra dimensiunii i formei nanoparticulelor i interfe ei metalice.



Figura 5.10 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS la 3 ore pentru diferite rapoarte volumetrice de amestecare azotat de argint 10 mM : extract *Salvia officinalis*: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:3, (c) 1:2, (d) 1:1, (e) 2:1, (f) 3:1 i (g) 5:1.



Figura 5.11 Evolu ia ariei relative în timp pentru amestecul de sintez la un raport de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint 10 mM : extract *Salvia officinalis* egal cu 1:1 [219].

Evolu ia spectrului UV-VIS în timp indic o cre tere rapid a nanoparticulelor de argint în primele trei ore de la momentul amestestec rii componen ilor. Totu i apar diferen e între viteza de cre tere a intensit ii absorban ei i pozi ia maximului de absorb ie. Luând în considerare alura spectrului (figura 5.10) în domeniul 350-600 nm, se poate aprecia c cel mai mare con inut de nanoparticule a fost ob inut atunci când amestecul ini ial a con inut volume egale de azotat de argint 10 mM i extract de salvie.

Alura curbelor varia iei ariei relative în func ie de timp variaz cu raportul de amestecare ini ial dintre extractul de salvie i azotat de argint. În cazul tuturor sintezelor efectuate experimental a fost calculat viteza relativ de cre tere a ariei ca panta por iunii lineare a graficului trasat în figura 5.11. Pentru fiecare vitez relativ aferent celor patru etape ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor de argint, men ionate anterior i eviden iate în figura 5.11, au fost atribuite nota iile v_1 , v_2 , v_3 i respectiv v_4 , valorile respective fiind prezentate în tabelul 5.3.

Raport de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint : extract vegetal în	Viteza relativă de creștere a ariei relative (unități arbitrare / secundă)				
amestecul de sinteză	<i>v</i> ₁	<i>v</i> ₂	<i>V</i> 3	v_4	
1:5	0.0450	0.0004	-	-	
1:3	0.0422	0.0006	0.0038	0.0012	
1:2	0.0251	0.0018	0.0050	0.0035	
1:1	0.0176	0.0021	0.0138	0.0052	
2:1	0.0136	0.0010	0.0066	0.0035	
3:1	0.0028	0.0006	0.0044	0.0027	
5:1	0.0026	0.0005	0.0016	0.0009	

Tabelul 5.3 Valorile vitezei relative de cre tere a ariei, din spectrele UV-VIS, asociat nanoparticulelor de argint pentru cele patru etape ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor

Un prim aspect care poate fi observat este acela c viteza relativ de cre tere în prima etap, ce implic un proces de reducere ce are loc cu vitez superioar cre terii particulelor, este influen at de con inutul de extract în solu ie. Ca urmare utilizarea solu iilor în care raportul de amestecare este favorabil extractului conduce la viteze de cre tere superioare aferente ariilor relative. Se poate concluziona c viteza de cre tere a ariei relative (implicit a r spunsului plasmonic) în prima etap a form rii i cre terii nanoparticulelor este propor ional cu con inutul în extract vegetal sau speciilor reduc toare prezente în acesta, existente în amestecul de sintez . În a doua etap a procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor, principalele procese care concur la apari ia unor nanoparticule stabile coloidal sunt reducerea i difuzia iar probele cu un raport volumetric de amestecare sare ionic : extract vegetal egal cu 1:1 ofer condi ii optime pentru cre terea nanoparticulelor.

Formarea nanoparticulelor în etapa de accelerare autocatalitic a cre terii acestora este atribuit unui proces autocatalitic, ionii metalici adsorbi i la interfa a metal-solu ie fiind ini ial redu i i apoi încorpora i în particula aflat în cre tere; amestecurile cu un raport de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint 10 mM : extract de salvie egal cu 1:1 au înregistrat cele mai mari valori ale vitezei de cre tere a semnalului plasmonic (tabelul 5.3). În etapa a patra se men ine aceea i ordine a evolu iei vitezelor relative sugerînd ca fiind optim în ob inerea unui r spuns plasmonic intens, raportul volumetric de amestecare sare ionic : extract vegetal de 1:1.



Figura 5.12 Varia ia ariei relative în timp pentru rapoarte volumetrice de amestecare azotat de argint 10 mM : extract de salvie egale cu: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:2, (c) 1:1, (d) 2:1 i (e) 5:1 [219].



Figura 5.13 Imagini SEM pentru probe cu raport volumetric de amestecare $AgNO_3$ 10 mM : extract de *Salvia officinalis* egal cu 5:1, (a) conglomerate cu model fractal de cristalizare, (b) particule cu dimensiuni nanometrice.



Figura 5.20 Imagini SEM ale nanoparticulelor puse în eviden pentru probe cu raport volumetric de amestecare $AgNO_3$ 10 mM : extract de *Salvia officinalis* egal cu 1:4 - (a) i respectiv 1:5 - (b).

În vederea ob inerii de informa ii privind stoechiometria mediului de reac ie al întregului proces de echilibru, într-o prim etap amestecul a fost testat la temperatura camerei prin înregistrarea spectrului UV-VIS iar con inutul de azotat de argint a fost variat sistematic (0 ó 100%); spectrele UV-VIS au fost înregistrate pentru ob inerea de informa ii asupra produ ilor de reac ie. Etapele demersului experimental au fost realizate pentru ob inerea de informa ii legate de raportul volumetric optim azotat de argint : extract vegetal necesar sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint stabile.

Rezultatele experimentale au indicat un raport optim de amestecare a precursorilor egal cu 1:1 (solu ie azotat de argint 10 mM : extract de salvie) în cazul biosintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* la temperatura ambiant .



Figura 5.22 Evolu ia în timp a ariei relative, calculate din spectrul UV-VIS, asociat nanoparticulelor de argint, într-un interval de 3 ore de la debutul sintezei (25°C) pentru diferite rapoarte volumetrice de amestecare ale precursorilor (extract *Salvia officinalis* : azotat de argint 10 mM).

Prin reprezentarea ariei relative în func ie de con inutul volumetric de azotat de argint din amestec (%, v/v) la intervale de timp de la debutul sintezei (25°C) se remarc valori mici ale acesteia pentru un con inut redus de sare ionic, comportare corelat cu existen a unui num r redus de nanoparticule de argint în solu ie (figura 5.24). O amplificare a r spunsului plasmonic se observ în cazul unui exces de sare ionic relativ la con inutul de extract vegetal (con inut de azotat de argint peste 50%, v/v), fiind înregistrate valori mai mari ale ariei relative. Rezult astfel c raportul volumetric ini ial de amestecare al precursorilor egal cu 1:1 poate fi considerat ca fiind optim pentru biosinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* la 25°C.

5.3.2 Influența pH-ului

pH-ul constituie un parametru experimental important în dinamica cre terii nanoparticulelor de argint pentru c valoarea sa poate influen a majoritatea echilibrelor implicate în proces. Probele testate, ob inute prin amestecarea în propor ii diferite a extractului de salvie cu solu ie tampon de pH, au prezentat valori stabile ale pH-ului.



Figura 5.25 Varia ia ariei relative în timp în mediu bazic (pH = 11.5) pentru diferite rapoarte de amestecare (v/v) azotat de argint : extract de salvie: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:2, (c) 1:1, (d) 2:1 i (e) 5:1 [219].



Figura 5.26 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru solu iile de nanoparticule de argint, la raport volumetric de amestecare azotat de argint : extract de salvie egal cu 1:1, la diferite valori de pH: (a) pH = 2.3, (b) pH = 2.8, (c) pH = 6.3, (d) pH = 10.5, (e) pH = 11.8, (f) pH = 6.8 (f r solu ie tampon de pH) [219].

Evolu ia vitezei relative de cre tere (calculat ca panta dreptei pe por iunea liniar a varia iei ariei relative în timp), la diferite valori de pH, pentru raportul de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint : extract de *Salvia officinalis* egal cu 1:1, este prezentat în tabelul 5.4. Valorile v_1 , v_2 , v_3 i respectiv v_4 corespund celor patru etape ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor corespunz toare modelului propus în studiul prezentat. Ariile relative sunt atribuite r spunsului plasmonic al nanoparticulelor de argint iar modul de calcul a fost detaliat anterior.

Tabelul 5.4 Valorile vitez	ei relative de cr	re tere a ariei	relative asociat	nanoparticulelor de
argint la diferite valori de	pH pentru rapor	tul de amesteo	care (v/v) azotat	de argint : extract de
Salvia officinalis egal cu 1:	:1			

pH-ul amestecului de sinteză	Viteza relativă de creștere a ariei relative (unități arbitrare / secundă)				
	v_1	v ₂	v ₃	v_4	
6.8 (f r solu ie tampon de pH)	0.0176	0.0021	0.0138	0.0052	
11.8	0.4439	0.0025	-	-	
10.5	0.0255	0.0031	0.0081	0.0049	
6.3	0.0106	0.0023	0.0092	0.0072	
2.8	0.0098	0.0023	0.0072	0.0030	
2.3	0.0028	0.0002	0.0061	0.0009	

Viteza asociat primei etape a procesului de cre tere (v_1) prezint valori ridicate în cazul amestecurilor cu pH alcalin comportare care poate fi atribuit form rii oxidului de argint. Ca urmare, în solu ie alcalin , în faza ini ial , oxidarea argintului la oxid de argint joac un rol important în mecanismul global al form rii nanoparticulelor de argint.

Analiza de spectroscopie în infraro u a urm rit identificarea modific rilor structurale care ar sugera natura interac iilor dintre nanoparticulele de argint i componen ii extractului vegetal, la diferite valori ale pH-ului, i, de asemenea, de a observa poten iale corela ii cu metodele de caracterizare ale extractului vegetal. Spectrele înregistrate au fost ob inute cu scopul ob inerii de informa ii privind caracteristicile structurale i modificarile care ar rezulta ca urmare a modific rii pH-ului solu iei apoase în care s-au sintetizat nanoparticulele de argint [272]. Modific rile observate în spectrele IR ale extractului în mediu acid i alcalin pot fi atribuite schimb rile structurale datorate hidrolizei grupelor amidice; acest lucru ar putea explica i modific rile ap rute în spectrele IR ale extractului de salvie dup ad ugarea azotatului de argint i r spunsul plasmonic slab al amestecului azotat de argint : extract vegetal în solu ie acid .

Analiza FTIR (realizat pentru extractul vegetal, în solu ie neutr , acid i bazic , i respectiv pentru amestecurile de sintez) a pus în eviden în spectrele IR pentru extractul vegetal a unei benzi largi de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 3400 cm⁻¹ ce poate fi corelat cu con inutul de compu i fenolici pus în eviden prin determin rile efectuate pentru con inutul de fenoli total, flavonoide i taninuri. Pe de alt parte au fost identificate modific ri structurale, în cazul extractului vegetal în solu ie acid i alcalin , constând în deplasarea unor picuri i apari ia unora noi, ce au fost asociate ac iunii hidroxidului sau acidului introdus în solu ie. Modific rile semnificative au fost observate în domeniul 1600-1800 cm⁻¹, datorate vibra iilor de întindere a leg turilor C-O specifice compu ilor cu grup ri carbonilice. În urma ad ug rii azotatului de argint la extractul vegetal, s-au constat deplas ri ale unor picuri dup formarea nanoparticulelor metalice; aceste deplas ri putând fi asociate interac iilor dintre unele grupe func ionale ale speciilor organice cu nanoparticulele metalice la interfa a metal ó solu ie.

5.3.3 Influența temperaturii

În acest sec iune sunt prezentate o serie de aspecte legate de influen a temperaturii asupra procesului de biosintez a nanoparticulelor de argint cu utilizarea extractului de *Salvia officinalis*. Este cunoscut faptul c temperatura de reac ie joac un rol important în distribu ia spa ial i dimensional a particulelor, în special în cazul nanoparticulelor de argint [92]. Determin rile experimentale pe baza procedurii abordate sunt destinate a optimiza parametrii experimentali ai procesului de biosintez studiat luând în considerare modific rile din spectrul UV-VIS.

În figura 5.31 este prezentat varia ia în timp a ariei relative asociat nanoparticulelor de argint în primele trei ore de la debutul sintezei la diferite temperaturi de lucru i rapoarte de amestecare ale precursorilor.





Figura 5.31 Evolu ia în timp a ariei relative, calculate din spectrul UV-VIS, asociat nanoparticulelor de argint, într-un interval de 3 ore de la debutul sintezei la 25, 40, 55 i respectiv 70°C, pentru rapoarte volumetrice de amestecare extract *Salvia officinalis* : azotat de argint 10 mM egale cu: a) 1:5, b) 1:2, c) 1:1, d) 2:1 i e) 5:1.

Înregistrarea spectrelor UV-VIS pentru amestecurile studiate (figurile 5.1-5.3 ó Anexa 5) a permis calculul ariei relative asociate nanoparticulelor de argint prezente în solu ie (figura 5.31) putând fi puse în eviden totodat o serie modific ri în alura spectrelor: atunci când sarea ionic se afl în exces (rapoarte volumetrice azotat de argint : extract mai mari ca 1:1) deplasarea $_{max}$ spre valori mai mari poate fi corelat cu formarea unor nanoparticule de dimensiuni mai mari i cu un înveli mai sub ire.

Rezultatele ob inute sugereaz c formarea nanoparticulelor de argint în urma procesului de biosintez cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* are la baz un echilibru capabil s



determine o modificare continu a formei i dimensiunii nanoparticulelor dependent de raportul Ag^+ / specii reduc toare i specii cu rol stabilizator.



Figura 5.32 Varia ia ariei relative, asociat nanoparticulelor de argint, în func ie de con inutul volumetric de azotat de argint în amestec, la diferite intervale de timp de la debutul sintezei realizate la: a) 40° C, b) 55°C i c) 70°C [276].

Din figura 5.32 se eviden iaz, în primele trei ore de la debutul sintezei, un raport volumetric optim ini ial de amestecare azotat de argint : extract salvie egal cu 1:1 la temperatura de 40 i respectiv 55°C, fiind ob inute valori maxime ale ariei relative pentru acest raport. Când temperatura cre te la 70°C maximul ariei relative se deplaseaz spre valori mai mici ale con inutului de azotat de argint în solu ie, aceast comportare putând constitui un indiciu asupra agreg rii nanoparticulelor sintetizate [265, 277].

5.4 Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*

Studiul experimental a urm rit într-o prim faz comportarea extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* în calitate de reduc tor i agent de stabilizare la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând ca precursor solu ie de azotat de argint 10 mM. Au fost efectuate teste cu probe având propor ii (rapoarte volumetrice) variabile de extract men inând constant con inutul de sare ionic , la un pH al amestecului de sintez datorat extractului vegetal (tabelul 5.6).

Tabelul 5.6. Amestecur	i de sintez	utilizate	la studiul	gener	rii nanopa	rticulelor	de argint (3
ore $/ 25^{\circ}$ C) cu extract de	Sapindus r	nukorossi	/ solu ie A	AgNO ₃	10 mM		

N.	r. Cod probă t. Cod probă extract : soluție ionică	Raport	Modul de p			
Nr.		Ар	Extract	Solu ie	рН	
<i>cri</i> .		ionioă	bidistilat	Sapindus	$AgNO_3$	
		ionica	(dilu ie) (ml)	mukorossi (ml)	10mM (ml)	
1	SM0.5-1Ag10	1:2	48.50	0.50	1.00	4.51
2	SM1-1Ag10	1:1	48.00	1.00	1.00	4.33
3	SM1.5-1Ag10	1.5 : 1	47.50	1.50	1.00	4.34
4	SM2-1Ag10	2:1	47.00	2.00	1.00	4.28

Pentru analiza UV-VIS au fost utilizate probe martor având acelea i rapoarte volumetrice de extract, la dilu ii identice cu probele de solu ii coloidale de nanoparticule de argint ob inute.



Figura 5.35 Spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru amestecurile de extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* i azotat de argint 10 mM (contactare static $/25^{0}$ C / pH acid al mediului de reac ie datorat extractului vegetal) la diferite rapoarte de volum: a) 1:2, b) 1:1, c) 1.5:1 i d) 2:1 (inser ie: domeniul spectral 400 ó 650 nm).

Datele ob inute în urma analizei UV-VIS pun în eviden o reducere extrem de lent a ionilor de argint de c tre compu ii prezen i în extractul vegetal în condi iile de sintez stabilite (contactare static $/25^{0}$ C / pH acid al mediului de reac ie datorat extractului vegetal). Cu toate acestea poate fi observat (figura 5.35 ó b, c) formarea nanoparticulelor în special la

rapoartele volumetrice 1:1 i 1.5:1 (corespunz toare unor concentra ii volumetrice de extract în amestec de 2% i respectiv 3%). În acest interval de concentra ie a fost determinat de altfel i valoarea concentra iei critice micelare a extractului ó 2.7% valoare medie (capitolul 5.2 ó Caracterizarea extractelor vegetale de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi*); aceast comportare sugereaz implicarea favorabil a miceliilor formate în solu ie în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a nanoparticulelor de argint.

5.4.1 Influența pH-ului și raportului de combinare precursor sare ionică : extract

În urm toarea etap a studiului experimental sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint a fost realizat pentru cinci valori de concentra ie ale extractului în amestec (în jurul valorii concentra iei critice micelare medii determinate ó 2.7%) la 25°C; amestecul a fost monitorizat prin analiz UV-VIS în domeniul 230-750 nm (ca probe martor au fost utilizate probe de extract ó dilu ie cu ap bidistilat ó la concentra ii similare cu amestecurile testate).

Dup un interval de trei ore de la contactarea componen ilor nu s-a constat nici o modificare sensibil a culorii solu iei care ar putea constitui un prim indiciu al prezen ei nanoparticulelor de argint. Probele de amestec au fost men inute în continuare la temperatura ambiant i analizate prin spectrofotometrie UV-VIS la 24 ore de la debutul sintezei. La 24 ore de la amestecare culoarea amestecurilor s-a modificat vizibil indicând prezen a nanoparticulelor de argint în solu ia coloidal .



Figura 5.37 Spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru solu ia coloidal de nanoparticule de argint la sinteza cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* / azotat de argint 10 mM (contactare static / 25^{0} C / 24 ore) în func ie de concentra ia extractului în amestec (% vol).

Din figura 5.37 se observ amplificarea maximului de absorb ie odat cu cre terea concentra iei extractului în amestec, îndeosebi la valori superioare concentra iei critice micelare (2.7%). Maximele de aborb ie p streaz în general aceea i form ó band de absorb ie centrat la aproximativ 440 nm. În condi iile de sintez testate se constat existen a unui proces global de sintez foarte lent.

Rezultatele ob inute în acest stadiu sugereaz o influen important în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a pH-ului mediului de reac ie. Ca urmare într-o a doua faz a studiului

experimental a fost investigat comportarea amestecurilor de sintez la valori de pH bazic (ajustarea pH-ului s-a realizat cu solu ie de hidroxid de potasiu 1M) men inând constant raportul volumetric de amestecare al componen ilor extract : sare ionic egal cu 1:1.



Figura 5.41 Spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru solu ia coloidal de nanoparticule de argint la sinteza cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* / azotat de argint 10 mM (contactare static / 25^{0} C / pH bazic) în func ie de concentra ia extractului în amestec (% vol): a) 3 ore; b) 3 zile.

Atât în cazul pH-ului acid cât i pentru valori de pH bazic, formarea nanoparticulelor este influen at de concentra ia extractului în amestecul de sintez fiind notabil la valori superioare concentra iei critice micelare.

În a treia faz a studiului experimental sinteza a fost realizat la valori bazice de pH (ajustare pH cu solu ie KOH 1M) men inând constat (1:1) raportul de amestecare între componen ii amestecului (extract : solu ie ionic) i respectiv la valori ale pH-ului amestecului datorate extractului vegetal (pH acid) modificând raportul de amestecare între componen i (1:4, 1:2, 1:1, 2:1 i 4:1); sinteza a fost realizat pentru cinci valori de concentra ie (în jurul valorii concentra iei critice micelare medii determinate - 2.7%) la 25°C (baie de ap termostatat) cu solu ie AgNO₃ 10 mM, prin contactare static . Amestecul a fost monitorizat prin analiz UV-VIS (domeniu 230-750 nm, ca martori fiind utilizate probe de extract ó dilu ie cu ap bidistilat ó la concentra ii în extract similare cu amestecurile testate).



Figura 5.43 Spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru solu ia coloidal de nanoparticule de argint la sinteza cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* / azotat de argint 10 mM (contactare static / 25^{0} C / pH bazic) în func ie de concentra ia extractului în amestec (% vol): a) 3 ore; b) 3 zile.

Tendin ele observate nu pot fi interpretate doar având în vedere în principal rolul stabilizator al extractului, fiind de a teptat ca o cre tere a concentra iei acestuia s duc la

dimensiuni mai reduse ale nanoparticulelor, rolul extractului nefiind limitat doar la acela de agent de reducere / stabilizare. Rezultatele sugereaz c distribu ia dimensional a nanoparticulelor de argint este determinat de un echilibru existent între reactivitatea precursorilor i coalescen în perioada ini ial , care ar putea fi influen at prin controlul pH-ului ini ial al reactan ilor respectiv al amestecului de reac ie.

5.4.2 Influența concentrației critice micelare

Influen a concentra iei critice micelare (CMC) a putut fi sesizat înc de la debutul studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*. Ca urmare în subcapitolul de fa a fost realizat un studiu mai detaliat cu accent pe aceast caracteristic a extractului.

Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint s-a realizat prin amestecarea extractului cu solu ie de azotat de argint 10 mM în diferite propor ii în mediu acid i bazic; pentru experimentele efectuate în mediu acid, aciditatea mediului (pH = 4.4) a fost asigurat de extract în urma amestec rii precursorilor. Mediul bazic a fost ajustat cu solu ie de hidroxid de sodiu 1 M la o valoare de pH egal cu 8.2.

În figura 5.46 sunt prezentate spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru solu iile cu nanoparticule de argint ob inute prin amestecarea precursorilor (extract : solu ie ionic) în raport volumetric de 1:1. În inser ia diagramei este ilustrat varia ia ariei relative asociat nanoparticulelor în func ie de con inutul în extract al amestecului de sintez .



Figura 5.46 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS (72 ore / mediu acid, pH = 4.4, raport volumetric de sintez 1:1, extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : azotat de argint) pentru solu iile de nanoparticule la diferite valori ale concentra iei extractului în amestec (%, v/v): 1) 0.8%, 2) 1.6%, 3) 2.7%, 4) 3.6% i 5) 5% [213].

Atât probele martor (solu iile de extract la dilu iile corespunz toare) cât i amestecurile de sintez au înregistrat un pH în jurul valorii de 4.4 indicând proprietatea de tamponare a extractului vegetal. Valoarea pH-ului se coreleaz cu structura saponinelor, ca i specii cu caracter slab acid, prezente în extractul apos de *Sapindus mukorossi* [239]. În condi iile de sintez aplicate formarea nanoparticulelor este un proces foarte lent, modific ri notabile atât în ceea ce prive te culoarea solu iilor (incolor la roz pal i ro iatic) cât i în spectrele UV-VIS fiind observate la 72 ore din momentul contact rii precursorilor.



Figura 5.47 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS (3 ore / mediu bazic, pH = 8.2, raport volumetric de sintez 1:1, extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : azotat de argint) pentru solu iile de nanoparticule la diferite valori ale concentra iei extractului în amestec (%, v/v): 1) 1.6%, 2) 2.7%, 3) 3.6% i 4) 5% [213].

Valorile CMC determinate din varia ia ariilor relative în mediu bazic, corespunz toare punctului de inflexiune, au prezentat valori similare în ambele cazuri: 3.65±0.19 % la 3 ore i respectiv 3.68±0.12% la 72 ore. Cre terea valorii CMC în mediul bazic comparativ cu mediul acid poate fi asociat existen ei speciilor chimice din extract cu caracter slab acid, odat cu ad ugarea solu iei alcaline (hidroxid de potasiu) grup rile func ionale acide suferind o deprotonare formându-se un amestec de compu i cu un caracter slab hidrofob. Sc derea caracterului hidrofobic al solu iilor poate conduce la valori mai ridicate ale CMC.

Profilul FTIR al extractului vegetal i nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate eviden iaz existen a biomoleculelor, cu grupe func ionale specifice flavonoidelor i saponinelor, ce pot ac iona ca stabilizatori ai nanoparticulelor [282]. Aceste observa ii sugereaz stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint prin intermediul grupelor func ionale asociate biomoleculelor precum flavonoidele i saponinele, prezente în extract; aceste interac ii decurg prin intermediul grupelor carboxilice de la nivelul saponinelor ca i al grupelor carbonil din structura flavonoidelor [52, 282].

Difractogramele XRD în cazul probelor martor (extract) prezint un maxim larg bine definit în domeniul 2θ de 10-25° fiind absente maxime înguste, sugerând astfel caracterul amorf al extractului apos uscat. Pentru amestecurile de sintez intensitatea maximului asociat caracterului amorf scade pe m sura cre terii con inutului de extract în amestec concomitent cu apari ia unor maxime înguste sugerând formarea unor compu i cristalini în timpul sintezei. Prezen a concomitent a fazei amorfe i cristaline dup sintez sugereaz ata area unor compu i din extract la nanoparticulele formate, comportare ce ar confirma i rezultatele ob inute prin spectroscopia în ultraviolet-vizibil i infraro u. Analiza XRD a confirmat prezen a argintului cristalin în probele studiate în special în cazul raportului volumetric de sintez egal cu 1: 1 i inferior acestuia, fiind de asemenea pus în eviden i prezen a azotatului de argint nereac ionat. Prin raportare i la o serie de date de literatur [283, 284] difrac ia de raze X a permis ob inerea de informa ii referitoare la identificarea nanoparticulelor i evolu ia cristalinit ii probelor investigate.



Figura 5.51 Imagini SEM al amestecului de sintez extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : azotat de argint 10 mM egal cu 1:1 pentru valori ale con inutului de extract în amestec (% vol) de a) 0.8% i b) 2.7%.

5.5 Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte de Salvia officinalis și Sapindus mukorossi

5.5.1 Influența raportului de amestecare între extractele de Salvia officinalis și Sapindus mukorossi

Studiul experimental a urm rit comportarea amestecului de extracte apoase (*Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi*) în calitate de agent reduc tor i agent de stabilizare la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând ca precursor solu ie de azotat de argint 10 mM. Au fost efectuate teste cu probe având propor ii (rapoarte volumetrice) variabile din cele dou extracte, men inând constant con inutul de sare ionic, la un pH al amestecului de sintez datorat celor dou extracte.

Probele au fost analizate prin spectrometrie UV-VIS în intervalul 230-750 nm (acurate e lungime de und : \pm 0.8 nm, repetabilitate: \leq 0.1 nm, domeniu fotometric: >3.5 A) prin monitorizare continu timp de 3 ore (25^oC) la interval de 20 minute; ulterior s-a realizat monitorizarea la intervale mai mari de timp pentru a observa modific rile care apar în spectrul UV-VIS. Pentru analiza s-au folosit cu probe martor având acelea i rapoarte volumetrice de extracte, la dilu ii identice cu probele de solu ii coloidale de nanoparticule de argint.





Figura 5.54 Spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate pentru amestecul de sintez extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : extract *Salvia officinalis* : AgNO₃ 10 mM (25° C) la rapoarte volumetrice de: a) 1:2:2 (pH = 6.24), b) 1:2.5:2.5 (pH = 6.32), c) 1:3.3:3.3 (pH = 5.87), d) 1:5:5 (pH = 6.15), e) 1:10:10 (pH = 6.62) i f) 1:20:20 (pH = 6.90).

Pentru rapoartele de amestecare între componen i la care extractul de Salvia officinalis i azotat de argint se afl în exces fa de extractul de Sapindus mukorossi (1:2:2 \rightarrow 1:20:20, figura 5.54) pe durata monitoriz rii ini iale (3 ore la intervale de 20 minute) au putut fi observate modific ri ale spectrului semnificative îndeosebi la rapoartele de amestecare 1:10:10 i respectiv 1:20:20 (figura 5.54 - e, f).

Analiza prin microscopie cu scanare electronic (SEM) a fost utilizat pentru a caracteriza dimensiunea, forma i morfologia nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate. Din imaginile SEM s-au putut observa formarea i a unor conglomerate a c ror dimensiune se reduce pe m sura sc derii con inutului de extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* în amestecul de sintez ; aceea i tendin apare i în ceea ce prive te dimensiunea nanoparticulelor de argint aproximativ sferice i num rul acestora (reducerea dimensiunii i cre terea num rului de nanoparticule pentru raportul de amestecare 1:10:10 comparativ cu raportul de amestecare 1:2:2).

O diferen notabil în cazul amestecului de extracte comparativ cu extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* ca atare se observ în cazul raportului volumetric egal cu 1:1:1 respectiv unei concentra ii de 2% (% vol.) de extract. Implicarea speciilor chimice din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* în procesul de reducere rezult , în special în cazul concentra iilor apropiate sau superioare (2%, 3% i 4%) concentra iei critice micelare, din varia ia ariei relative în primele 80 minute de contactarea precursorilor pentru amestecul de extracte comparativ cu extractul de salvie; nu trebuie exclus nici posibilitatea modific rii valorii

concentra iei critice micelare a extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* aflat în amestec cu cel de salvie comparativ cu extractul ca atare.

5.5.2 Influența pH-ului la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte de *Salvia officinalis* și *Sapindus mukorossi*

Într-o prim faz, inând cont de rezultatele anterioare (studierea comport rii amestecului de extracte la propor ii variabile de extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* la un pH datorat compu ilor prezen i în extracte) s-a realizat testarea la valori diferite (cresc toare) de pH prin aditivare de hidroxid de potasiu 0.1M. Au fost efectuate teste cu probe la un raport volumetric constant de extracte de *Sapindus mukorossi* i *Salvia officinalis* i respectiv de solu ie AgNO₃, variindu-se pH-ul prin adaos de KOH.







6. SINTEZA ȘI CARACTERIZAREA HIDROGELURILOR COMPOZITE CU NANOPARTICULE DE ARGINT OBȚINUTE CU EXTRACTE DE SALVIA OFFICINALIS ȘI SAPINDUS MUKOROSSI

Sinteza nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel pe baz de matrice polimeric hibrid (matricea polimeric a avut la baz dou componente, un polimer sintetic ó poliacrilamid sau alcool polivinilic ó i respectiv un polimer natural sau un derivat al acestuia ó amidon sau hidrolizat de colagen) a avut ca scop ob inerea unor materiale - biocompatibile, netoxice, cu poten ial antimicrobian ó cu nanoparticule de argint pentru aplica ii biomedicale, etapele de sintez implicând evitarea utiliz rii unor reactivi chimici cu poten ial toxic i totodat aplicarea unui proces de õsintez verdeö. Încorporarea nanoparticulelor de argint în matricea polimeric s-a realizat prin metoda *in situ* prin intermediul unui extract natural cu rol de agent reduc tor i de stabilizare.



Figura 6.1 Schema de sintez a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimeric pe baz de alcool polivinilic (PVA) ó hidrolizat de colagen (HC) i poliacrilamid (PAA) ó amidon (A) i nanoparticule de argint (NPAg).

Demersul experimental de ob inere a nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel a avut în vedere aplicarea unor condi ii de sintez ce presupun reducerea implic rii unor agen i chimici poten ial toxici i aplicarea unor procese care s afecteze într-un grad redus precursorii naturali (extractele vegetale). Schema general de sintez a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimeric pe baz de alcool polivinilic (PVA) ó hidrolizat de colagen (HC) i respectiv poliacrilamid (PAA) ó amidon (A) este prezentat în figura 6.1.

Reticularea matricii polimerice s-a realizat fie prin *cicluri termice de congelare* – *decongelare* (probele de material au fost supuse la 3 cicluri termice fiecare ciclu constând în men inere 23 ore la -20°C urmat de men inere o or la temperatura ambiant de 25°C) fie prin *iradiere cu radiații ionizante* (la doze de iradiere de 20 kGy i respectiv 50 kGy). Dup reticularea probelor de material acestea au fost stocate la întuneric (9°C) pe toat durata testelor / analizelor efectuate. Modalitatea de reticulare a matricii polimerice avut în vedere o serie de aspecte dintre care pot fi men ionate: evitarea utiliz rii unor reactivi chimici cu poten ial toxic i care ar putea interac iona cu compu ii prezen i în extractele vegetale, natura componentelor matricii polimerice i consecutiv posibilele modific ri induse de metoda de reticulare aplicat , modific rile induse asupra compu ilor din compozi ia extractelor vegetale.

6.1 Caracterizarea prin spectroscopie de absorbție în ultravioletvizibil a hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint, cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen și poliacrilamidă - amidon

6.1.1 Hidrogel compozit cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură

Probele de hidrogel au fost diluate în prealabil i omogenizate prin agitare magnetic timp de o or la 25°C. Au fost utilizate în calitate de probe martor pentru comparare probe de matrice polimeric ca atare, matrice polimeric cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* i respectiv matrice polimeric cu azotat de argint.



Figura 6.5 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur ó probe diluate (dup terminarea etapei de reticulare).
Prezen a nanoparticulelor de argint poate fi eviden iat în spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS (figura 6.5) prin existen a unui maxim de absorb ie bine definit (localizat la 425.68 nm / 0.433 - absorban) prezent numai în spectrul probei de hidrogel cu nanoparticule de argint. Alura benzii de absorb ie sugereaz existen a unor nanoparticule în solu ie cu un spectru granulometric relativ îngust cu precizarea c prelevarea probei în vederea analizei s-a efectuat din supernatant existând prin urmare posibilitatea existen ei unor nanoparticule i în matricea hidrogelului care nu au migrat în solu ie apoas .

6.1.2 Hidrogel compozit cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere

Tabel 6.2 Modul de preparare a hidrogelului compozit cu matrice PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere în vederea analizei UV-VIS

Cod probă	Diluție probă pentru analiza UV- VIS	Observații	
P1-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml prob (2.05 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric cu extract de <i>Salvia officinalis</i> (iradiere la 20 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Aspect translucid, incolor. Spectrul nu prezint maxime de absorb ie.	
P1-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml prob (2.04 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric cu extract de <i>Salvia officinalis</i> (iradiere la 50 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Aspect translucid, incolor. Spectrul nu prezint maxime de absorb ie.	
P2-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml prob (2.06 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob matrice polimeric cu NPAg (iradiere la 20 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Colora ie galben-brun deschis. Spectrul prezint o band de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 404.82 nm / 0.292 A.	
P2-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml prob (2.04 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob matrice polimeric cu NPAg (iradiere la 50 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Colora ie galben-brun deschis. Spectrul prezint o band de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 407.34 nm / 0.323 A.	
P3-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml prob (2.05 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric cu $AgNO_3$ (iradiere la 20 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Colora ie galben-brun deschis. Spectrul prezint o band de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 420.69 nm / 0.175 A.	
P3-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml prob (2.06 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric cu $AgNO_3$ (iradiere la 50 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Colora ie galben-brun deschis. Spectrul prezint o band de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 417.99 nm / 0.245 A.	
P4-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml prob (2.04 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric (iradiere la 20 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Aspect translucid, incolor. Spectrul nu prezint maxime de absorb ie.	
P4-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml prob (2.03 g) / 38 ml ap bidistilat	Prob martor matrice polimeric (iradiere la 50 kGy) Scanarea s-a realizat la un interval de 5 zile de la terminarea etapei de reticulare. Aspect translucid, incolor. Spectrul nu prezint maxime de absorb ie.	

Existen a nanoparticulelor de argint este eviden iat în spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS al probelor de hidrogel (matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere) prin maxime de absorb ie în domeniul 400 ó 430 nm respectiv: 401.18 nm / 0.294(A) ó P2-0412-ir-20-dil, 421.44 nm / 0.173(A) ó P3-0412-ir-20-dil, 407.61 nm / 0.325(A) ó P2-0412-ir-50-dil i 418.0 nm / 0.245(A) ó P3-0412-ir-50-dil. În cazul absen ei extractului vegetal din amestecul de sintez (probele P3-0412-ir-20-dil i P3-0412-ir-50-dil) maximele de absorb ie sunt deplasate c tre lungimi de und mai mari, sugerând existen a unor nanoparticule de mai mari dimensiuni, în timp ce prezen a extractului vegetal determin deplasarea acestor maxime c tre lungimi de und mai mici; aceast deplasare ar putea fi datorat efectului de stabilizare al compu ilor din extractul vegetal care determin o stabilizare dimensional a nanoparticulelor.



Figura 6.8 Spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere (20 kGy) ó 5 zile de la iradiere.



Figura 6.9 Spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere (50 kGy) ó 5 zile de la iradiere.

Rolul extractului vegetal ca agent reduc tor poate fi sugerat i de amplitudinea maximelor de absorb ie superioar comparativ cu amestecurile f r extract vegetal, indiferent de doza de iradiere. La o doz superioar de iradiere se remarc o intensificare a maximului de absorb ie (îndeosebi în cazul absen ei extractului vegetal din amestec) concomitent cu o relativ îngustare a benzii de absorb ie. Datele ob inute ar putea sugera o prim direc ie de optimizare a procedeului de sintez în sensul g sirii unui raport optim între doza de iradiere i con inutul de extract din amestecul de sintez.

6.1.3 Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură



Figura 6.12 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu matrice polimeric PAA-A cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur comparativ cu spectrele înregistrate pentru martori cu matrice polimeric (dup etapa de reticulare ó 14 zile / blank ap bidistilat)

Rezultatele ob inute sugereaz posibilitatea implic rii compu ilor din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* nu numai în reducerea, formarea i stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint dar i în reticularea scheletului polimeric de baz.

Pentru probele de hidrogel cu NPAg, maximele tip band înregistrate sugereaz existen a unui num r relativ mare de nanoparticule cu o distribu ie granulometric larg. Comparativ cu spectrul extractelor vegetale poate fi remarcat o diminuare semnificativ a maximelor prezente în extractele vegetale îndeosebi pentru probele în care este prezent extractul de *Salvia officinalis*. Aceast modificare ar putea confirma implicarea anumitor compu i din extractul de *Salvia officinalis* în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a nanoparticulelor, ace tia influen ând procesul men ionat într-un grad mai ridicat comparativ cu compu ii din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi*.



Figura 6.15 Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu matrice polimeric PAA-A cu reticulare prin iradiere comparativ cu spectrele probelor martor (dup etapa de reticulare / blank ap bidistilat) ó 60 zile de la sintez : a) 20 kGy i b) 50 kGy

Stabilitatea nanoparticulelor de argint în toate sistemele testate se dovede te a fi deosebit pentru toate sistemele analizate la ambele doze de iradiere. Aceast comportare indic al turi de rolul stabilizant al compu ilor din extractele vegetale i implicarea matricii polimerice / componen ilor acesteia în procesul de stabilizare a nanoparticulelor.

6.2 Caracterizarea prin spectroscopie în infraroșu (FTIR) a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen și poliacrilamidă - amidon

Analiza FTIR a fost realizat utilizând un sistem de spectroscopie FTIR pentru cercetare avansat compus din spectrometru FT-IR Vertex 80 (ATR ó attenuated total reflection; cap de diamant). Rezultatele ob inute au fost intercomparate cu date din articole din literatura de specialitate referitoare la tipuri de extracte vegetale apoase i matrici polimerice similare. Interpretarea spectrelor FTIR a avut în vedere identificarea maximelor de absorb ie care sufer modific ri în mediile analizate (extract vegetal brut, componen i ai matricii polimerice i hidrogeluri cu nanoparticule de argint). Modific rile pozi iei maximelor spectrale pot fi asociate adsorb iei [184, 185, 186, 187, 188] constituen ilor extractului vegetal pe suprafa a nanoparticulelor de argint, leg turilor care pot apare în urma reticul rii matricii polimerice i interac iei dintre aceasta i / sau nanoparticulele de argint respectiv extractul vegetal.

Similitudinea între spectrele IR în cazul probelor de hidrogeluri cu matrice hibrid PVA-HC (respectiv cu extract de *Salvia officinalis*, nanoparticule de argint, azotat de argint i matrice polimeric ca atare - Anexa 7: figurile 7.1-7.2), sugereaz o înglobare avansat a componen ilor nanomaterialului ob inut în matricea polimeric . Principalele modific ri observate în spectrul IR apar îndeosebi între componen ii matricii polimerice i matricea polimeric ob inut pe baza acestora. Analiza FTIR a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimeric PAA-A i reticulare prin iradiere (50kGy) a dus la înregistrarea unor modific ri spectrale îndeosebi în cazul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extract *Sapindus mukorossi* i respectiv amestec de extracte, comparativ cu matricea polimeric i hidrogelurile cu NPAg / extract *Salvia officinalis* i azotat de argint.

6.3 Caracterizarea prin microscopie electronică (SEM-EDS) a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen și poliacrilamidă – amidon

Dispozitivul utilizat la analiz a fost constituit dintr-un microscop electronic de baleiaj cu emisie de câmp (FESEM) model Carl Zeiss ó Auriga, dedicat studiului structurilor microscopice i al suprafe elor diferitelor tipuri de materiale: probe organice i anorganice (polimeri, materiale policompozite, mase plastice) conductive sau neconductive magnetic; parametrii func ionali ai dispozitivului sunt men iona i în subcapitolul 4.4 ó figura 4.6.

6.3.1 Caracterizarea prin microscopie electronică (SEM-EDS) a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen



Figura 6.37 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.39 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 20 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes

Morfologia / forma nanoparticulelor de argint (figurile 6.36.-6.41, Anexa 9 ó figura 9.1) este relativ complex , unele dintre acestea prezentând forme polignale asociate în general ca sferice. Au fost puse în eviden particule relativ de form sferic i polidisperse, fiind prezente i aglomer ri, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 21÷37 nm. Detaliile neclare apar ca rezultat al înc rc rii probei ce eviden iaz o conductibilitate electric sc zut a mediului ce poate fi asociat existen ei stratului stabilizator din jurul nanoparticulelor constituit din matricea polimeric / compu ii fitochimici din extractul vegetal.

Spectrele EDS au pus în eviden al turi de spoturile asociate argintului i cele asociate carbonului, oxigenului i azotului ce confirm prezen a stabilizatorilor constitui i din catene alchilice în probele examinate [342, 343]. În zona central a spectrului poate fi observat clar picul asociat argintului localizat la 2.5 keV, acest maxim fiind asociat liniilor K, L caracteristice argintului [344, 345, 346]. Intensit ile liniilor spectrale sunt propor ionale cu abunden a elementului îns având în vedere c metoda EDS nu poate distinge între argintului

elemental i atomii de argint prezen i în al i compu i [342, 345, 346], rezultatul eviden iaz valori ale concentra iilor relative în probele investigate



Figura 6.41 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 50 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes

6.3.2 Caracterizarea prin microscopie electronică (SEM-EDS) a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică poliacrilamidă – amidon



Figura 6.43 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Salvia officinalis* cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.45 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Sapindus mukorossi* cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.47 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / amestec extracte cu reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes







Figura 6.49 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Salvia officinalis* cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 20 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes





Figura 6.51 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Sapindus mukorossi* cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 20 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes





Figura 6.53 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / amestec extracte cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 20 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.55 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Salvia officinalis* cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 50 kGy (ordin de m rire: 200.000X, scala 500 nm) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.57 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / extract *Sapindus mukorossi* cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 50 kGy (ordin de m rire: 100.000X, scala 1 μ m) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes



Figura 6.59 Analiza SEM-EDS pentru hidrogelul compozit cu matrice polimeric PAA-A / amestec extracte cu reticulare prin iradiere ó 50 kGy (ordin de m rire: 200.000X, scala 500 nm) / mapare elemente chimice în microzona de interes

Analiza SEM pentru hidrogelurile compozite (matrice polimeric PAA-A) cu NPAg utilizînd extract de Salvia officinalis a pus în eviden existen a nanoparticulelor de form aproximativ sferic, dispersate, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 20 ó 60 nm. Concentra ia medie relativ a argintului în probele investigate a variat între 13.6% (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur), 28.5% (iradiere ó 20 kGy) i respectiv 15.2% (iradiere ó 50 kGy); valorile ridicate ale concentra iei medii relative a carbonului i oxigenului indic existen a stratului stabilizator indus de matricea polimeric i compu ii fitochimici din extract asupra nanoparticulelor de argint. Pentru hidrogelurile compozite (matrice polimeric PAA-A) cu NPAg utilizînd extract de Sapindus mukorossi au fost observate nanoparticule de form aproximativ sferic, dispersate, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 30 ó 60 nm. Un aspect aparte referitor la aceste probe investigate îl constituie prezen a peliculei de gel observabil chair dup procesarea probei în vederea analizei SEM-EDS. Valorile superioare în cazul concentra iei medii relative a carbonului i oxigenului, pentru fiecare variant de reticulare, comparativ cu cele ale extractului de salvie sugereaz aderarea stratului stabilizator (matrice polimeric / compu i fitochimici din extract) într-o m sur mai mare.

În cazul utiliz rii amestecului de extracte la ob inerea hidrogelurilor compozite (matrice polimeric PAA-A) cu NPAg, analiza SEM-EDS a eviden iat existen a nanoparticulelor de form sferic , disperse (în unele cazuri pot fi observate i aglomer ri de particule) cu dimensiuni cuprinse între 10 ó 60 nm. O prim remarc referitoare la rezultatele ob inute este legat de ob inerea unor valori superioare ale C_{mAg} comparativ cu extractele utilizate ca atare în condi ii similare de sintez / analiz ceea ce sugereaz un efect sinergetic al compu ilor fitochimici prezen i în cele dou extracte relativ la reducerea / stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint în cadrul matricii polimerice.

6.4 Caracterizarea prin difracție de raze X (XRD) a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen și poliacrilamidă – amidon

Caracterizarea structural a matricilor polimerice i hidrogelurilor compozite, s-a realizat pe probe de material uscate $(30 \pm 2^{\circ}C)$ la etuv timp de 24 de ore, mojarate i separate în dou frac iuni granulometrice pe sit cu ochiuri de 1 mm; analiza a fost efectuat asupra frac iunii fine depuse pe suporturile standard de cuar aferente difractometrului.

Datele ob inute din scan rile XRD au fost importate în programul PDXL fiind efectuat analiza Rietveld pentru rafinarea cristalografic . Detaliile referitoare la modelele cristalografice utilizate sunt prezentate în tabelul 6.13.

Fază	Formula chimică	Sistem cristalin	Grup spațial	Densitate (g/cm ³)	Nr. Card ICDD-PDF
Argint	Ag	Cubic	Fm-3m (225)	10.396	04-003-7118
Oxid de argint	AgO	Monoclinic	P21/c (14)	7.684	04-007-1374
Azotat de argint	AgNO ₃	Orthorombic	P212121 (19)	4.346	01-074-4790
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{48}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1070
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{121}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1069
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{243}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1068

Tabelul 6.13 Parametrii structurii cristaline pentru o serie din compu ii argintului

Tabelul 6.14 Gradul de cristalinitate relativ pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu matrice polimeric poliacrilamid ó amidon.

Cod probă	Varianta de reticulare	Intensitate pic (cps)		Cristalinitate	
		$I_{2\Theta = 17^{\circ}}$	$I_{2\Theta} = 38^{\circ}$	(70)	
Matrice polimeric	PAA-A				
P5 -1902	CT ó cicluri termice	3469	-	-	
P5 -0412-ir20	P5 -0412-ir20 ir20 ó iradiere 20 kGy		-	-	
P5 -0412-ir50	-0412-ir50 ir50 ó iradiere 50 kGy 2747 -		-	-	
Hidrogeluri comp	ozite cu NPAg / extract Salvi	a officinalis			
P9 -1902	CT ó cicluri termice	1558	3072	66.35	
P9 -0412-ir20	ir20 ó iradiere 20 kGy	1769	1899	51.77	
P9 -0412-ir50	P9 -0412-ir50 ir50 ó iradiere 50 kGy		1849	57.35	
Hidrogeluri compozite cu NPAg / extract Sapindus mukorossi					
P10 -1902	CT ó cicluri termice	2438	2162	47.00	
P10 -0412-ir20	ir20 ó iradiere 20 kGy	2966	1680	36.16	
P10 -0412-ir50	ir50 ó iradiere 50 kGy	2659	1573	37.17	
Hidrogeluri compozite cu NPAg / amestec extracte					
P11 -1902	CT ó cicluri termice	2609	2818	51.93	
P11 -0412-ir20	ir20 ó iradiere 20 kGy	1645	1347	45.02	
P11 -0412-ir50	ir50 ó iradiere 50 kGy	2697	2127	44.09	

Datele prezentate în tabelul 6.14 indic o cre tere a gradului de cristalinitate în ordinea P10, P9 i respectiv P11, rezultatele indicând caracterul mixt, cristalin i amorf, al materialelor sintetizate precum i c tipul de extract utilizat ca agent reduc tor i varianta de reticulare aplicat, influen eaz cristalinitatea produsului final. În cazul reticul rii prin cicluri termice nanomaterialele la care a fost utilizat extract de *Salvia officinalis* ca atare (66.35%)

sau în amestec (51.93%) prezint un grad de cristalinitate relativ superior comparativ cu nanomaterialul ob inut cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* (47%); o varia ie similar se constat i în cazul reticul rii prin iradiere la ambele doze de iradiere aplicate.

Varianta de reticulare aplicat (cicluri termice i respectiv iradiere cu radia ii gamma) influen eaz de asemenea gradul de cristalinitate relativ, acesta având valori superioare în cazul reticul rii prin cicluri termice comparativ cu varianta prin iradiere. Pentru toate cele trei categorii de hidrogeluri (func ie de tipul de extract) se constat diferen e relativ mici ale valorilor gradului de cristalinitate în func ie de doza de iradiere.

6.5 Evaluarea activității antimicrobiene a hidrogelurilor compozite cu matrice polimerică alcool polivinilic – hidrolizat de colagen și poliacrilamidă – amidon

Testarea efectului antifungic al materialelor sintetizate pune în primul rând în eviden rolul extractelor vegetale. A a cum se men ioneaz i în studiile de specialitate, chiar în cazul extractelor (*Salvia officinalis, Sapindus mukorossi*) a c ror compozi ie chimic nu a fost identic , rezultatele au indicat o activitate antifungic similar ; efectul antifungic nu este asociat unuia dintre compu ii majori prezen i în extract ci sinergiei altor compu i care se afl în propor ii reduse [354, 355, 356]. Evaluarea comparativ a rezultatele ob inute (tabelul 6.15) pentru probele martor (cu extract) i hidrogelurilor cu nanoparticule de argint indic rolul determinat al compu ilor din extract / extracte în efectul antifungic manifestat.

În experimentul de *testare a toxicității acute* au fost folosi i oareci albi rasa Swiss (în greutate de 20 ± 2 g) i obolani albi rasa Wistar (în greutate de 140 ± 20 g) cu reparti ie uniform pe sexe (20 animale, 10 masculi i 10 femele pe fiecare lot i doz), proveni i de la biobaza U.S.A.M.V. - Bucure ti.

Tabelul 6.17 Rezultatele testelor biochimice la sfîr itul perioadei de observa ie dup administrarea probei P11-1902 (prob hidrogel cu matrice poliacrilamid -amidon i nanoparticule de argint ob inute cu amestec de extracte) pe obolan Wistar

Nr. crt.	Parametru / indicator biochimic	Valoare înregistrată	Domeniu valori de referință [357, 358]
1	Hb - hemoglobin	11 g / 100 ml	8 ó 15 g / 100 ml
2	RBC (Red Blood Cells) - eritrocite	7.0 mil. / mm ³ sânge	5.5 ó 10 mil / mm ³
3	WBC (White Blood Cells) - leucocite	12000 / mm ³ sânge	10000 ó 15000 / mm ³
4	MONO (Monocytes) - monocite	3 %	max. 5 %
5	BASO (Basophils) - bazofile	< 1 %	0.0 ó 0.7 %
6	EOS (Eosinophils) - eozinofile	2.1 %	2 ó 4 %
7	NEU (Neutrophils) - neutrofile	54 %	50 ó 55 %
8	LYM (Lymphocytes) - limfocite	28 %	25 ó 35 %
9	CHOL (Cholesterol) - colesterol	126 mg / 100 ml	135 mg / 100 ml, medie
10	CREA (Creatinine Kinase) - creatinin	0.3 mg / 100 ml sânge	0.3 ó 0.5 mg / 100 ml
11	ALB (Albumin) - albumin	2.3 mg / 100 ml sânge	2.1 ó 4.0 mg / 100 ml
12	AMYL (Amylase) - amilaz	740 mg / 100 ml sânge	300 ó 1500 mg / 100 ml
13	GLU (Glucose) - glucoz	44 mg / 100 ml sânge	40 mg / 100 ml, medie
14	ALKP (Alkaline phosphatase) - fosfataz alcalin	29 mg / 100 ml sânge	8 ó 80 mg / 100 ml

Animalele de experien au fost supuse observa iilor în ceea ce prive te comportamentul, semnele vitale, notându-se apari ia eventualelor modific ri sugestive unei st ri toxice, la 24 ore, 48 ore, 72 ore i 14 zile, dup administrarea dozelor [359].

Studiul microbiologic efectuat asupra hidrogelurile compozite cu nanoparticule de argint s-a realizat în scopul eviden ierii caracterului lor antimicrobian i determin rii dozei

minime bactericide asupra tulpinilor de bacterii testate. Au fost selectate dou tulpini de bacterii (sub form de culturi pure liofilizate) frecvent implicate în infec iile intraspitalice ti: *Escherichia coli* ATCC reg. 25922 - bacterie Gram negativ (condi ionat patogen, extrem de rezistent la tratamentul cu antibiotice) i *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC reg 25923 - bacterie Gram pozitiv, patogen, din clasa stafilococilor coagulazo-pozitivi, cu ridicat risc de infec ie postoperatorie.

Activitatea antimicrobian pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu nanoparticule de argint a fost determinat la concentra ii ob inute prin dilu ii decimale, conform protocolului de lucru (prezentat în subcapitolul 4.5). Volumul mediului de cultur folosit în cazul fiec rei tulpini de bacterii a fost men inut constant (15 ml) fiind variat concentra ia hidrogelurilor testate. Pl cile cu medii nutritive, hidrogel i inocul de bacterii au fost incubate aerob, pe durate variabile func ie de genul bacteriei, în paralel fiind efectuate teste microbiologice i pentru matricea polimeric corespunz toare fiec rui tip de hidrogel (PVA-HC i respectiv PAA-A), considerat prob martor. Pentru testarea hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint a fost adoptat aceea i procedur indiferent de modul de sintez al acestora. Într-o prim faz s-au realizat o serie de teste preliminare asupra fiec rui tip de hidrogel sintetizat i probelor martor (matricii polimerice) corespunz toare. Pentru confirmarea rezultatelor, testele preliminare au fost efectuate în duplicat pentru toate probele de hidrogeluri i ambele tulpini bacteriene.

Eficien a hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint a fost evaluat prin intermediul concentra iei minime bactericide (CMB). Astfel într-o faz preliminar au fost repetate testele cu propor ii mai reduse de hidrogeluri (0.8 ml i 0.5 ml / plac test) rezultatele indicînd i aceste cazuri lipsa coloniilor tipice de bacterii ceea ce indic un efect bactericid asupra ambelor tulpini bacteriene. Ca urmare a acestor teste s-a stabilit o sensibilitate diferen iat a tulpinilor bacteriene la ac iunea nanomaterialelor testate, tulpina de Escherichia coli fiind mai sensibil decât cea de Staphylococcus aureus. Din acest motiv în testele ulterioare, testarea pe tulpin de *Escherichia coli* s-a efectuat plecând de la dilu ia de baz d_0 cu 0.5 ml hidrogel respectiv 0.8 ml hidrogel pentru testarea pe tulpin de Staphylococcus aureus. Pentru valori inferioare d₀ în pl ci apar dezvoltate colonii tipice de bacterii hidrogelurile manifestând doar efect bacteriostatic. Termenul de dilu ie de baz $d_0 (10^0)$ va fi utilizat în cele ce urmeaz pentru probele în care hidrogelurile se folosesc ca atare, neeluate în ser fiziologic. Datorit volumului redus de hidrogel luat în prob pentru testare este dificil de realizat o repartizarea uniform a acestuia pe placa Petri; din acest motiv, pentru stabilirea CMB în cazul celor dou tulpini bacteriene, testele au fost realizate cu efectuarea de dilu ii decimale succesive (conform tehnicii descrise în subcapitolul 4.5) pentru toate probele de hidrogeluri:



Figura 6.69 Hidrogel P2-0412 ó pl ci Petri dup testare la tulpin de *Staphylococcus aureus* la dilu ii diferite: a) $d_1(10^{-1})$, b) $d_2(10^{-2})$ i c) $d_3(10^{-3})$.

Întrucât imaginile pl cilor de testare Petri sugereaz acela i tip de comportament bacteriostatic au fost prezentate numai o serie de imagini sugestive pentru fiecare tip de hidrogel cu nanoparticule de argint i pentru fiecare tip de tulpin bacterian , comportamentul bacteriostatic fiind detaliat sub form tabelar (tabelele 6.19-6.23).

	Cod probă	CMB (ml / ml inocul / 24 ore)		Tin hidrogal / matrice	
Nr.crt.		Escherichia coli	Staphylococcus aureus	polimerică	
1	P2-0412	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hidrogeluri cu extract de Salvia officinalis /	
2	P2-0412-ir20	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³		
3	P2-0412-ir50	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³	РУА-НС	
4	P3-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hidrogeluri cu AgNO3	
5	P3-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	– iradiere / PVA-HC	
6	P9-2002	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³	Hidrogeluri cu extract de Salvia officinalis /	
7	P9-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$		
8	P9-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	РАА-А	
9	P10-2002	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hidnogoluni ou ortugot	
10	P10-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	de Sapindus mukorossi / PAA-A	
11	P10-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	0.8.10-2		
12	P11-2002	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hidrogeluri cu amestec de extracte / PAA-A	
13	P11-0412-ir20	0.5.10-2	0.8·10 ⁻³		
14	P11-0412-ir50	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³		
15	P12-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-1}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-1}$	Hidrogeluri cu AgNO ₃ – iradiere / PAA-A	
16	P12-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-1}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-1}$		

 Tabelul 6.23 Concentra ia minim bactericid (CMB) pentru tulpinile bacteriene Escherichia coli i Staphylococcus aureus

7. CONCLUZII ȘI CONTRIBUȚII PROPRII

7.1 Concluzii

Activitatea de cercetare aferent tezei de doctorat a avut ca obiectiv general sinteza õverdeö a unor hidrogeluri compozite, func ionalizate cu nanoparticule de argint, caracterizarea acestor materiale precum i evaluarea poten ialului acestora pentru aplica ii biomedicale. Cercet rile efectuate în cadrul tezei s-au direc ionat c tre posibilit ile de a sintetiza un anume tip de nanomateriale, respectiv hidrogeluri, cu matrice polimeric hibrid (pe baza a doi componen i, un polimer sintetic i unul natural) i func ionalizate cu nanoparticule de argint (sintetizate prin intermediul extractelor vegetale de *Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi*). Pentru un studiu relevant într-o prim faz a fost experimentat sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extractele vegetale men ionate iar ulterior sinteza hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint generate *in situ* prin intermediul acelora i extracte. Într-o faz final a fost evaluat activitatea antimicrobian a nanomaterialelor sintetizate prin teste *in vitro* i teste preliminare *in vivo*.

Obiectivele specifice tezei de doctorat au fost atinse finalizându-se prin ob inerea nanomaterialelor tip hidrogel prin tehnicile de sintez propuse în cadrul obiectivului general al tezei, nanomateriale care au fost caracterizate ulterior prin metode specifice de analiz.

Metodele de sintez aplicate (atât la ob inerea extractelor naturale, sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint i a hidrogelurilor compozite) au avut în vedere urm toarele aspecte: utilizarea de surse naturale, solven i nontoxici, parametrii de proces care s permit reproductibilitatea metodelor, apelarea la echipamente i o logistic avantajoase din punct de vedere economic precum i aspecte legate de protec ia mediului încojur tor.

Nanoparticulele de argint reprezint una din clasele de nanoparticule cel mai des utilizate ca agent de func ionalizare a polimerilor datorit în special propriet ilor electrice, optice, catalitice i în particular propriet ilor antimicrobiene bine stabilite i investigate în special în sistemele coloidale. Cu toate acestea numeroase aplica ii practice ale nanoparticulelor de argint implic includerea acestora în diverse substraturi i matrici. Din acest punct de vedere polimerii constituie o clas de materiale preferat datorit morfologiei specifice, naturii chimice i structurii cu catene polimerice lungi ce permit încorporarea i dispersia avansat a nanoparticulelor. În plus o serie de grupe func ionale ale polimerilor pot fi folosite ca centrii activi pentru sinteza controlat a nanoparticulelor.

Procedeul frecvent aplicat pentru dispersarea nanoparticulelor de argint în matricea polimeric implic captarea cationilor de argint de c tre catenele polimerice urmat de reducerea cu agen i reduc tori. Acest procedeu, comparativ cu amestecarea a doi componen i i polimerizarea în prezen a nanoparticulelor de argint presintetizate, prezint dou avantaje: în primul rând existen a catenelor macromoleculare îmbun t e te dispersia nanoparticulelor în matricea polimeric i previne par ial formarea de agregate i în al doilea rând, substratul asigurat de catenele polimerice conduce la o o dimensiune redus a nanoparticulelor, o distribu ie granulometric îngust i forme relativ bine definite.

Varianta de sintez aplicat, formarea nanoparticulelor reactive în cadrul unui hidrogel preformat, implic ob inerea într-o prim faz a hidrogelul preformat ce ac ioneaz ca un microreactor în care nanoparticulele se formeaz din precursori dup o serie de tratamente necesare. Acest proces a dobândit popularitate îndeosebi datorit avantajelor tehnologice, comparativ cu metoda *ex situ*, dimensiunea i morfologia nanoparticulelor putând fi controlat relativ mai u or. Ionii metalici pot fi absorbi i de grupele func ionale ale hidrogelului prin interac ii electrostatice sau ion-dipol, iar apoi redu i la nanoparticule metalice prin intermediul unor agen i reduc tori proveni i din extractele naturale. Reticularea prin iradiere este o tehnic care nu implic utilizarea unor reactivi chimici p strându-se ca urmare

biocompatibiliatea polimerului i asigurându-se în acela i timp modificarea polimerului i o sterilizare a acestuia. Hidrogelurile preparate prin tehnica de înghe are-dezghe are au demonstrat a avea un poten ial important în numeroase aplica ii datorit anumitor propriet i, preferabile gelurilor ob inute prin tehnici de reticulare tradi ionale, referitoare la lipsa toxicit ii i rezisten a mecanic superioar ; expunerea la cicluri repetate de înghe are i decongelare la temperatura camerei are ca rezultat formarea de cristalite ce ac ioneaz ca reticul ri fizice în cadrul matricii polimerice. Compu ii fitochimici prezen i în extractele vegetale ar putea contribui de asemenea la stabilizarea matricii polimerice, contribuind în plus cu activitate antioxidant , farmacologic i poten ial terapeutic la nanobiomaterial.

Un mediu hidrofilic este deosebit de important în aplica iile antimicrobiene pentru ca apa s faciliteze eliberarea ionilor de argint din nanoparticulele încapsulate în matricea polimeric ; totodat materialul va men ine un mediu umed în jurul pl gii asigurând astfel o hidratare pentru o vindecare optim . Biopolimerii constituie un grup important în principal datorit disponibilit ii, costului redus i biocompatibilit ii. Considerând i faptul c numeroase aplica ii ale nanocompozitelor cu argint sunt îndreptate c tre tratamentul biomedical, hidrogelurile constituie repere importante în acest domeniu.

Din categoria materialelor sintetizate, hidrogelurile simple / multicomponent au luat amploare în domeniul eliber rii controlate de principii medicamentoase dar i în domenii precum ingineria tisular unde biomaterialele polimerice îndeplinesc numeroase func ii, captând tot mai mult interesul cercet torilor în ultimul deceniu datorit propriet ilor intrinseci pretabile aplica iilor medicale; biocompatibilitatea, capacitatea de a elibera din re eaua polimeric compu i hidrosolubili i versatilitatea acestora în modelarea propriet ilor fizicochimice permit generarea de noi biomateriale.

Concluzii rezultate în urma studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint / hidrogelurilor compozite prin analiza de spectroscopie de absorbție în ultraviolet-vizibil (UV-VIS)

Prin corelarea modific rilor spectrale în UV-VIS, ca indicator al schimb rilor morfologice ale nanoparticulelor de argint, cu parametrii experimentali (pH, raportul de amestecare ini ial azotat de argint / extract *Salvia officinalis*) se pot trage concluzii referitoare la cre terea nanoparticulelor i parametrii de lucru optimi în vederea sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând extracte din plante.

În demersul experimental efectuat spectroscopia de absorb ie în ultraviolet-vizibil a fost utilizat ca tehnic analitic pentru a caracteriza extractul vegetal i a monitoriza procesul de sintez al nanoparticulelor de argint. Parametrii de proces precum pH-ul, temperatura, con inutul extractului de salvie (corespunz tor unei anumite metode extrac ie), concentra ia solu iei ionice, timpul de reac ie, etc. influen eaz reac ia de reducere a ionului metalic, cre terea nanoparticulelor i faza de stabilizare. Prin urmare distribu ia dimensional i morfologic a nanoparticulelor de argint este rezultatul cineticii diferite ale tuturor etapelor implicate în procesul form rii nanoparticulelor. Aceast influen se reflect în alura benzii de absorb ie care apare în domeniul 350-600 nm ce cumuleaz propriet ile plasmonice ale tuturor nanoparticulelor de argint prezente în solu ie. Dinamica cre terii nanoparticulelor poate fi monitorizat prin controlul cinetic al procesului, varianta uzual constând în varia ia concentra iei tipului speciilor reduc toare i cu caracter stabilizator. Astfel pentru a ob ine informa ii referitoare la etapele procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor au fost amestecate solu ii de extract de salvie i azotat de argint în diferite rapoarte.

A fost calculat aria relativ în func ie de timp în domeniul 350-600 nm, aria relativ reprezentând suprafa a delimitat de spectrul de absorb ie în cazul probelor de extract aditivate cu azotat de argint. S-a considerat c valoarea acestei arii pot fi corelat cu existen a

i con inutul de nanoparticule care dau un r spuns plasmonic. Reprezentarea grafic a ariei relative în func ie de timp a fost preferat reprezent rii valorilor asociate maximului de absorb ie în timp datorit faptului c benzile de absorb ie prezint caracteristici diferite (intensitate maxim , l rgime de band , form) în func ie de rapoartele de amestecare azotat de argint / extract de salvie. Domeniul lungimii de und selectat a avut în vedere faptul c în aceast zon apar principalele modific ri plasmonice ale nanoparticulelor de argint în spectrele UV-VIS. Motivul select rii ariei relative în locul maximului de absorb ie a fost i acela c r spunsul plasmonic al nanoparticulelor metalice este influen at de mediul de reac ie... În etapa de cre tere procesul este dinamic, înso it de rupere i formare de leg turi, cu efect asupra dimensiunii i formei nanoparticulelor i interfe ei metalice.

Evolu ia spectrului UV-VIS în timp indic o cre tere rapid a nanoparticulelor de argint în primele trei ore de la momentul amestestec rii componen ilor. Totu i apar diferen e între viteza de cre tere a intensit ii absorban ei i pozi ia maximului de absorb ie. Luând în considerare alura spectrului în domeniul 350-600 nm, se poate aprecia c cel mai mare con inut de nanoparticule a fost ob inut atunci când amestecul ini ial a con inut volume egale de azotat de argint 10 mM i extract de salvie. În cazul reprezent rii ariei relative în func ie de timp pentru amestecurile de sintez studiate pot fi identificate cele patru etape cu cinetici diferite ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor. Dinamica procesului este similar cu mecanismul propus de Polte [215] pentru formarea nanoparticulelor de aur ob inute prin metoda Turkevich [214].

În modelul cre terii descris în studiul prezentat procesele implicate sunt: reducerea ionilor metalici, difuzia ionilor metalici i particulelor metalice în solu ie, adsorb ia i reducerea ionilor metalici la interfa , coalescen a nanoparticulelor instabile coloidal. Având în vedere evolu ia procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor, la un anumit moment unul din procesele individuale poate avea o pondere mai însemnat în dinamica procesului global de cre tere. O alt observa ie experimental este aceea c alura curbelor varia iei ariei relative în func ie de timp variaz cu raportul de amestecare ini ial dintre extractul de salvie i azotat de argint. În cazul tuturor sintezelor efectuate experimental a fost calculat viteza relativ de cre tere a ariei ca panta por iunii lineare a evou iei ariei relative în func ie de timp.

Monitorizarea form rii nanoparticulelor pe durata a opt zile a pus în eviden o cre tere lent i continu a ariei relative pentru amestecurile în care volumul de azotat de argint 10 mM se afl în exces fa de cel de extract. În acela i timp a putut fi observat i o deplasare u oar a maximului de absorb ie în spectrul UV-VIS spre lungimi de und mai mari, comportare ce poate fi corelat cu formarea unor nanoparticule de dimensiuni mari.

În vederea ob inerii de informa ii privind stoechiometria mediului de reac ie al întregului proces de echilibru s-a aplicat de asemenea o procedur similar metodei varia iei continue. Într-o prim etap amestecul a fost testat la temperatura camerei prin înregistrarea spectrului UV-VIS iar con inutul de azotat de argint a fost variat sistematic (0 ó 100%); spectrele UV-VIS au fost înregistrate pentru ob inerea de informa ii asupra produ ilor de reac ie. Etapele demersului experimental au fost realizate pentru ob inerea de informa ii legate de raportul volumetric optim azotat de argint : extract vegetal necesar sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint stabile.

Când amestecul ini ial de reac ie con ine volume egale de azotat de argint i extract de *Salvia officinalis* (raport volumetric de amestecare egal cu 1:1), spectrul UV-VIS a pus în eviden cea mai ridicat valoare a absorban ei la aproximativ 425 nm. În cazul rapoartelor de amestecare în care sarea ionic se afl în exces s-a observat o deplasare batocromic a maximului de absorb ie; aceast deplasare putând fi corelat cu formarea nanoparticulelor de dimensiuni mai mari. Dac extractul vegetal se afl în exces fa de volumul de azotat de argint, spectrul UV-VIS prezint maxime de absorb ie mai atenuate, corelate cu un con inut mai mic de nanoparticule în amestec. Valoarea lungimii de und corespunz toare maximului

de absorb ie (_{max}) este deplasat c tre lungimi de und mai mici comparativ cu amestecul la raport de amestecare 1:1 indicând prezen a unor particule de dimensiuni mai reduse; aceast comportare ar putea fi datorat solu iei ionice în calitate de reactant limitativ în acest caz.

Rezultatele experimentale au indicat un raport optim de amestecare a precursorilor egal cu 1:1 (solu ie azotat de argint 10 mM : extract de salvie) în cazul biosintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* la temperatura ambiant .

pH-ul constituie un parametru experimental important în dinamica cre terii nanoparticulelor de argint pentru c valoarea sa poate influen a majoritatea echilibrelor implicate în proces. Probele testate, ob inute prin amestecarea în propor ii diferite a extractului de *Salvia officinalis* cu solu ie tampon de pH, au prezentat valori stabile ale pH-ului; ulterior, dup ad ugarea azotatului de argint, în rapoarte corespunz toare extractului vegetal, s-a doar constatat o u oar modificare (\pm 0.5 unit i de pH) a valorii pH-ului amestecului de sintez final. Diferen ele observate în spectrele înregistrate deriv îndeosebi din amplitudinea acestora, intensitat ile maximului de absorb ie reducându-se i devenind mai apropiate pe m sura sc derii pH-ului. Introducerea ionului fosfat în sistem (odat cu solu ia tampon de pH) influen eaz r spunsul plasmonic al nanoparticulelor de argint formate diferen a putând fi observat în cazul amestecului cu pH egal cu 6.3 (con inând solu ie tampon) comparativ cu amestecul cu pH egal cu 6.8 (f r solu ie tampon); diferen a dintre cele dou spectre se datoreaz ionilor fosfat prezen i în solu ie i consecutiv la interfa a particul coloidal metalic ó solu ie. În urma ad ug rii în amestecul de sintez de acid fosforic, varia ia aria relative în timp este similar unor reac ii autocatalitice.

Evolu ia vitezei relative de cre tere (calculat ca panta dreptei pe por iunea liniar a varia iei ariei relative în timp), la diferite valori de pH, pentru raportul de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint : extract de *Salvia officinalis* egal cu 1:1, a fost determinat pe baza valorilor v₁, v₂, v₃ i respectiv v₄ ce corespund celor patru etape ale procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor corespunz toare modelului propus în studiul prezentat. Probele cu valori ale pH-ului de 10.5, 6.3, 2.8 i 2.3, m surat dup ad ugarea solu iei tampon, prezint valori relativ apropiate ale vitezei în a treia etap (v₃), etap în care procesul de cre tere al nanoparticulelor este accelerat datorit reducerii autocatalitice la interfa a metal ó solu ie. Diferen a dintre aceste valori este dat de durata de timp asociat acestei etape în curbele de varia ie ale ariei relative în func ie de timp. Prin urmare odat cu sc derea valorii pH-ului în amestecul de sintez , se reduce i durata de timp corespunz toare etapei a treia. Viteza asociat primei etape a procesului de cre tere (v₁) prezint valori ridicate în cazul amestecurilor cu pH alcalin comportare care poate fi atribuit form rii oxidului de argint. Ca urmare, în solu ie alcalin , în faza ini ial , oxidarea argintului la oxid de argint joac un rol important în mecanismul global al form rii nanoparticulelor de argint.

Este cunoscut faptul c temperatura de reac ie joac un rol important în distribu ia spa ial i dimensional a particulelor, în special în cazul nanoparticulelor de argint. Determin rile experimentale pe baza procedurii abordate au fost destinate optimiz rii parametrilor experimentali ai procesului de biosintez studiat luând în considerare modific rile din spectrul UV-VIS.

Înregistrarea spectrelor UV-VIS pentru amestecurile studiate a permis calculul ariei relative asociate nanoparticulelor de argint prezente în solu ie, putând fi puse în eviden totodat o serie modific ri în alura spectrelor: atunci când sarea ionic se afl în exces (rapoarte volumetrice azotat de argint : extract mai mari ca 1:1) deplasarea max spre valori mai mari putând fi corelat cu formarea unor nanoparticule de dimensiuni mai mari i cu un înveli mai sub ire. Rezultatele ob inute sugereaz c formarea nanoparticulelor de argint în urma procesului de biosintez cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* are la baz un echilibru capabil s determine o modificare continu a formei i dimensiunii nanoparticulelor dependent de raportul Ag^+ / specii reduc toare i specii cu rol stabilizator. Procesul decurge continuu, în

corela ie cu condi iile specifice ale mediului de reac ie pân la atingerea unui anumit echilibru legat de distribu ia dimensional i spa ial a nanoparticulelor. De i ariile relative calculate pe baza spectrelor UV-VIS prezint valori ridicate pentru amestecurile ce au fost înc lzite ini ial, valoarea absorban ei asociat maximului este sc zut ca valoare benzile de absorb ie fiind totodat largi comparativ cu valorile amestecului la temperatura ambiant. Aceast comportare sugereaz c nanoparticulele de argint se afl în propor ie ridicat atunci când amestecul este înc lzit ini ial îns în acela i timp, distribu ia spa ial i dimensional este mai larg comparativ cu probele f r înc lzire.

Studiul experimental realizat cu utilizarea extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* a urm rit într-o prim faz comportarea în calitate de reduc tor i agent de stabilizare a acestuia, la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint utilizând ca precursor solu ie de azotat de argint 10 mM. Au fost efectuate teste cu probe având propor ii (rapoarte volumetrice) variabile de extract men inând constant con inutul de sare ionic , la un pH al amestecului de sintez datorat extractului vegetal. Pentru analiza UV-VIS au fost utilizate probe martor având acelea i rapoarte volumetrice de extract, la dilu ii identice cu probele de solu ii coloidale de nanoparticule de argint ob inute.

Datele ob inute în urma analizei UV-VIS pun în eviden o reducere extrem de lent a ionilor de argint de c tre compu ii prezen i în extractul vegetal în condi iile de sintez stabilite (contactare static $/25^{0}$ C / pH acid al mediului de reac ie datorat extractului vegetal). Cu toate acestea poate fi observat formarea nanoparticulelor în special la rapoartele volumetrice 1:1 i 1.5:1 (corespunz toare unor concentra ii volumetrice de extract în amestec de 2% i respectiv 3%). În acest interval de concentra ie a fost determinat de altfel i valoarea concentra iei critice micelare a extractului ó 2.7% valoare medie; aceast comportare sugereaz implicarea favorabil a miceliilor formate în solu ie în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a nanoparticulelor de argint.

În urm toarea etap a studiului experimental sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de Sapindus mukorossi a fost realizat pentru cinci valori de concentra ie ale extractului în amestec (în jurul valorii concentra iei critice micelare medii determinate ó 2.7%) la 25°C (baie de ap termostatat) în exces de solu ie AgNO₃ 10 mM, f r dilu ie, prin contactare static ; amestecul a fost monitorizat prin analiz UV-VIS în domeniul 230-750 nm (ca probe martor au fost utilizate probe de extract ó dilu ie cu ap bidistilat ó la concentra ii similare cu amestecurile testate). Din spectrele UV-VIS se observ o deplasare u oar a maximului de absorb ie c tre lungime de und mai mare care ar putea fi corelat cu existen a în solu ie a agregatelor / nanoparticulelor de dimensiuni mai mari (existen a depunerilor ar confirma acest lucru, o parte din agregatele de mari dimensiuni precipitând). Concomitent se observ o stabilizare a maximului de absorb ie pentru concentra iile de 1.6%, 2.7%, 3.6% i 5% aproximativ în jurul valorii absorban ei de 0.28; comportarea în spectrul UV-VIS are putea fi pus în leg tur i cu formarea agregatelor micelare care influen eaz r spunsul plasmonic, în domeniul de concentra ie men ionat anterior formându-se micelii de dimensiuni comparabile. Valorile pH-ului se men in aproximativ în acela i domeniu pentru toate amestecurile de sintez (pH: 4.14 ó 4.63) dup 4 zile de la sintez , variind foarte pu in, sc derea fiind datorat posibil eliber rii ionilor de hidrogen de c tre compu ii polifenolici în urma reducerii ionilor de argint din solu ie.

Rezultatele ob inute în acest stadiu al demersului experimental sugereaz o influen important în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a pH-ului mediului de reac ie. Ca urmare a fost investigat comportarea amestecurilor de sintez la valori de pH bazic (ajustarea pH-ului s-a realizat cu solu ie de hidroxid de potasiu 1M) men inând constant raportul volumetric de amestecare al componen ilor extract : sare ionic egal cu 1:1. Analiza spectral UV-VIS a confirmat importan a pH-ului ca unul din factorii decisivi în cazul sintezei. La valori bazice de pH procesul de formare a nanoparticulelor de argint decurge cu o vitez global crescut din alura maximelor de absorb ie rezultând formarea unui num r crescut de nanoparticule cu dimensiuni mai mici (valoarea lungimii de und asociat maximului se deplaseaz c tre valori mai mici comparative cu amestecurile la pH acid) i o distribu ie granulometric mai restrâns (maxime de absorb ie bine definite în cazul pH-ului bazic comparativ cu benzi de absorb ie pentru valori de pH acid). Atât în cazul pH-ului acid cât i pentru valori de pH bazic, formarea nanoparticulelor este influen at de concentra ia extractului în amestecul de sintez fiind notabil la valori superioare concentra iei critice micelare.

În condi ii de pH acid al mediului de reac ie sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint decurge extrem de lent în condi iile date $(25^{\circ}C / pH)$ acid datorat extractului vegetal / azotat de argint 10 mM / contactare static); o modificare notabil în spectrele UV-VIS apare la 3 zile de la debutul sintezei observându-se existen a unor benzi de absorb ie largi a c ror intensitate se diminueaz odat cu cre terea con inutului de extract vegetal în amestec. Aceast comportare sugereaz un echilibru competitiv existent în amestecul de sintez între ionii de argint i hidrogen, fixa i i respectiv elibera i la nivelul grupelor hidroxil saponinice. Deplasarea batocrom a maximele benzilor de absorb ie comparativ cu amestecurile la pH bazic sugereaz existen a în solu ie a nanoparticulelor de argint de dimensiuni mai mari i un spectru granulometric relativ larg. R spunsul plasmonic al nanoparticulelor de argint ar putea fi totodat atenuat de existen a miceliilor formate în jurul nanoparticulelor. Pentru toate rapoartele de amestecare testate (1:4, 1:2, 1:1, 2:1 i 4:1) se constat totodat o stabilizare a pH-ului solu iei în jurul valorii de 4.3 dup trei zile de la contactare ce ar sugera totodat comportarea extractului vegetal ca un tampon de pH acid. Date de literatur [278] sugereaz de asemenea c în condi ii de pH acid are loc o dizolvare par ial a nanoparticulelor formate invers propor ional cu dimensiunea acestora i totodat o cre tere dimensional dup dizolvare; spectrele UV-VIS înregistrate ar confirma o astfel de comportare.

Influen a concentra iei critice micelare (CMC) a putut fi sesizat înc de la debutul studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*. Atât probele martor (solu iile de extract la dilu iile corespunz toare) cât i amestecurile de sintez au înregistrat un pH în jurul valorii de 4.4 indicând proprietatea de tamponare a extractului vegetal; valoarea pH-ului se coreleaz cu structura saponinelor, ca i specii cu caracter slab acid, prezente în extractul apos de *Sapindus mukorossi*. În condi iile de sintez aplicate formarea nanoparticulelor este un proces foarte lent, modific ri notabile atât în ceea ce prive te culoarea solu iilor cât i spectrele UV-VIS au fost observate la 72 ore din momentul contact rii precursorilor. Spectrele înregistrate prezint benzi de absorb ie largi centrate la circa 450 nm pentru toate probele investigate, putându-se observa c o cre tere accentuat a absorban ei odat cu atingerea i dep irea valorii de $2.6\pm0.10\%$ extract în amestecul de sintez . Varia ia liniar a ariei relative, calculate pe baza spectrelor UV-VIS în domeniul 350-600 nm, pentru solu iile de nanoparticule, prezint un punct de inflexiune corespunz tor unui con inut de extract de 2.6% ce confirm ipoteza c miceliile ar putea constituie structuri ce contribuie formarea nanoparticulelor.

Cre terea valorii CMC în mediul bazic comparativ cu mediul acid poate fi asociat existen ei speciilor chimice din extract cu caracter slab acid, odat cu ad ugarea solu iei alcaline (hidroxid de potasiu) grup rile func ionale acide suferind o deprotonare formându-se un amestec de compu i cu un caracter slab hidrofob. Sc derea caracterului hidrofobic al solu iilor poate conduce la valori mai ridicate ale CMC; diagramele înregistrate în mediu acid i respectiv bazic indic o influen semnificativ a CMC în formarea nanoparticulelor de argint în condi iile de sintez aplicate.

Sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte a eviden iat faptul c pentru rapoartele de amestecare între componen i la care extractul de *Salvia officinalis* i azotat de argint se afl în exces fa de extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* (1:2:2 \rightarrow 1:20:20) pe durata monitoriz rii ini iale (3 ore la intervale de 20 minute) au putut fi observate modific ri

spectrale semnificative îndeosebi la rapoartele de amestecare 1:10:10 i respectiv 1:20:20. Formarea nanoparticulelor de argint este favorizat îndeosebi la aceste dou rapoarte de amestecare mai sus men ionate atât la 180 minute de la debutul sintezei cît mai ales pe un interval mai larg de timp; comportarea amestecurilor de extracte la rapoartele de amestecare investigate indic un raport optim de amestecare pentru acest sistem (extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : extract *Salvia officinalis* : azotat de argint 10 mM) situat în intervalul 1:10: 0 ó 1:20 :20.

A fost realizat de asemenea i o analiz comparativ pe baza datelor de spectroscopie UV-VIS având în vedere sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte i respectiv prin utilizarea componen ilor / extractelor individuali. În cazul raportului volumetric de amestecare 1:10:10 se remarc la 5 zile un maxim de absorb ie foarte bine delimitat, îngust ca l rgime de band cu intensitate semnificativ crescut comparativ cu extractul de salvie, indicând o distribu ie granulometric redus i o stabilizare superioar a nanoparticulelor din punct de vedere dimensional; pentru acest raport de amestecare (comparativ cu celelalte) spectrul UV-VIS sugereaz un efect sinergetic al celor dou extracte.

O diferen notabil în cazul amestecului de extracte comparativ cu extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* ca atare se observ în cazul raportului volumetric egal cu 1:1:1 respectiv unei concentra ii de 2% (% vol.) de extract. Influen a extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* în amestec se observ în toate cazurile investigate, varia ia ariei relative pentru extractele în amestec fiind similar varia iei extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* ca atare. Aria relativ asociat nanoparticulelor de argint înregistreaz o cre tere lent aproximativ liniar în timp ce sugereaz un proces de stabilizare datorat în special extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi*. Varia ia / diferen a mai accentuat observat în cazul raportului 1:1:1 ar putea fi asociat unui efect de stabilizare manifestat mai pregnant în etapa premicelar ; diferen ierea fa de cazul utiliz rii numai a extractului de salvie este evident , în acest caz procesul de reducere a ionilor de argint cu formare de noi particule desf urându-se cu vitez crescut , varia ia ariei relative putând fi asociat îns i aglomer rii nanoparticulelor formate.

Implicarea speciilor chimice din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* în procesul de reducere rezult , în special în cazul concentra iilor apropiate sau superioare (2%, 3% i 4%) concentra iei critice micelare, din varia ia ariei relative în primele 80 minute de contactarea precursorilor pentru amestecul de extracte comparativ cu extractul de salvie; nu trebuie exclus nici posibilitatea modific rii valorii concentra iei critice micelare a extractului de *Sapindus mukorossi* aflat în amestec cu cel de salvie comparativ cu extractul ca atare.

Hidrogel compozit cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură) - Prezen a nanoparticulelor de argint poate fi eviden iat în spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS prin existen a unui maxim de absorb ie bine definit (localizat la 425.68 nm / 0.433 - absorban) prezent numai în spectrul probei de hidrogel cu nanoparticule de argint. Alura benzii de absorb ie sugereaz existen a unor nanoparticule cu un spectru granulometric relativ îngust, cu precizarea c prelevarea probei în vederea analizei s-a efectuat din supernatant existând prin urmare posibilitatea existen ei unor nanoparticule i în matricea hidrogelului care nu au migrat în solu ie apoas .

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC (reticulare prin iradiere) - Existen a nanoparticulelor de argint este eviden iat în spectrul de absorb ie UV-VIS al probelor de hidrogel prin maxime de absorb ie în domeniul 400 ó 430 nm.

În cazul absen ei extractului vegetal din amestecul de sintez maximele de absorb ie sunt deplasate c tre lungimi de und mai mari, sugerând existen a unor nanoparticule de mai mari dimensiuni, în timp ce prezen a extractului vegetal determin deplasarea acestor maxime c tre lungimi de und mai mici; aceast deplasare ar putea fi datorat efectului de stabilizare a compu ilor din extractul vegetal care determin o stabilizare dimensional a nanoparticulelor. Totodat rolul extractului vegetal ca agent reduc tor poate fi sugerat i de amplitudinea maximelor de absorb ie superioar comparativ cu amestecurile f r extract vegetal, indiferent de doza de iradiere.

- La o doz superioar de iradiere se remarc o intensificare a maximului de absorb ie (îndeosebi în cazul absen ei extractului vegetal din amestec) concomitent cu o relativ îngustare a benzii de absorb ie.
- Datele ob inute ar putea sugera o prim direc ie de optimizare a procedeului de sintez în sensul g sirii unui raport optim între doza de iradiere i con inutul de extract din amestecul de sintez.
- Analiza UV-VIS la 100 zile de la preparare a probelor de hidrogel cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC reticulate prin iradiere pune în eviden o stabilitate deosebit a sistemelor respective, spectrele de absorb ie fiind aproape indentice cu cele înregistrate la 5 zile.

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură) - Spectrele de absorb ie UV-VIS înregistrate pentru probele de hidrogel cu matrice polimeric PAA-A pun în eviden apari ia unor maxime tip band care pot fi atribuite form rii i existen ei nanoparticulelor de argint. Aceste observa ii sugereaz posibilitatea implic rii compu ilor din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi* nu numai în reducerea, formarea i stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint dar i în reticularea scheletului polimeric de baz.

- Pentru probele de hidrogel cu NPAg, maximele tip band înregistrate (hidrogel cu NPAg ó extract de *Salvia officinalis*: 416.14 nm / 1.466 A i 352.42 nm / 1.487 A; hidrogel cu NPAg ó extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*: 426.23 nm / 0.507 A; hidrogel cu NPAg ó amestec de extracte: 434.05 nm / 0.612 A) sugereaz existen a unui num r relativ mare de nanoparticule cu o distribu ie granulometric larg.
- Comparativ cu spectrul extractelor vegetale poate fi remarcat o diminuare semnificativ a maximelor prezente în extractele vegetale îndeosebi pentru probele în care este prezent extractul de *Salvia officinalis*. Aceast modificare ar putea confirma implicarea anumitor compu i din extractul de *Salvia officinalis* în procesul de reducere i stabilizare a nanoparticulelor, ace tia influen ând procesul men ionat într-un grad mai ridicat comparativ cu compu ii din extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi*.
- Stabilitatea nanoparticulelor de argint în cadrul hidrogelurilor poate fi pus în eviden i prin înregistrarea spectrelor de absorb ie în UV-VIS la intervale de timp de la sintez. Modific ri notabile în spectrul de absorb ie apar îndeosebi în cazul hidrogelului cu nanoparticule de argint ó extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*, maximul de absorb ie fiind redus ca intensitate în timp, acest lucru putând fi datorat înglob rii / re inerii în gelul prezent în prob a unei frac iuni din nanoparticulele prezente ini ial în solu ie.

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A (reticulare prin iradiere) - Spectrele de absorb ie au pus în eviden existen a unor maxime / benzi de absorb ie ce pot fi asociate existen ei nanoparticulelor de argint i o serie de particularit i dintre care pot fi men ionate:

Toate probele analizate indic o intensificare a maximului de absorb ie odat cu cre terea dozei de iradiere. Aceast modificare este mai accentuat pentru probele de hidrogel cu NPAg ó amestec de extracte i respectiv hidrogel cu NPAg ó f r extract / amestec de extracte. Acest lucru poate fi datorat gener rii în sistem a unui num r crescut de radicali liberi genera i în principal de matricea polimeric dar i de o serie de compu i din extractele vegetale. Alura maximelor de absorb ie pentru probele cu i respectiv f r extract vegetal indic (deplasarea maximului c tre lungimi de und mai mici) rolul compu ilor din extractul vegetal la stabilizarea nanoparticulelor cu formarea unor nanoparticule de dimensiuni mai reduse. Doza de iradiere, a a cum

indic spectrele de absorb ie, pentru hidrogelurile cu NPAg ó extract de *Salvia officinalis* i respectiv *Sapindus mukorossi* nu influen eaz semnificativ generarea de nanoparticule; rezultatele ob inute ar sugera un posibil efect sinergetic (atât în ceea ce prive te generarea cât i stabilizarea nanoparticulelor) datorat compu ilor prezen i în cele dou extracte în urma iradierii.

- Deplasarea pozi iei maximului este semnificativ mai ales pentru hidrogelul cu NPAg ó amestec de extracte vegetale sugerând existen a unor nanoparticule de dimensiuni mai mari odat cu cre terea dozei de iradiere. Absen a unei deplas ri semnificative a maximului de absorb ie odat cu cre terea dozei de iradiere sugereaz faptul c dimensiunea nanoclusterilor de argint metalic forma i nu este influen at semnificativ de doza de iradiere [317].
- Stabilitatea nanoparticulelor de argint în toate sistemele testate se dovede te a fi deosebit pentru toate sistemele analizate i la ambele doze de iradiere. Aceast comportare indic al turi de rolul stabilizant al compu ilor din extractele vegetale i implicare matricii polimerice / componen ilor acesteia în procesul de stabilizare a nanoparticulelor.

Concluzii rezultate în urma studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint / hidrogelurilor compozite prin analiza de spectroscopie în infraroșu cu transformată Fourier (FTIR)

Studiul sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de Salvia officinalis a apelat i la analiza de spectroscopie în infraro u cu transformat Fourier (FTIR) urm rindu-se identificarea modific rilor structurale care ar sugera natura interac iilor dintre nanoparticulele de argint i componen ii extractului vegetal, la diferite valori ale pH-ului, i, de asemenea, de a observa poten iale corela ii cu metodele de caracterizare ale extractului vegetal. Având in vedere ca prezentul studiu a urm rit i influen a pH-ului asupra dinamicii cre terii nanoparticulelor, au fost urm rite modific rile în spectrul IR ale extractului apos în solu ie i în solu ie acid. Modific rile spectrale observate pot fi atribuite modific rilor bazic structurale cauzate de ad ugarea solutiei de hidroxid de potasiu în extract cu efect asupra func iunilor care con in gruparea carbonil. Privit în ansamblu apari ia noilor picuri de absorb ie în spectru indic modificarea important a unor grup ri func ionale din structura compu ilor prezen i în extract în mediu bazic; modific rile observate în spectrele IR ale extractului în mediu acid i alcalin pot fi atribuite schimb rile structurale datorate hidrolizei grupelor amidice; acest lucru ar putea explica i modific rile ap rute în spectrele IR ale extractului de salvie dup ad ugarea azotatului de argint i r spunsul plasmonic slab al amestecului azotat de argint : extract vegetal în solu ie acid .

Analiza FTIR (realizat pentru extractul vegetal, în solu ie neutr , acid i bazic , i respectiv pentru amestecurile de sintez) a pus în eviden în spectrele IR pentru extractul vegetal a unei benzi largi de absorb ie cu un maxim centrat la 3400 cm⁻¹ ce poate fi corelat cu con inutul de compu i fenolici pus în eviden prin determin rile efectuate pentru con inutul de fenoli total, flavonoide i taninuri. Pe de alt parte au fost identificate modific ri structurale, în cazul extractului vegetal în solu ie acid i alcalin , constând în deplasarea unor picuri i apari ia unora noi, ce au fost asociate ac iunii hidroxidului sau acidului introdus în solu ie. Modific rile semnificative au fost observate în domeniul 1600-1800 cm⁻¹, datorate vibra iilor de întindere a leg turilor C-O specifice compu ilor cu grup ri carbonilice. În urma ad ug rii azotatului de argint la extractul vegetal, s-au constat deplas ri ale unor picuri dup formarea nanoparticulelor metalice; aceste deplas ri putând fi asociate interac iilor dintre unele grupe func ionale ale speciilor organice cu nanoparticulele metalice la interfa a metal ó solu ie. Înregistrarea spectrelor FTIR, în cazul studiului influen ei temperaturii asupra sintezei

nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Salvia officinalis*, s-a realizat pentru a ob ine informa ii referitoare la natura interac iilor dintre nanoparticulele de argint i compu ii prezen i în extractul vegetal. Deplasarea unor maxime prezente în spectru dup formarea nanoparticulelor de argint poate fi asociat interac iilor dintre grupele func ionale ale speciilor organice cu suprafa a metalic la nivelul interfe ei acesteia.

Grup rile func ionale ce ar putea fi implicate în stabilizarea nanoparticulelor sintetizate cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* au fost investigate prin spectroscopie FTIR, o serie de studii recente în domeniu indicând posibilitatea detect rii directe saponinelor în extractele apoase i alcoolice brute, înaintea purific rii, utilizând spectroscopia FTIR, reducând astfel durata analizei i necesitatea etapelor de purificare preliminare. Profilul FTIR al extractului vegetal i nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate eviden iaz existen a biomoleculelor, cu grupe func ionale specifice flavonoidelor i saponinelor, ce pot ac iona ca stabilizatori ai nanoparticulelor; modific rile spectrale observate sugereaz stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint prin intermediul grupelor func ionale asociate biomoleculelor precum flavonoidele i saponinele, prezente în extract, aceste interac ii decurgând prin intermediul grupelor carboxilice de la nivelul saponinelor ca i al grupelor carbonil din structura flavonoidelor.

Hidrogel compozit cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură) - Se poate remarca o similitudine între spectrele IR în cazul probelor de hidrogeluri cu matrice hibrid PVA-HC, respectiv cu extract de *Salvia officinalis*, nanoparticule de argint, azotat de argint i matrice polimeric ca atare. Acest lucru ar sugera o înglobare avansat a componen ilor nanomaterialului ob inut în matricea polimeric . Principalele modific ri observate în spectrul IR apar îndeosebi între componen ii matricii polimerice (hidrolizatul de colagen i alcoolul polivinilic) i matricea polimeric ob inut pe baza acestora. Maximele semnificative înregistrate în spectrele FTIR ale nanomaterialului tip hidrogel cu matrice polimeric hibrid alcool polivinilic ó hidrolizat de colagen i nanoparticule de argint reticulare, precum i cele asociate probelor martor sunt prezentate în Anexa 7 (tabelul 7.1).

Hidrogel compozit cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC (reticulare prin iradiere)

Spectrele FTIR în cazul hidrogelurilor cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC i nanoparticule de argint reticulate prin iradiere la 20 kGy nu prezint modific ri semnificative comparativ cu probele martor ceea ce ar sugera o încorporare avansat a nanoparticulelor de argint în matricea polimeric . Modific rile spectrale observate sunt legate de deplasarea u oar a unor picuri în spectrul probelor cu nanoparticule de argint comparativ cu spectrul probelor martor.

Ini ial, spectrele apar similare indicând faptul c matricea polimeric / structura de baz a colagenului sufer modific ri minore în urma iradierii. Cu toate acestea modific rile observate pot oferi indica ii asupra modific rilor structurale datorate reticul rii îndeosebi prin intermediul benzilor amidice. Banda asociat amidei A (3258 cm^{-1} în cazul probei neiradiate) sufer modific ri minore în urma iradierii deplasându-se u or c tre numere de und mai mari în probele iradiate concomitent cu o cre tere în intensitate îndeosebi în cazul probelor cu azotat de argint dar f r extract vegetal, deplasarea sau reducerea intensit ii acestei benzi fiind legat de scindarea structurii colagenice helicoidale. Pozi ia benzii de a absorb ie asociat amidei I (1630 cm^{-1} în cazul probei neiradiate; vibra ii de întindere C=O din leg tura amidic) se deplaseaz u or spre numere und mai mari în spectrul probelor iradiate cu o reducere a intensit ii benzii spectrale. În general aceast band localizat între 1650 cm^{-1} i 1635 cm^{-1} apare în cazul colagenului cu structur helicoidal respectiv structur spiralat aleatorie. Sc derea în intensitate a benzii de absorb ie asociat amidei I ($1600-1690 \text{ cm}^{-1}$) în cazul probelor iradiate ar indica faptul c iradierea induce reticul ri în moleculele de colagen prin formarea de leg turi peptidice. Aceast band fiind deosebit de senzitiv la mici

varia ii ale geometriei moleculare i modului de realizare a leg turilor de hidrogen, sc derea în intensitate poate fi asociat dispari iei unor structuri secundare ale colagenului (alfa-helix, beta-structura; structura secundar constituie o aranjare ordonat a polipeptidei într-o form mai compact stabilizat prin leg turi de hidrogen). Sc derea în intensitate a benzilor spectrale asociate amidei I i II concomitent cu deplasarea acestora c tre numere de und mai mari în cazul probelor iradiate poate indica formarea leg turilor de hidrogen între grupele aminice ale colagenului i grupele hidroxil din alcoolul polivinilic. Banda de absorb ie asociat amidei II (1535 cm⁻¹ în cazul probei neiradiate=vibra ii de deformare N-H i de întindere C-N) poate fi influen at sensibil în urma iradierii=pozi ionarea acestei benzi c tre numere de und mai mari ar indica o structur helicoidal (1550 cm⁻¹ în cazul colagenului pur). Banda de absorb ie centrat la 1238 cm⁻¹ asociat amidei III (proba neiradiat) sufer o scindare în dou picuri de intensitate redus în spectrul probelor iradiate aceast modificare fiind asociat aminoacizilor reziduali din compozi ia colagenului denaturat în urma iradierii. În urma expunerii la iradiere cu radia ii gamma, colagenul i materialele colagenice sufer procese de reticulare i scindare / degradare. În general reticularea predomin în cazul în care proba se afl în mediu apos în timp ce în cazul probei uscate predomin scindarea / denaturarea. Mecanismul de reticulare propus de unii autori [337] implic radicalii hidroxil rezulta i în urma radiolizei apei care interac ioneaz cu catena polimeric formând un radical polimeric intermediar care ulterior poate induce reticul ri intermoleculare sau degrad ri prin reac ii intra i intermoleculare.

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură) - Interpretarea spectrelor FTIR a avut în vedere identificarea maximelor de absorb ie care sufer modific ri în mediile analizate (extract vegetal brut, componen i ai matricii polimerice i hidrogeluri cu nanoparticule de argint). Modific rile pozi iei maximelor spectrale pot fi asociate adsorb iei constituen ilor extractului vegetal pe suprafa a nanoparticulelor de argint, leg turilor care pot apare în urma reticul rii matricii polimerice i interac iei dintre aceasta i / sau nanoparticulele de argint respectiv extractul vegetal.

Spectrul FTIR al matricii polimerice prezint în general similarit i cu spectrul poliacrilamidei (PAA), diferen e notabile observându-se mai ales comparativ cu spectrul amidonului în regiunea sub 1800 cm⁻¹. Interac iile dintre grupele func ionale cu azot prezente în matricea polimeric i atomii metalici se manifest în general într-o deplasare c tre numere de und mai mari a benzilor corespunz toare grupelor func ionale cu azot în spectrul FTIR. Amidonul nativ prezint în spectrul FTIR caracteristici vibra ionale complexe datorate ciclului piranozic din unit ile glicozidice în regiunea sub 800 cm⁻¹. Caracteristicile spectrale ale amidonului iradiat sunt similare cu cele ale celui nativ cu u oare deplas ri ale maximelor. Aceste deplas ri nu indic o modificare clar i evident a structurii amidonului. Cu toate acestea aceste modific ri minore în special pentru benzile atribuite leg turilor C-H i O-H ar putea sugera afectarea stabilit ii leg turilor de hidrogen inter i intramoleculare în procesului de iradiere.

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A (reticulare prin iradiere) - Analiza FTIR a hidrogelurilor compozite a dus la înregistrarea unor spectre de absorb ie relativ similare îns cu o serie de particularit i care sugereaz existen a unor interac ii între matricea polimeric / componen ii acesteia ó compu ii din extractul vegetal ó nanoparticulele de argint:

Banda spectral larg din spectrul probei martor se reduce ca intensitate în cazul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg concomitent cu o îngustare a benzii. Maximul de absorb ie de la 3190 cm⁻¹ persist îndeosebi în cazul hidrogelului cu NPAg generate prin iradiere în prezen de azotat de argint (3182 cm⁻¹). Prezen a acestei benzi poate fi asociat vibra iilor de întindere O-H, grupelor OH caracteristice compu ilor din extractul / extractele vegetale, grupelor OH saponinice. Modificarea acestei benzi ar putea fi datorat compu ilor polifenolici din extract / extracte care ac ioneaz ca i captori ai radicalilor rezulta i în urma iradierii.

- Maximul localizat la 2930 cm⁻¹ este redus ca intensitate în cazul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extract de Salvia officinalis i respectiv Sapindus mukorossi cu u oar deplasare c tre numere de und mai mici. Acest maxim poate fi asociat vibra iilor de întindere C-H, CH₂- i CH₃-, vibra iilor de întindere ale C-H metilenic asimetric.
- În spectrul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extract Sapindus mukorossi i amestec extracte apare un maxim situat la 1722 cm⁻¹ i respectiv 1719 cm⁻¹. Prezen a acestui maxim asociat vibra iilor de întindere C=O, combin ri aromatice, acid carboxilic, ceton , ester sugereaz implicarea compu ilor din extract (saponine) în reducerea / stabilizarea NPAg i o posibil interac ie cu componen ii matricii polimerice.
- Cele trei maxime asociate benzii spectrale din proba martor (1659 cm⁻¹, 1605 cm⁻¹ i 1553 cm⁻¹) i hidrogelul cu NPAg / azotat de argint nu î i modific semnificativ pozi ia fiind îns diminuate sensibil în cazul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extracte vegetale. Aceast varia ie sugereaz o posibil interac ie dintre compu i prezen i în extract i matricea polimeric / componen ii acesteia. Totodat maximul de la 1553 cm⁻¹ este diminuat semnificativ îndeosebi pentru hidrogelurile cu NPAg / extract *Sapindus mukorossi* i amestec extracte. Prezen a acestei benzi poate fi asociat vibra iilor de întindere C=O (1659 cm⁻¹) i respectiv vibra iilor de îndoire N-H (1605 cm⁻¹) ale grupelor amidice.
- Maximul localizat la 1445 cm⁻¹ este diminuat semnificativ în spectrul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extracte sau amestec de extracte r mânând aproape nemodificat în cazul hidrogelului cu NPAg ob inute prin iradiere. Nanoparticulele de argint ar putea fi fixate în matricea polimeric i prin intermediul compu ilor din extractul vegetal care ar putea ac iona ca un liant între matrice i NPAg contribuind la reticulare i stabilizarea nanoparticulelor.
- Maximul localizat la 1402 cm⁻¹ apare i în spectrul hidrogelului cu NPAg / extract de Salvia officinalis fiind absent în spectrul hidrogelului cu NPAg / extract de Sapindus mukorossi i respectiv foarte diminuat în spectrul hidrogelului cu NPAg / amestec de extracte (P11-ir20); prezen a acestui maxim poate fi asociat vibra iilor de întindere C-N caracteristice benzii amidice grefate pe scheletul amidonului. Acest lucru sugerez interac ia anumitor compu i specifici extractului de Sapindus mukorossi cu matricea polimeric / amidonul.
- În cazul hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extract de Sapindus mukorossi sau amestec de extracte apare un maxim distinct centrat la 1240 cm⁻¹ respectiv 1244 cm⁻¹. Maximul ar putea fi asociat prezen ei compu ilor din extractul de Sapindus mukorossi; leg turi C-O-C i grupe ester carboxilic, leg turi C-CH₃, întinderi legaturi aril óO în eteri aromatici, C-O- inele epoxi i oxiran, întindere C-N amine primare aromatice.
- Maximul de la 1150 cm⁻¹ prezent în spectrul matricii polimerice i al hidrogelurilor cu NPAg / extract de Salvia officinalis i respectiv azotat de argint poate fi asociat vibra iilor de întindere C-O-C. În spectrul hidrogelului cu NPAg / extract de Sapindus mukorossi i respectiv amestec de extracte acest maxim este absent indicând o posibil interac ie dintre compu i ai extractului de Sapindus mukorossi i matricea polimeric.

Concluzii rezultate în urma studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint / hidrogelurilor compozite prin analiza de difracție de raze X (XRD)

Difractogramele înregistrate la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*, pentru diferite rapoarte volumetrice extract : solu ie ionic , au permis evaluarea comparativ , structural i compozi ional, a probelor supuse analizei. Difractogramele probelor martor (extract) prezint un maxim larg bine definit în domeniul 20 de 10-25° fiind absente maxime înguste, sugerând astfel caracterul amorf al extractului apos uscat. Pentru amestecurile de sintez intensitatea maximului asociat caracterului amorf scade pe m sura cre terii con inutului de extract în amestec concomitent cu apari ia unor maxime înguste sugerând formarea unor compu i cristalini în timpul sintezei. Prezen a concomitent a fazei amorfe i cristaline dup sintez sugereaz ata area unor compu i din extract la nanoparticulele formate, comportare ce ar confirma i rezultatele ob inute prin spectroscopia în ultraviolet-vizibil i infraro u.

Datele de difrac ie experimentale i standard confirm identificarea argintului ca faz cristalin în amestecurile studiate; pentru maximele semnificative sunt indicate ungiurile de difrac ie, distan ele interplanare i indicii Miller. Prin compararea intensit ii maximului localizat la 38° se observ c valorile cele mai ridicate au fost înregistrate pentru amestecul cu raport volumetric de sintez 1:1, extract : sare ionic , intensitatea acestui maxim fiind redus pentru rapoartele de sintez de 1:2 i respectiv 1:4. De asemenea acest maxim este diminuat în mare m sur la raportul volumetric de sintez 2:1, fiind absent în difractograma aferent raportului volumetric 4:1.

Analiza XRD a confirmat prezen a argintului cristalin în probele studiate în special în cazul raportului volumetric de sintez egal cu 1: 1 i inferior acestuia, fiind de asemenea pus în eviden i prezen a azotatului de argint nereac ionat. Prin raportare i la o serie de date de literatur , difrac ia de raze X a permis ob inerea de informa ii referitoare la identificarea nanoparticulelor i evolu ia cristalinit ii probelor investigate.

Analiza de difrac ie de raze X (XRD) a avut în vedere evaluarea cristalinit ii nanomaterialelor investigate precum i confirmarea prezen ei compu ilor argintului fiind analizate hidrogelurile compozite ob inute cu extracte de *Salvia officinalis*, *Sapindus mukorossi* i amestec de extracte, respectiv matricile polimerice corespunz toare.

Rezultatele difractogramelor, pentru hidrogelurile cu matrice polimeric PAA-A, au indicat diferen e între hidrogelurile ob inute cu extract / amestec de extracte de Sapindus mukorossi (P10-1902 i P11-1902) i cele ob inute numai cu extract de Salvia officinalis (P9-1902) referitoare la prezen a respectiv absen a unor picuri în cazul probelor men ionate anterior. Picurile observate la valori 20 de aproximativ 32° al turi de asimetria picului de la 38° pot sugera prezen a oxidului de argint AgO monoclinic centrosimetric ((ICDD 04-007-1374) cu planele corespunz toare (2.0.0), (-1.1.1) i (-2.0.2). Azotatul de argint ortorombic non-centrosimetric (ICDD 01-074-4790) poate fi considerat prezent în cazul probelor P10-1902 i P11-1902 datorit picurilor observate la valori 2θ de aproximativ 20°, 21°, 24°, 30° care pot fi asociate planelor de cristalizare (1.1.1), (2.0.1), (0.2.0) i (1.1.2). Aceste observa ii duc la concluzia c utilizarea diferi ilor agen i reduc tori prezen i în extracte contribuie la propriet ile nanomaterialelor ob inute. Prin urmare extractul de Salvia officinalis ca i agent reduc tor are o comportare diferit fa de cel de Sapindus mukorossi; în primul caz procesul de sintez poate fi considerat mai eficient întrucât în produsul final nu a fost identificat azotat de argint sau oxid de argint sau ace tia sunt prezen i sub limita de detec ie a tehnicii de difrac ie de raze X. În cazul amestecului de extracte, influen a ambelor extracte a fost observat asupra propriet ilor produsului final.

Influen a agentului reduc tor (extractului vegetal) utilizat a fost eviden iat de asemenea prin compararea gradului de cristalinitate relativ. Datele ob inute indic o cre tere a

gradului de cristalinitate în ordinea P10, P9 i respectiv P11, rezultatele indicând caracterul mixt, cristalin i amorf, al materialelor sintetizate precum i c tipul de extract utilizat ca agent reduc tor i varianta de reticulare aplicat, influen eaz cristalinitatea produsului final.

Picurile înregistrate pentru hidrogelurile cu matrice polimeric PVA/HC au fost asociate unor compu i organici în care argintul se afl legat de structura macromolecular în diferite rapoarte stoechiometrice. Ca urmare picurile localizate la valori 20 de aproximativ 29°, 32°, 38°, 40°, 42°, 46°, unele de intensitate redus , pot fi datorate compu ilor argint ó alcool polivinilic (Ag-PVA) cu formule moleculare precum: $Ag(C_2H_4O)_{48}$ ó ICDD 00-058-1070, $Ag(C_2H_4O)_{121}$ ó ICDD 00-058-1069, $Ag(C_2H_4O)_{243}$ ó ICDD 00-058-1068. Diferen ele observate în difractogramele hidrogelurilor sintetizate i probelor control / martor, atât în cazul reticul rii prin cicluri termice cât i prin iradiere, indic influen a procedeului de sintez aplicat asupra cristalinit ii i compozi iei matricii polimerice.

Concluzii rezultate în urma studiului sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint / hidrogelurilor compozite prin microscopie electronică de baleiaj și spectroscopie de raze X cu dispersie după energie (SEM-EDS)

Analiza prin microscopie cu scanare electronic (SEM) a fost utilizat pentru a caracteriza dimensiunea, forma i morfologia nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate cu extract de *Salvia officinalis*. Din imaginile SEM s-a putut observa c atunci când în amestecul ini ial de sintez azotatul de argint se afl în exces fa de extract se formeaz conglomerate cu model fractal de cristalizare. Dimensiunea conglomeratelor i reducerea num rului de nanoparticule sunt direct propor ionale cu con inutul de azotat de argint în amestec. Un con inut mai ridicat de azotat de argint în amestec conduce la formarea de particule cu dimensiuni micro i nanometrice cu form sferic i cilindric (tije i nanotije). O sc dere a num rului de nanoparticule formate în solu ie poate fi observat pentru probele la care extractul de salvie se afl în exces volumetric fa de azotatul de argint; totodat se constat i o reducere a dimensiuni i nanoparticulelor formate. În cazul raportului de amestecare volumetric azotat de argint : extract de salvie egal cu 1:4 au fi putut puse în eviden i nanoparticule cubice al turi de cele sferice.

În urma analizei SEM, la sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*, poate fi observat formarea de conglomerate în cazul utiliz rii unei concentra ii mai mari de extract în amestecul ini ial de sintez concomitent cu o reducere a con inutului de nanoparticule; în toate cazurile au fost puse în eviden nanoparticule de form sferic.

Analiza prin microscopie cu scanare electronic utilizat pentru a caracteriza dimensiunea, forma i morfologia nanoparticulelor de argint sintetizate cu amestec de extracte, a avut în vedere probele preparate la rapoarte de amestecare ale componen ilor de 1:2:2 i respectiv 1:10:10 (amestecuri de sintez din categoria celor la care extractul de *Salvia officinalis* i azotat de argint se afl în exces fa de extractul de *Sapindus mukorossi*, i la care au fost observate modific ri notabile în urma monitoriz rii UV-VIS). Din imaginile SEM s-au putut observa formarea i a unor conglomerate a c ror dimensiune se reduce pe m sura sc derii con inutului de extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* în amestecul de sintez conglomeratelor; aceea i tendin apare i în ceea ce prive te dimensiunea nanoparticulelor de argint aproximativ sferice i num rul acestora (reducerea dimensiunii i cre terea num rului de nanoparticule pentru raportul de amestecare 1:10:10 comparativ cu raportul de amestecare 1:2:2).

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PVA-HC (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură și iradiere) - Morfologia / forma nanoparticulelor de argint este relativ complex , unele dintre acestea prezentând forme polignale asociate în general ca sferice. Necesitatea usc rii suspensiei înainte de efectuarea observa iilor duce la aglomer ri ale nanoparticulelor,

forma real a particulelor în coloid fiind astfel mai dificil de observat cu acurate e. Au fost puse în eviden relativ de form sferic i polidisperse, fiind prezente i aglomer ri, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 21÷37 nm. Spectrele EDS au pus în eviden al turi de spoturile asociate argintului i cele asociate carbonului, oxigenului i azotului ce confirm prezen a stabilizatorilor constitui i din catene alchilice în probele examinate. În zona central a spectrului poate fi observat clar picul asociat argintului localizat la 2.5 keV acest maxim fiind asociat liniilor K, L caracteristice argintului. Este cunoscut din literatura în domeniu c intensit ile liniilor spectrale sunt propor ionale cu abunden a elementului îns având în vedere c metoda EDS nu poate distinge între argintul elemental i atomii de argint prezen i în al i compu i, rezultatul analizei eviden iaz valori ale concentra iilor relative în probele investigate.

Hidrogeluri compozite cu matrice polimerică PAA-A (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatură și iradiere)

Analiza SEM pentru hidrogelurilor compozite cu NPAg utilizînd extract de *Salvia* officinalis a pus în eviden existen a nanoparticulelor de form aproximativ sferic , dispersate, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 20 ó 60 nm. Concentra ia medie relativ a argintului în probele investigate a variat între 13.6% (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur), 28.5% (iradiere ó 20 kGy) i respectiv 15.2% (iradiere ó 50 kGy); valorile ridicate ale concentra iei medii relative a carbonului i oxigenului indic existen a stratului stabilizator indus de matricea polimeric i compu ii fitochimici din extract asupra nanoparticulelor de argint. Cre terea con inutului de argint în urma iradierii / dozei de iradiere ar putea fi asociat i scind rii catenelor polimerice ca rezultat al iradierii i ca urmare o sc dere a con inutului de carbon i oxigen în stratul stabilizator din jurul nanoparticulelor; o tendin similar o înregistreaz i varia ia raportului concentra iei medii relative a argintului (C_{mC}) i respectiv a oxigenului (C_{mO}).

Pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu NPAg utilizînd extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* au fost observate nanoparticule de form aproximativ sferic , dispersate, cu dimensiuni în intervalul 30 ó 60 nm. Un aspect aparte referitor la aceste probe investigate îl constituie prezen a peliculei de gel observabil chair dup procesarea probei în vederea analizei SEM-EDS. Valoarea raportului C_{mAg} / C_{mC} i C_{mAg} / C_{mO} înregisteaz i în acest caz o varia ie similar extractului de salvie. Valorile superioare în cazul concentra iei medii relative a carbonului i oxigenului, pentru fiecare variant de reticulare, comparativ cu cele ale extractului de salvie sugereaz aderarea stratului stabilizator (matrice polimeric / compu i fitochimici din extract) într-o m sur mai mare.

Utilizarea amestecului de extracte la ob inerea hidrogelurile compozite cu NPAg a eviden iat în urma analizei SEM-EDS existen a nanoparticulelor de form sferic , disperse (în unele cazuri pot fi observate i aglomer ri de particule) cu dimensiuni cuprinse între 10 ó 60 nm. O prim remarc referitoare la rezultatele ob inute este legat de ob inerea unor valori superioare ale C_{mAg} comparativ cu extractele utilizate ca atare în condi ii similare de sintez / analiz ceea ce sugereaz un efect sinergetic al compu ilor fitochimici prezen i în cele dou extracte relativ la reducerea / stabilizarea nanoparticulelor de argint în cadrul matricii polimerice. În al doilea rând poate fi remarcat o varia ie diferit a raportului concentra iilor medii relative (C_{mAg} / C_{mC} i C_{mAg} / C_{mO}) fa de hidrogelurile ob inute cu extracte ca atare, respectiv valorile cele mai ridicate fiind ob inute în cazul reticul rii prin cicluri de temperatur .

Concluzii rezultate în urma evaluării activității antibacteriene a hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint

Studiul microbiologic efectuat asupra hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint s-a realizat în scopul eviden ierii caracterului lor antimicrobian i determin rii dozei minime bactericide asupra tulpinilor de bacterii testate. Au fost selectate dou tulpini de bacterii (sub form de culturi pure liofilizate) frecvent implicate în infec iile intraspitalice ti: *Escherichia coli* ATCC reg. 25922 - bacterie Gram negativ (condi ionat patogen, extrem de rezistent la tratamentul cu antibiotice) i *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC reg 25923 - bacterie Gram pozitiv, patogen, din clasa stafilococilor coagulazo-pozitivi.

Eficien a hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint a fost evaluat prin intermediul concentra iei minime bactericide (CMB). Astfel într-o faz preliminar au fost repetate testele cu propor ii mai reduse de hidrogeluri (0.8 ml i 0.5 ml / plac test) rezultatele indicînd i aceste cazuri lipsa coloniilor tipice de bacterii ceea ce indic un efect bactericid asupra ambelor tulpini bacteriene. Ca urmare a acestor teste s-a stabilit o sensibilitate diferen iat a tulpinilor bacteriene la ac iunea nanomaterialelor testate, tulpina de *Escherichia coli* fiind mai sensibil decât cea de *Staphylococcus aureus*. Din acest motiv în testele ulterioare, testarea pe tulpin de *Escherichia coli* s-a efectuat plecând de la dilu ia de baz d₀ cu 0.5 ml hidrogel respectiv 0.8 ml hidrogel pentru testarea pe tulpin de *Staphylococcus aureus*. Pentru valori inferioare d₀ în pl ci apar dezvoltate colonii tipice de bacterii hidrogelurile manifestând doar efect bacteriostatic.

Pentru hidrogelurile compozite cu matrice polimeric PVA-HC s-a observat c pe m sur ce cre te dilu ia hidrogelului (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur), respectiv scade concentra ia nanoparticulelor de de argint / ionilor de argint în mediu, num rul de colonii specifice de Staphylococcus aureus cre te considerabil; bacteriile se dezvolt optim cu cât sunt mai pu in expuse ac iunii metalului / ionilor metalici, multiplicarea acestora fiind din ce în ce mai pu in inhibat . Probele cu reticulare prin iradiere sunt singurele care mai prezint efect bacteriostatic la dilu ia d_3 (10⁻³), respectiv un num r de colonii sub 300, care conform standardului de num rare, mai poate fi acceptat în interpretarea rezultatelor. O comportare similar s-a constat i în cazul testelor efectuate pe tulpin de Escherichia coli, hidrogelurile cu reticulare prin iradiere fiind i de aceast dat cele care mai prezint efect bacteriostatic la dilu ia d_3 (10⁻³). Valorile relativ mai ridicate ale num rului de colonii în cazul tulpinii de Escherichia coli comparativ cu cea de Staphylococcus aureus, pentru acela i hidrogel i aceea i dilu ie, trebuie s ia în considerare dilu ia de baz d_0 de la care s-a pornit (diferit pentru cele dou tulpini bacteriene). Cu toate acestea în cazul ambelor tulpini bacteriene chiar la dilu ii mai mici $(10^{-1}, 10^{-2}, \text{ i chiar } 10^{-3})$ ale hidrogelurilor, acestea încep s - i piard efectul bactericid, având totu i un efect bacteriostatic destul de puternic - demonstrat de num rul relativ mic de colonii dezvoltate în pl ci ó îndeosebi hidrogelurile cu nanoparticule de argint ob inute cu extract vegetal i supuse reticul rii prin iradiere.

Efectul bacteriostatic superior în cazul hidrogelurilor cu reticulare prin iradiere, cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* relativ la hidrogelurile cu azotat de argint (hidrogeluri cu nanoparticule de argint generate prin iradiere), sugereaz un posibil efect bacteriostatic amplificat i de compu ii prezen i în extractul vegetal.

În cazul hidrogelurile compozite cu matrice polimeric PAA-A, majoritatea tipurilor de hidrogeluri testate prezint un efect bacteriostatic semnificativ la dilu ia $d_1(10^{-1})$, diminuat în mare m sur la dilu ia $d_2(10^{-2})$ respectiv absent la dilu ia $d_3(10^{-3})$ (num r de colonii peste 300, care conform standardului de num rare men ionat în tez nu mai poate fi acceptat în interpretarea rezultatelor). Dintre probele testate se remarc îndeosebi hidrogelurile cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur) i respectiv cu amestec de extracte (reticulare prin iradiere), care prezint efect bacteriostatic chiar la dilu ia $d_3(10^{-3})$; hidrogelul

cu amestec de extracte reticulat prin iradiere ó 50 kGy este singurul care mai prezint efect bactericid la dilu ia $d_1(10^{-1})$ pe tulpin de *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Rezultatele ob inute sugereaz i o contribu ie la activitatea antimicrobian din partea compu ilor din extractele vegetale (prezen i la nivelul matricii polimerice i la nivelul nanoparticulelor de argint ca agen i stabilizatori). Generarea nanoparticulelor de argint prin iradiere contribuie de asemenea la efectul antimicrobian al materialului final (valori aproximativ similare sau relativ superioare odat cu cre terea dozei de iradiere) îns nu în aceea i m sur ca extractul vegetal, a a cum sugereaz valorile ob inute pentru probele cu extract vegetal comparativ cu cele f r extract supuse iradierii.

Pe de alt parte pentru acela i tip de material (matrice polimeric , extract vegetal) procedeul de reticulare prin iradiere comparativ cu cel prin cicluri de temperatur induce o sc dere a poten ialului antimicrobian la dilu iile testate; aceast comportare reiese dac se compar datele pentru hidrogelurile cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* i extract de *Sapindus mukorossi*. Iradierea în aceste cazuri poate determina o reducere a con inutului de compu i asocia i extractului prin intermediul radicalilor liberi genera i i care ar õconsumaö o parte din ace tia.

O comportare atipic în seriile de hidrogeluri men ionate anterior o au hidrogelurile ob inute cu amestec de extracte în sensul c iradierea / doza de iradiere amplific efectul bactericid; valorile superioare asociate efectului bacteriostatic (hidrogel cu amestec de extracte reticulat prin cicluri de temperatur), dac se iau în considerare valorile pentru dilu ia $d_1(10^{-1})$, i apropiate ca valoare de cele pentru hidrogelul cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* neiradiat, sugereaz o activitate antimicrobian datorat extractului de salvie i totodat un posibil efect sinergetic datorat celor dou extracte în amestec.

Hidrogelurile cu nanoparticule de argint / matrice polimeric PAA-A testate pe tulpin de *Escherichia coli* au dus la rezultate aproximativ similare cu testarea pe tulpin de *Staphylococcus aureus* cu unele particularit i care vor fi men ionate în cele ce urmeaz. Majoritatea tipurilor de hidrogeluri testate prezint un efect bacteriostatic la dilu ia $d_1(10^{-1})$, diminuat în mare m sur la dilu ia $d_2(10^{-2})$ respectiv absent la majoritatea probelor pentru dilu ia $d_3(10^{-3})$ (num r de colonii peste 300, care conform standardului de num rare men ionat în tez nu mai poate fi acceptat în interpretarea rezultatelor). Dintre probele testate se remarc îndeosebi hidrogelurile cu extract de salvie (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur) i cel cu amestec de extracte (reticulare prin iradiere ó 50 kGy) care prezint înc efect bacteriostatic la dilu ia $d_3(10^{-3})$.

Rezultatele ob inute sugereaz i de aceast dat o contribu ie la activitatea antimicrobian din partea compu ilor din extractele vegetale. Generarea nanoparticulelor de argint prin iradiere contribuie de asemenea la efectul antimicrobian al materialului final (valori aproximativ similare sau relativ superioare odat cu cre terea dozei de iradiere) îns nu în aceea i m sur ca extractul vegetal, a a cum sugereaz valorile ob inute pentru probele cu extract vegetal comparativ cu cele f r extract (hidrogeluri cu AgNO₃ / iradiere).

Pentru acela i tip de material (matrice polimeric , extract vegetal) procedeul de reticulare prin iradiere comparativ cu cel prin cicluri de temperatur induce o sc dere a poten ialului antimicrobian la dilu iile testate; iradierea în aceste cazuri poate determina o reducere a con inutului de compu i asocia i extractului prin intermediul radicalilor liberi genera i i care ar õconsumaö o parte din ace tia. O comportare atipic în seriile de hidrogeluri men ionate anterior, ca i în cazul tulpinii de *Staphylococcus aureus* o au hidrogelurile ob inute cu amestec de extracte, iradierea / doza de iradiere amplificând efectul bactericid; valorile superioare asociate efectului bacteriostatic (hidrogel cu amestec de extracte reticulat prin cicluri de temperatur), dac se ia în considerare valoarea pentru dilu ia $d_1(10^{-1})$, i aproximativ identic pentru hidrogelul cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* neiradiat

sugereaz o activitate antimicrobian datorat îndeosebi extractului de salvie i totodat un posibil efect sinergetic datorat amestecului dintre cele dou extracte.

Datele ob inute indic faptul c toate hidrogelurile compozite cu nanoparticule de argint sintetizate prezint un efect bacteriostatic la tulpinile de *Escherichia coli* i *Staphylococcus aureus* îns pentru valori diferite ale CMB. Concentra iile / dozele minime bactericide pot fi deduse în func ie de dilu ia de baz $d_0 (10^0)$, 0.5 ml pentru *Escherichia coli* i respectiv 0.8 ml pentru *Staphylococcus aureus*, de la care se fac dilu iile ini iale i de ultima dilu ie la care nanomaterialul a mai prezentat efect bacteriostatic (ultima dilu ie la care s-a înregistrat un num r de colonii / plac mai mic de 300, conform ISO 7218 [196] de num rare i interpretare a rezultatelor analizelor microbiologice).

7.2 Contribuții proprii

În cadrul tezei de doctorat õNanomateriale pe baz de extracte naturale cu aplica ii biomedicaleö, au fost aduse urm toarele contribu ii personale:

- A fost realizat un studiu documentar extins asupra nanoparticulelor metalice / nanomaterialelor, axat pe sinteza õverdeö a nanoparticulelor de argint cu extracte din plante i principalilor factori care intervin în biosinteza acestora, nanomaterialelor cu matrice polimeric func ionalizate cu nanoparticule de argint respectiv hidrogelurilor compozite cu nanoparticule de argint. De asemenea au fost considerate aspecte legate de mecanismul ac iunii antimicrobiene a nanoparticulelor de argint i toxicologiei acestora.
- 2) S-a realizat un studiu asupra sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Salvia officinalis*, studiu care a avut în vedere aspecte legate de dinamica procesului de cre tere a nanoparticulelor de argint, influen a raportului de combinare sare ionic : extract vegetal, influen a pH-ului i a temperaturii asupra procesului de sintez .
- 3) Similar studiului efectuat cu extract de *Salvia officinalis* s-a realizat i un studiu asupra sintezei nanoparticulelor de argint cu extract de *Sapindus mukorossi* în care al turi de influen a pH-ului i raportului de combinare sare ionic : extract vegetal a fost eviden iat i rolul concentra iei critice micelare a extractului utilizat.
- 4) Demersul de cercetare a avut în vedere i sinteza nanoparticulelor de argint cu amestec de extracte (*Salvia officinalis* i *Sapindus mukorossi*) axându-se pe influen a pH-ului i raportului de amestecare între extractele individuale.
- 5) Au fost ob inute hidrogelurile compozite cu nanoparticule de argint, cu matrice polimeric (alcool polivinilic ó hidrolizat de colagen i respectiv poliacrilamid ó amidon), având la baz atât compu i sintetici (alcoolul polivinilic i poliacrialamida) cât i compu i naturali (hidrolizatul de colagen i amidonul) cu grad ridicat de biocompatibilitate. Varianta de sintez aplicat, formarea nanoparticulelor *in situ* în cadrul unui hidrogel preformat, a implicat ob inerea într-o prim faz a hidrogelul preformat ce ac ioneaz ca un microreactor în care nanoparticulele au fost ob inte cu ajutorul extractelor vegetale men ionate anterior. Metodele de reticulare aplicate matricii polimerice (reticulare prin cicluri de temperatur / congelare ó decongelare i respectiv reticularea prin iradiere) au avut în vedere dezvoltarea unor produse i procese care s reduc sau s elimine utilizarea i generarea unor substan e poten ial nocive.
- 6) A fost realizat o caracterizare prin metode moderne de analiz nanoparticulelor de argint i nanomaterialelor sintetizate, un aspect aparte în acest sens fiind aplicat în cadrul spectroscopiei în ultraviolet-vizibil utilizându-se ca parametru aria relativ asociat nanoparticulelor de argint.
- 7) Asupra nanomaterialelor sintetizate a fost realizat un studiu microbiologic în vederea evalu rii propriet ilor antibacteriene, demonstrându-se c toate nanomaterialele ob inute au efect bactericid sau bacteriostatic asupra unor bacterii cu inciden ridicat în infec iile nosocomiale (*Staphylococcus aureus* i *Escherichia coli*).
- 8) Problematica abordat în cadrul tezei de doctorat, legat de o serie de aspecte fundamentale din domeniul nanomaterialelor pentru aplica ii biomedicale, se înscrie între direc iile principale de ac iune ale programelor de cercetare de excelen prin care se promoveaz cunoa terea tiin ific în domeniul nanomaterialelor. Dezvoltarea de nanomateriale biocompatibile, cu func ionalitate ridicat i efecte secundare reduse în cazul aplica iilor medicale, permi ând terapii performante i tratamente de succes, reprezint un domeniu important prin prisma poten ialului lucrativ dar i a s n ta ii popula iei.

7.3 Perspective de cercetare

Extinderea ariei de cercetare aferent domeniului abordat în cadrul prezentei tezei de doctorat (õNanomateriale pe baz de extracte naturale cu aplica ii biomedicaleö), ar putea avea în vedere urm toarele aspecte / teme:

- Sursa / tipul i concentra ia extractelor de plante ó modalitatea de ob inere i caracterizarea extractului vegetal (utilizarea extractului sub form uscat / liofilizare);
- Corelarea compozi iei chimice i a parametrilor de sintez cu propriet ile nanomaterialelor sintetizate;
- Sinteza unor materiale ce includ extracte naturale cu rol terapeutic i cu ac iune sinergic bine determinat ;
- Cuantificarea produc iei de nanomaterial / nanoparticule, stabilirea unei durate de ob inere pentru un anumit volum de nanoparticule, standardizarea condi iilor pentru ob inerea de particule monodisperse, stabilitatea nanoparticulelor ob inute prin sintez verde;
- Identificarea materialelor derivate din plante adecvate sintezei unor nanomateriale / nanoparticule specifice;
- Clarificarea mecanismelor biochimice i moleculare implicate de formarea de nanoparticule specifice;
- Realizarea de teste de citotoxicitate i extinderea studiilor microbiologice i la alte tulpini bacteriene cu inciden nosocomial crescut.
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LISTA LUCRĂRILOR PUBLICATE

A. Lista lucrărilor publicate în reviste cotate ISI

(38 lucr ri din care 4 în domeniul tezei de doctorat)

A.1 Lista lucrărilor publicate în domeniul tezei de doctorat

- 1. R. L. Olteanu, C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, *Influence of Phytochemical Reductive Capacity on Ultraviolet-visible Spectroscopic Behavior of Silver Nanoparticles*, Analytical Letters, 50(17), 2786-2801, 2017.
- C. M. Nicolescu, R. L. Olteanu, M. Bumbac, Growth Dynamics Study of Silver Nanoparticles Obtained by Green Synthesis using Salvia officinalis Extract, Analytical Letters, 50(17), 2802-2821, 2017.
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A.2 Lista lucrărilor publicate în domeniul conex (chimie) al tezei de doctorat (citări selective)

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B. Participări la conferințe naționale / internaționale cu lucrări în domeniul tezei de doctorat / domeniul conex (chimie)

1. The Fourth Edition of International Conference on Analytical and Nanoanalytical Methods for Biomedical and Environmental Sciences (IC-ANMBES 2016), Bra ov, România:

1.1 Characterization of Silver and Copper Nanoparticles Synthesized by Bottom-Up Approach Using Plant Extracts, R. L. Olteanu, C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 91.

1.2 Study on the Synthesis Process of Silver Nanoparticles in Salvia Officinalis Extract Using UV-VIS Spectroscopy, C. M. Nicolescu, R. L. Olteanu, M. Bumbac, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 92.

- 2. The Fifth Edition of International Conference on Analytical and Nanoanalytical Methods for Biomedical and Environmental Sciences (IC-ANMBES 2018), Bra ov, România:
 - Bioactive Properties and Chemical Composition of Juglans Regia L. Extracts, C. Radulescu, C. Stihi, M. Florescu, D. Lazurca, I. D. Dulama, S. Teodorescu, **R. L. Olteanu**, R. M. tirbescu, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 167.
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 - 4.1 Functionalization of cotton fibres with silver nanoparticles obtained by synthesis with Sapindus mukorossi water extract, R. L. Olteanu, M. Bumbac, C. M. Nicolescu, B. C. erban, O. Buiu.



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Aptitudini și competențe personale	
Pagina 2/3 - Curriculum vitae Olteanu Radu Lucian	20.08.2019

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MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION "VALAHIA" UNIVERSITY OF TÂRGOVIȘTE IOSUD – ENGINEERING SCIENCES DOCTORAL SCHOOL FUNDAMENTAL DOMAIN *ENGINEERING SCIENCES* DOMAIN *MATERIALS ENGINEERING*

NANOMATERIALS BASED ON NATURAL EXTRACTS WITH BIOMEDICAL APPLICATIONS

-PhD Thesis Summary-

PhD Superviser: Prof. univ. dr. chim. Rodica Mariana ION

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TÂRGOVIȘTE 2019

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* figures and tables keep the numbering from the PhD Thesis; ** the indicated bibliography is selective keeping the numbering from PhD Thesis.

Keywords: natural extracts, *Salvia officinalis, Sapindus mukorossi*, silver nanoparticles, composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, *in-situ* synthesis, UV-VIS, XRD, FTIR, SEM-EDS, antimicrobial activity, *Staphiloccocus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, microbiological test.

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For Carmen, Cristina and Marius

Radu Lucian Olteanu

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue addressed in the doctoral thesis, related to a number of fundamental aspects in the field of nanomaterials for biomedical applications, line up between the main directions of action (National Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2014 - 2020) of the research programs of excellence through which scientific knowledge in the field of nanomaterials is promoted regarding the development and integration of the economic agents at CEEX consortium level and the requirements of the European Union and the developed European countries. The development of biocompatible nanomaterials, with high functionality and reduced side effects in the case of medical applications, allowing for successful therapies and treatments, is an important area from the perspective of the lucrative potential but also of the population's health.

The eco-nanotechnology (green nanotechnology), resulted from combining nanotechnology with the principles and practices of green chemistry (green chemistry is based on a set of principles or rather a philosophy that encourages the development of products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use and generation of potential substances) could be an important element in the development of an environmentally sustainable society in the 21 century. The processes and procedures currently applied in the field of eco-nanotechnology involve the use of natural sources, nontoxic solvents and energy efficient processes in obtaining nanomaterials [1]. Herbal extracts are one of the most studied categories at present being regarded as one of the most promising sources of natural reducing agents. A particularly successful field is the synthesis of metal nanoparticles, with medical applications and in electronics, using plant extracts as reducing agents [2].

In the first three decades of the 21s century the society was placed in front of a large number of nanoproducts. According to the NCPI (Nanotechnology Consumer Products Inventory) report, in 2016, 622 companies from 32 countries produced 1814 nanoproducts together. There are a number of expressions associated with nanotechnology, but two of the most commonly used terms are "nanomaterial" and "nanoparticle". Although both terms are sometimes used as synonyms, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) [4] states that "the nanoparticle (NP) is a subclassification of a two- or three dimensional ultrafine particle larger than 0.001 μ m (1 nm) and smaller than 0.1 μ m (100 nm) which may or may not have an intensive size-related propertyö. On the other hand, the European Union has defined the nanomaterial (NM) as an "natural, incidental or manufactured material containing particles in an unbound state or in aggregate or agglomerated form, for which more than 50% of the particle size distribution, of one or more dimensions, it is in the range 1 - 100 nm "[5]. According to recent publications [3, 6, 7, 8], the development of the green synthesis of nanomaterials beyond the laboratory scale should take into account the clarification of the aspects regarding: quantifying the production of nanomaterials / nanoparticles, establishing a production duration for a certain volume of nanomaterial / nanoparticles, standardization of the conditions for obtaining specific monodisperse particles, stability of nanoparticles obtained by green synthesis, identification of materials derived from plants most suitable for the synthesis of specific nanomaterials / nanoparticles, clarification of the biochemical and molecular mechanisms involved in the formation of specific nanoparticles.

The performed studies, which were the basis for the elaboration of the present doctoral thesis, intended to exploit the potential of some plant extracts for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles and respectively to obtain nanomaterials type composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, by a "green" synthesis method, with potential biomedical applications.

1.1. Purpose and objectives of the PhD thesis

The aim of the doctoral thesis is to investigate the possibilities of synthesizing a certain type of nanomaterials, respectively composite hydrogels, with hybrid polymeric matrix (based on two components, a synthetic and a natural polymer) and functionalized with silver nanoparticles (synthesized through extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi*). For a relevant study in a first phase, was experimented the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with the mentioned plant extracts and subsequently the synthesis of the composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles generated *in situ* through the same extracts. In a final phase, the antimicrobial activity of the synthesized nanomaterials was tested by *in vitro* and preliminary *in vivo* tests in order to evaluate their potential for biomedical applications. The results obtained during the elaboration of the thesis can be, in perspective, the subject of a new research.

The general objective of the present doctoral thesis is the "green" synthesis of nanomaterials type composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles by the method of forming the reactive nanoparticles within a preformed gel (generation of nanoparticles being realized *in situ*), physically cross-linked (freezing - thawing) respectively by irradiation.

The specific objectives:

- The synthesis of silver nanoparticles with Salvia officinalis involving a small number of reagents and specific technical equipment, with minimal economic and logistical implications; study of the influence of the ion salt / extract ratio, pH and temperature on the synthesis process.
- The synthesis of silver nanoparticles with Sapindus mukorossi extract involving a small number of reagents and specific technical equipment, with minimal economic and logistical implications; study of the influence of the ion salt / extract ratio, pH and temperature on the synthesis process.
- The synthesis of silver nanoparticles with a mixture of extracts (Salvia officinalis and Sapindus mukorossi) for highlighting the reducing potential of the Salvia officinalis extract and that of the stabilizing agent of Sapindus mukorossi extract respectively.
- > The obtaining of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles generated *in situ* through extracts of *Salvia officinalis*, *Sapindus mukorossi* and a mixture of extracts, physically cross-linked (freezing thawing) and by irradiation.
- The study of the antibacterial properties of hydrogels functionalized with silver nanoparticles, determined qualitatively and semi-quantitatively by establishing the minimum bactericidal and bacteriostatic concentration relative to two strains of pathogenic bacteria (*Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*) often involved in in-hospital infections.

1.2. Description of the thesis chapters

The doctoral thesis is structured in 7 chapters, the first three chapters being dedicated to the documentary study regarding the current state of knowledge in the complex field of metal nanomaterials / nanoparticles, and the next four chapters to experimental research and own contributions.

Chapter 1 of the thesis is an introductory one, presenting a brief incursion into the issues addressed and a series of aspects regarding the state of the green synthesis of nanomaterials as well as the purpose and general and specific objectives of the thesis.

A detailed description of metallic nanomaterials / nanoparticles in general and especially of those with silver nanoparticles starting from synthesis, classification and their biomedical applications, is included in **chapter 2** of the thesis. Within this chapter, the green

synthesis of silver nanoparticles has been emphasized through plant extracts, nanomaterials with silver nanoparticles with polymeric matrix and respectively composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles.

Chapter 3 contains a series of information related to the antimicrobial activity of silver nanoparticles / nanomaterials with silver nanoparticles on pathogenic microorganisms and some aspects related to their toxicology.

The experimental part of the doctoral thesis begins with **chapter 4** dedicated to a brief presentation of the investigation techniques applied in the study of the synthesized nanoparticles / nanomaterials and of the plant extracts used.

Chapter 5 presents aspects related to the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* through the ratio of the combination extract / ionic salt precursor, the pH and the synthesis temperature, as well as investigations on the synthesized nanoparticles, the obtained results being discussed.

Chapter 6 includes the synthesis of composite hydrogels (with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcohol 6 collagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide - starch respectively) with silver nanoparticles generated *in situ* using extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* as well as investigations on these nanomaterials. Within the same chapter, the evaluation of the antibacterial activity of the obtained nanomaterials is presented.

Chapter 7 of the PhD thesis presents own conclusions and contributions.

At the end of the doctoral thesis are included the bibliographic notes consulted during the years of the thesis development, the list of papers published in the field of the doctoral thesis and the annexes structured in 11 parts which include a series of data obtained from the experimental research carried out within the thesis.

EXPERIMENTAL PART

4. INVESTIGATION TECHNIQUES USED IN THE STUDY

The methods of physical-structural analysis of materials are the basic elements in determining the relationship between structure - property - processing for any field of materials science. They provide data on their behavior and properties related to structure, the nature of interaction forces, structural organization. As each field of materials science has specific methods of investigation, they can be subclassified into structural, physical and analytical methods common to any type of material.

4.1 Ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy

UV-VIS absorption spectroscopy allowed: 1) identification of the presence of silver nanoparticles in colloidal solution / hydrogel nanomaterial (usually the presence of silver nanoparticles in the analyzed sample is evidenced by the existence of a spectral maximum in the range 400 - 480 nm); 2) informations regarding: the size, the particle size distribution, the agglomeration / aggregation of the nanoparticles (the monochromatic and hypochromatic displacement of the maximum absorption associated with the increase or decrease of the size of the nanoparticles; the hyperchromic effect corroborated with the narrowing of the absorption band and the reduction of the respective distribution; the hypochromic effect corroborated by the enlargement of the dimensional distribution and aggregation of the nanoparticles).

The ultraviolet-visible absorption spectra were recorded using a Thermo-Evolution-260Bio absorption spectrophotometer in the 200-375 nm range (using yard vats as sample holder) and 375-700 nm respectively (using quartz cuvettes as sample support) at a range of 2 nm. Material samples were taken at different stages of the synthesis process or at time intervals after obtaining the final product. The hydrogel samples were previously diluted for spectrum recording using bidistilled water as a solvent; as a control sample, bidistilled water and plant extracts were used as the case, in the same dilution ratio with the analyzed samples.

4.2 Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR)

The FTIR spectroscopy system for advanced research, used for analysis, was composed of the FT-IR Vertex 80 spectrometer in the ATR - attenuated total reflection mode. The analyzed samples (colloidal solutions of nanoparticles, polymeric matrix components, polymeric matrices and composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles) were evaporated to dryness previously (drying in the oven for 72 hours / 30° C) without pasting with potassium bromide or with pill in some cases. Usually, the analysis of samples with as little manipulation as possible is preffered to avoid their contamination [49], the chemical reagents used for fixation, binding or elution can lead to the relocation of trace elements and change the native and structural chemical composition of the samples [183]. The results obtained were compared with data from literature articles in the field regarding the types of aqueous plant extracts and similar polymeric matrices; IR radiation absorption was recorded in transmittance coordinates (T) - wavenumber (v, cm-1) or absorbance (A) - wavenumber, in the range 4000 - 400 cm⁻¹ at a spectral resolution of 2 cm⁻¹.

The interpretation of the FTIR spectra considered the identification of the absorption maxima that undergo changes in the analyzed media (crude vegetable extract, polymeric matrix components and hydrogels with silver nanoparticles). The changes of the position of

the spectral maxima may be associated with the adsorption [184, 185, 186, 187, 188] of the constituents of the plant extract on the surface of the silver nanoparticles, the bonds that may occur following the cross-linking of the polymeric matrix and the interaction between matrix and / or the silver nanoparticles, respectively the plant extract.

4.3 X-ray diffraction (XRD)

The structural characterization of synthesized silver nanoparticles, polymeric matrices and hydrogel type nanomaterials was performed with a Rigaku Ultima IV model diffractometer. The crystalline phases of the nanoparticle powder structure were identified by comparing the diffractograms obtained with the diffraction lines existing in the International ICDD (International Center for Diffraction Data) databases [189]. The ICDD - PDF2 files studied for the identification of crystalline phases were: 00-031-1238 for silver chloride, 00-030-1137 for silver phosphate and 00-004-0783 for metallic silver.

The XRD analysis considered the evaluation of the crystallinity of the investigated nanomaterials as well as the confirmation of the presence of the silver compounds being analyzed the hydrogel type nanomaterials obtained with extracts of *Salvia officinalis*, *Sapindus mukorossi* and a mixture of extracts, respectively the corresponding polymeric matrices. The data obtained from the XRD scans were imported into the PDXL program and Rietveld analysis was performed for crystallographic refinement. The crystalline models were based on the ICDD cards for silver (ICDD-PDF 04-003-7118), the silver oxide (ICDD-PDF 04-007-1374) and the silver nitrate (ICDD-PDF 01-074-4790) respectively.

4.4 Scanning electronic microscopy and X-ray spectroscopy with energy dispersion (SEM-EDS)

The device used in the analysis consisted of a field emission scanning electron microscope (FESEM) model Carl Zeiss-Auriga, dedicated to the study of microscopic structures and surfaces of different types of materials: organic and inorganic samples (polymers, polycomposite materials, plastics) magnetic conductive or not. For the analysis of the nanoparticles (from colloidal solutions) synthesized in the first phase of the experimental study, was used a device consisting of a Hitachi SU-70 field emission scanning electron microscope coupled with an energy dispersion spectrometer (EDS) and the wavelength (WDS); variable acceleration voltage 0.1÷30 kV, magnification range 30X÷800.000X and 1 nm resolution at acceleration voltage of 15 kV.

Energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDX or EDS) is an instrument capable of performing the compositional analysis of the characteristic X-rays generated by the interaction between the incident electron beam and the sample surface. Among the characteristics / advantages and disadvantages of the EDS method compared to the wavelength dispersion spectrometry method (WDX or WDS), we can mention: simultaneous analysis of numerous elements in a short time, high detection sensitivity, low detection limit (0.3%) compared to WDX, minimal deterioration of the analyzed sample.

As an advantage of the SEM technique, can be mentioned the high resolution in characterizing the shape and size of the nanoparticles, but a number of limitations must be considered due to the effects of the charge (due to the accumulation of static electric fields), the incompatibility with the liquid or wet samples, the operation under vacuum conditions, as well as a degree of uncertainty of 10% in the quantitative analysis [9, 190, 191].

4.5 Microbiological techniques used in the study

The biocidal potential, namely *the investigation of the antimicrobial properties of the hydrogel-type nanomaterials*, was performed in the microbiology laboratory of the Veterinary Sanitary and Food Safety Directorate of Târgovi te, Dâmbovi a. The laboratory, equipped standard from the point of view of the technical equipments (sterile working conditions including sterilization of the instrumentation, the working material and the enclosure), uses the aseptic technique to avoid any cross-contamination of the cultures of microorganisms, culture media, material and instrumentation, etc.

Antimicrobial properties of hydrogel nanomaterials with silver nanoparticles were investigated by a microbiological study on two pure cultures of bacteria from the Gramnegative (*Escherichia coli*) and Gram-positive (*Staphylococcus aureus*) strains; the selection of the mentioned bacteria had in view their incidence in nosocomial infections (nosocomial infection or intrahospital infection, is that infection that is not present or is not in the incubation period when the patient was admitted to the hospital and the is overdosed to the disease which the patient was hospitalized).

Bacterial strains were grown on specific and / or selective nutrient media, in the presence of variable doses of hydrogel with silver nanoparticles, incubated at optimum temperatures for standard durations, and afterwards the indirect counting of colony-forming units (UFCs) was used. The antimicrobial capacity of the hydrogel type and the minimum bactericidal dose can be determined by correlating the number of colonies developed with the hydrogel dose in the sample. The stage of multiplication of microorganisms or the assessment of the degree of infection of the sample can be established by counting microorganisms or UFC. For a more accurate count, a sample is usually diluted, in a first stage before seeding, of the sample to be analyzed (the hydrogel with antimicrobial potential) or the inoculum of microorganisms used in a sterile environment; usually the decimal dilution is applied in sterile peptonic water (this medium is recommended by ISO Committee by ISO 6579:1993 specification), physiological serum (9% NaCl solution) or physiological peptonate serum [192].

In the case of the study performed on the hydrogel samples, the indirect method of counting the microorganisms was used, respectively the Koch cultural method (the plate culture method) which is based in principle on the seeding of a known volume of microbial cell suspension on culture medium, in Petri dishes. containing a certain amount of sample to be analyzed - as such or eluted; after an optimal incubation period, the colonies are counted, considering that each colony appears as a result of multiplying a single cell.

In parallel, a *test of antifungal activity* was performed on the Penicillium (*Penicillium glaucum*) strain, as many species of this genus are decaying agents, being commonly encountered in the air microhotta; activity testing was performed at U.S.A.M.V. - The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, the clinical laboratory within the College of Veterinary Doctors. The test technique as well as the working protocol applied to the composite hydrogel samples with silver nanoparticles was performed in compliance with the norms according to the existing standardized methods [200, 201, 202].

For a first *assessment of the degree of acute toxicity*, the synthesized hydrogel-type nanomaterials were subjected to a series of preliminary pharmacological tests (the test was performed at the U.S.A.M.V. Bucharest - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, clinical laboratory within the College of Veterinary Doctors). In the acute toxicity test experiment, Swiss white mice $(20\pm2 \text{ g in weight})$ and Wistar white rats $(140\pm20 \text{ g in weight})$ were used with uniform distribution by sex (20 animals, 10 males and 10 females on each batch and dose), from the USAMV biobased - Bucharest. During the *in vivo* experiments, the handling of animals was

made having in view the approval of the Ethics Committee of the U.S.A.M.V. - Bucharest, in strict accordance with international ethical regulations.

4.6 Characterization methods for vegetal extracts used in the study

The obtained plant extracts were characterized by measuring the pH (the value recorded was 6.8 for *Salvia officinalis* and 4.2 respectively for *Sapindus mukorossi*) and the spectrophotometric evaluation of the phytochemical species involved in the synthesis process.

Antioxidant activity (AA,%) was evaluated using 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) and recording the absorbance at 517 nm based on the method described in the literature [207]. The total flavonoid content was determined based on the aluminum chloride test at 510 nm [208], the results being expressed in mg catechin / ml. The vanillin assay [209, 210] at 500 nm was applied to determine the total tannin content; the results were expressed in mg catechin / ml. For the total terpenoid content the method described in literature [211] was applied at 608 nm, the results being expressed in mg linalool / ml. The plant extracts were also characterized in order to determine the total phenol content by applying the Folin-Ciocalteu method, in accordance with the international standard ISO 14502-1: 2005 (E) [212], adapted to the working conditions; for calibration, different concentration of gallic acid solutions were used, the standards and samples being measured at 765 nm and the total phenol content being expressed in mg of gallic acid / ml extract.

The usual spectrophotometric methods for determining the critical micellar concentration (CMC) use additives whose changes in UV-VIS absorbance or fluorescence emission indicates the formation of micelles.

The method of micellization of a dye, proposed by Patist et al. [58], was adapted to the working conditions for the CMC determination of the extract by using an aqueous solution of methylene blue ($C_{16}H_{18}ClN_3S$) 10⁻⁴M. The visible absorption spectra were recorded in the 500 - 800 nm range, on a 1 nm scan interval, the wavelength corresponding to the maximum absorption (λ_{max}) being recorded. From the graphical representation of λ_{max} according to the intersection point of the two approximations / linear trends of the segments corresponding to the obtained curve.

The method based on the correlation of the signal due to the surface plasmon resonance of the silver nanoparticles with the surfactant concentration. To determine the CMC based on the plasmonic response of the nanoparticles, mixtures of plant extract and stable solution of silver nanoparticles were used, the tests being performed at room temperature by recording the absorbance of the samples at a fixed wavelength (418 nm), corresponding to the maximum absorption registered for the stable solution of silver nanoparticles. The absorbance values were represented according to the extract concentration fort each measurement, the CMC being determined as the value corresponding to the inflection point identified from the representation of the maximum absorbance variation (A_{max}) as a function of the vegetable extract content in the test solution.

As a variant of the applied method, the CMC determination was performed based on the variation of the wavelength of the maximum absorption (λ_{max}) with the extract content added to the silver nanoparticles solution, the CMC value obtained (2.53±0.19%, v/v) being close to the values recorded by applying the two methods described above. The variation of the wavelength associated with the absorption maximum in the UV-VIS spectrum took into account the fact that there is not a single value of the absorbance maximum, the absorption maximum being flattened; taking into account this aspect, was recorded the first value of the maximum in the range 650 - 300 nm.

OWN CONTRIBUTIONS

5. SILVER NANOPARTICLES SYNTHESIS USING SALVIA OFFICINALIS AND SAPINDUS MUKOROSSI EXTRACTS

5.1 Salvia officinalis and Sapindus mukorossi extracts synthesis

As extraction procedure the solvent extraction was chosen in order to obtain plant extracts due to its speed, ease and cost efficiency. The extracts were obtained by static extraction at room temperature in the coated container, the extraction ratio (dry plant material / solvent volume, g/ml) being maintained in all extraction procedures. After completion of the extraction the mixture was filtered and centrifuged to obtain a clear extract and the supernatant was stored at 4 °C for further use in experimental determinations. The same stock solution from each extract was used in all related determinations [218, 219].

5.2 Characterization of Salvia officinalis and Sapindus mukorossi extracts

The tests for the identification of active components in the aqueous extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* were performed based on standard procedures [231, 232, 233] allowing to identification of saponins, terpenoids, steroids, tannins and flavonoids.

Table 5.1 Indicators of the phytochemical content of aqueous extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* [218, 219]

Indicator Extract type	Antioxidant activity (%)	Flavonoids (mg/ml)	Tannins (mg/ml)	Terpenoids (mg/ml)	Polyphenols (mg/ml)
Salvia officinalis	28.92±0.88	304.60±3.40	188.00±2.35	95.61±0.89	170.92±2.44
Sapindus mukorossi	27.01±0.92	182.54±1.66	83.31±1.12	251.00±2.21	168.88±2.78
*each v	alue represent the a	verage for three tes	\pm standard devia	tion	

In the experimental approach who aimed the influence of the phytochemical reducing capacity on the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with plant extracts, which results were published [218], which also included the extract of *Salvia officinalis*, was made a correlation between the indicators of the phytochemical content of plant extracts and their reducing capacity.

As mentioned above, the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* has been particularly noted for its qualities of natural surfactant due to its high saponin content. A particular property of these is the arrangement of molecules in organized molecular aggregates, the micelles, when the surfactant concentration reaches a certain value called *critical micellar concentration* [245]. It is generally accepted that CMC is not defined by a well-defined value but by a concentration range associated with micelles formation [248, 249].

The dye micellization method, proposed by Patist et al. [58], was adapted to the working conditions for CMC determination of the extract by using an aqueous solution of methylene blue ($C_{16}H_{18}CIN_3S$) of $10^{-4}M$ concentration.



Figure 5.4 Determination of the critical micellar concentration (CMC = $2.71 \pm 0.11\%$, v/v) for the aqueous extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* by the method of micellization of a dye (methylene blue 10^{-4} M) [213].

The method based on the correlation of the signal due to the surface plasmonic resonance of the silver nanoparticles with the surfactant concentration has been studied among others by Salem et al. when determining the critical micellar concentration for a series of synthetic surfactants.



Figure 5.5 Determination of the micellar critical concentration (CMC = $2.68 \pm 0.13\%$, v/v) for the aqueous extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* based on the band sensitivity associated with the surface plasmon resonance of silver nanoparticles (418 nm) [213].

As a variant of the applied method, the CMC determination was performed also based on the variation of the wavelength associated with the maximum absorption (λ_{max}) with the extract content added to the silver nanoparticles solution, the CMC value obtained (2.53 ± 0.19%, v/v) being close to the values recorded by applying the two methods described above.



Figure 5.6 Determination of the micellar critical concentration (CMC = $2.53\pm0.19\%$, v/v) based on the variation of the maximum absorption wavelength, for the colloidal solution of silver nanoparticles, with the addition of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract.

The spectroscopic methods applied led to a good correlation between the values determined for the critical micellar concentration (2.71 \pm 0.11%, v/v and 2.68 \pm 0.13%, v/v respectively).

5.3 Silver nanoparticles synthesis using Salvia officinalis extract

5.3.1 Growth dinamics study of silver nanoparticles. Influence of the ionic salt : extract ratio

The dynamics of formation and growth of metallic colloidal nanoparticles has been described by different theories that establish models for the nucleation and growth of nanoparticles. A different approach to these theories is made by Jorg Polte [215] who presents nanoparticles growth models based on their colloidal stability. Polte's nanoparticle formation model comprises four stages in which the reduction and coalescence occur simultaneously but at different speeds.

The synthesis of silver nanoparticles using *Salvia officinalis* extract can be included in the model proposed by Polte in the second category of synthesis (it includes the processes in which the reduction and coalescence take place at the same time and is carried out concurrently until stable colloidal nanoparticles are formed). judging by the composition of the extraction mixture as presented in the literature, which includes weakly reducing species. However, changes in working conditions could lead to different dynamics of the nanoparticles growth process.

By correlating the spectral changes in UV-VIS, as an indicator of the morphological changes of the silver nanoparticles, with the experimental parameters (pH, the initial mixing ratio of silver nitrate / *Salvia officinalis* extract), can be obtained informations regarding the growth of the nanoparticles and optimal working parameters for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using plant extracts [92, 258, 259].



Figure 5.9 The relative area associated with the plasmonic response of silver nanoparticles calculated from UV-VIS spectra recorded for the plant extract and the colloidal solution of nanoparticles.

The graphical representation of the relative area as a function of time has been preferred relative to the values associated with the maximum absorption over time because the absorption bands have different characteristics (maximum intensity, bandwidth, shape) depending on the ratios of silver nitrate / sage extract nitrogen. The selected wavelength domain considered that the main plasmonic changes of silver nanoparticles in UV-VIS spectra appear in this area [261]. The reason for the selection of the relative area instead of the maximum absorption was that the plasmonic response of the metal nanoparticles is influenced by the reaction medium. In the growth stage the process is dynamic, accompanied by breaking and bonding, with effect on the size and shape of the nanoparticles and the metal interface.



Figure 5.10 UV-VIS absorption spectra at 3 hours for different volumetric mixing ratios of 10 mM silver nitrate : *Salvia officinalis* extract: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:3, (c) 1:2, (d) 1:1, (e) 2:1, (f) 3:1 and (g) 5:1.



Figure 5.11 Evolution of the relative area over time for the synthesis mixture of 10 mM silver nitrate 10 mM : *Salvia officinalis* extract equal to 1: 1 [219].

The evolution of the UV-VIS spectrum over time indicates a rapid growth of silver nanoparticles in the first three hours from the moment of mixing the components. However, are present differences between the rate of increase of the absorbance intensity and the position of the maximum absorption. Considering the aspect of the spectrum (Figure 5.10) in the range 350-600 nm, it can be appreciated that the highest nanoparticle content was obtained when the initial mixture contained equal volumes of 10 mM silver nitrate and sage extract.

The aspect of the curves of variation of relative area as a function of time varies with the initial mixing ratio between sage extract and silver nitrate. For all the syntheses performed experimentally, the relative growth rate of the area was calculated as the slope of the linear portion of the graph plotted in figure 5.11. For each of the four stages of the silver nanoparticle growth process, mentioned above and highlighted in figure 5.11, the notations v_1 , v_2 , v_3 and v_4 were assigned, the respective values being presented in table 5.3.

Volumetric ratio silver nitrate : vegetal extract in the synthesis	Relativ	e speed of inc (arbitrary u	rease of relat nits / second)	tive area
mixture	v_1	v_2	<i>V</i> 3	v_4
1:5	0.0450	0.0004	-	-
1:3	0.0422	0.0006	0.0038	0.0012
1:2	0.0251	0.0018	0.0050	0.0035
1:1	0.0176	0.0021	0.0138	0.0052
2:1	0.0136	0.0010	0.0066	0.0035
3:1	0.0028	0.0006	0.0044	0.0027
5:1	0.0026	0.0005	0.0016	0.0009

Table 5.3 The values of the relative velocity of the relative area, from the UV-VIS spectra, associated with the silver nanoparticles for the four stages of the nanoparticle growth process

A first aspect that can be observed is that the relative growth rate in the first stage, which involves a reduction process that occurs at a higher rate of particle growth, is influenced by the extract content in the solution. As a result, the use of solutions in which the mixing ratio is favorable to the extract leads to higher growth rates of the relative areas. It can be concluded that the rate of increase of the relative area (implicitly of the plasmonic response) in the first stage of nanoparticle formation and growth is proportional to the content of the plant extract or reducing species presents therein in the synthesis mixture. In the second stage of the nanoparticle growth process, the main processes that contribute to the emergence of stable colloidal nanoparticles are the reduction and diffusion, and the samples with a volumetric mixing ratio of ionic salt : vegetable extract equal to 1 : 1 provide optimal conditions for nanoparticle growth.

The formation of nanoparticles in the autocatalytic acceleration step of their growth is attributed to an autocatalytic process, the metal ions adsorbed to the metal-solution interface are initially reduced and then incorporated into the growing particle; the mixtures with a volumetric mixing ratio of 10 mM silver nitrate : sage extract equal to 1 : 1 recorded the highest growth rates of the plasmonic signal (Table 5.3). In the fourth stage, the same order of evolution of relative velocities is maintained, suggesting the optimal volumetric mixing ratio of ionic salt 1 : 1 vegetable extract in obtaining an intense plasmonic response.



Figure 5.12 The variation of relative area over time for volumetric mixing ratios of 10 mM silver nitrate: sage extract equal to: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:2, (c) 1:1, (d) 2:1 and (e) 5:1 [219].



Figure 5.13 SEM images for samples with volumetric mixing ratio $AgNO_3$ 10 mM : *Salvia officinalis* extract equal to 5 : 1, (a) conglomerates with fractal crystallization pattern, (b) particles with nanometric dimensions.



Figure 5.20 SEM images of the nanoparticles highlighted for samples with volumetric mixing ratio $AgNO_3$ 10 mM : *Salvia officinalis* extract equal to 1 : 4 - (a) and respectively 1: 5 - (b).

In order to obtain informations on the stoichiometry of the reaction medium of the entire equilibrium process, the mixture was initially tested at room temperature by recording the UV-VIS spectrum and the silver nitrate content was systematically varied (0 - 100%); UV-VIS spectra were recorded for information on the reaction products. The stages of the experimental approach were performed to obtain information related to the optimal volumetric ratio of silver nitrate : plant extract necessary for the synthesis of stable silver nanoparticles.

The experimental results indicated an optimal mixing ratio of the precursors equal to 1 : 1 (10 mM silver nitrate solution : sage extract) in the case of silver nanoparticles biosynthesis with *Salvia officinalis* extract at ambient temperature.



Figure 5.22 The evolution of the relative area in time, calculated from the UV-VIS spectrum, associated with the silver nanoparticles, within 3 hours from the beginning of the synthesis $(25^{\circ}C)$ for different volumetric mixing ratios of the precursors (*Salvia officinalis* extract : silver nitrate 10 mM).

By representing the relative area according to the volumetric content of silver nitrate in the mixture (%, v/v) at time intervals from the beginning of the synthesis (25° C), are noticed small values for a low ionic salt content, this behavior being correlated with the existence of a small number of silver nanoparticles in solution (Figure 5.24). An increase of the plasmonic response is observed in the case of an excess of ionic salt relative to the content of vegetable extract (silver nitrate content over 50%, v/v), higher values of the relative area being recorded. It follows that the initial volumetric mixing ratio of the precursors equal to 1 : 1 can be considered as optimal for the biosynthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Salvia officinalis* extract at 25°C.

5.3.2 The pH effect

The pH is an important experimental parameter in the growth dynamics of silver nanoparticles because its value can influence most of the equilibria involved in the process. The tested samples, obtained by mixing sage extract with pH buffer solution in different proportions, showed stable pH values.



Figure 5.25 Variation of relative area over time in basic environment (pH = 11.5) for different mixing ratios (v/v) silver nitrate : sage extract: (a) 1:5, (b) 1:2, (c) 1:1, (d) 2:1 and (e) 5:1 [219].



Figure 5.26 UV-VIS absorption spectra for silver nanoparticle solutions, at a volumetric mixing ratio of silver nitrate : sage extract equal to 1 : 1, at different pH values: (a) pH = 2.3, (b) pH = 2.8, (c) pH = 6.3, (d) pH = 10.5, (e) pH = 11.8, (f) pH = 6.8 (without pH buffer) [219].

The evolution of the relative growth rate (calculated as the slope of the line on the linear portion of the variation of the relative area over time), at different pH values, for the volumetric mixing ratio of silver nitrate : *Salvia officinalis* extract equal to 1 : 1, is shown in the table 5.4. The values v_1 , v_2 , v_3 and v_4 respectively correspond to the four stages of the nanoparticle growth process corresponding to the model proposed in the presented study. The relative areas are attributed to the plasmonic response of silver nanoparticles and the calculation method has been detailed previously.

act equal to 1:1.	C			
pH of the synthesis mixture	Relativ	e speed of inc (arbitrary u	rease of relat nits / second)	tive area
	v_1	v ₂	v ₃	v_4
6.8 (without pH buffer)	0.0176	0.0021	0.0138	0.0052

0.4439

0.0255

0.0106

0.0098

0.0028

0.0025

0.0031

0.0023

0.0023

0.0002

_

0.0081

0.0092

0.0072

0.0061

0.0049

0.0072

0.0030

0.0009

11.8

10.5

6.3

 $\frac{2.8}{2.3}$

Table 5.4 The values of the relative growth rate of the relative area associated with the silver nanoparticles at different pH values for mixing ratio (v/v) silver nitrate : *Salvia officinalis* extract equal to 1:1.

The speed associated with the first stage of the growth process (v_1) has high values in the case of mixtures with alkaline pH which can be attributed to the formation of silver oxide. As a result, in the alkaline solution, in the initial phase, the oxidation of silver to silver oxide plays an important role in the overall mechanism of silver nanoparticle formation.

The infrared spectroscopy analysis aimed to identify the structural changes that would suggest the nature of the interactions between the silver nanoparticles and the components of the plant extract, at different pH values, and also to observe potential correlations with the characterization methods of the plant extract. The recorded spectra were obtained for obtaining information on the structural characteristics and the modifications that would result as a result of the pH change of the aqueous solution in which the silver nanoparticles were synthesized [272]. The changes observed in the IR spectra of the extract in acid and alkaline environment can be attributed to the structural changes due to the hydrolysis of the amide groups; this could also explain the changes in the IR spectra of sage extract after the addition of silver nitrate and the weak plasmonic response of the mixture silver nitrate : vegetable extract in acid solution.

The FTIR analysis (performed for the vegetable extract, in neutral, acidic and basic solution, and for the synthesis mixtures respectively) showed in the IR spectra for the plant extract a wide absorption band with a maximum centered at 3400 cm⁻¹ which can be correlated with the content of phenolic compounds highlighted by determinations made for the content of total phenols, flavonoids and tannins. On the other hand, structural changes were identified, in the case of the vegetable extract in acid and alkaline solution, consisting of the displacement of some peaks and the appearance of new ones, which were associated with the action of the hydroxide or acid introduced into the solution. Significant changes were observed in the range 1600-1800 cm⁻¹, due to the stretching vibrations of C-O bonds specific to compounds with carbonyl groups. Following the addition of silver nitrate to the plant extract, some peaks were displaced after the formation of the metal nanoparticles; these displacements can be associated with the interactions between some functional groups of the organic species with the metal nanoparticles at the metal-solution interface.

5.3.3 The temperature effect

In this section are presented a number of issues related to the influence of temperature on the biosynthesis process of silver nanoparticles with the use of *Salvia officinalis* extract. It is known that the reaction temperature plays an important role in the spatial and dimensional distribution of the particles, especially in the case of silver nanoparticles [92]. The experimental determinations based on the involved procedure are intended to optimize the experimental parameters of the studied biosynthesis process taking into account the changes in the UV-VIS spectrum.

Figure 5.31 shows the variation of the relative area in time, associated with silver nanoparticles in the first three hours from the beginning of the synthesis at different working temperatures and mixing ratios of the precursors.





Figure 5.31 The evolution in time of the relative area, calculated from the UV-VIS spectrum, associated with silver nanoparticles, within 3 hours from the beginning of the synthesis at 25, 40, 55 and 70°C, respectively, for volumetric mixing ratios *Salvia officinalis* extract : 10 mM silver nitrate equal to: a) 1:5, b) 1:2, c) 1:1, d) 2:1 and e) 5:1.

The recording of the UV-VIS spectra for the studied mixtures (Figures 5.1-5.3 - Annex 5) allowed the calculation of the relative area associated with the silver nanoparticles present in the solution (Figure 5.31), while a number of changes in the spectra aspect can be highlighted: when the ionic salt is in excess (volumetric ratios of silver nitrate : extract greater than 1 : 1); the displacement of $_{max}$ to higher values may be correlated with the formation of larger nanoparticles and a thinner coating.

The results obtained suggest that the formation of silver nanoparticles following the biosynthesis process with *Salvia officinalis* extract is based on a balance capable of



determining a continuous change in the shape and size of the nanoparticles depending on the Ag^+ / reducing species ratio and stabilizing species.



Figure 5.32 The variation of the relative area, associated with the silver nanoparticles, according to the volumetric content of silver nitrate in the mixture, at different time intervals from the beginning of the synthesis performed at: a) 40°C, b) 55°C and c) 70°C [276].

Figure 5.32 shows, in the first three hours after the beginning of the synthesis, an initial optimum volumetric ratio of silver nitrate mixing: sage extract equal to 1 : 1 at 40 and 55°C respectively, with maximum values of the relative area being obtained for this ratiot. When the temperature rises to 70°C the maximum of the relative area moves to lower values of the silver nitrate content in the solution, this behavior being an indication of the aggregation of the synthesized nanoparticles [265, 277].

5.4 Silver nanoparticles synthesis using Sapindus mukorossi extract

The experimental study has investigated initially the behavior of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract as a reducing and stabilizing agent for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using as a precursor 10 mM silver nitrate solution. Tests were carried out with samples having variable proportions (volumetric ratios) of the extract maintaining the ionic salt content constantly, at a pH of the synthesis mixture due to the plant extract (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Synthesis mixtures used for silver nanoparticles generation (3 hours / 25° C) with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract / AgNO₃ 10 mM solution.

Comm		Volumetric	Modul de p	reparare al ames sinteză	tecurilor de	
curr. no.	Sample code	ratio extract : ionic solution	Bidistilled water (ml)	Sapindus mukorossi extract (ml)	AgNO ₃ 10mM solution (ml)	рН
1	SM0.5-1Ag10	1:2	48.50	0.50	1.00	4.51
2	SM1-1Ag10	1:1	48.00	1.00	1.00	4.33
3	SM1.5-1Ag10	1.5 : 1	47.50	1.50	1.00	4.34
4	SM2-1Ag10	2:1	47.00	2.00	1.00	4.28

For UV-VIS analysis, control samples with the same volumetric extract ratios were used, at dilutions identical to the samples of colloidal silver nanoparticle solutions obtained.



Figure 5.35 UV-VIS spectra recorded for mixtures of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract and 10 mM silver nitrate (static contact / 25°C / acid pH of the reaction medium due to the plant extract) at different volume ratios: a) 1:2, b) 1:1, c) 1.5:1 and d) 2:1 (insertion: spectral interval 400 ó 650 nm).

The data obtained from the UV-VIS analysis show an extremely slow reduction of silver ions by the compounds present in the plant extract under the established synthesis conditions (static contact / 25° C / acid pH of the reaction medium due to the plant extract).

However, it can be observed (Figure 5.35 - b, c) the formation of nanoparticles especially at the volumetric ratios 1:1 and 1.5:1 (corresponding to volumetric concentrations of extract in mixture of 2% and 3% respectively). In this concentration range, the value of the critical micellar concentration of the extract was also determined - 2.7% average value (Chapter 5.2 - Characterization of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* extracts); this behavior suggests the favorable involvement of the micelles formed in solution in the process of reducing and stabilization of the silver nanoparticles.

5.4.1 The pH and ionic salt : extract ratio influence

In the next stage of the experimental study the synthesis of silver nanoparticles was performed for five concentration values of the extract in the mixture (around the average critical micellar concentration determined - 2.7%) at 25°C; the mixture was monitorised by UV-VIS analysis in the range 230-750 nm (as control samples were used extract samples - diluted with bidistilled water - at concentrations similar to the tested mixtures).

After a period of three hours after contacting the components, there was no significant change in the color of the solution which could be a first indication of the presence of silver nanoparticles. The mixture samples were further maintained at ambient temperature and analyzed by UV-VIS spectrophotometry 24 hours after the beginning of the synthesis. At 24 hours after mixing, the color of the mixtures was visibly changed, indicating the presence of silver nanoparticles in the colloidal solution.



Figure 5.37 UV-VIS spectra recorded for colloidal silver nanoparticles solution for synthesis with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract / 10 mM silver nitrate (static contact / 25° C / 24 hours) depending on the concentration of the extract in the mixture (% vol).

From figure 5.37, it can be observed the increase of the absorption maximum with the increase of the concentration of the extract in the mixture, especially at values higher than the critical micellar concentration (2.7%). The absorption peaks generally retain the same absorption band shape centered at approximately 440 nm. In the tested synthesis conditions it is found that there is a very slow global synthesis process.

The results obtained at this stage suggest an important influence of the pH reaction medium in the process of reducing and stabilizing. As a result, in a second phase of the experimental study, the behavior of the synthesis mixtures at basic pH values was investigated (pH adjustment was performed with 1M potassium hydroxide solution), constantly maintaining the volumetric mixing ratio of the components extract : ionic salt equal to 1:1.



Figure 5.41 UV-VIS spectra recorded for colloidal solution of silver nanoparticles for synthesis with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract / 10 mM silver nitrate (static contact / 25° C / basic pH) depending on the concentration of the extract in the mixture (% vol): a) 3 hours; b) 3 days.

For both the acidic and basic pH values, the formation of the nanoparticles is influenced by the concentration of the extract in the synthesis mixture being noticeable at values higher than the critical micellar concentration.

In the third phase of the experimental study, the synthesis was performed at basic pH values (pH adjustment with 1M KOH solution), maintaining constant (1:1) the mixing ratio between the components of the mixture (extract: ionic solution) and at pH values of the mixture due to the vegetable extract (acidic pH) modifying the mixing ratio between the components (1:4, 1:2, 1:1, 2:1 and 4: 1); the synthesis was performed for five concentration values (around the determined average critical micellar concentration - 2.7%) at 25°C (thermostatic water bath) with 10 mM AgNO₃ solution, by static contact. The mixture was monitored by UV-VIS analysis (range 230-750 nm, as control extract samples were used - dilution with bidistilled water - at concentrations in extract similar to the tested mixtures).



Figure 5.43 UV-VIS spectra recorded for colloidal solution of silver nanoparticles for synthesis with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract / 10 mM silver nitrate (static contact / 25° C / basic pH) depending on the concentration of the extract in the mixture (% vol): a) 3 hours; b) 3 days.
The observed trends cannot be interpreted only considering mainly the stabilizing role of the extract, being expected that an increase of its concentration will lead to smaller dimensions of the nanoparticles, the role of the extract being not limited to that of reducing / stabilizing agent. The results suggest that the dimensional distribution of silver nanoparticles is determined by a balance between the reactivity of the precursors and coalescence in the initial period, which could be influenced by controlling the initial pH of the reactants respectively of the reaction mixture.

5.4.2 Critical micellar concentration influence

The influence of micellar critical concentration (CMC) has been noticed since the beginning of the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract. As a result, in the present subchapter, a more detailed study was conducted with emphasis on this feature of the extract.

The synthesis of silver nanoparticles was achieved by mixing the extract with 10 mM silver nitrate solution in different proportions in acidic and basic medium; for the experiments performed in acidic medium, the acidity of the medium (pH = 4.4) was provided by the extract after mixing the precursors. The basic medium was adjusted with 1M sodium hydroxide solution to a pH value of 8.2.

Figure 5.46 shows the UV-VIS absorption spectra for the solutions with silver nanoparticles obtained by mixing the precursors (extract: ionic solution) in a volumetric ratio of 1:1. The insertion of the diagram shows the variation of the relative area associated with the nanoparticles according to the extract content of the synthesis mixture.



Figure 5.46 UV-VIS absorption spectra (72 hours / acid medium, pH = 4.4, 1:1 synthesis volumetric ratio, *Sapindus mukorossi* extract : silver nitrate) for nanoparticle solutions at different values of the extract concentration in the mixture (%, v/v): 1) 0.8%, 2) 1.6%, 3) 2.7%, 4) 3.6% and 5) 5% [213].

Both the control samples (the extract solutions at the appropriate dilutions) and the synthesis mixtures recorded a pH around 4.4 indicating the buffering property of the plant extract. The pH value correlates with the structure of the saponins, as weakly acidic species, present in the aqueous extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* [239]. Under the applied synthesis conditions the formation of nanoparticles is a very slow process, noticeable changes in both

the color of the solutions (colorless to pale pink and red) and the UV-VIS spectra were observed at 72 hours after the precursors were contacted.



Figure 5.47 UV-VIS absorption spectra (3 hours / basic medium, pH = 8.2, 1:1 synthesis volume ratio, *Sapindus mukorossi* extract : silver nitrate) for nanoparticle solutions at different values of the concentration of the extract in the mixture (%, v/v): 1) 1.6%, 2) 2.7%, 3) 3.6% and 4) 5% [213].

The CMC values determined from the variation of the relative areas in the basic environment, corresponding to the turning point, showed similar values in both cases: $3.65\pm0.19\%$ at 3 hours and $3.68\pm0.12\%$ respectively at 72 hours. The increase of the CMC value in the basic environment compared to the acidic environment can be associated with the existence of the chemical acidic weak species from the extract, with the addition of the alkaline solution (potassium hydroxide) the acid functional groups suffering a deprotonation forming a mixture of compounds with a weak hydrophobic character. The decrease of the hydrophobic nature of the solutions can lead to higher CMC values.

The FTIR profile of plant extract and synthesized silver nanoparticles highlights the existence of biomolecules, with specific functional groups of flavonoids and saponins, which can act as stabilizers of nanoparticles [282]. These observations suggest stabilization of silver nanoparticles through functional groups associated with biomolecules such as flavonoids and saponins, present in the extract; these interactions result through carboxylic groups from the saponins as well as carbonyl groups from the structure of flavonoids [52, 282].

XRD diffractograms in the case of the control samples (extract) show a well-defined maximum in the 2 range of 10-25° narrow maxima being absent, thus suggesting the amorphous character of the dry aqueous extract. For the synthesis mixtures the intensity of the maximum associated with the amorphous character decreases as the content of the extract content in the mixture increases with the appearance of narrow maxima, suggesting the formation of crystalline compounds during the synthesis. The simultaneous presence of the amorphous and crystalline phase after synthesis suggests the attachment of some compounds from the extract to the formed nanoparticles, behavior that would confirm the results obtained by ultraviolet-visible and infrared spectroscopy. XRD analysis confirmed the presence of crystalline silver in the studied samples especially in the case of the volumetric synthesis ratio equal to 1:1 and below, the presence of unreacted silver nitrate being also highlighted. By referring also to a series of literature data [283, 284] the X-ray diffraction allowed to obtain

information regarding the identification of the nanoparticles and the evolution of the crystallinity of the investigated samples.



Figure 5.51 SEM images of the synthesis mixture extract *Sapindus mukorossi* : 10 mM silver nitrate equal to 1:1 for values of the extract content in the mixture (% vol) of a) 0.8% and b) 2.7%.

5.5 Silver nanoparticles synthesis using extract mixture of *Salvia* officinalis and *Sapindus mukorossi*

5.5.1 The mixing ratio effect between *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* extracts

The experimental study followed the behavior of the mixture of aqueous extracts (*Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi*) as reducing and stabilizing agent for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using as a precursor 10 mM silver nitrate solution. Sample tests were performed with varying proportions (volumetric ratios) of the two extracts, maintaining the ionic salt content constantly, at a pH of the synthesis mixture due to the two extracts.

The samples were analyzed by UV-VIS spectrometry in the range 230-750 nm (wavelength accuracy: ± 0.8 nm, repeatability: ≤ 0.1 nm, photometric range: >3.5 A) by continuous monitoring for 3 hours (25°C) at 20 minutes interval; subsequently monitoring was carried out at longer intervals to observe the changes occurring in the UV-VIS spectrum. For analysis, control samples with the same volumetric ratios of extracts were used at dilutions identical to the samples of colloidal solutions of silver nanoparticles.





Figure 5.54 UV-VIS spectra recorded for the synthesis mixture *Sapindus mukorossi* extract : *Salvia officinalis* extract : 10 mM AgNO₃ (25°C) at volumetric ratios of: a) 1:2:2 (pH = 6.24), b) 1:2.5:2.5 (pH = 6.32), c) 1:3.3:3.3 (pH = 5.87), d) 1:5:5 (pH = 6.15), e) 1:10:10 (pH = 6.62) and f) 1:20:20 (pH = 6.90).

For mixing ratios between components in which *Salvia officinalis* extract and silver nitrate are in excess of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract (1:2:2 \rightarrow 1:20:20, Figure 5.54) during initial monitoring (3 hours at 20 minutes interval), significant changes in the spectrum were observed especially for the mixing ratios 1:10:10 and 1:20:20 respectively (Figure 5.54 - e, f).

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) analysis was used to characterize the size, shape and morphology of the synthesized silver nanoparticles. From the SEM images we could observe the formation of some conglomerates whose size is reduced as the content of extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* decreases in the synthesis mixture; the same tendency also occurs with respect to the size of the approximately spherical silver nanoparticles and their number (the reducing of the size and increasing the number of nanoparticles for the mixing ratio 1:10:10 compared to the mixing ratio 1:2:2).

A notable difference in the case of the mixture of extracts compared to the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* as such, is observed in the case of the volumetric ratio equal to 1:1:1 respectively to a concentration of 2% (% vol.) of the extract. The involvement of the chemical species from *Sapindus mukorossi* extract in the reduction process results especially in the case of near or higher concentrations (2%, 3% and 4%) of the critical micellar concentration, from the variation of the relative area in the first 80 minutes of contacting the precursors for the mixture of extracts compared to sage extract; should not be excluded the possibility of changing the critical micellar concentration value of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract mixed with sage as compared to the extract as such.

5.5.2 The pH effect on silver nanoparticles synthesis with extract mixture of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi*

In a first phase, taking into account the previous results (studying the behavior of the mixture of extracts at varying proportions of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract at a pH due to the compounds present in the extracts), the test was performed at different (increasing) pH values by adding potassium hydroxide 0.1M. Sample tests were performed at a constant volumetric ratio of extracts of *Sapindus mukorossi* and *Salvia officinalis* and of AgNO₃ solution respectively.





(e)



6. SYNTHESIS AND CHARACTERIZATION OF COMPOSITE HYDROGELS WITH SILVER NANOPARTICLES GENERATED USING SALVIA OFFICINALIS AND SAPINDUS MUKOROSSI EXTRACTS

The synthesis of nanomaterials hydrogel-type based on hybrid polymer matrix (the polymeric matrix was based on two components, a synthetic polymer - polyacrylamide or polyvinyl alcohol - and a natural polymer or a derivative thereof - starch or collagen hydrolysate) was performed having in view to obtain materials - biocompatible, non-toxic, with antimicrobial potential - with silver nanoparticles for biomedical applications, the synthesis stages involving avoiding the use of chemical reagents with toxic potential and at the same time applying a "green synthesis" process. The incorporation of silver nanoparticles into the polymeric matrix was accomplished by the *in situ* method through a natural extract acting as reducing and stabilizing agent.



Figure 6.1 Synthesis of composite hydrogels with polymeric matrix based on polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) ó collagen hydrolisate (HC) and polyacrylamide (PAA) - starch (A) and silver nanoparticles (NPAg).

The experimental approach to obtain hydrogel-type nanomaterials was aimed to apply synthesis conditions which involve reducing the involvement of potentially toxic chemical agents and applying processes that affect to a limited degree the natural precursors (plant extracts). The general scheme of synthesis of composite hydrogels with polymeric matrix based on polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) - hydrolysed collagen (HC) and polyacrylamide (PAA) - starch (A) respectively is shown in figure 6.1.

The crosslinking of the polymeric matrix was performed either by thermal freezethaw cycles (the material samples were subjected to 3 thermal cycles each cycle consisting of 23 hours maintenance at -20°C followed by one hour maintenance at 25°C ambient temperature) or by *irradiation with ionizing radiations* (at irradiation doses of 20 kGy and 50 kGy respectively). After crosslinking the material samples were stored in the dark (9°C) throughout performed tests / analyzes. The modality of crosslinking of the polymeric matrix envisaged a number of aspects from which can be mentioned: avoiding the use of chemical reagents with toxic potential and that could interact with the compounds present in the plant extracts, the nature of the polymeric matrix components and consequently the possible modifications induced by the method of applied crosslinking, the modifications induced on the compounds in the composition of the plant extracts.

6.1 The ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy study of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcoholcollagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide-starch

6.1.1 Composite hydrogel with polymeric matrix PVA-HC crosslinked by temperature cycles

The hydrogel samples were previously diluted and homogenized by magnetic stirring for one hour at 25°C. There were used as control samples for comparing, samples of polymeric matrix as such, polymeric matrix with *Salvia officinalis* extract and polymeric matrix with silver nitrate respectively.



Figure 6.5 UV-VIS absorption spectra for composite hydrogel based on PVA-HC matrix with crosslinking through temperature cycles - diluted samples (after the crosslinking step).

The presence of silver nanoparticles can be highlighted in the UV-VIS absorption spectrum (Figure 6.5) by the existence of a well-defined absorption maximum (located at 425.68 nm / 0.433 - absorbance) present only in the hydrogel sample spectrum with silver nanoparticles. The aspect of the absorption band suggests the existence of nanoparticles in solution with a relatively narrow particle size profile, specifying that the sampling for analysis was performed from the supernatant and existing therefore the possibility of nanoparticles in the matrix of the hydrogel that did not migrate in aqueous solution.

6.1.2 Composite hydrogel with polymeric matrix PVA-HC crosslinked by irradiation

Sample code	Sample dilution for UV-VIS analysis	Observations
P1-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml sample (2.05 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with <i>Salvia officinalis</i> extract (irradiation at 20 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Translucent, colorless appearance. The spectrum has no absorption maxima.
P1-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml sample (2.04 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with <i>Salvia officinalis</i> extract (irradiation at 50 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Translucent, colorless appearance. The spectrum has no absorption maxima.
P2-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml sample (2.06 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with NPAg (irradiation at 20 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Light yellow-brown coloring. The spectrum shows an absorption band with a maximum centered at 404.82 nm / 0.292 A.
P2-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml sample (2.04 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with NPAg (irradiation at 50 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Light yellow-brown coloring. The spectrum shows an absorption band with a maximum centered at $407.34 \text{ nm} / 0.323 \text{ A}$.
P3-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml sample (2.05 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with $AgNO_3$ (irradiation at 20 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Light yellow-brown coloring. The spectrum shows an absorption band with a maximum centered at 420.69 nm / 0.175 A.
P3-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml sample (2.06 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample with $AgNO_3$ (irradiation at 50 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the crosslinking step. Light yellow-brown coloring. The spectrum shows an absorption band with a maximum centered at 417.99 nm / 0.245 A.
P4-0412-ir-20-dil	2 ml sample (2.04 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample (irradiation at 20 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the cross- linking step. Translucent, colorless appearance. The spectrum has no absorption maxima
P4-0412-ir-50-dil	2 ml sample (2.03 g) / 38 ml bidistilled water	Polymer matrix control sample (irradiation at 50 kGy). The scan was performed within 5 days of the completion of the cross- linking step. Translucent, colorless appearance. The spectrum has no absorption maxima

Table 6.2 Method of preparing the composite hydrogel with PVA-HC matrix crosslinked by irradiation for UV-VIS analysis

The existence of silver nanoparticles is evidenced in the UV-VIS absorption spectrum of hydrogel samples (PVA-HC polymeric matrix crosslinked by irradiation) through absorption maxima in the range 400 - 430 nm respectively: 401.18 nm / 0.294 (A) - P2- 0412-

ir-20-dil, 421.44 nm / 0.173 (A) - P3-0412-ir-20-dil, 407.61 nm / 0.325 (A) - P2-0412-ir-50-dil and 418.0 nm / 0.245 (A)) - P3-0412-ir-50-dil. In the absence of the plant extract from the synthesis mixture (samples P3-0412-ir-20-dil and P3-0412-ir-50-dil) the absorption maxima are shifted to higher wavelengths, suggesting the existence of larger nanoparticles dimensions, while the presence of the plant extract determines the movement of these maxima to smaller wavelengths; this displacement could be due to the stabilizing effect of the compounds in the plant extract which causes a dimensional stabilization of the nanoparticles.



Figure 6.8 UV-VIS absorption spectrum for composite hydrogel PVA-HC matrix with irradiation crosslinking (20 kGy) - 5 days after irradiation.



Figure 6.9 UV-VIS absorption spectrum for composite hydrogel PVA-HC matrix with irradiation crosslinking (50 kGy) - 5 days after irradiation.

The role of the vegetable extract as a reducing agent may also be suggested by the amplitude of the higher absorption maxima compared to the mixtures without vegetable extract, at both irradiation doses. At a higher dose of irradiation, it is noted an increase of the maximum absorption (especially in the case of the absence of the vegetable extract in the mixture) in the same time with a relative narrowing of the absorption band.

The data obtained could suggest a first direction of optimization of the synthesis process in order to find an optimal ratio between the irradiation dose and the extract content of the synthesis mixture.





Figure 6.12 UV-VIS absorption spectra for composite hydrogels with PAA-A matrix with crosslinking through temperature cycles compared to the spectra recorded for polymer matrix controls (after crosslinking step - 14 days / blank bidistilled water)

The obtained results suggest the possibility of the compounds from *Sapindus mukorossi* extract to be involved not only in reducing, forming and stabilizing silver nanoparticles but also in the crosslinking of the basic polymeric skeleton.

For NPAg hydrogel samples, the recorded band-type maxima suggest the existence of a relatively large number of nanoparticles with a large particle size distribution. In comparison with the spectrum of plant extracts, a significant decrease of the maxima present in plant extracts can be noted, especially for the samples in which the *Salvia officinalis* extract is present. This modification could confirm the involvement of certain compounds in the *Salvia officinalis* extract in the process of reducing and stabilization of nanoparticles, which influence the process mentioned in a higher degree compared to the compounds from the *Sapindus mukorossi* extract.



Figure 6.15 UV-VIS absorption spectra for composite hydrogels with PAA-A matrix with irradiation crosslinking compared to control sample spectra (after crosslinking / blank bidistilled water) - 60 days from synthesis: a) 20 kGy and b) 50 kGy

Stabilitatea nanoparticulelor de argint în toate sistemele testate se dovede te a fi deosebit pentru toate sistemele analizate la ambele doze de iradiere. Aceast comportare indic al turi de rolul stabilizant al compu ilor din extractele vegetale i implicare matricii polimerice / componen ilor acesteia în procesul de stabilizare a nanoparticulelor.

6.2 The infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) study of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcohol-collagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide-starch

FTIR analysis was performed using a FTIR spectroscopy system for advanced research composed from a Vertex 80 FT-IR spectrometer (ATR - attenuated total reflection; diamond head). The obtained results were compared with literature data regarding types of aqueous plant extracts and similar polymeric matrices. The interpretation of the FTIR spectra considered the identification of the absorption maxima that undergo changes in the analyzed media (crude vegetable extract, polymeric matrix components and hydrogels with silver nanoparticles). The changes in the position of the spectral maxima can be associated with the adsorption [184, 185, 186, 187, 188] of the constituents of the plant extract on the surface of the silver nanoparticles, the bonds that may occur as a result of the crosslinking of the polymeric matrix and the interaction between it and / or the silver nanoparticles, respectively the plant extract.

The similarity between the IR spectra in the case of the PVA-HC hybrid matrix hydrogel samples (respectively with *Salvia officinalis* extract, silver nanoparticles, silver nitrate and polymeric matrix as such - Annex 7: figures 7.1-7.2), suggests an advanced incorporation of components of the nanomaterial obtained in the polymeric matrix. The main changes observed in the IR spectrum occur mainly between the components of the polymeric matrix and the polymeric matrix obtained on their basis. FTIR analysis of composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix and irradiation crosslinking (50kGy) led to the recording of spectral changes, especially in the case of NPAg / *Sapindus mukorossi* hydrogels and mixtures of extracts respectively, compared to the polymeric matrix and NPA / hydrogels *Salvia officinalis* extract and silver nitrate.

6.3 Characterization by electronic microscopy (SEM-EDS) of composite hydrogels with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcohol – collagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide - starch

The device used in the analysis was constituted by a scanning electron microscope with field emission (FESEM) Carl ZeissóAuriga model, dedicated to the study of microscopic structures and surfaces of different types of materials: organic and inorganic samples (polymers, polycomposite materials, plastics) magnetic conductive or no; the functional parameters of the device are mentioned in subchapter 4.4 - figure 4.6.

6.3.1 Analysis by scanning electron microscopy (SEM-EDS) of composite hydrogels with PVA-HC polymeric matrix



Figure 6.37 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel with PVA-HC matrix crosslinked through temperature cycles (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone.



Figure 6.39 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel with PVA-HC matrix crosslinked through irradiation (20 kGy) (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone.

The morphology / shape of the silver nanoparticles (Figures 6.36.-6.41, Annex 9 - Figure 9.1) is relatively complex, some of them having generally associated polygonal shapes as spherical. Relatively spherical and polydisperse particles were highlighted, and agglomerations were present, with dimensions in the range $21\div37$ nm. The blurry details appear as a result of the sample loading which shows a low electrical conductivity of the environment which can be associated with the existence of the stabilizing layer around the nanoparticles consisting of the polymeric matrix / phytochemical compounds from the plant extract.

The EDS spectra highlighted the spots associated with silver and those associated with carbon, oxygen and nitrogen, which confirm the presence of stabilizers consisting of alkyl chains in the examined samples [342, 343]. In the central area of the spectrum it can be clearly observed the peak associated with the silver located at 2.5 keV this maximum being associated with the K, L lines characteristic of the silver [344, 345, 346]. The intensities of the spectral lines are proportional to the abundance of the element, but given that the EDS method cannot distinguish between the elemental silver and the silver atoms present in other

compounds [342, 345, 346], the result shows values of the relative concentrations in the investigated samples.



Figure 6.41 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel with PVA-HC matrix crosslinked through irradiation (50 kGy) (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone.

6.3.2 Analysis by scanning electron microscopy (SEM-EDS) of composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix



Figure 6.43 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / *Salvia officinalis* extract with crosslinking by temperature cycle (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone



Figure 6.45 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / *Sapindus mukorossi* extract with crosslinking by temperature cycle (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone



Figure 6.47 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / extracts mixture with crosslinking by temperature cycle (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone





Figure 6.49 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / *Salvia officinalis* extract with crosslinking by irradiation ó 20 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 µm scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone





Figure 6.51 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / *Sapindus mukorossi* extract with crosslinking by irradiation 6 20 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone





Figure 6.53 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / extracts mixture with crosslinking by irradiation 6 20 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone



Figure 6.55 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / Salvia officinalis extract with crosslinking by irradiation 6 50 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 μ m scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone



Figure 6.57 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / Sapindus mukorossi extract with crosslinking by irradiation ó 20 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 µm scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone



Figure 6.59 SEM-EDS analysis for composite hydrogel PAA-A matrix / extracts mixture with crosslinking by irradiation ó 20 kGy (magnification order: 100,000X, 1 µm scale) / mapping of chemical elements in the interest microzone

SEM analysis for the composite hydrogels (PAA-A polymeric matrix) with NPAg using Salvia officinalis extract revealed the existence of nanoparticles of approximately spherical shape, dispersed, with dimensions in the range 20-60 nm. The relative average concentration of silver in the investigated samples varied between 13.6% (crosslinking through temperature cycles), 28.5% (irradiation - 20 kGy) and 15.2% (irradiation - 50 kGy) respectively: the high values of the relative average concentration of carbon and oxygen indicate the existence of the stabilizing layer induced by the polymeric matrix and the phytochemical compounds from the extract on the silver nanoparticles. For composite hydrogels (PAA-A polymeric matrix) with NPAg using Sapindus mukorossi extract, nanoparticles of approximately spherical shape, dispersed, with dimensions in the range of 30-60 nm were observed. A special aspect regarding these investigated samples is the presence of the observable gel film after processing the sample for the SEM-EDS analysis. The higher values, in this case, of the relative average concentration of carbon and oxygen, for each crosslinking version, compared to those of sage extract, suggest the adhesion of the stabilizing layer (polymeric matrix / phytochemical compounds from the extract) to a greater extent.

In the case of using the mixture of extracts to obtain the composite hydrogels (PAA-A polymeric matrix) with NPAg, the SEM-EDS analysis revealed the existence of spherical shaped nanoparticles, dispersed (in some cases particle agglomerations) with dimensions between 10-60 nm. A first remark regarding the results obtained is related to obtaining higher values of C_{mAg} compared to the extracts used as such under similar conditions of synthesis / analysis, which suggests a synergistic effect of the phytochemical compounds present in the

two extracts relative to the reduction / stabilization of nanoparticles. silver within the polymeric matrix.

6.4 Analysis by X-ray diffraction (XRD) of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcohol-collagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide-starch

Structural characterization of polymeric matrices and composite hydrogels was performed on material samples $(30\pm 2^{\circ}C)$ dried in the oven for 24 hours, milled and separated into two granulometric fractions (1 mm mesh); the analysis was performed on the fine fraction deposited on the standard diffractometer quartz substrates. The data obtained from the XRD scans were imported into the PDXL program and Rietveld analysis was performed for crystallographic refinement. The details regarding the crystallographic models used are presented in table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Parameters of crystalline structure for a series of silver compounds

Phase	Chemical formula	Crystalline system	Spatial group	Density (g/cm ³)	No. Card ICDD-PDF
Silver	Ag	Cubic	Fm-3m (225)	10.396	04-003-7118
Silver oxide	AgO	Monoclinical	P21/c (14)	7.684	04-007-1374
Azotat de argint	AgNO ₃	Orthorombical	P212121 (19)	4.346	01-074-4790
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{48}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1070
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{121}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1069
Ag-PVA	$Ag(C_2H_4O)_{243}$	Tetragonal	-	9.610	00-058-1068

Table 6.14 Relative crystalline degree for composite hydrogels with polyacrylamide-starch polymeric matrix

Sample code	Crosslinking	Peak intensity (cps)		Crystallinity	
		$I_{2\Theta = 17^{\circ}}$	$I_{2\Theta = 38^{\circ}}$	(70)	
Polymeric matrix	PAA-A				
P5 -1902	CT ó termal cycles	3469	-	-	
P5 -0412-ir20	ir20 ó irradiation 20 kGy	3195	-	-	
P5 -0412-ir50	P5-0412-ir50 ir50 ó irradiation 50 kGy		-	-	
Composite hydrog	els with NPAg / Salvia officir	nalis extract			
P9 -1902	CT ó termal cycles	1558	3072	66.35	
P9- 0412-ir20	ir20 ó irradiation 20 kGy	1769	1899	51.77	
P9 -0412-ir50	ir50 ó irradiation 50 kGy	1375	1849	57.35	
Composite hydrogels with NPAg / Sapindus mukorossi extract					
P10 -1902	CT ó termal cycles	2438	2162	47.00	
P10-0412-ir20 ir20 ó irradiation 20 kGy		2966	1680	36.16	
P10-0412-ir50 ir50 ó irradiation 50 kGy		2659	1573	37.17	
Composite hydrogels with NPAg / extracts mixture					
P11 -1902	CT ó termal cycles	2609	2818	51.93	
P11- 0412-ir20	ir20 ó irradiation 20 kGy	1645	1347	45.02	
P11 -0412-ir50	ir50 ó irradiation 50 kGy	2697	2127	44.09	

The data presented in table 6.14 indicate an increase in the degree of crystallinity in the order P10, P9 and P11 respectively, the results indicating the mixed, crystalline and

amorphous character of the synthesized materials as well as that the type of extract used as reducing agent and the crosslinking variant applied have influence on the crystallinity of the final product. In the case of crosslinking through thermal cycles, the nanomaterials based on *Salvia officinalis* extract as such (66.35%) or in mixture (51.93%) have a relatively higher degree of crystallinity compared to the nanomaterial obtained with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract (47%); a similar variation is observed in the case of the crosslinking by irradiation at both applied irradiation doses.

The variant of crosslinking applied (thermal cycles and irradiation with gamma radiation respectively) also influences the degree of relative crystallinity, which has higher values in the case of crosslinking by thermal cycles compared to the variant by irradiation. For all three categories of hydrogels (depending on the type of extract), there are relatively small differences in the values of the degree of crystallinity depending on the irradiation dose.

6.5 Antimicrobial activity evaluation of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, with polymeric matrix polyvinyl alcoholcollagen hydrolysate and polyacrylamide-starch

Testing the antifungal effect of the synthesized materials firstly highlights the role of plant extracts. As mentioned in the specialized studies, even in the case of extracts (*Salvia officinalis, Sapindus mukorossi*) whose chemical composition was not identical, the results indicated a similar antifungal activity; the antifungal effect is not associated with one of the major compounds present in the extract but with the synergy of other compounds that are in small proportions [354, 355, 356].

The comparative evaluation of the results obtained (table 6.15) for the control samples (with extract) and the hydrogels with silver nanoparticles indicates the determined role of the compounds of the extract / extracts in the antifungal effect. In the acute toxicity test experiment, Swiss white mice (20 ± 2 g in weight) and Wistar white rats (140 ± 20 g in weight) were used, with uniform distribution by sex (20 animals, 10 males and 10 females on each batch and dose), from the biobase USAMV - Bucharest.

Tabelul 6.17 The results of the biochemical tests at the end of the observation period after the administration of sample P11-1902 (hydrogel sample with polyacrylamide-starch matrix and silver nanoparticles obtained with a mixture of extracts) on Wistar rat

No. crt.	Parameter / biochemical indicator	Registered value	<i>Reference value range</i> [357, 358]
1	Hb - hemoglobin	11 g / 100 ml	8 ó 15 g / 100 ml
2	RBC (Red Blood Cells) - erytrocites	7.0 mil. / mm ³ blood	5.5 ó 10 mil / mm ³
3	WBC (White Blood Cells) - leucocytes	12000 / mm ³ blood	10000 ó 15000 / mm ³
4	MONO (Monocytes) - monocytes	3 %	max. 5 %
5	BASO (Basophils) - basofiles	< 1 %	0.0 ó 0.7 %
6	EOS (Eosinophils) - eozynofiles	2.1 %	2 ó 4 %
7	NEU (Neutrophils) - neutrofiles	54 %	50 ó 55 %
8	LYM (Lymphocytes) - lymfocites	28 %	25 ó 35 %
9	CHOL (Cholesterol) - cholesterol	126 mg / 100 ml	135 mg / 100 ml, average
10	CREA (Creatinine Kinase) - creatinin	0.3 mg / 100 ml blood	0.3 ó 0.5 mg / 100 ml
11	ALB (Albumin) - albumin	2.3 mg / 100 ml blood	2.1 ó 4.0 mg / 100 ml
12	AMYL (Amylase) - amylaze	740 mg / 100 ml blood	300 ó 1500 mg / 100 ml
13	GLU (Glucose) - glucose	44 mg / 100 ml blood	40 mg / 100 ml, average
14	ALKP (Alkaline phosphatase)	29 mg / 100 ml blood	8 ó 80 mg / 100 ml

Experienced animals were subjected to observations regarding behavior, vital signs, noting the occurrence of any suggestive changes to a toxic condition, at 24 hours, 48 hours, 72 hours and 14 days after dosing [359].

The microbiological study on the composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles was performed in order to highlight their antimicrobial character and to determine the minimum bactericidal dose on the strains of bacteria tested. Two strains of bacteria (in the form of pure lyophilized cultures) were selected, frequently involved in intrahospital infections: *Escherichia coli* ATCC reg. 25922 - Gram-negative bacterium (pathogenic condition, extremely resistant to antibiotic treatment) and *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC reg 25923 - Gram-positive, pathogenic Gram bacterium of coagulase-positive staphylococci, with high risk of postoperative infection.

Antimicrobial activity for composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles was determined at concentrations obtained by decimal dilutions, according to the working protocol (presented in subchapter 4.5). The volume of culture medium used for each bacterial strain was kept constant (15 ml) and the concentration of the tested hydrogels varied. The plates with nutrient media, hydrogel and inoculum of bacteria were incubated aerobically, for variable durations depending on the bacterial genus, in parallel being performed microbiological tests and for the polymeric matrix corresponding to each type of hydrogel (PVA-HC and PAA-A), considered as control. For the test of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, the same procedure was adopted regardless of their synthesis mode. In a first phase, a series of preliminary tests were performed on each type of synthesized hydrogel and the corresponding control samples (polymeric matrices). To confirm the results, preliminary tests were performed in duplicate for all hydrogel samples and both bacterial strains.

The efficiency of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles was evaluated by means of the minimum bactericidal concentration (CMB). Thus, in a preliminary phase, the tests with smaller proportions of hydrogels (0.8 ml and 0.5 ml / test plate) were repeated, the results also indicating the lack of typical bacterial colonies, indicating a bactericidal effect on both bacterial strains. As a result of these tests, a differentiated sensitivity of the bacterial strains to the action of the tested nanomaterials was established, the strain of *Escherichia coli* being more sensitive than that of *Staphylococcus aureus*. For this reason, in subsequent tests, *Escherichia coli* strain assay was performed starting from the basic dilution d_0 with 0.5 ml hydrogel and 0.8 ml hydrogel respectively for *Staphylococcus aureus* strain testing. For lower values d_0 in plates appear typical colonies of bacteria, the hydrogels showing only bacteriostatic effect. The basic dilution term d_0 (10⁰) will be used in the following for the samples in which the hydrogels are used as such not taken into physiological serum.

Due to the small volume of the hydrogel taken in the test sample, it is difficult to achieve a uniform distribution on the Petri dish; for this reason, for the determination of CMB in the case of the two bacterial strains, the tests were performed with successive decimal dilutions (according to the technique described in subchapter 4.5) for all hydrogel samples:



Figure 6.69 P2-0412 hydrogel ó Petri plates after testing on *Staphylococcus aureus* strain at different dilutions: a) $d_1(10^{-1})$, b) $d_2(10^{-2})$ and c) $d_3(10^{-3})$.

As the images of the Petri test plates suggest the same type of bacteriostatic behavior, only a series of suggestive images were presented for each type of hydrogel with silver nanoparticles and for each type of bacterial strain, the bacteriostatic behavior being detailed in tabular form (tables 6.19-6.23).

	Sample code	CMB (ml / ml inoculum / 24 hours)		Unduced ture /	
No.crt.		Escherichia coli	Staphylococcus aureus	polymeric matrix	
1	P2-0412	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hydrogels with Salvia officinalis extract /	
2	P2-0412-ir20	0.5 ·10 ⁻³	0.8 ·10 ⁻³		
3	P2-0412-ir50	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8 ·10 ⁻³	РУА-НС	
4	P3-0412-ir20	0.5.10-2	0.8.10-2	Hydrogels with AgNO ₃	
5	P3-0412-ir50	0.5.10-2	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	- irradiation / PVA-HC	
6	P9-2002	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³	- Hydrogels with Salvia officinalis extract /	
7	P9-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$		
8	P9-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	РАА-А	
9	P10-2002	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Hydrogals with	
10	P10-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	Sapindus mukorossi	
11	P10-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-2}$	extract / PAA-A	
12	P11-2002	0.5.10-2	0.8.10-2	- Hydrogels with extracts mixture / PAA-A	
13	P11-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-2}$	0.8·10 ⁻³		
14	P11-0412-ir50	0.5·10 ⁻³	0.8·10 ⁻³		
15	P12-0412-ir20	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-1}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-1}$	Hydrogels with AgNO ₃ – irradiation / PAA-A	
16	P12-0412-ir50	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-1}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-1}$		

 Table 6.23 Minimum bactericidal concentration (CMB) for bacterial strains Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus

7. CONCLUSIONS AND OWN CONTRIBUTIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The research activity related to the doctoral thesis had as a general objective the "green" synthesis of composite hydrogels, functionalized with silver nanoparticles, the characterization of these materials and the evaluation of their potential for biomedical applications. The research carried out within the thesis focused on the possibilities to synthesize a certain type of nanomaterials, respectively hydrogels, with hybrid polymer matrix (based on two components, a synthetic and a natural polymer) and functionalized with silver nanoparticles (synthesized by using plant extracts of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi*). For a relevant study in a first phase, the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with the mentioned plant extracts was experimented and subsequently the synthesis of the composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles generated *in situ* through the same extracts. In a final phase, the antimicrobial activity of the synthesized nanomaterials was evaluated by *in vitro* tests and preliminary *in vivo* tests.

The specific objectives of the doctoral thesis were achieved by obtaining the hydrogeltype nanomaterials through the synthesis techniques proposed within the general objective of the thesis, nanomaterials that were subsequently characterized by specific methods of analysis.

The synthesis methods applied (both for obtaining natural extracts, for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles and for composite hydrogels) considered the following aspects: the use of natural sources, nontoxic solvents, process parameters that allow the reproducibility of the methods, the use of equipment and a logistics economically advantageous as well as aspects of environmental protection.

Silver nanoparticles are one of the most commonly used classes of nanoparticles as a functionalizing agent of polymers due in particular to the electrical, optical, catalytic and in particular antimicrobial properties well established and investigated in particular in colloidal systems. However, many practical applications of silver nanoparticles involve their inclusion in various substrates and matrices. From this point of view, polymers are a preferred class of materials due to their specific morphology, chemical nature and structure with long polymeric chains that allow the incorporation and advanced dispersion of nanoparticles. In addition, a number of functional groups of polymers can be used as active centers for the controlled synthesis of nanoparticles.

The commonly applied process for dispersing silver nanoparticles in the polymer matrix involves the capture of silver cations by the polymer chains followed by reduction with reducing agents. This process, compared to the mixing of two components and the polymerization in the presence of the pre-synthesized silver nanoparticles, presents two advantages: firstly the existence of macromolecular chains improves the dispersion of the nanoparticles in the polymeric matrix and partially prevents the formation of aggregates and secondary, the polymer substrate lead to a small size of nanoparticles, a narrow particle size distribution and relatively well defined shapes.

The variant of applied synthesis, the formation of the reactive nanoparticles within a preformed hydrogel, involves obtaining in a first phase of the preformed hydrogel which acts as a microreactor in which the nanoparticles are formed from precursors after a series of necessary treatments. This process gained popularity mainly due to the technological advantages, compared to the *ex situ* method, the size and morphology of the nanoparticles could be controlled relatively easier. The metal ions can be absorbed by the functional groups of the hydrogel by electrostatic or ion-dipole interactions, and then reduced to the metal nanoparticles by reducing agents from the natural extracts. Irradiation crosslinking is a

technique that does not involve the use of chemical reagents, thus preserving the biocompatibility of the polymer and at the same time ensuring the modification of the polymer and its sterilization. Hydrogels prepared by freeze-thaw technique have shown to have significant potential in many applications due to certain properties, preferable to gels obtained by traditional crosslinking techniques, related to the lack of toxicity and superior mechanical strength; Exposure to repeated cycles of freezing and thawing at room temperature results in the formation of crystallites that act as physical crosslinks within the polymeric matrix. The phytochemical compounds present in the plant extracts could also contribute to the stabilization of the polymeric matrix, contributing in addition with antioxidant, pharmacological and therapeutic potential to the nanobiomaterial.

A hydrophilic environment is particularly important in the antimicrobial applications because water facilitates the release of silver ions from nanoparticles encapsulated in the polymeric matrix; at the same time the material will maintain a moist environment around the wound thus ensuring a hydration for optimal healing. Biopolymers are an important group mainly due to their availability, low cost and biocompatibility. Considering that many applications of silver nanocomposites are aimed at biomedical treatment, hydrogels are important benchmarks in this field.

From the category of synthesized materials, simple / multicomponent hydrogels have expanded in the field of controlled release of drug principles but also in fields such as tissue engineering where polymeric biomaterials perform many functions, capturing the interest of researchers over the last decade due to the intrinsic properties of medical applications; biocompatibility, the ability to release water-soluble compounds from the polymer network and their versatility in modeling physico-chemical properties allow the generation of new biomaterials.

Conclusions from the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles / composite hydrogels by ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy (UV-VIS) analysis

By correlating the spectral changes in UV-VIS, as an indicator of the morphological changes of the silver nanoparticles, with the experimental parameters (pH, the initial mixing ratio of silver nitrate / *Salvia officinalis* extract) one can draw conclusions regarding the growth of the nanoparticles and the optimal working parameters. for the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using plant extracts.

In the experimental approach performed the ultraviolet-visible absorption spectroscopy was used as an analytical technique to characterize the plant extract and to monitor the synthesis process of the silver nanoparticles. Process parameters such as pH, temperature, sage extract content (corresponding to a certain extraction method), ionic solution concentration, reaction time, etc. influences the reduction reaction of the metal ion, the growth of the nanoparticles and the stabilization phase. Therefore the dimensional and morphological distribution of silver nanoparticles is the result of the different kinetics of all the steps involved in the process of nanoparticle formation. This influence is reflected in the absorption band that appears in the range 350-600 nm, which accumulates the plasmonic properties of all the silver nanoparticles present in the solution. The growth dynamics of the nanoparticles can be monitored by the kinetic control of the process, the usual variant being the variation of the concentration of the type of reducing and stabilizing species. Thus, in order to obtain information regarding the stages of the nanoparticle growth process, solutions of sage extract and silver nitrate were mixed in different ratios.

The relative area as a function of time in the range 350-600 nm was calculated, the relative area representing the surface delimited by the absorption spectrum in the case of samples with silver nitrate. It was considered that the value of this area could be correlated

with the existence and the content of nanoparticles that give a plasmonic response. The graphical representation of the relative area as a function of time has been preferred to represent the values associated with the maximum absorption over time because the absorption bands have different characteristics (maximum intensity, bandwidth, shape) depending on the ratios of silver nitrate / sage extract. The selected wavelength domain considered that the main plasmonic changes of silver nanoparticles in UV-VIS spectra appear in this area. The reason for the selection of the relative area instead of the maximum absorption was that the plasmonic response of the metal nanoparticles is influenced by the reaction medium. In the growth stage the process is dynamic, accompanied by breaking and bonding, with effect on the size and shape of the nanoparticles and the metal interface.

The evolution of the UV-VIS spectrum over time indicates a rapid growth of silver nanoparticles in the first three hours from the moment of mixing the components. However, differences between the rate of increase of the absorbance intensity and the position of the maximum absorption appear. Considering the aspect of the spectrum in the range 350-600 nm, it can be appreciated that the highest content of nanoparticles was obtained when the initial mixture contained equal volumes of 10 mM silver nitrate and sage extract. In case of representing the relative area as a function of time for the studied synthesis mixtures, the four stages with different kinetics of the nanoparticle growth process can be identified. The dynamics of the process is similar to the mechanism proposed by Polte [215] for the formation of gold nanoparticles obtained by Turkevich method [214].

In the growth model described in the present study the processes involved are: reduction of metal ions, diffusion of metal ions and metal particles in solution, adsorption and reduction of metal ions at the interface, coalescence of colloidal unstable nanoparticles. Considering the evolution of the nanoparticle growth process, at one point one of the individual processes may have a greater weight in the dynamics of the global growth process. Another experimental observation is that the allure of the curves of the variation of the relative area as a function of time varies with the initial mixing ratio between sage extract and silver nitrate. For all the syntheses performed experimentally, the relative growth rate of the area was calculated as the slope of the linear portion of the relative area evolution as a function of time.

Monitoring the formation of nanoparticles over eight days revealed a slow and continuous increase in the relative area for mixtures in which the volume of silver nitrate 10 mM is in excess of that of the extract. At the same time, a slight shift of the maximum absorption in the UV-VIS spectrum towards larger wavelengths could be observed, behavior that can be correlated with the formation of large nanoparticles.

In order to obtain information on the stoichiometry of the reaction medium of the entire equilibrium process, a procedure similar to the continuous variation method was also applied. In a first step the mixture was tested at room temperature by recording the UV-VIS spectrum and the silver nitrate content was systematically varied (0 - 100%); UV-VIS spectra were recorded for information on the reaction products. The stages of the experimental approach were performed to obtain information related to the optimal volumetric ratio of silver nitrate : plant extract necessary for the synthesis of stable silver nanoparticles.

When the initial reaction mixture contained equal volumes of silver nitrate and *Salvia* officinalis extract (1:1 mixing volume ratio), the UV-VIS spectrum showed the highest absorbance value at about 425 nm. In the case of mixing reports in which the ionic salt is in excess, a bathochromic displacement of the maximum absorption was observed; this displacement may be correlated with the formation of larger nanoparticles. If the vegetable extract is in excess of the volume of silver nitrate, the UV-VIS spectrum shows more attenuated absorption maxima, correlated with a lower content of nanoparticles in the mixture. The value of the wavelength corresponding to the maximum absorption ($_{max}$) is shifted to

smaller wavelengths compared to the mixing at the 1:1 ratio indicating the presence of smaller particles; this behavior could be due to the ionic solution as a limiting reactant in this case.

The experimental results indicated an optimal mixing ratio of the precursors equal to 1:1 (10 mM silver nitrate solution : sage extract) in the case of silver nanoparticles with *Salvia officinalis* extract at ambient temperature.

pH is an important experimental parameter in the growth dynamics of silver nanoparticles because its value can influence most of the equilibria involved in the process. The tested samples, obtained by mixing in different proportions the extract of *Salvia officinalis* with pH buffer solution, showed stable pH values; subsequently, after the addition of silver nitrate, in ratios corresponding to the plant extract, only a slight change (\pm 0.5 pH units) of the pH value of the final synthesis mixture was found. The differences observed in the recorded spectra derive mainly from their amplitude, the intensities of the maximum absorption who are lower and become closer as the pH decreases. The introduction of the phosphate ion into the system (together with the pH buffer solution) influences the plasmonic response of the silver nanoparticles formed, the difference can be observed in the case of the mixture with pH equal to 6.3 (containing buffer solution) compared to the mixture with pH equal to 6.8 (without buffer solution); the difference between the two spectra is due to the phosphate ions present in the solution and consecutively to the colloidal metallic particle interface - solution. Following addition to the phosphoric acid in the synthesis mixture, the relative area variation over time is similar to autocatalytic reactions.

The evolution of the relative growth rate (calculated as the slope of the line on the linear portion of the variation of the relative area over time), at different pH values, for the volumetric ratio of mixing of silver nitrate : Salvia officinalis extract equal to 1:1, was determined based on the values of v_1 , v_2 , v_3 and v_4 respectively which correspond to the four stages of the nanoparticle growth process corresponding to the model proposed in the presented study. The samples with pH values of 10.5, 6.3, 2.8 and 2.3, measured after the addition of the buffer solution, have relatively close velocity values in the third step (v_3) , a stage in which the nanoparticle growth process is accelerated due to the autocatalytic reduction at metal-solution interface. The difference between these values is given by the time duration associated with this stage in the variation curves of the relative area as a function of time. Therefore with the decrease of the pH value in the synthesis mixture, the time corresponding to the third step is also reduced. The speed associated with the first stage of the growth process (v_1) has high values in the case of mixtures with alkaline pH which can be attributed to the formation of silver oxide. As a result, in the alkaline solution, in the initial phase, the oxidation of silver to silver oxide plays an important role in the overall mechanism of silver nanoparticle formation.

It is known that the reaction temperature plays an important role in the spatial and dimensional distribution of the particles, especially in the case of silver nanoparticles. The experimental tests based on the approach procedure were intended to optimize the experimental parameters of the studied biosynthesis process taking into account the changes in the UV-VIS spectrum.

The recording of UV-VIS spectra for the studied mixtures allowed the calculation of the relative area associated with the silver nanoparticles present in the solution, while a series of changes in the spectra aspects can be highlighted: when the ionic salt is in excess (volumetric ratios of silver nitrate : extract larger than 1:1) the displacement of $_{max}$ to higher values may be correlated with the formation of larger nanoparticles and a thinner coating. The results obtained suggest that the formation of silver nanoparticles following the biosynthesis process with *Salvia officinalis* extract is based on a balance capable of determining a continuous change in the shape and size of the nanoparticles depending on the ratio Ag^+ / reducing and stabilizing species. The process proceeds continuously, in correlation with the

specific conditions of the reaction medium until a certain equilibrium related to the dimensional and spatial distribution of the nanoparticles is reached. Although the relative areas calculated on the basis of UV-VIS spectra have high values for mixtures that were initially heated, the value of the absorbance associated with the maximum is low as the value of the absorption bands is also wide compared to the values of the mixture at ambient temperature. This behavior suggests that the silver nanoparticles are in high proportion when the mixture is initially heated but at the same time, the spatial and dimensional distribution is wider compared to the non-heated samples.

The experimental study performed with the use of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract initially pursued its behavior as a reducing and stabilizing agent, in the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using as a precursor 10 mM silver nitrate solution. Tests were carried out with samples having variable proportions (volumetric ratios) of the extract, maintaining the ionic salt content constantly, at a pH of the synthesis mixture due to the vegetable extract. For UV-VIS analysis, control samples with the same volumetric extract ratios were used, at dilutions identical to the samples of colloidal silver nanoparticle solutions obtained.

The data obtained from the UV-VIS analysis show an extremely slow reduction of the silver ions by the compounds present in the plant extract under the established synthesis conditions (static contact / 25° C / acidic pH of the reaction medium due to the plant extract). However, the formation of nanoparticles can be observed, especially at the 1:1 and 1.5:1 volumetric ratios (corresponding to 2% and 3% v/v extract in mixtures). In this concentration range was also determined the value of the critical micellar concentration of the extract - 2.7% average value; this behavior suggests the favorable involvement of the micelles formed in solution in the process of reducing and stabilizing the silver nanoparticles.

In the next stage of the experimental study the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with Sapindus mukorossi extract was performed for five concentration values of the extract in the mixture (around the determined average critical micellar concentration - 2.7%) at 25°C (thermostatic water bath) in excess of 10 mM AgNO₃ solution, without dilution, by static contact; the mixture was monitored by UV-VIS analysis in the range 230-750 nm (as control samples were used extract samples - diluted with bidistilled water - at concentrations similar to the tested mixtures). From the UV-VIS spectra there is a slight shift of the maximum absorption towards the higher wavelength which could be correlated with the existence in solution of the larger aggregates / nanoparticles (the existence of the deposits would confirm this, some of the large size particles precipitating). At the same time, a stabilization of the absorption maximum is observed for the concentrations of 1.6%, 2.7%, 3.6% and about 5% around the absorbance of 0.28; the behavior in the UV-VIS spectrum could also be related to the formation of the micellar aggregates that influence the plasmonic response, in the concentration range mentioned above, forming the micelle of comparable size. The pH values are kept approximately in the same domain for all synthetic mixtures (pH: 4.14 - 4.63) after 4 days of synthesis, with small variations, the decrease being due to the possible release of hydrogen ions by the polyphenolic compounds following the reduction of the ions. silver from the solution.

The results obtained at this stage of the experimental approach suggest an important influence in the reducing and stabilizing process of the reaction medium pH. As a result, the behavior of the synthesis mixtures at basic pH values (pH adjustment was performed with 1M potassium hydroxide solution) was investigated, maintaining the mixing volume ratio of the extract : ionic salt equal to 1:1. UV-VIS spectral analysis confirmed the importance of pH as one of the decisive factors in the synthesis. At basic pH values, the silver nanoparticles formation process proceeds with an increased global velocity, from the absorption maxima aspects resulting the formation of an increased number of smaller nanoparticles (the value of the wavelength associated with the maximum moves to smaller values compared to the

mixtures. at acidic pH) and a narrower particle size distribution (well defined absorption maxima for basic pH compared to absorption bands for acidic pH values). For both acidic and basic pH values, the formation of the nanoparticles is influenced by the concentration of the extract in the synthesis mixture, being noticeable at values higher than the critical micellar concentration.

Under acidic pH conditions of the reaction medium the synthesis of silver nanoparticles proceeds extremely slowly under the given conditions (25°C / acidic pH due to plant extract / 10 mM silver nitrate / static contact); a noticeable change in the UV-VIS spectra appears 3 days after the beginning of the synthesis, being observed the existence of large absorption bands whose intensity decreases with the increase of the content of plant extract in the mixture. This behavior suggests a competitive equilibrium existing in the synthesis mixture between silver and hydrogen ions, fixed and released respectively at by the saponin hydroxyl groups. The bathochromic displacement of the absorption band maxima compared to the mixtures at basic pH suggests the existence in solution of the larger silver nanoparticles and a relatively large particle size spectrum. The plasmonic response of silver nanoparticles could also be attenuated by the existence of micelles formed around the nanoparticles. For all the mixing reports tested (1:4, 1:2, 1:1, 2:1 and 4:1), a stabilization of the pH of the solution around 4.3 is also observed after three days of contact which would also suggested the behavior of the plant extract as an acid pH buffer. Literature data [278] also suggest that under acidic pH conditions a partial dissolution of nanoparticles formed occurs, inversely proportional to their size; the UV-VIS spectra recorded would confirm such behavior.

The influence of micellar critical concentration (CMC) has been noticed since the beginning of the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract. Both the control samples (the extract solutions at the appropriate dilutions) and the synthesis mixtures recorded a pH around 4.4 indicating the buffering property of the plant extract; the pH value correlates with the structure of the saponins, as weakly acidic species, presents in the aqueous extract of *Sapindus mukorossi*. Under the applied synthesis conditions the formation of nanoparticles is a very slow process, noticeable changes in both the color of the solutions and the UV-VIS spectra were observed 72 hours after the precursors were contacted. The recorded spectra show broad absorption bands centered at around 450 nm for all the investigated samples, it can be observed that a marked increase of the absorbance with reaching and exceeding the value of $2.6\pm0.10\%$ extract in the synthesis mixture. The linear variation of the relative area, calculated on the basis of UV-VIS spectra in the range of 350-600 nm, for the nanoparticle solutions, presents a turning point corresponding to an extract content of 2.6%, which confirms the hypothesis that the micelles could constitute structures that contribute to the nanoparticles formation.

The increase of the CMC value in the basic environment compared to the acidic environment can be associated with the existence of the chemical species from the acidic weak extract, with the addition of the alkaline solution (potassium hydroxide) the acid functional groups suffering a deprotonation by forming a mixture of compounds with a weak hydrophobic character. The decrease of the hydrophobic nature of the solutions can lead to higher CMC values; the diagrams recorded in acidic and basic environment respectively indicate a significant influence of CMC in the formation of silver nanoparticles under the applied synthesis conditions.

Synthesis of silver nanoparticles with mixture of extracts revealed that for mixing ratios between components in which the extract of *Salvia officinalis* and silver nitrate are in excess of the extract of Sapindus mukorossi (1:2:2 - 1:20:20) during the initial monitoring (3 hours at 20 minutes intervals) significant spectral especially in the mixing reports 1:10:10 and 1:20:20 respectively. The formation of silver nanoparticles is especially favored in these two

mixing reports mentioned above, both at 180 minutes after the beginning of the synthesis and especially over a longer period of time; the behavior of the mixtures of the extracts in the investigated mixing reports indicates an optimal mixing ratio for this system (*Sapindus mukorossi* extract : *Salvia officinalis* extract : 10 mM silver nitrate) located in the range 1:10:10 - 1:20:20.

A comparative analysis was also performed based on UV-VIS spectroscopy data considering the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with mixture of extracts and respectively by using individual components / extracts. In the case of the mixing volumetric ratio 1:10:10 a very well delimited absorption maximum is observed at 5 days, as a narrow bandwidth with significantly increased intensity compared to sage extract, indicating a reduced particle size distribution and a higher stabilization of the nanoparticles from a dimensional point of view; for this mixing ratio (compared to the others) the UV-VIS spectrum suggests a synergistic effect of the two extracts.

A notable difference in the case of the mixture of extracts compared with the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* as such is observed in the case of the volumetric ratio equal to 1:1:1 respectively to a concentration of 2% (% vol.) of the extract. The influence of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract in the mixture is observed in all investigated cases, the variation of the relative area for the extracts in the mixture being similar to the variation of the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* as such. The relative area associated with the silver nanoparticles shows a slow growth approximately linear while suggesting a stabilization process due in particular to the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi*. The more pronounced variation / difference observed in the case of the 1:1:1 ratio could be associated with a stabilization effect more pronounced during the pre-cellular stage; the differentiation from the case of using only the sage extract is obvious, in this case the process of reducing the silver ions with the formation of new particles taking place at high speed, but the variation of the relative area can be associated with the agglomeration of the formed nanoparticles.

The involvement of the chemical species from *Sapindus mukorossi* extract in the reduction process results especially in the case of near or higher concentrations (2%, 3% and 4%) relative to the critical micellar concentration, from the variation of the relative area in the first 80 minutes of contacting the precursors for the mixture of extracts compared to sage extract; cannot be excluded also the possibility of changing the value of the critical micellar concentration of *Sapindus mukorossi* extract mixed with sage as compared to the extract as such be excluded.

Composite hydrogel with PVA-HC polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles) - The presence of silver nanoparticles can be highlighted in the UV-VIS absorption spectrum by the existence of a well-defined absorption maximum (located at 425.68 nm / 0.433 - absorbance) present only in the hydrogel sample spectrum with silver nanoparticles. The aspect of the absorption band suggests the existence of nanoparticles in solution with a relatively narrow particle size spectrum, specifying that the sampling for analysis was performed from the supernatant and therefore the possibility existence of nanoparticles in the matrix of the hydrogel that did not migrate in aqueous solution.

Composite hydrogels with PVA-HC polymeric matrix (irradiation crosslinking) - The existence of silver nanoparticles is evidenced in the UV-VIS absorption spectrum of hydrogel samples by absorption maxima in the 400-430 nm range.

➢ In the absence of the vegetable extract from the synthesis mixture, the absorption maxima are shifted to larger wavelengths, suggesting the existence of larger nanoparticles, while the presence of the vegetable extract causes the displacement of these maxima to smaller wavelengths; this displacement could be due to the stabilizing effect of the compounds in the plant extract which causes a dimensional stabilization of the nanoparticles. At the same time, the role of the vegetable extract as a reducing

agent can be suggested by the amplitude of the higher absorption maxima compared to the mixtures without vegetable extract, for both irradiation doses.

- At a higher dose of irradiation, it is noted an increase of the maximum absorption (especially in the case of the absence of the vegetable extract in the mixture) in the same time with a relative narrowing of the absorption band.
- The data obtained could suggest a first direction of optimization of the synthesis process in order to find an optimal ratio between the irradiation dose and the extract content of the synthesis mixture.
- The UV-VIS analysis at 100 days from the preparation of the hydrogel samples with PVA-HC matrix shows a high stability of the respective systems, the absorption spectra being almost identical to those recorded at 5 days.

Composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles) - UV-VIS absorption spectra recorded for hydrogel samples with PAA-A polymer matrix highlight the appearance of band-type maxima that can be attributed to the formation and existence of the silver nanoparticles. These observations suggest the possibility of involvement of the compounds from *Sapindus mukorossi* extract not only in reducing, forming and stabilizing silver nanoparticles but also in the crosslinking of the basic polymeric backbone.

- For NPAg hydrogel samples the recorded band-type maxima (NPAg hydrogel Salvia officinalis extract: 416.14 nm / 1.466 A and 352.42 nm / 1.487 A; NPAg hydrogel Sapindus mukorossi extract: 426.23 nm / 0.507 A; hydrogel with NPAg mixture of extracts: 434.05 nm / 0.612 A) suggests the existence of a relatively large number of nanoparticles with a large particle size distribution.
- In comparison with the spectrum of plant extracts, a significant decrease of the maximums present in the plant extracts can be noticed, especially for the samples in which the extract of *Salvia officinalis* is present. This modification could confirm the involvement of certain compounds from the *Salvia officinalis* extract in the process of reducing and stabilizing of the nanoparticles, which influence the process mentioned in a higher degree compared to the compounds from *Sapindus mukorossi* extract.
- The stability of silver nanoparticles within hydrogels can also be highlighted by recording absorption spectra in UV-VIS at time intervals from synthesis. Noticeable changes in the absorption spectrum occur especially in the case of the hydrogel with silver nanoparticles *Sapindus mukorossi* extract, the maximum absorption being reduced in intensity over time, this may be due to the incorporation / retention in the gel of a fraction of the nanoparticles presented initially in solution.

Composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix (irradiation crosslinking) - Absorption spectra have highlighted the existence of absorption maxima / bands that can be associated with the existence of silver nanoparticles and a number of particularities from which may be mentioned:

All the analyzed samples indicate an increase of the absorption maximum with the increase of the irradiation dose. This change is more pronounced for the samples of NPAg hydrogel - mixture of extracts and respectively NPAg hydrogel - without extract / mixture of extracts. This may be due to the generation in the system of an increased number of free radicals generated mainly by the polymeric matrix but also by a number of compounds in plant extracts. The aspect of absorption maxima for the samples with and without vegetable extract respectively, indicates (the shift of the maximum towards smaller wavelengths) the role of the compounds from the vegetable extract in stabilizing the nanoparticles with the formation of smaller nanoparticles. The irradiation dose, as indicated by the absorption spectra, for the hydrogels with NPAg - extract of Salvia officinalis and Sapindus mukorossi respectively, does not

significantly influence the generation of nanoparticles; the obtained results would suggest a possible synergistic effect (both in terms of generation and stabilization of nanoparticles) due to the compounds present in the two extracts following irradiation.

- The displacement of the maximum position is significant especially for the hydrogel with NPAg - mixture of plant extracts, suggesting the existence of larger nanoparticles with the increasing of irradiation dose. The absence of a significant displacement of the absorption maximum with the increase of the irradiation dose suggests that the size of the metallic silver nanoclusters formed is not significantly influenced by the irradiation dose [317].
- The stability of the silver nanoparticles in all tested systems proves to be great for all the analyzed systems at both irradiation doses. This behavior indicates along with the stabilizing role of the compounds from the plant extracts and the involvement of the polymeric matrix / its components in the stabilization process of the nanoparticles.

Conclusions from the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles / composite hydrogels by Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis

The study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Salvia officinalis* extract also used Fourier transform (FTIR) infrared spectroscopy analysis to observe potential correlations with the characterization methods of the vegetable extract. Given that the present study also looked at the influence of pH on the growth dynamics of nanoparticles, the changes in the IR spectrum of the aqueous extract in basic and acid solution were followed. The observed spectral changes can be attributed to the structural changes caused by the addition of the potassium hydroxide solution in the extract having an effect on the functions containing the carbonyl group. The overall appearance of the new absorption peaks in the spectrum indicates the important modification of some functional groups from the structure of the compounds present in the extract in basic environment; the changes observed in the IR spectra of the hydrolysis of the amide groups, this could also explain the changes in the IR spectra of sage extract after the addition of silver nitrate and the weak plasmonic response of the silver nitrate mixture : vegetable extract in acid solution.

The FTIR analysis (performed for the vegetable extract, in neutral, acidic and basic solution, and for the synthesis mixtures respectively) showed in the IR spectra for the plant extract a wide absorption band with a maximum centered at 3400 cm⁻¹ which can be correlated with the content of phenolic compounds highlighted by determinations made for the content of total phenols, flavonoids and tannins. On the other hand, structural changes were identified in the case of the vegetable extract in acid and alkaline solution, consisting of the displacement of some peaks and the appearance of new ones, which were associated with the action of the hydroxide or acid introduced into solution. Significant changes were observed in the range 1600-1800 cm⁻¹, due to the stretching vibrations of C-O bonds specific to compounds with carbonyl groups. Following the addition of silver nitrate to the plant extract, some peaks were displaced after the formation of the metal nanoparticles; these displacements can be associated with the interactions between some functional groups of the organic species with the metal nanoparticles at the metal-solution interface. FTIR spectra recording studying the influence of temperature on the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with Salvia officinalis extract, was performed to obtain information regarding the nature of the interactions between the silver nanoparticles and the compounds present in the plant extract. The displacement of some maxima present in the spectrum after the formation of the silver nanoparticles can be associated with the interactions between the functional groups of the organic species with the metallic surface at its interface.

Functional groups that might be involved in stabilizing nanoparticles synthesized with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract have been investigated by FTIR spectroscopy, a series of recent studies in the field indicating the possibility of direct detection of saponins in crude aqueous and alcoholic extracts, before purification, using FTIR spectroscopy, reducing thus the duration of the analysis and the need for preliminary purification steps. The FTIR profile of plant extract and synthesized silver nanoparticles highlights the existence of biomolecules, with specific functional groups of flavonoids and saponins, which can act as stabilizers of nanoparticles; The observed spectral changes suggest the stabilization of silver nanoparticles through functional groups associated with biomolecules such as flavonoids and saponins, present in the extract, these interactions arising through carboxylic groups at the level of saponins as well as carbonyl groups in the flavonoid structure.

Composite hydrogel with PVA-HC polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles) - A similarity between IR spectra can be observed for the samples of PVA-HC hybrid matrix hydrogels, respectively with *Salvia officinalis* extract, silver nanoparticles, silver nitrate and polymeric matrix as such. This would suggest an advanced incorporation of the components of the nanomaterial obtained in the polymeric matrix. The main changes observed in the IR spectrum occur mainly between the components of the polymeric matrix (collagen hydrolysate and polyvinyl alcohol) and the polymeric matrix obtained on their basis. Significant peaks recorded in the FTIR spectra of the hydrogel-type nanomaterial with hybrid polymer matrix polyvinyl alcohol - collagen hydrolysate and silver nanoparticles, as well as those associated with the control samples, are presented in Annex 7 (Table 7.1).

Composite hydrogel with PVA-HC polymeric matrix (irradiation crosslinking)

FTIR spectra for PVA-HC polymeric matrix hydrogels and silver nanoparticles crosslinked by irradiation at 20 kGy show no significant changes compared to the control samples, which would suggest an advanced incorporation of silver nanoparticles into the polymeric matrix. The observed spectral changes are related to the slight displacement of some peaks in the sample spectrum with silver nanoparticles compared to the control sample spectrum.

Initially, the spectra appear similar indicating that the polymer matrix / the basic structure of the collagen undergoes minor changes after irradiation. However, the observed changes can give indications on the structural changes due to crosslinking, especially through the amide bands. The band associated with the amide A (3258 cm^{-1} in the case of the nonirradiated sample) undergoes minor changes due to the irradiation, moving slightly to higher wavenumbers in the irradiated samples, with an increase in intensity, especially in the case of silver nitrate samples but without plant extract, the displacement or reduction of the intensity of this band being related to the cleavage of the helical collagen structure. The position of the absorption band associated with the amide I (1630 cm⁻¹ in the case of the non-irradiated sample; stretching vibrations C=O from the amide bond) moves slightly to higher wavenumbers in the spectrum of the irradiated samples with a reduction in the intensity of the spectral band. In general, this band located between 1650 cm⁻¹ and 1635 cm⁻¹ appears in the case of collagen with helical structure or random spiral structure. The decrease in intensity of the absorption band associated with amide I (1600-1690 cm⁻¹) in the case of irradiated samples would indicate that irradiation induces crosslinking in the collagen molecules by the formation of peptide bonds. This band being particularly sensitive to minor variations in molecular geometry and hydrogen bonding, the decrease in intensity may be associated with the disappearance of secondary collagen structures (alpha-helix, beta-structure; secondary structure constitutes an ordered polypeptide arrangement in a more compact form stabilized by hydrogen bonds). The decrease in intensity of the spectral bands associated with amide I and II concomitantly with their shift to higher wavenumbers in the case of irradiated samples

may indicate the formation of hydrogen bonds between the amine groups of collagen and the hydroxyl groups of polyvinyl alcohol. The absorption band associated with amide II (1535 cm⁻¹ in the case of the non-irradiated sample; N-H deformation and C-N stretching vibrations) can be significantly influenced by irradiation; positioning this band to higherr wavenumbers would indicate a helical structure (1550 cm^{-1} in the case of pure collagen). The absorption band centered at ~1238 cm⁻¹ associated with amide III (non-irradiated sample) undergoes a split in two peaks of reduced intensity in the spectrum of irradiated samples, this modification being associated with the residual aminoacids in the composition of the denatured collagen following irradiation. Following exposure to irradiation with gamma radiation, collagen and collagenous materials undergo crosslinking and cleavage / degradation processes. In general, the crosslinking predominates if the sample is in aqueous environment whereas in the case of the dry sample the cleavage / distortion predominates. The crosslinking mechanism proposed by some authors [337] involves the hydroxyl radicals resulting from the radiolysis of water that interacts with the polymer chain forming an intermediate polymeric radical that can subsequently induce intermolecular crosslinking or degradation by intra- and intermolecular reactions.

Composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles) - The interpretation of the FTIR spectra aimed to identify the absorption maxima that undergo changes in the analyzed media (crude plant extract, polymeric matrix components and hydrogels with silver nanoparticles). Changes in the position of the spectral maxima can be associated with the adsorption of the constituents of the plant extract on the surface of the silver nanoparticles, the bonds that may occur following the crosslinking of the polymeric matrix and the interaction between it and / or the silver nanoparticles, respectively the plant extract.

The FTIR spectrum of the polymeric matrix generally has similarities to the polyacrylamide (PAA) spectrum, notable differences being observed especially compared to the starch spectrum in the region below 1800 cm⁻¹. The interactions between the nitrogen functional groups present in the polymeric matrix and the metal atoms are generally manifested in a shift to larger wavenumbers of the bands corresponding to the nitrogen functional groups in the FTIR spectrum. The native starch has complex vibrational characteristics due to the pyranose cycle in the glycosidic units in the region below 800 cm⁻¹ in the FTIR spectrum. The spectral characteristics of the irradiated starch are similar to those of the native one with slight displacements of the maxima. These shifts do not indicate a clear and obvious change in the starch structure. However, these minor changes, especially for the bands attributed to the C-H and O-H bonds, may suggest that the stability of the inter- and intramolecular hydrogen bonds is affected in the irradiation process.

Composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix (irradiation crosslinking) - FTIR analysis of composite hydrogels has led to the recording of relatively similar absorption spectra but with a number of particularities that suggest the existence of interactions between the polymeric matrix / its components - compounds from the vegetable extract - silver nanoparticles:

The broad spectral band from the control sample spectrum is reduced in intensity in the case of NPAg hydrogels in the same time with a narrowing of the band. The maximum absorption from 3190 cm⁻¹ persists especially in the case of the NPAg hydrogel generated by irradiation in the presence of silver nitrate (3182 cm⁻¹). The presence of this band may be associated with the O-H stretching vibrations, the OH groups characteristic of the compounds in the plant extracts, the saponin OH groups. The modification of this band could be due to the polyphenolic compounds in the extract / extracts that act as captors of the radicals resulting from the irradiation.

- ➤ The maximum located at 2930 cm⁻¹ is reduced in intensity in the case of hydrogels with NPAg / extract of *Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi* respectively with slight displacement to smaller wavenumbers. This maximum may be associated with the C-H, CH₂- and CH₃- stretching vibrations, the asymmetrical C-H stretching vibrations.
- ➤ In the spectrum of hydrogels with NPAg / Sapindus mukorossi extract and extracts mixture a maximum appears at 1722 cm⁻¹ and 1719 cm⁻¹ respectively. The presence of this maximum associated with the stretching vibrations C=O, aromatic combinations, carboxylic acid, ketone, ester, suggests the involvement of the compounds of the extract (saponins) in the reduction / stabilization of NPAg and a possible interaction with the components of the polymeric matrix.
- The three maxima associated with the spectral band in the control sample (1659 cm⁻¹, 1605 cm⁻¹ and 1553 cm⁻¹) and the hydrogel with NPAg / silver nitrate do not significantly change their position but are significantly reduced in the case of NPAg hydrogels. / vegetable extract. This variation suggests a possible interaction between the compounds present in the extract and the polymeric matrix / its components. At the same time, the maximum at 1553 cm⁻¹ is significantly reduced especially for the hydrogels with NPAg / *Sapindus mukorossi* extract and extracts mixture. The presence of this band can be associated with the stretching vibrations C=O (1659 cm⁻¹) and respectively the bending vibrations N-H (1605 cm⁻¹) of the amide groups.
- The maximum located at 1445 cm⁻¹ is significantly decreased in the spectrum of NPAg hydrogels / extracts or mixture of extracts remaining almost unchanged in the case of NPAg hydrogels obtained by irradiation. The silver nanoparticles could be fixed in the polymeric matrix and through the compounds of the plant extract which could act as a binder between the matrix and the NPAg contributing to the crosslinking and stabilization of the nanoparticles.
- The maximum localized at 1402 cm⁻¹ also appears in the spectrum of the hydrogel with NPAg / extract of Salvia officinalis being absent in the spectrum of the hydrogel with NPAg / extract of Sapindus mukorossi and respectively very diminished in the spectrum of the hydrogel with NPAg / mixture of extracts (P11-ir20); the presence of this maximum may be associated with the C-N stretching vibrations characteristic of the amide strip grafted on the starch skeleton. This suggests the interaction of certain specific compounds of Sapindus mukorossi extract with the polymeric matrix / starch.
- In the case of hydrogels with NPAg / Sapindus mukorossi extract or mixture of extracts, is present a distinct maximum centered at 1240 cm⁻¹ respectively 1244 cm⁻¹. The maximum could be associated with the presence of compounds in Sapindus mukorossi extract; C-O-C bonds and carboxylic ester groups, C-CH₃ bonds, aryl-O bondings in aromatic ethers, aromatic C-O- epoxy and oxirane rings, primary aromatic C-N amines.
- The maximum from 1150 cm⁻¹ present in the spectrum of the polymeric matrix and of the hydrogels with NPAg / Salvia officinalis extract and silver nitrate respectively can be associated with the C-O-C stretching vibrations. In the spectrum of the hydrogel with NPAg / Sapindus mukorossi extract and mixture of extracts respectively this maximum is absent indicating a possible interaction between compounds of Sapindus mukorossi extract and the polymeric matrix.

Conclusions from the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles / composite hydrogels by X-ray diffraction (XRD)

The diffractograms recorded at the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with Sapindus mukorossi extract, for different volumetric ratios extract : ionic solution, allowed comparative, structural and compositional evaluation, of the samples under analysis. The diffractograms of the control samples (extract) show a well-defined maximum in the 2 range of $10-25^{\circ}$ being absent narrow maxima, thus suggesting the amorphous character of the dry aqueous extract. For the synthesis mixtures the intensity of the maximum associated with the amorphous character decreases as the content of the extract content in the mixture increases with the appearance of narrow maxima, suggesting the formation of crystalline compounds during the synthesis. The concomitant presence of the amorphous and crystalline phase after synthesis suggests the attachment of some compounds from the extract to the formed nanoparticles, behavior that would confirm the results obtained by ultraviolet-visible and infrared spectroscopy. The experimental and standard diffraction data confirm the identification of silver as a crystalline phase in the studied mixtures; for significant maxima, diffraction angles, interplanar distances and Miller indices are indicated. By comparing the intensity of the localized maximum at 38°, it is observed that the highest values were recorded for the mixture with 1:1 volumetric synthesis ratio, extract : ionic salt, the intensity of this maximum being reduced for the synthesis ratios of 1:2 and 1:4 respectively. Also, this maximum is greatly decreased at the 2:1 synthesis volumetric ratio, being absent in the 4:1 volumetric ratio diffractogram.

XRD analysis confirmed the presence of crystalline silver in the samples studied especially in the case of the volumetric synthesis ratio equal to 1:1 and below, the presence of unreacted silver nitrate being also highlighted. By referring also to a series of literature data, the X-ray diffraction allowed to obtain information regarding the identification of the nanoparticles and the evolution of the crystallinity of the investigated samples.

X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis aimed at evaluating the crystallinity of the investigated nanomaterials as well as confirming the presence of silver compounds by analyzing the composite hydrogels obtained with extracts of *Salvia officinalis*, *Sapindus mukorossi* and mixture of extracts, respectively corresponding polymeric matrices.

The diffractogram results for hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix indicated differences between the hydrogels obtained with extract / mixture of Sapindus mukorossi extracts (P10-1902 and P11-1902) and those obtained only with Salvia officinalis extract (P9-1902) regarding the presence or absence of peaks in the case of the aforementioned samples. The peaks observed at 2 values of approximately 32° along with the asymmetry of the peak at 38° may suggest the presence of centrosymmetric monoclinic AgO silver oxide ((ICDD 04-007-1374) with corresponding planes (2.0.0), (-1.1.1) and (-2.0.2). Non-centrosymmetric orthorhombic silver nitrate (ICDD 01-074-4790) can be considered present for samples P10-1902 and P11-1902 due to the peaks observed at 2 values of about 20°, 21°, 24°, 30° which may be associated with the crystallization plans (1.1.1), (2.0.1), (0.2.0) and (1.1.2). These observations lead to the conclusion that the use of the different reducing agents present in the extracts contributes to the properties of the obtained nanomaterials, therefore the extract of Salvia officinalis as a reducing agent has a different behavior from that of Sapindus mukorossi; in the first case the synthesis process can be considered more efficient since silver nitrate or silver oxide were not identified in the final produt or these are present below the detection limit of the X-ray diffraction technique. In the case of the mixture of extracts, the influence of both extracts was observed on the properties of the final product.

The influence of the reducing agent (vegetable extract) used was also highlighted by comparing the relative crystallinity. The data obtained indicate an increase in the degree of
crystallinity in the order P10, P9 and P11 respectively, the results indicating the mixed, crystalline and amorphous character of the synthesized materials as well as that the type of extract used as reducing agent and the crosslinking variant applied, influence the crystallinity of the final product.

The peaks recorded for the PVA / HC polymeric matrix hydrogels were associated with organic compounds in which silver is linked to the macromolecular structure in different stoichiometric ratios. As a result peaks located at 2 values of approximately 29°, 32°, 38°, 40°, 42°, 46°, some of low intensity, may be due to silver - polyvinyl alcohol (Ag-PVA) compounds with molecular formulas such as: Ag(C₂H₄O)₄₈ - ICDD 00-058-1070, Ag(C₂H₄O)₁₂₁ - ICDD 00-058-1069, Ag(C₂H₄O)₂₄₃ - ICDD 00-058-1068. The differences observed in the diffractograms of the synthesized hydrogels and the control samples, both in the case of crosslinking by thermal cycles and by irradiation, indicate the influence of the synthesis process applied on the crystallinity and composition of the polymeric matrix.

Conclusions from the study of the synthesis of silver nanoparticles / composite hydrogels by scanning electron microscopy and energy dispersion X-ray spectroscopy (SEM-EDS)

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) analysis was used to characterize the size, shape and morphology of silver nanoparticles synthesized with *Salvia officinalis* extract. From the SEM images it was observed that when in the initial synthesis mixture the silver nitrate is in excess of the extract, conglomerates with fractal crystallization pattern are formed. The size of the conglomerates and the reduction of the number of nanoparticles are directly proportional to the silver nitrate content in the mixture. Higher content of silver nitrate in the mixture results in the formation of particles with micro and nanometric dimensions with spherical and cylindrical shape (rods and nanowires). A decrease in the number of nanoparticles formed in the solution can be observed for the samples in which the sage extract is excessively volumetric with respect to the silver nitrate; at the same time, there is a reduction in the size of the formed nanoparticles. In the case of the volumetric mixing ratio of silver nitrate: sage extract equal to 1:4 cubic nanoparticles next to the spherical ones could be highlighted.

Following the SEM analysis, in the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract, it can be observed the formation of conglomerates when a higher concentration of extract is used in the initial synthesis mixture together with a reduction of the nanoparticles content; in all cases nanoparticles of spherical shape were highlighted.

Scanning electron microscopy analysis used to characterize the size, shape and morphology of the silver nanoparticles synthesized with mixture of extracts, took into account the samples prepared in mixing ratios of the components of 1:2:2 and 1:10:10 respectively (synthesis mixtures from those in which the extract of *Salvia officinalis* and silver nitrate are in excess of the extract of *Sapindus mukorossi*, and which have been noticeable changes following UV-VIS monitoring). From the SEM images we could observe the formation of some conglomerates whose size is reduced as the content of extract of *Sapindus mukorossi* decreases in the synthesis mixture; the same tendency also occurs with respect to the size of the approximately spherical silver nanoparticles and their number (reducing the size and increasing the number of nanoparticles for the mixing ratio 1:10:10 compared to the mixing ratio 1:2:2).

Composite hydrogels with PVA-HC polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles and irradiation) - The morphology / shape of silver nanoparticles is relatively complex, some of them having generally associated polygonal shapes as spherical. The need to dry the suspension before making observations leads to agglomerations of the nanoparticles, the actual shape of the colloid particles being thus more difficult to accurately

observe. Relatively spherical and polydisperse, with agglomerations, with dimensions in the range 21÷37 nm. The EDS spectra highlighted with the spots associated with silver and those associated with carbon, oxygen and nitrogen that confirm the presence of stabilizers consisting of alkyl chains in the examined samples. In the central area of the spectrum can be clearly observed the peak associated with the silver located at 2.5 keV this maximum being associated with the K, L lines characteristic of the silver. It is known from the literature in the field that the intensities of the spectral lines are proportional to the abundance of the element, but given that the EDS method cannot distinguish between the elemental silver and the silver atoms present in other compounds, the result of the analysis shows values of the relative concentrations in the investigated samples.

Composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix (crosslinking through temperature cycles and irradiation)

SEM analysis for NPAg composite hydrogels using *Salvia officinalis* extract revealed the existence of nanoparticles of approximately spherical shape, dispersed, with dimensions in the range 20 - 60 nm. The relative average concentration of silver in the investigated samples varied between 13.6% (crosslinking through temperature cycles), 28.5% (irradiation - 20 kGy) and 15.2% (irradiation - 50 kGy) respectively; the high values of the relative average concentration of carbon and oxygen indicate the existence of the stabilizing layer induced by the polymeric matrix and the phytochemical compounds in the extract on the silver nanoparticles. The increase of the silver content following the irradiation / dose of irradiation could also be associated with the cleavage of the polymeric chains as a result of the irradiation and consequently a decrease of the carbon and oxygen content in the stabilizing layer around the nanoparticles; a similar trend is recorded by the variation of the ratio of the relative average concentration of silver (C_{mAg}) to the relative average concentration of carbon (C_{mC}) and oxygen (C_{mO}) respectively.

For the composite hydrogels with NPAg using *Sapindus mukorossi* extract, nanoparticles of approximately spherical shape, dispersed, with dimensions in the range of 30 - 60 nm were observed. A special aspect regarding these investigated samples is the presence of the observable gel film after processing the sample for the SEM-EDS analysis. The value of the ratio C_{mAg} / C_{mC} and Cm_{Ag} / C_{mO} also shows a variation similar to sage extract in this case. The higher values in the case of the relative average concentration of carbon and oxygen, for each crosslinking variant, compared to those of sage extract, suggest the adhesion of the stabilizing layer (polymeric matrix / phytochemical compounds from the extract) to a greater extent.

The use of the mixture of extracts to obtain the composite hydrogels with NPAg revealed from the SEM-EDS analysis the existence of spherical shaped nanoparticles (in some cases particle agglomerations can be observed) with dimensions between 10 - 60 nm. A first remark regarding the results obtained is related to obtaining higher values of C_{mAg} compared to the extracts used as such under similar conditions of synthesis / analysis, which suggests a synergistic effect of the phytochemical compounds present in the two extracts relative to the reduction / stabilization of nanoparticles. silver within the polymeric matrix. Secondly, a different variation of the ratio of the relative average concentrations (C_{mAg} / C_{mC} and C_{mAg} / C_{mO}) to the hydrogels obtained with extracts as such can be observed, respectively the highest values being obtained in the case of crosslinking through temperature cycles.

Conclusions from the evaluation of the antibacterial activity of the composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles

The microbiological study performed on composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles was made in order to highlight their antimicrobial character and to determine the minimum bactericidal dose on the strains of tested bacteria. Two strains of bacteria (in the form of pure lyophilized cultures) were selected, frequently involved in intrahospital infections: *Escherichia coli* ATCC reg.25922 - Gram-negative bacterium (pathogenic condition, highly resistant to antibiotic treatment) and *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC reg.25923 - Gram-positive, pathogenic Gram of coagulase-positive staphylococci.

The efficiency of composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles was evaluated by means of the minimum bactericidal concentration (CMB). Thus, in a preliminary phase, the tests with smaller proportions of hydrogels (0.8 ml and 0.5 ml / test plate) were repeated, the results also indicating the lack of typical bacterial colonies, indicating a bactericidal effect on both bacterial strains. As a result of these tests, a differentiated sensitivity of the bacterial strains to the action of the tested nanomaterials was established, the strain of *Escherichia coli* being more sensitive than that of *Staphylococcus aureus*. For this reason, in subsequent tests, *Escherichia coli* strain assay was performed starting from the basic dilution d_0 with 0.5 ml hydrogel and 0.8 ml hydrogel respectively for *Staphylococcus aureus* strain testing. For lower d_0 values in plates appear typical colonies of bacteria, hydrogels showing only bacteriostatic effect.

For composite hydrogels with PVA-HC polymer matrix it was observed that as the dilution of the hydrogel increases (crosslinking through temperature cycles), respectively the concentration of silver nanoparticles / silver ions decreases in the environment, the number of specific colonies of *Staphylococcus aureus* increases considerably; the bacteria develop optimally with the less exposed to the action of the metal / metal ions, their multiplication being less and less inhibited. Irradiation crosslinking samples are the only ones that exhibit bacteriostatic effect at dilution d_3 (10⁻³), respectively a number of colonies below 300, which according to the counting standard, can still be accepted in interpreting the results. A similar behavior was observed for the Escherichia coli strain assays, with the irradiation crosslinked hydrogels having also the most bacteriostatic effect at dilution d_3 (10⁻³). The relatively higher values of the number of colonies in the case of *Escherichia coli* strain compared to that of Staphylococcus aureus, for the same hydrogel and the same dilution, must take into account the basic dilution d_0 from which it started (different for the two bacterial strains). However, in both bacterial strains even at lower dilutions $(10^{-1}, 10^{-2}, \text{ and even } 10^{-3})$ of the hydrogels, they begin to lose their bactericidal effect, yet having a rather strong bacteriostatic effect demonstrated by the relatively small number of colonies developed in plates - in particular hydrogels with silver nanoparticles obtained with vegetable extract and subjected to irradiation. The superior bacteriostatic effect in the case of irradiation crosslinked hydrogels, with extract of Salvia officinalis relative to silver nitrate hydrogels (hydrogels with silver nanoparticles generated by irradiation), suggests a possible amplified bacteriostatic effect by the compounds present in the plant extract.

In the case of composite hydrogels with PAA-A polymeric matrix, most of the hydrogel types tested have a significant bacteriostatic effect at dilution d_1 (10⁻¹), greatly diminished at dilution d_2 (10⁻²) and absent at dilution d_3 (10⁻³) (number of colonies over 300, which according to the counting standard mentioned in the thesis can no longer be accepted in interpreting the results). Notable among the tested samples are hydrogels with *Salvia officinalis* extract (crosslinking through temperature cycles) and respective with mixture of extracts (crosslinking through irradiation), which have bacteriostatic effect even at dilution d_3 (10⁻³); the hydrogel with extracts mixture irradiated - 50 kGy is the only one that exhibit

bactericidal effect at dilution d_1 (10⁻¹) on *Staphylococcus aureus* strain. The results also suggest a contribution to the antimicrobial activity of compounds in plant extracts (present at the level of the polymeric matrix and at the level of the silver nanoparticles as stabilizing agents). The generation of silver nanoparticles by irradiation also contributes to the antimicrobial effect of the final material (approximately similar or relatively higher values with increasing irradiation dose) but not to the same extent as the plant extract, as suggested by the values obtained for the samples with vegetable extract compared to those without extract subject to irradiation.

On the other hand, for the same type of material (polymeric matrix, plant extract), the irradiation crosslinking process compared to the one with temperature cycles induces a decrease of the antimicrobial potential at the dilutions tested; this behavior results when comparing the data for hydrogels with *Salvia officinalis* extract and *Sapindus mukorossi* extract. Irradiation in these cases may result in a reduction in the content of compounds associated with the extract through the free radicals generated and which would "consume" part of them. An atypical behavior in the aforementioned hydrogel series is the hydrogels obtained by mixing extracts in the sense that irradiation / irradiation dose amplifies the bactericidal effect; the higher values associated with the bacteriostatic effect (hydrogel with mixture of extracts crosslinked through temperature cycles), considering the values for the dilution $d_1 (10^{-1})$, and close to those of the hydrogel with the non-irradiated *Salvia officinalis* extract, suggest an antimicrobial activity due to sage extract and also a possible synergistic effect due to the two extracts in the mixture.

Hydrogels with silver nanoparticles / PAA-A polymer matrix tested on *Escherichia coli* strain have shown results similar to *Staphylococcus aureus* strain testing with some of the features that will be discussed below. Most of the types of hydrogels tested have a bacteriostatic effect at dilution $d_1 (10^{-1})$, greatly diminished at dilution $d_2 (10^{-2})$, respectively absent at most samples for dilution $d_3 (10^{-3})$ (number of colonies over 300, which according to the counting standard mentioned in the thesis can no longer be accepted in interpreting the results). Notably are the hydrogels with sage extract (crosslinking through temperature cycles) and the mixture of extracts (crosslinking - 50 kGy), which still have bacteriostatic effect at dilution $d_3 (10^{-3})$.

The results obtained also suggest a contribution to the antimicrobial activity of compounds from plant extracts. The generation of silver nanoparticles by irradiation also contributes to the antimicrobial effect of the final material (approximately similar or relatively higher values with increasing irradiation dose) but not to the same extent as the plant extract, as suggested by the values obtained for the samples with vegetable extract compared to those without extract (AgNO $_3$ / irradiation). For the same type of material (polymeric matrix, plant extract) the irradiation crosslinking process compared to the one with temperature cycles induces a decrease of the antimicrobial potential at the dilutions tested; irradiation in these cases may result in a reduction in the content of compounds associated with the extract through the free radicals generated and which would "consume" part of them. Atypical behavior in the aforementioned hydrogel series, as in the case of Staphylococcus aureus strain, is obtained by the hydrogels obtained with a mixture of extracts, irradiation / irradiation dose amplifying the bactericidal effect; the higher values associated with the bacteriostatic effect (hydrogel with mixture of extracts crosslinked through temperature cycles), if the value for the dilution $d_1 (10^{-1})$ is taken into account, and approximately identical for the hydrogel with non-irradiated Salvia officinalis extract suggests antimicrobial activity due in particular to the sage extract and also a possible synergistic effect due to the mixture between the two extracts.

The data obtained indicate that all the composite hydrogels with synthesized silver nanoparticles have a bacteriostatic effect on the strains of *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, but different CMB values. The minimum bactericidal concentrations / doses can be deduced according to the basic dilution d_0 (10⁰), 0.5 ml for *Escherichia coli* and 0.8 ml respectively for *Staphylococcus aureus*, from which the initial dilutions are made and from the last dilution to which the nanomaterial had the effect. bacteriostatic (the last dilution with a number of colonies / plate less than 300, according to ISO 7218 [196] for counting and interpreting the results of microbiological analyzes).

7.2 Own contributions

In the frame of doctoral thesis "Nanomaterials based on natural extracts with biomedical applications", the following personal contributions were made:

- An extensive documentary study on metallic nanoparticles / nanomaterials was made, focusing on the "green" synthesis of silver nanoparticles with plant extracts and the main factors involved in their biosynthesis, nanomaterials with polymer matrix functionalized with silver nanoparticles and composite hydrogels. with silver nanoparticles. Also, aspects related to the mechanism of antimicrobial action of silver nanoparticles and their toxicology were considered.
- 2) A study was performed on the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Salvia officinalis* extract, that considered aspects related to the dynamics of the growth process of silver nanoparticles, the influence of the combination ratio ionic salt : plant extract, the influence of pH and temperature on the synthesis process.
- 3) Like the study carried out with *Salvia officinalis* extract, a study was also performed on the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with *Sapindus mukorossi* extract, in which, together with the influence of pH and combination ratio ionic salt : vegetable extract, was also highlighted the critical micellar concentration of the extract used.
- 4) The research also considered the synthesis of silver nanoparticles with a mixture of extracts (*Salvia officinalis* and *Sapindus mukorossi*) focusing on the influence of pH and mixing ratio between individual extracts.
- 5) Were obtained composite hydrogels with silver nanoparticles, with polymeric matrix (polyvinyl alcohol collagen hydrolisate and polyacrylamide starch), based on both synthetic compounds (polyvinyl alcohol and polyacrylamide) and natural compounds (collagen hydrolysate and starch) with high degree of biocompatibility. The variant of applied synthesis, the formation of nanoparticles *in situ* within a preformed hydrogel, involved obtaining in a first phase the preformed hydrogel which acts as a microreactor in which the nanoparticles were obtained with the aid of the above mentioned plant extracts. The crosslinking methods applied to the polymeric matrix (crosslinking by temperature / freezing thawing and irradiation crosslinking, respectively) have considered the development of products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use and generation of potentially harmful substances.
- 6) A characterization by modern methods of analysis of the silver nanoparticles and of the synthesized nanomaterials has been realized, a special aspect in this respect being applied to the ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy using as a parameter the relative area associated with the silver nanoparticles.
- 7) A microbiological study was carried out on the synthesized nanomaterials to evaluate the antibacterial properties, demonstrating that all the obtained nanomaterials have bactericidal or bacteriostatic effect on bacteria with high incidence in nosocomial infections (*Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*).
- 8) The issue addressed in the doctoral thesis, related to a number of fundamental aspects in the field of nanomaterials for biomedical applications, is one of the main directions of action of the research programs of excellence through which scientific knowledge in the field of nanomaterials is promoted. The development of biocompatible nanomaterials, with high functionality and reduced side effects in the case of medical applications, allowing for successful therapies and successful treatments, is an important area from the perspective of the lucrative potential but also of the population's health.

7.3 Research perspectives

The extension of the research area related to the field addressed in the present PhD thesis ("Nanomaterials based on natural extracts with biomedical applications"), could consider the following aspects / themes:

- The source / type and concentration of plant extracts the way of obtaining and characterizing the plant extract (use of the extract in dry form / lyophilized);
- Correlation of the chemical composition and the synthesis parameters with the properties of the synthesized nanomaterials;
- Synthesis of materials that include natural extracts with therapeutic role and with welldetermined synergistic action;
- Quantifying the production of nanomaterials / nanoparticles, establishing a duration for obtaining a certain volume of nanoparticles, standardizing the conditions for obtaining monodisperse particles, stability of the nanoparticles obtained by green synthesis;
- Identification of materials derived from plants suitable for the synthesis of specific nanomaterials / nanoparticles;
- Clarification of the biochemical and molecular mechanisms involved in the formation of specific nanoparticles;
- Carrying out cytotoxicity tests and extending the microbiological studies and to other bacterial strains with high nosocomial incidence.

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LIST OF THE PUBLISHED PAPERS

A. ISI articles

(38 papers from which 4 in the doctoral thesis domain)

A.1 List of the published papers in the doctoral thesis domain

- 1. R. L. Olteanu, C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, *Influence of Phytochemical Reductive Capacity on Ultraviolet-visible Spectroscopic Behavior of Silver Nanoparticles*, Analytical Letters, 50(17), 2786-2801, 2017.
- C. M. Nicolescu, R. L. Olteanu, M. Bumbac, Growth Dynamics Study of Silver Nanoparticles Obtained by Green Synthesis using Salvia officinalis Extract, Analytical Letters, 50(17), 2802-2821, 2017.
- 3. R. L. Olteanu, C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, I. D. Dulam, R. M. Ion, I. R. Suica-Bunghez, *Study on Critical Micelle Concentration influence in Green Synthesis of Silver Nanoparticles assisted by Sapindus mukorossi aqueous extract*, Revista de Chimie, 69(6), 1339-1345, 2018.
- 4. M. Bumbac, R. L. Olteanu, R. M. Ion. C. M. Nicolescu, *Influence of temperature on the growth of silver nanoparticles synthesized using Salvia officinalis aqueous extract*, Revista de Chimie, 69(8), 1934-1938, 2018.

A.2 List of the published papers in related domain (chemistry) of doctoral thesis (selective citations)

- 1. S. Jipa, T. Zaharescu, W. Kappel, T. Setnescu, M. Lungulescu, R. L. Olteanu, *Vegetal polyphenols as antioxidants in polymers*, Journal of Optoelectronics and Advanced Materials, 10(4), 837-840, 2008.
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- C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, R. L. Olteanu, G. C. Alecu (Holban), D. N. Boboac -Mih escu, C. Necula, C. R dulescu, *Influence of extraction method on chemical composition from red grapes skin extract*, Journal of Science and Arts, 19, 1(46), 201-208, 2019.

B. Participation at national / international conferences with papers in the field of doctoral thesis / related field (chemistry)

1. The Fourth Edition of International Conference on Analytical and Nanoanalytical Methods for Biomedical and Environmental Sciences (IC-ANMBES 2016), Bra ov, România:

1.1 Characterization of Silver and Copper Nanoparticles Synthesized by Bottom-Up Approach Using Plant Extracts, R. L. Olteanu, C. M. Nicolescu, M. Bumbac, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 91.

1.2 Study on the Synthesis Process of Silver Nanoparticles in Salvia Officinalis Extract Using UV-VIS Spectroscopy, C. M. Nicolescu, R. L. Olteanu, M. Bumbac, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 92.

- 2. The Fifth Edition of International Conference on Analytical and Nanoanalytical Methods for Biomedical and Environmental Sciences (IC-ANMBES 2018), Bra ov, România:
 - Bioactive Properties and Chemical Composition of Juglans Regia L. Extracts, C. Radulescu, C. Stihi, M. Florescu, D. Lazurca, I. D. Dulama, S. Teodorescu, **R. L. Olteanu**, R. M. tirbescu, Book of Abstracts, ISSN 2360-3461, ISSN-L 2360-3461, pag. 167.
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- 3. 11th International Conference of Materials Science and Engineering (BraMat 2019), Bra ov, România:
 - 3.1 Banana flower nectar mediated synthesis of silver nanoparticles, N. M. tirbescu, S. Teodorescu, **R. L. Olteanu**, R. M. tirbescu.
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Mars 2000 – April 2016							
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Period

Period

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Valahia" University of Targoviste - Department for the training of teaching staff and continuing education

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Period

classification

Period

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Postgraduate education

Polytechnic University of Bucharest, Faculty of Industrial Chemistry

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institution / training provider Level in national or international

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professional competences Name and type of educational institution / training provider

The main disciplines studied / acquired

Level in national or international classification

Personal skills and competences

Native language

Romanian language

Secondary education

20.08.2019

Foreign language(s) known													
Self-assessment		Under	stand	ling		Spe	akin	g		Writing			
European level (*)	Listening Reading				Participation in the Oral speach conversation				Written expression				
English	C2	Experienced user	C2	Experienced user	C1	Experienced user	C1	Experienced user	C2	Experienced user			
Franch	B2	Independent user	B2	Independent user	B2	Independent user	B2	Independent user	B2	Independent user			
	(*)Level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Languages												
Social skills and competences	 a) Team spirit - the experience of teamwork was acquired in the different contracts / projects carried out, in which I activated as a member of the team.; b) Rightness; c) Adaptability, communication skills and ability to relate - acquired both due to the responsibilities of the faculty and the university, as well as from the projects carried out at national and international level. 												
Computer skills and abilities	Very good knowledge of computer use acquired in the postgraduate studies of specialization, from the operation using the packages of text editing programs and spreadsheets to the modern technologies that use information and communication technologies (ICT) in education: information technologies for e-learning, virtual interaction and communication, web-oriented learning platforms.												
Other skills and competences	Ability to motivate the team I work in, communication, openness, initiative, analytical thinking, balance, loyalty, determination and results orientation.												
Additional informations	PhD Student Doctoral field: Engineering Sciences - Materials Engineering <i>"Nanomaterials based on natural extracts with biomedical applications"</i> – PhD Superviser: prof. Dr. R.M.Ion.												
	 a) 8 Programs / National research contracts / in progress – roles performed: 8 - member of the project work team; b) 8 Projects / International educational grants - roles performed: 8 - tutor / membru în echipa de lucru a proiectului c) 1 Internal scientific research grant ("Valahia" University of Târgovişte) – role performed: member of the project work team; d) 75 Published scientific papers e) 80 Scientific communications - of which 28 at international conferences and 52 at national conferences; f) 3 Monographs, textbooks and university books, laboratory guidance: in recognized publishers, with ISBN; g) Member of professional associations and accredited research groups: Member of the National Chemistry Society; References can be obtained from all the employees in the country and abroad with whom I worked / work in the different contracts / projects. Additional information can be found from the web pages of the contracts / projects carried out:, http://fiste.ssai.valahia.ro, http://tiste.ssai.valahia.ro, <a href="http://tiste.ssai.valahia.ro" http:="" li="" tiste.ssai.valahia.ro"="" tiste.ssai.valahia.ro<=""> 												