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# Original article

# Rapid analytical method for the determination of 220 pesticide with their isomers by GCMS-TIC



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#### ABSTRACT

This paper presents a cost-effective and validated multi residue modified and miniaturized method for the determination of 220 chemically different groups of pesticides and their isomers. This determination method is performed with single Quaid Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry -Total Ion Chromatogram GCMS-TIC. Two methods was experimented and modified with different GCMS parameters to analyses most common used pesticide and their residues in the standers solution and can be applied for real environmental samples. The results showed by single Quaid GCMS-TIC it can analyze 220 pesticides including their isomers within 49.6 min and low detection limit by using modified method 2 as described in this research. Limit of detection (LOD) was ranged from 0.78 to 14.74 ng/ml (ppb) with good separation and resolution. Limit of quantification (LOQ) was ranged between 2.34 and 44.22 ng/ml (ppb). Method 2 was more accurate, shorter, and clear separation rather than method 1. This method can be successfully applied in real environmental samples proven to be a good option for routine analysis of pesticide within the maximum residue limits (MRL) referenced to European commission especially with the most common GCMS-TIC which exists in most of labs and low income countries.

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# 1. Introduction

Hundreds of pesticides are used worldwide for pest control during most of agriculture production, that is why it is necessary to develop and employ multiclass methods for pesticide residue determination. In this study the recovery was from 70 to 120% and relative standard deviation (RSD) < 20% for 60 pesticides and limits of quantification of 5  $\mu$ g kg  $-1$  for almost all studied pesticides and this method was successfully applied in real samples proven to be a good option for routine analysis [\(Estéfani et al.,](#page-9-0) [2019\)](#page-9-0). Amulti-residue method of 107 pesticide residues in wolfberry has been developed and validated using QuEChERS Nano Column Purification Coupled with Ultra Performance Liquid

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Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry. Similar pretreatment approaches were compared, and the linearity, matrix, analysis limits, precision, stability, and accuracy were validated, which verifies the satisfactory performance of this new method. The LODs and LOQs were in the range of 0.14–1.91  $\mu$ g/kg and 0.46–6.37  $\mu$ g/ kg, respectively. The recovery of analyses at three fortification levels (10  $\mu$ g/kg, 50  $\mu$ g/kg, 100  $\mu$ g/kg) ranged from 63.3 to 123.0%, 72.0–118.6% and 67.0–118.3%, respectively, with relative standard deviations (RSDs) below 15.0% [\(Jia-Nan et al., 2019\)](#page-9-0).

A fast analytical method was developed for the determination of 133 pesticide residues using gas chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (GC–MS/MS). All pesticides showed good linearity in the respective range, both with values of  $r^2 > 0.99$ . The average recoveries of the pesticides spiked samples ranged from 70.0% to 112.2% with the RSDs of 0.2%–14.4% ([Shuang, et al., 2020](#page-9-0)). Meanwhile, ([Rutkowska, et al., 2018\)](#page-9-0) determined 235 pesticides in challenging, dry, complex herb matrices and the results showed most recoveries ranged from 70 to 120% (RSD < 18%), reaching the quantification limit of 0.001 to 0.002 mg  $kg - 1$ . With excellent linearity within the range from 0.001 to 2.00  $\mu$ g mL  $-$  1, and a correlation coefficient higher than 0.999 was obtained

The Quantitative estimation of pesticide residues in tea samples was established by employing Liquid Chromatography with tan-

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<span id="page-1-0"></span>dem mass spectrometer using electron spray ionization (LC-ESI-MS/MS) in multiple reaction modes (MRM). Recoveries were between 70 and 120% with the acceptable relative standard deviation (RSD). The limits of detection ranged from 0.03 to 1.4 ng/mL $^{-1}$  and limit of quantifications from 0.1 to 2.6 ng.mL-1 for all the samples under investigation ([Reddy, et al. 2018](#page-9-0)). The sensitive and rapid liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) method is developed for simultaneous determination of 187 pesticide residues in edible fungi. At low and high fortification levels, recoveries ranged from 70 to 118%. The relative standard deviation (RSD) was always below 30% and was below 25% for 169 pesticides, accounting for 90%. The limit of detection (LOD) was  $0.01 - 85$  µg kg-1, 165 pesticides had LOD #10 mg kg-1, accounting for 88%. The proposed method is suitable for determination of 187 pesticide residues in shiitake, black fungus, nameko and enoki mushroom [\(Chang, et al., 2014\)](#page-9-0).

The mluti-residues Analysis of pesticide residues using GCMS in leafy vegetables was provided by ([Selim et al., 2011](#page-9-0)) to determine 86 pesticides residue with highly recovery % and acceptable LOD and LOQ. Furthermore, ([EL-Saeid et al., 2012](#page-9-0)) the same methodology was applied using GCMS for the determination of 86 pesticide residues in non-leafy vegetables with highly recovery % and acceptable LOD and LOQ. Conversely, [\(Acosta-Dacal, et al., 2021\)](#page-9-0) it was reported that the 218 analytes are extracted using a single step, without clean-up, with matrixmatched calibration, and two complementary techniques: liquid and gas chromatography tandem triple quad mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS and GC–MS/MS). The used method was fully validated on a representative agricultural soil sample with limits of detection (LOD) ranged between 0.024 and 6.25 ng g<sup>-1</sup>. [\(Shen, et al., 2009\)](#page-9-0) reported the determination of 107 pesticide residues using off-line dispersive solid-phase extraction and gas chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry in some Chinese vegetables, Also, ([Ishaqa and Nawazb, 2018\)](#page-9-0) Analyze the organochlorine (OCPs) pesticide residues in contaminated milk using gas chromatography.

#### 2. Materials and methods

#### 2.1. Chemicals and standard solutions

Certified reference standards of the tested pesticides were GC Multiresidue Pesticide Kit with a Cataloged number. 32,562 and purchased from Restek Corporation, U.S. which contain 9 ampules. Comprehensive 220 compound kit covers food safety lists by the FDA, USDA, and other global governmental agencies. Each ampule standard includes different 5 pesticide groups (Organophosphorus (group 1), Organochlorine (group 2), Organonitrogen (group 3), Synthetic Pyrethroid (group 4), and Herbicide (group 5) Methyl Esters) with concentration 100  $\mu$ g/mL = ppm each and dissolved in toluene. Acetonitrile reagents used was of LC–MS grade and acetone of pesticide grade.

Stock solutions,  $2 \mu g/mL$ , of mixture pesticide standards were prepared by dissolving 100 µL of the pesticide group in mixture of acetonitrile: Acetone 80:20, the volume of which was calculated in order to prepare 2 mg/mL solutions. The solvents used were acetonitrile and acetonewere chosen in accordancewith the solubility of the analyte. The stock solutions were stored at low temperature  $(-20^{\circ}C)$ in containers that prevent any loss of solvent and entry of water.

The working standards used for quantitative were prepared in acetonitrile for the GC–MS analysis system. Intermediate stock standard mixtures of 10  $\mu$ g/mL in acetonitrile were prepared by diluting  $500$   $\mu$ L of the stock solutions in class A volumetric flasks of 1 mL. By diluting the intermediate stock standard mixtures, the intermediate working standards of 1, 0.1, 0.01 and  $0.001 \mu g/mL =$  ppm were prepared in solvent.

#### 2.2. Pesticide analysis by gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC–MS-TIC)

Analyte separation, detection, and identification were performed by gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC–MS) on an Agilent (Palo Alto, CA) 6890 N gas chromatograph equipped with an Agilent DB-5MS column (30 m  $\times$  0.25 mm  $\times$  0.25 $\mu$ mfilm thickness) and 5973 N mass selective detector Table 1.

#### 2.3. Quality Control/Assurance

Solvents was used in this study were 99.99% pure and residue analytical grade. By using pesticide standard mixture, the recoveries of pesticides were detected in three replicates. The analysis was done to keep reproducibility and repeatability under acceptable range. Acetonitrile solvent and different pesticides concentration limits was used as blank samples for limit of detection (LOD).

#### 3. Results

In this research, several experiments were conducted to separate the largest number of different groups of pesticides in the same run and also in the shortest possible separation time using several variables parameters by GCMS-TIC.

The results indicate that two methods have been reached to separate 220 pesticides belonging to different chemical groups, such as Organophosphorus OPPs, Organochlorines OCPs, Organonitrogens ONPs, Synthetic Pyrethroids, and Herbicides Methyl Esters and its isomers, as well as in terms of application and use such as Insecticides, Herbicides, Fungicides, and Nematocides.

Furthermore, the results indicated as in [Table 2](#page-2-0) and [Fig. 2](#page-5-0) that the second method was better in terms of separating the number of 220 pesticides and its isomers within a retention time

#### Table 1

Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry -Total Ion Chromatogram (GCMS-TIC) Parameters for Pesticides Analysis Methods.

| Parameter                           | Method 1                   | Method 2  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Carrier gas                         | Helium                     | Helium  |
| Inlet temp.                         | 250C                       | 250 °C  |
| Mode                                | Splitless                  | Splitless   |
| Pressure                            | 9.954 psi                  | 9.954 psi   |
| <b>Injection Source</b>             | <b>GC ALS</b>              | GC ALS  |
| <b>Total Flow</b>                   | 64 mL/min                  | $65$ mL/min   |
| Thermal Aux Temp.                   | 280 °C                     | 281 °C  |
| <b>Injection Volume</b>             | $1 \mu L$                  | $1 \mu L$   |
| Coulmn                              | Agilent DB-5 ms<br>350 °C: | $30 \text{ m} \times 250 \text{ µm} \times 0.25 \text{ µm}$                   |
| Agilent DB-5 ms<br>350 $\degree$ C. |                            | $30 \text{ m} \times 250 \text{ }\mu\text{m} \times 0.25 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ |
| Pressure                            | 9.954 psi                  | 9.954 psi   |
| Flow                                | $1$ mL/min                 | 2 mL/min  |
| Average Velocity                    | 37.132 cm/sec              | 37.132 cm/sec   |
| Holdup Time                         | 1.3466 min                 | 1.3466 min  |
| Flow Program                        | 1 mL/min                   | 1 mL/min  |
| Oven Program:                       | Initial                    | Initial temp. 90 $\degree$ C for 2 min then                                   |
|                                     | temperature 90 °C          | 6 °C/min to 150 °C for 5 min then   |
|                                     | hold for 2 min             | 5 °C/min to 220 °C for 5 min then   |
|                                     | then $6 °C$ /min to        | 6 °C/min to 290 °C for 2 min  |
|                                     | 200 $°C$ for 5 min         |   |
|                                     | then $7 °C/min$ to         |   |
|                                     | 290 $°C$ for 7 min         |   |
| Run Time                            | 45.19 min                  | 49.667 min  |
| Solvent Delay                       | 3.00 min                   | $3.00$ min  |
| <b>EMV Mode</b>                     | Relative                   | Relative  |
| <b>EM Voltage</b>                   | 1482                       | 1482  |
| <b>MS</b> Source                    | 230 °C                     | 230 $\degree$ C   |
| MS Ouad                             | 150 °C                     | 155 °C  |
| <b>Actual EMV</b>                   | 1482.35                    | 1482.35   |
| <b>GAIN FACTOR</b>                  | 0.46                       | 0.46  |
|                                     |                            |   |

### <span id="page-2-0"></span>Table 2

Pesticides Groups, RT and Target and Qualified ions, Limit of Detection (LOD) and Limit of quantification (LOQ) using GCMS-TIC method 2.



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## Table 2 (continued)



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#### <span id="page-5-0"></span>Table 2 (continued)





Fig. 1. Minimum and maximum LODs of the OPPs-, OCPs-, ONPs-, pyrethroids-, and herbicides-tested groups.



Fig. 2. Minimum and maximum LOQs of the OPPs-, OCPs-, ONPs-, pyrethroids-, and herbicides-tested groups.

49.6 min without any interference between the compounds, which could be relied upon in estimating this number of pesticides or their residues in the environmental samples. While the second method Fig. 1 is less efficient in the separation of the number of 220 pesticides with their isomers under this research and that the separation time is 45 min which is longer than method 1 and the presence of many overlaps between the separated pesticides is observed.

Limit of detection (LOD) and Limit of quantification (LOQ) of 220 tested and separated pesticides ranged from 0.78 to 14.74 and 2.34 to 44.22 ng/ml (ppb) as showed in [Table 2](#page-2-0) and Figs. 1 and 2 which is reflect the sensitivity of the GCMS-TIC and the accuracy of the tested parameters in method 2 ([Table 1](#page-1-0)). As previously reported the LOD ranged from 0.03 to 1.4 ng/mL $^{-1}$ , [\(Reddy, et al.](#page-9-0) [2018\)](#page-9-0). 0.01 - 85 µg kg-1, for 165 pesticides, [\(Chang, et al., 2014\)](#page-9-0). Also LOD ranged between 0.024 and 6.25 ng  $g^{-1}$  as reported by ([Acosta-Dacal, et al., 2021](#page-9-0)).

The LOD and LOQ of OPPs, OCPs, ONPs, Pyrethroids and Herbicides tested groups (Figs. 1 and 2) ranged from 0.78 to 2.34, 13.41 to 40.23; 0.86 to 2.58, 11.44 to 34.32; 0.88 to 2.64, 14.74to 44.22; 0.88 to 2.64, 12.28 to 36.84 and 1.02to 3.06, 13.75 to 41.25 ng/ml (ppb). respectively.

## 4. Discussion

Many studies was mentioned and discus the determination of different numbers of pesticides by different techniques. Estefani, et al 2019 develop a method and it was successfully applied in real samples proven to be a good option for routine analysis, also, reported multi-residue method of 107 pesticide residues has been



Fig. 3. GC-MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues (220 Compound), method 1.



Fig. 4. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues (220 Compound), method 2.

developed and validated using QuEChERS nano column purification coupled with Ultra Performance Liquid Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry (UPLC-MSMS) [\(Jia-Nan et al., 2019\)](#page-9-0). Meanwhile, a fast analytical method was developed for the determination of 133 pesticide residues using gas chromatographytandem mass spectrometry GC–MS/MS ([Shuang, et al., 2020\)](#page-9-0). Additionally, a modified a multiresidue method using QuEChERS and GC–MS/MS to determine determined was reported. 235 pesticides ([Rutkowska, et al., 2018\)](#page-9-0). The use of Liquid Chromatography with tandem mass spectrometer using electron spray ionization (LC-ESI-MS/MS) was reported ([Reddy, et al. 2018](#page-9-0)). for the quantitative estimation of pesticide residues. A sensitive and rapid liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) method was developed for simultaneous determination of 187 pesticide residues ([Chang, et al., 2014\)](#page-9-0).

Most of the previous research has used sophisticated and expensive Chromatographic techniques that may not be available in most laboratories for many countries, while the method discussed in the current research has used a very common technique GCMS-TIC to separate 220 comprehensive pesticides and their isomers as showed in [Table 2](#page-2-0) and Figs. 3–9 which cover a food safety lists by the FDA, USDA, and other global governmental agencies



Fig. 5. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues from RT 9– 20 min, methods 1 and 2.



Fig. 6. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues from RT 20–25 min, methods 1 and 2.

with highly accuracy with the possibility of applying in the future to estimating the pesticide residues with different environmental samples as mentioned in the previous researches.

Fourteen Isomers (Chlorfenvinphos 2, Chlorfenvinphos 1, Tetramethrin 1, etramethrin 2, Cyfluthrin 1, Cyfluthrin 2, Cyfluthrin 3, Cyfluthrin 4, Cypermethrin 1, Cypermethrin 2, Cypermethrin 3, Cypermethrin 4, tau-Fluvalinate 1 and tau-Fluvalinate 2.) was analyzed by current modified method which is more advantages for this method that we able to analyze the original compound and its related isomers such as Cyfluthrin and its 4 isomers (Cyfluthrin 1, Cyfluthrin 2, Cyfluthrin 3, Cyfluthrin 4. Also 4 isomers of Cypermethrin 1, Cypermethrin 2, Cypermethrin 3, Cypermethrin 4 and MGK 264–2) Was also analyzed by current instigated method using GCMS-TIC.

Using the modified method in present research it can be analyze 5 groups of pesticides in same mixture and GCMS-TIC run, 48 organophosphorus pesticides (OPPs) (group 1) compounds. Forty Organochlorine Pesticides Compounds (OCPs) (group 2) was separated and analyzed by the current investigated method as well as 87 Organonitrogen Fungicides Compounds (ONFs) (group 3), Meanwhile, Seventeen Synthetic Pyrethroid compound (group 5) was separated and analyzed [Table 2](#page-2-0).

# 5. Conclusions

This study demonstrated the possibility of estimating the different chemical groups of 220 pesticides and their isomers using the



Fig. 7. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues from RT 25–30 min, methods 1 and 2.



Fig. 8. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues from RT 30–35 min, methods 1 and 2.

least expensive techniques of chromatographic devices, GC–MS-TIC, which may be found in most laboratories in most countries worldwide. These pesticides can be analyzed and separated within 49 min. The LODs and LOQs of the 220 tested and separated pesticides ranged from 0.78 to 14.74 and 2.34 to 44.22 ng mL  $-$  1 (ppb), respectively. This encourages the application of this method to further research on estimating pesticide residues in different environmental samples, such as soil, water, and foods. There are two main strengths of this research: first, the number of pesticides with their isomers that can be separated in one injection and, second, the low cost of the analysis technique that uses a gas chromatography device with a single inexpensive mass spectrometer, which is available in most analysis laboratories, quarantine laboratories, and ports. Furthermore, although most researchers used the ethyl acetate solvent, the use of acetonitrile organic solvent in the GC– MS in this study encourages the future application of this method

with extraction by QuEChERS method to estimate the pesticide residues in real environmental samples.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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<span id="page-9-0"></span>

Fig. 9. GC–MS-TIC separation chromatogram of pesticide residues from RT 36–45 min; methods 1.

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