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Commentary

# Development of a Novel Biosensor for Real-time Detection of Pathogenic Bacteria in Food Products

**Daniel Badul***

*Department of Biological Safety, German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Berlin, Germany*

## DESCRIPTION

The development of a novel biosensor for real-time detection of pathogenic bacteria in food products represents a significant advancement in food safety and public health. The presence of pathogenic bacteria in food can lead to severe health consequences, including foodborne illnesses that affect millions of people worldwide. Traditional methods for detecting these pathogens often involve time-consuming laboratory techniques that require extensive sample processing and analysis. These methods, such as culture-based assays and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, can take several hours to days to yield results, which is inadequate for ensuring the safety of food products in a fast-paced supply chain. In this context, the need for rapid, sensitive and accurate detection methods has become increasingly urgent.

Biosensors offer a promising solution to these challenges. They are analytical devices that utilize biological recognition elements, such as antibodies, nucleic acids, or enzymes, to detect specific pathogens. The incorporation of these biological components allows for high specificity and sensitivity in identifying pathogenic bacteria at low concentrations. Recent advancements in nanotechnology, materials science and bioengineering have led to the development of novel biosensor platforms that can significantly improve the detection of foodborne pathogens. These platforms can integrate various detection techniques, such as electrochemical, optical and mass-sensitive methods, to facilitate real-time monitoring of food safety.

The design of a biosensor for pathogenic bacteria detection typically involves three key components: A biological recognition element, a transducer and a signal output system. The biological recognition element is essential as it selectively binds to the target pathogen, initiating the detection process. Common recognition elements include antibodies that target specific surface antigens of bacteria, oligonucleotides designed to hybridize with pathogen-specific genetic sequences, or antimicrobial peptides that can inhibit bacterial growth. By carefully selecting and optimizing these biological components, the biosensor can achieve high specificity, minimizing the risk of false positives or negatives.

The transducer is responsible for converting the biological interaction into a measurable signal. This signal can be electrical, optical, or mechanical, depending on the type of biosensor being developed. For example, electrochemical biosensors rely on changes in current or voltage when the target pathogen binds to the recognition element, while optical biosensors may detect changes in fluorescence or absorbance. Advances in nanomaterials, such as gold nanoparticles, carbon nanotubes and graphene, have enhanced the performance of transducers, allowing for increased sensitivity and rapid response times. By leveraging these advanced materials, the novel biosensor can detect pathogenic bacteria at lower concentrations than traditional methods, providing a essential advantage in ensuring food safety.

The signal output system translates the transducer's response into a user-friendly format, allowing for real-time monitoring of bacterial contamination in food products. This system can include visual indicators, such as color changes or fluorescence, or electronic readouts that can be connected to smartphones or computers for immediate analysis. The ability to provide real-time results is particularly important in industrial food processing environments, where rapid decision-making is critical to prevent contamination and ensure consumer safety. Furthermore, integrating data analytics and machine learning algorithms into the biosensor can enhance its predictive capabilities, allowing for improved risk assessment and management in food safety protocols.

One of the significant advantages of developing a novel biosensor for pathogenic bacteria detection is its potential for in-situ applications. Traditional laboratory methods often require samples to be transported to a testing facility, which can delay the detection process and increase the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks. In contrast, a portable biosensor can be deployed directly at various points in the food supply chain, including

**Correspondence to:** Daniel Badul, Department of Biological Safety, German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Berlin, German, E-mail: daniel@badul.com

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farms, processing plants and retail locations. This capability allows for immediate testing of food products and rapid identification of contamination sources, facilitating timely interventions and reducing the risk of contaminated food reaching consumers.

In addition to enhancing food safety, the development of this biosensor aligns with broader public health initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of foodborne illnesses. By providing rapid and reliable detection of pathogenic bacteria, the biosensor can help food producers and regulatory agencies monitor compliance with safety standards more effectively. This proactive approach to food safety can lead to better risk management, more informed consumer choices and ultimately, a decrease in the prevalence of foodborne diseases.

The novel biosensor's design can also be tailored to target specific pathogenic bacteria of concern, such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli* and Listeria which are among the leading causes of foodborne illnesses. By focusing on high-risk pathogens, the biosensor can be fine-tuned for maximum effectiveness, ensuring that it meets the specific needs of various sectors within the food industry. Moreover, ongoing research can expand the biosensor's capabilities to detect multiple pathogens simultaneously, further enhancing its utility in ensuring food safety.

In conclusion, the development of a novel biosensor for the real-time detection of pathogenic bacteria in food products is a transformative step forward in food safety and public health. By harnessing the power of biosensing technology, this innovative solution addresses the urgent need for rapid, accurate and sensitive detection methods. The integration of advanced materials, biological recognition elements and user-friendly output systems will enable the effective monitoring of foodborne pathogens throughout the supply chain, ultimately protecting consumers and improving public health outcomes. As research and development continue to advance in this field, the novel biosensor holds great promise for enhancing food safety and mitigating the risks associated with foodborne illnesses.