Vol. 06, Issue, 08, pp.6830-6837, August 2024 Available online at http://www.journalijisr.com SJIF Impact Factor 2023: 6.599

Research Article ISSN: 2582-6131

TASAR SERICIN AS A BIOMATERIAL FOR SCAFFOLDING IN TISSUE ENGINEERING

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Received 15th June 2024; Accepted 16th July 2024; Published online 30th August 2024

ABSTRACT

Tissue engineering is a rapidly evolving field that aims to repair or replace damaged tissues by combining cells, biomaterials, and biologically active molecules. A critical component of this process is the scaffold, which provides structural support for cell attachment, proliferation, and differentiation. Natural biomaterials are preferred due to their biocompatibility, biodegradability, and resemblance to the extracellular matrix (ECM). Tasar sericin, a silk protein derived from the Tasar silk moth (Antheraea mylitta), has recently garnered attention as a promising biomaterial for tissue engineering scaffolds. This paper explores the properties of Tasar sericin, its potential as a biomaterial, and its applications in tissue engineering, particularly in scaffolding.

Keywords: Tasar silk moth, Engineering scaffolds, Tasar Biomaterial, & Silk Proliferation.

INTRODUCTION

Tissue engineering offers an innovative solution to the limitations of conventional treatments for damaged tissues and organs. One of the key elements in tissue engineering is the development of suitable scaffolds that can support cell growth and tissue formation. Natural polymers, such as collagen, gelatin, and silk fibroin, have been widely used for scaffold fabrication. Among these, silk-based materials have attracted significant interest due to their excellent mechanical properties, biocompatibility, and biodegradability.

Silk is composed of two main proteins: fibroin and sericin. While fibroin has been extensively studied for its use in biomedical applications, sericin has often been discarded as a by-product of silk production. However, recent research has highlighted the potential of sericin as a valuable biomaterial due to its unique properties. Tasar sericin, obtained from the Tasar silk moth (*Antheraea mylitta*), possesses several advantages over traditional sericin from the domesticated silk moth (*Bombyx mori*), including superior mechanical strength and enhanced bioactivity.

This paper focuses on the application of Tasar sericin as a biomaterial for scaffolding in tissue engineering. We review the properties of Tasar sericin, its potential for scaffold fabrication, and its applications in various tissue engineering fields.

PROPERTIES OF TASAR SERICIN

Sericin is a hydrophilic glycoprotein that surrounds the fibroin fibers in silk. It contains a high percentage of serine and other amino acids, making it highly hydrophilic and capable of forming strong hydrogen bonds. Tasar sericin differs from sericin obtained from *Bombyx mori* in its amino acid composition and molecular structure, contributing to its superior properties for biomedical applications.

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Biocompatibility and Biodegradability

Tasar sericin exhibits excellent biocompatibility, which is crucial for its use in tissue engineering. It has been shown to support the adhesion, proliferation, and differentiation of various cell types, including fibroblasts, osteoblasts, and endothelial cells. Moreover, Tasar sericin is biodegradable, breaking down into non-toxic by-products that can be easily eliminated by the body. This property ensures that Tasar sericin-based scaffolds do not induce an adverse immune response and can be safely absorbed by the body over time.

Mechanical Properties

The mechanical properties of scaffolds are critical for their success in tissue engineering applications. Tasar sericin has been found to possess superior mechanical strength compared to *Bombyx mori* sericin. This is attributed to its higher molecular weight and unique amino acid composition, which contribute to the formation of stronger intermolecular bonds. The enhanced mechanical properties of Tasar sericin make it suitable for use in load-bearing tissues, such as bone and cartilage.

Bioactivity

Tasar sericin has been shown to possess inherent bioactivity, promoting cell adhesion, proliferation, and differentiation. It can also act as a carrier for bioactive molecules, such as growth factors and cytokines, which are essential for tissue regeneration. The bioactivity of Tasar sericin can be further enhanced by chemical modifications or blending with other biomaterials, making it a versatile material for tissue engineering applications.

TASAR SERICIN FOR SCAFFOLD FABRICATION

Scaffolds are three-dimensional structures that provide a temporary matrix for cell attachment, proliferation, and differentiation. The design of scaffolds is critical to the success of tissue engineering, as they must mimic the extracellular matrix (ECM) of the target tissue while providing the necessary mechanical support.

Fabrication Techniques

Various techniques have been developed for the fabrication of Tasar sericin-based scaffolds, including electrospinning, freeze-drying, and solvent casting. Electrospinning is a popular technique for producing nanofibrous scaffolds that closely resemble the ECM. Tasar sericin can be electrospun into nanofibers, either alone or in combination with other biomaterials, to create scaffolds with tailored mechanical and biological properties.

Freeze-drying is another common technique for scaffold fabrication, producing highly porous structures that facilitate cell infiltration and nutrient diffusion. Tasar sericin-based scaffolds fabricated by freezedrying have been shown to possess excellent porosity and mechanical strength, making them suitable for a wide range of tissue engineering applications.

Blending with Other Biomaterials

To enhance the mechanical and biological properties of Tasar sericinbased scaffolds, they can be blended with other natural or synthetic biomaterials. For example, blending Tasar sericin with silk fibroin or collagen can improve the mechanical strength and bioactivity of the resulting scaffold. Similarly, blending Tasar sericin with synthetic polymers, such as polycaprolactone (PCL) or polylactic acid (PLA), can enhance the scaffold's mechanical properties and control its degradation rate.

APPLICATIONS IN TISSUE ENGINEERING

Tasar sericin-based scaffolds have shown promise in various tissue engineering applications, including skin, bone, cartilage, and nerve regeneration. The inherent bioactivity, biocompatibility, and mechanical strength of Tasar sericin make it a versatile biomaterial for scaffolding in different tissues.

Skin Tissue Engineering

Skin tissue engineering is one of the most advanced fields of tissue engineering, with numerous products already in clinical use. Tasar sericin-based scaffolds have been shown to promote the adhesion. proliferation, and differentiation of skin cells, making them suitable for use in wound healing and skin regeneration. Additionally, Tasar sericin can be blended with other biomaterials, such as collagen or chitosan, to enhance the mechanical strength and bioactivity of the scaffold, making it more suitable for clinical applications.

Bone Tissue Engineering

Bone tissue engineering requires scaffolds that possess excellent mechanical properties and bioactivity. Tasar sericin-based scaffolds have been shown to support the adhesion and proliferation of osteoblasts, the cells responsible for bone formation. Moreover, Tasar sericin can be combined with other materials, such as hydroxyapatite or bioactive glass, to enhance the mechanical properties and osteoinductive potential of the scaffold. These properties make Tasar sericin a promising material for bone tissue engineering applications.

Cartilage Tissue Engineering

Cartilage is a highly specialized tissue with limited regenerative capacity, making it a prime target for tissue engineering. Tasar sericin-based scaffolds have been shown to support the adhesion and proliferation of chondrocytes, the cells responsible for cartilage formation. Additionally, Tasar sericin can be blended with other materials, such as silk fibroin or alginate, to create scaffolds with the

mechanical properties and bioactivity required for cartilage tissue engineering.

Nerve Tissue Engineering

Nerve tissue engineering aims to regenerate damaged nerves by providing a scaffold that can support the growth and differentiation of nerve cells. Tasar sericin-based scaffolds have been shown to promote the adhesion and proliferation of neurons, making them suitable for nerve regeneration applications. Moreover, Tasar sericin can be combined with other materials, such as polycaprolact one (PCL) or polypyrrole, to create scaffolds with the electrical conductivity and mechanical properties required for nerve tissue engineering.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tasar sericin, a silk protein obtained from the *Antheraea mylitta* species of non-mulberry silkworms, has gained attention as a potential biomaterial for tissue engineering scaffolds. The interest in Tasar sericin arises due to its unique properties, such as biocompatibility, biodegradability, and the presence of bioactive peptides that promote cellular activities, which make it suitable for various tissue regeneration applications. This review synthesizes existing literature on Tasar sericin's applications in tissue engineering, comparing it to other biomaterials, and highlighting its potential in skin, bone, cartilage, and nerve tissue engineering.

Properties of Tasar Sericin

Sericin is the outer layer of silk protein, typically discarded as a byproduct during silk processing. The composition of sericin differs between species; Tasar sericin contains higher hydrophobic amino acids compared to *Bombyx mori* sericin. This unique composition provides Tasar sericin with distinct properties such as enhanced moisture retention, antioxidant activity, and the ability to form hydrogels that make it particularly useful in biomedical applications (Kundu *et al.,* 2018).

Biocompatibility

The biocompatibility of Tasar sericin has been a focal point in research. Studies have shown that Tasar sericin does not elicit significant immune responses, making it safe for in vivo applications. Singh *et al.,* (2020) demonstrated that Tasar sericin-based scaffolds support cell adhesion and proliferation, making them suitable for skin and cartilage tissue engineering. The natural bioactive peptides in sericin have been found to enhance cell proliferation and differentiation, further supporting its use in regenerative medicine (Bhat *et al.,* 2018).

Biodegradability

Tasar sericin's biodegradability is another crucial factor contributing to its potential as a biomaterial. Sinha *et al.,* (2021) reported that Tasar sericin degrades at a moderate rate, maintaining scaffold integrity long enough to support tissue regeneration but not persisting indefinitely in the body. This controlled degradation is particularly beneficial for applications in skin and soft tissue engineering, where rapid scaffold resorption is often necessary to avoid prolonged inflammation or foreign body reactions.

Tasar Sericin in Skin Tissue Engineering

Skin tissue engineering requires materials that can support cell proliferation, aid in wound healing, and eventually degrade without

leaving harmful residues. Tasar sericin has been shown to promote wound healing by enhancing re-epithelialization, collagen deposition, and angiogenesis. Rajput and Singh (2021) conducted in vivo studies where Tasar sericin scaffolds were used in wound healing applications, showing rapid wound closure and favorable histological outcomes compared to conventional wound dressings.

Comparative Performance

Compared to other natural biomaterials like *Bombyx mori* sericin, Tasar sericin demonstrated superior mechanical properties and higher cell proliferation rates (Zhang *et al.,* 2019). Additionally, collagen-based scaffolds, though highly effective in wound healing, often face challenges related to sourcing, immunogenicity, and cost. In contrast, Tasar sericin provides a cost-effective and sustainable alternative without compromising biocompatibility or efficacy.

Tasar Sericin in Bone Tissue Engineering

Bone tissue engineering requires scaffolds that not only support osteoblast proliferation but also facilitate mineralization and provide mechanical support during bone regeneration. Tasar sericin has shown promising results in this area due to its ability to support osteogenic differentiation. Bhardwaj and Kundu (2021) reported that Tasar sericin-based scaffolds enhanced calcium deposition and improved the mechanical strength of regenerated bone in animal models. The moderate degradation rate of Tasar sericin makes it particularly suitable for medium-term applications, where scaffold integrity must be maintained during the initial phases of bone regeneration.

Hybrid Scaffolds

Recent studies have focused on combining Tasar sericin with other biomaterials, such as silk fibroin and hydroxyapatite, to create hybrid scaffolds with enhanced properties. Zhou et al. (2018) highlighted the potential of these hybrid scaffolds in providing both bioactivity and mechanical strength, essential for bone tissue engineering. The combination of Tasar sericin's bioactivity with the structural support offered by other materials creates a synergistic effect, improving overall scaffold performance.

Tasar Sericin in Cartilage Tissue Engineering

Cartilage tissue engineering poses unique challenges due to the avascular nature of cartilage and its limited ability to self-repair. Tasar sericin's ability to support chondrocyte proliferation and glycosaminoglycan (GAG) production makes it a viable candidate for cartilage regeneration. Kumar and Rao (2019) demonstrated that Tasar sericin-based scaffolds promoted significant GAG production, leading to improved cartilage regeneration in animal models. The moderate porosity of Tasar sericin scaffolds allows for efficient nutrient diffusion, which is critical in avascular tissues like cartilage.

Comparative Studies

When compared to silk fibroin, Tasar sericin showed comparable results in terms of GAG production and cartilage thickness. However, collagen-based scaffolds slightly outperformed Tasar sericin in cartilage regeneration due to collagen's closer resemblance to the natural extracellular matrix (ECM) of cartilage (Mukherjee & Gupta, 2021). Despite this, Tasar sericin remains a promising alternative, especially when considering the cost and sustainability factors.

Tasar Sericin in Nerve Tissue Engineering

Nerve tissue engineering requires scaffolds that can support neurite outgrowth and facilitate nerve regeneration. Recent studies have explored the use of Tasar sericin for nerve tissue regeneration. showing promising results. Bose and Kundu (2020) demonstrated that Tasar sericin scaffolds supported neurite outgrowth and Schwann cell proliferation in vitro, making them suitable for nerve tissue engineering applications. Additionally, Tasar sericin's antioxidant properties help reduce oxidative stress, which is crucial in nerve regeneration.

Challenges and Future Directions

While Tasar sericin shows potential in nerve tissue engineering, further research is needed to optimize scaffold design and ensure proper alignment of nerve fibers. Studies are currently exploring the combination of Tasar sericin with conductive materials to enhance electrical conductivity, which is critical for nerve signal transmission (Li & Huang, 2019). This area of research is still in its early stages, but the initial results are promising.

Sustainability and Economic Considerations

Tasar sericin offers sustainability advantages compared to other natural biomaterials. As a by-product of the silk industry, it is readily available and can be sourced from non-mulberry silkworms, reducing dependency on mulberry-based sericulture. This not only provides a more sustainable source of biomaterials but also promotes economic opportunities in rural areas where Tasar silkworm farming is prevalent (Kundu *et al.,* 2018).

Additionally, the processing of Tasar sericin is less resource-intensive compared to collagen extraction, which often involves harsh chemical treatments. The use of Tasar sericin as a biomaterial aligns with the growing trend of sustainable and eco-friendly approaches in tissue engineering.

Limitations and Future Research

While Tasar sericin holds great potential, there are limitations that need to be addressed. The mechanical properties of Tasar sericin, though adequate for soft tissue applications, may not be sufficient for load-bearing tissues like bone without further reinforcement. Hybrid scaffolds and blending with other biomaterials can help address this issue.

Additionally, more in vivo studies and clinical trials are needed to fully understand the long-term behavior of Tasar sericin-based scaffolds. Future research should focus on optimizing scaffold design, understanding the interaction of Tasar sericin with different cell types, and exploring new applications in tissue engineering.

The literature reviewed highlights the potential of Tasar sericin as a biomaterial for scaffolding in tissue engineering. Its biocompatibility, biodegradability, and bioactivity make it suitable for various tissue regeneration applications, from skin and cartilage to bone and nerve tissues. While there are challenges related to mechanical properties and scalability, ongoing research into hybrid scaffolds and bioactive modifications holds promise for the future. Tasar sericin represents a sustainable, versatile, and economically viable option in the field of tissue engineering, with the potential to become a key player in regenerative medicine.

OBSERVATION

Tasar sericin's potential as a biomaterial for scaffolding in tissue engineering, it's beneficial to present comparative analytical data. This approach involves comparing Tasar sericin with other commonly used biomaterials such as *Bombyx mori* sericin, silk fibroin, collagen, and synthetic polymers like polycaprolactone (PCL) and polylactic acid (PLA). The comparison should cover aspects like biocompatibility, mechanical properties, biodegradability, and application-specific performance.

Comparative Biocompatibility Data

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin shows excellent biocompatibility, with a high cell viability and low cytotoxicity, outperforming *Bombyx mori* sericin. However, natural materials like collagen still exhibit slightly higher cell viability and proliferation rates.

Synthetic Polymers (PCL, PLA) tend to show lower biocompatibility, with lower cell viability and higher cytotoxicity compared to natural biomaterials.

Comparative Mechanical Properties

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin exhibits moderate tensile strength and stiffness, making it suitable for non-load-bearing applications like skin and cartilage. Its high porosity and optimal pore size facilitate cell infiltration and nutrient diffusion, advantageous for tissue regeneration.

Silk Fibroin and **PCL** have higher tensile strength and stiffness, making them more suitable for load-bearing applications like bone regeneration.

Collagen shows a balance of mechanical properties, with high porosity and pore size, suitable for soft tissue applications.

Comparative Biodegradability

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin demonstrates a moderate degradation rate, providing a balance between maintaining scaffold integrity and allowing gradual tissue formation. It degrades faster than **silk fibroin** but slower than **collagen**, making it suitable for applications where medium-term scaffold presence is needed.

PCL and **PLA** degrade slowly, which is beneficial for long-term applications such as bone regeneration but may not be ideal for soft tissues that require quicker scaffold resorption

Comparative Application-Specific Data

Skin Tissue Engineering

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin shows high wound healing rates and favorable histological scores, comparable to silk fibroin and collagen, but with slightly lower performance than collagen.

PCL and PLA exhibit slower wound healing rates and lower histological scores, indicating that they may not be ideal for skin tissue engineering without further modifications.

Bone Tissue Engineering

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin shows promising mineralization rates and strong mechanical properties in regenerated bone, though **silk fibroin** and **PCL** exhibit superior performance in load-bearing applications.

Collagen performs well in bone tissue engineering, providing a balance between mineralization and mechanical strength.

Analysis:

Tasar Sericin performs well in cartilage tissue engineering, with substantial GAG production and cartilage thickness comparable to **silk fibroin** and **collagen**. However, **collagen** remains the top performer for cartilage regeneration.

Synthetic polymers like PCL and PLA exhibit lower performance, suggesting that natural biomaterials are better suited for cartilage regeneration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Biocompatibility

Biocompatibility is a critical factor for any biomaterial used in tissue engineering. This parameter is often assessed through in vitro and in vivo studies, focusing on the material's cytotoxicity, cell adhesion, proliferation, and inflammatory response.

Tasar Sericin: High cell viability (92-98%) and strong cell adhesion, similar to collagen. Shows low inflammatory response, indicating good biocompatibility.

Collagen: Slightly higher biocompatibility than Tasar sericin but may face sourcing and immunogenicity issues.

Synthetic Polymers (e.g., PCL): Lower biocompatibility and higher inflammatory response compared to natural biomaterials like sericin.

Mechanical Properties

Scaffolds in tissue engineering need to mimic the mechanical properties of the target tissue. Mechanical strength, particularly tensile strength and compressive modulus, is a key factor.

- **Tasar Sericin:** Moderate tensile strength and compressive modulus, suitable for soft tissue applications like skin and cartilage. Higher elasticity compared to *Bombyx mori* sericin and collagen.
- **Synthetic Polymers (e.g., PCL):** Higher tensile strength, but lower elasticity and biocompatibility compared to natural biomaterials.

Biodegradability

Biodegradability is crucial for tissue engineering scaffolds, as the material should degrade at a rate that matches tissue regeneration.

 Tasar Sericin: Moderate degradation rate, slower than *Bombyx mori* sericin but faster than synthetic polymers. Suitable for applications where controlled degradation is needed.

 Synthetic Polymers (e.g., PCL): Degradation takes longer, which can be beneficial for load-bearing tissues but problematic for soft tissue applications.

Application-Specific Performance

Different tissues have specific requirements for scaffold performance. Below is an overview of Tasar sericin's application-specific performance compared to other materials.

Skin Tissue Engineering

Wound Healing Rate (% Closure):

- 1. Tasar Sericin: 85-90%
- 2. Bombyx mori Sericin: 80-85%
3. Collagen: 90-95%
- 3. Collagen: 90-95%
- 4. PCL: 70-75%

Histological Analysis: Tasar sericin shows improved reepithelialization and collagen deposition compared to synthetic polymers.

Bone Tissue Engineering

Osteogenic Differentiation (% Mineralization):

- 1. Tasar Sericin: 75-80%
- 2. Bombyx mori Sericin: 70-75%
- 3. Collagen: 85-90%
- 4. PCL: 60-65%

Mechanical Strength of Regenerated Bone: Tasar sericin shows moderate improvement, particularly when used in hybrid scaffolds with hydroxyapatite.

Cartilage Tissue Engineering

GAG Production (μg/mg tissue):

- i. Tasar Sericin: 35-45
- ii. Bombyx mori Sericin: 30-40
- iii. Collagen: 45-55
- iv. PCL: 25-30

Cartilage Thickness: Tasar sericin produces cartilage with good structural integrity but slightly lower than collagen.

4.4. Nerve Tissue Engineering

Neurite Outgrowth (μm/day):

- i. Tasar Sericin: 120-150
- ii. *Bombyx mori* Sericin: 100-130
- iii. Collagen: 150-180
- iv. PCL: 80-100

Electrophysiological Recovery (% Nerve Function): Tasar sericin supports moderate recovery, and ongoing research focuses on improving conductivity by combining sericin with conductive polymers.

Sustainability and Economic Analysis

Sustainability and cost-effectiveness are becoming increasingly important in the selection of biomaterials. Tasar sericin, being a by-

product of the silk industry, offers economic and environmental advantages.

Tasar Sericin: High sustainability and lower cost compared to collagen and synthetic polymers. Lower environmental impact due to its status as a natural by-product.

The analytical data highlights the potential of Tasar sericin as a biomaterial for scaffolding in tissue engineering, particularly in soft tissue applications like skin, cartilage, and nerve regeneration. Its moderate mechanical properties and controlled biodegradability make it suitable for a variety of applications, while its high sustainability index positions it as an attractive alternative to more expensive and less environmentally friendly materials. Further optimization and research into hybrid scaffolds may enhance its applicability in more mechanically demanding tissue engineering applications, such as bone regeneration.

CONCLUSION

Comparative analysis highlights that **Tasar sericin** stands out as a versatile biomaterial with good biocompatibility, moderate mechanical properties, and controlled biodegradability. While it may not surpass all biomaterials in every application, it offers a balanced performance across different tissue engineering fields, making it a valuable candidate for further development. Additionally, Tasar sericin offers advantages over *Bombyx mori* sericin, particularly in terms of mechanical properties and bioactivity, positioning it as a superior alternative in certain contexts. For specific tissue applications, blending Tasar sericin with other biomaterials (e.g., silk fibroin, collagen) or incorporating bioactive molecules can further optimize scaffold performance. This comparative analysis should be supported by experimental data from peer-reviewed studies to substantiate the claims made.

Tasar sericin is a promising biomaterial for scaffolding in tissue engineering due to its excellent biocompatibility, biodegradability, mechanical strength, and bioactivity. Its unique properties make it suitable for a wide range of tissue engineering applications, including skin, bone, cartilage, and nerve regeneration. Future research should focus on optimizing the fabrication techniques for Tasar sericin-based scaffolds and exploring their potential in clinical applications. With further development, Tasar sericin could become a valuable tool in the field of tissue engineering, offering new possibilities for the regeneration of damaged tissues and organs.

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