



Fabrication of Silver Nanocomposite on Copper Metal- A Potential Strategy to Alleviate Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

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Abstract: Nano silver particle (NSPs), is one of the most attractive nano materials, and has been widely used in a range of biomedical applications, including diagnosis, treatment, drug delivery, medical device coating, and for personal health care. Silver nanoparticles can be synthesized by various methods but citrate reduced and stabilized particles gain an advantage over other methods because of its morphology, stable nature, cost effective and easy scale-up nature. In the present study, the silver nanoparticle was synthesized by reducing silver salt with sodium citrate that showed the characteristic peak at 410 nm by means of UV-Visible spectroscopy. Antibacterial activity was performed against *S.aureus* and *P.aeruginosa*, and *S.aureus* was found to be more susceptible. Characterized colloidal silver nanoparticles were used for the coating process. Coating on copper plate was achieved by Dip method, and characterized using SEM, EDAX and FTIR. Resulting EDAX and SEM images showed the morphology of the coated surface with their elemental composition. FTIR interferogram showed the characteristic functional groups at 1290.09 cm⁻¹ and 1483.68cm⁻¹ responsible for the reduction of silver salt into silver nanoparticles. Antimicrobial activity was performed for the coated metal against the *Trichomonas vaginalis*, a sexual transmitted pathogen that attribute to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).The inhibition diameter is of about 31mm, thereby considering the fabricated nano composite to be effective against the disease causing microbial species. Invitro cytotoxicity studies in the Vero cell line show 81% viability with no significant morphological alterations. Hence, the fabricated nano composite could be a future benchmark for implant functionalization.

Keywords: Silver nanoparticles, *Trichomonas vaginalis*, intrauterine device, copper, pelvic inflammatory disease

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I. INTRODUCTION

Advancement in Nanotechnology has opened new therapeutic horizon and especially Silver Nanoparticles has gained importance because of its extraordinary physicochemical properties and biological activity. The therapeutic action of Silver Nanoparticles against bacterial and viral infection is due to the interaction of microbial biomolecules and silver Nanoparticles¹. It is widely accepted that NSPs (Nano silver particles) can anchor and penetrate into the bacterial cell wall, thereby producing structural changes in the cell membrane and increase cell permeability, leading to cell death². The other mechanism includes free radicals formation and subsequent free radical-induced membrane damage according to Kim *et al*³, NSPs can also act by releasing silver ions and interacting with the thiol groups of many vital enzymes and phosphorus-containing bases, thus inhibit certain cell functions, such as preventing cell division and DNA replication⁴. In addition, the antibacterial mechanism of NSPs can modulate signal transduction by changing the phosphotyrosine profile of bacterial peptides⁵. Nano particles has been widely used for diagnosis⁶, treating sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis and gonorrhea⁷ drug delivery⁸, medical device coating⁹, wound dressings and contraceptive devices¹⁰. Coating of Silver Nanoparticles (AgNPs) in different biomaterials to improve their antimicrobial characteristics is presently being studied extensively and has been vastly used in medicine. Intrauterine devices (IUD) are small devices implanted into the uterus for a certain period of time to prevent pregnancy by disrupting the uterine wall or slowly releasing hormones¹¹⁻¹³. IUD is a safe, long acting and effective method of contraception^{14,15}. Copper-containing intrauterine device (Cu-IUD) is the most widely accepted among many kind of IUDs since 1900s¹⁶. All IUDs, whether inert or medicated, profoundly alter the composition of uterine fluid and the morphology of the human endometrium. The action of contraception is mainly to release the cupric ions uninterruptedly from the device. This release of ions induces inflammatory reactions in the endometrium in response to the foreign elements; create an unfriendly environment that decreases the motility, viability of sperm and the endometrium to implant embryos¹⁷⁻²⁰. However, Cu-IUD insertion causes side effects such as pelvic inflammatory disease, a poly microbial infection of the female reproductive tract, and is associated with pelvic pain, abnormal uterine bleeding, and tubal damage that can lead to ectopic pregnancies and infertility. These long-term implants are associated with the problem of bacterial infection by microorganisms besides aseptic loosening and lack of tissue integration during implantation²¹. Thus novel strategies that prevent implant colonization by microorganisms during perioperative period are strongly required. Anti-adhesive surfaces on intravascular and intra urethral devices show reduction of both bacterial cell and protein adhesion²². Nanotechnology was employed in the contraceptive field to reduce the side effects and increase contraceptive efficacy.. One way of reducing the side effects and cytotoxicity is to decrease the initial release of copper and recently, different methods were proposed to improve the performance of IUDs²³. Hence, the present study was aimed to chemically synthesize silver nanoparticles and coat the synthesized particles on copper plates of 1mm thickness similar to that of Copper T and also to determine its dissolution property in simulated uterine medium. In addition, the study also

evaluated the cytotoxicity of novel composite in the Vero cell line. This may lend credence to the feasibility and safety for applying it as contraceptive material.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Synthesis of colloidal Silver nanoparticles by chemical reduction method

Silver Nanoparticles were prepared from Silver nitrate and trisodium citrate by using chemical reduction method²⁴. In this preparation, 50 ml of different molar concentrations of AgNO₃ was heated to 70 °C. To this 5 mL of 1 % trisodium citrate was added drop wise. The solutions were mixed vigorously and heated until change of color was evident (pale yellow). Then it was removed and stirred until cooled to 37°C.

2.2 Characterization of colloidal silver Nanoparticles using UV-Vis spectrophotometer

Formation of Silver Nanoparticles was confirmed using UV-Vis spectroscopy Systronic UV 117. The absorbance spectrum of the colloidal sample should be in the range of 200–800 nm²⁵.

2.3 Antimicrobial activity

Antimicrobial activity was carried out with Muller Hinton Agar²⁶

2.3.1. Antibiotic sensitivity test

Approximately 20ml of melted and cooled media was poured in sterilized petri plates, 24 hours growing culture of *Trichomonas vaginalis* (ATCC 50143), *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (MTTC 1687) and *Streptococcus aureus* (MTTC 3160) were used. Hi-media discs containing Nanoparticle in solution were placed on the agar plate²⁷. The plates were then incubated at 37 °C for 24 hours. The inhibition diameter was then measured.

2.4 Coating (silver nanoparticle to copper metal)

2.4.1. Dip coating

A copper plate of dimension 1x1mm is dipped into the colloidal silver nanoparticle solution. To increase the thickness of the film, the dipping time was increased. Then the coated metal was dried and stored in the oxygen free zip lock cover until the time of characterization²⁸.

2.5 Characterization of the coated metal

2.5.1 Surface characterization studies

The nature of the film formed on the surface of the coated metal plate and control metal were analyzed by various surface analysis techniques like Scanning electron microscope (SEM), Energy dispersive X-ray analysis (EDAX) and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR)²⁹

2.6. Preparation of simulated uterine medium

Table I: Composition of simulated uterine fluid g/L

Components	Weight (Gram)
NaCL	4.97
KCL	0.224
CaCl ₂	0.167
NaHCO ₃	0.25
Glucose	0.5
NaH ₂ O ₄ .2H ₂ O	0.072

Chemical immersion tests were carried out in the simulated uterine solution. Table I indicates the composition of the simulated uterine solution ³⁰. The coated metal was immersed in the solution for 24 hrs to check its dissolution nature, Cu and Ag content were analyzed by EDX analysis.

2.7. In Vitro Cytotoxicity assay

Cytotoxicity assays were carried out in SashamBiologicals, Ashok Nagar, Chennai. MTT assay was used to evaluate the cytotoxicity of the composite ³¹.

2.7.1. Cell line and culture studies

VERO cell lines were obtained from King Institute, Guindy, Chennai. The cells were maintained in Minimal Essential Medium supplemented with 10% FBS, penicillin (100 U/ml), and streptomycin (100 µg/ml) in a humid atmosphere of 50 µg/ml CO₂ at 37 °C.

2.7.2. Reagents

MEM was purchased from Hi Media Laboratories Fetal Bovine Serum (FBS) was purchased from Cistron laboratories Trypsin

methyl thiazolylidiphenyl- tetrazolium bromide (MTT) and Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) were purchased from (Sisco research laboratory chemicals Mumbai). All of the other chemicals and reagents were obtained from Sigma Aldrich Mumbai.

2.7.3. In Vitro assay (MTT assay)

Mosmann method of *in vitro* MTT assay was performed ³². 1 × 10⁵ well cells were plated in 6-well plates and incubated at 37°C with 5% CO₂. As the cell reaches the confluence, the sample was added and incubated for 24hrs. After incubation, 100µl/well (5mg/ml) of 0.5% 3-(4,5-dimethyl-2-thiazolyl)-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide (MTT) was added and incubated for 4 hours followed by 1ml of DMSO to all the wells. The absorbance was measured with UV-Spectrophotometer at 570nm using DMSO as the blank. The % cell viability was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage cell viability} = A_{570} \text{ of treated cells} / A_{570} \text{ of control cells} \times 100$$

3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data were analysed by using MS Excel 2007 and expressed as mean ± SD as three replicates. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey test were performed by using “Stat plus 2009 professional” software to determine the

significance and the means were considered as statistically significant if p<0.05

4. RESULTS

4.1 Characterization using UV-Vis Spectrophotometer

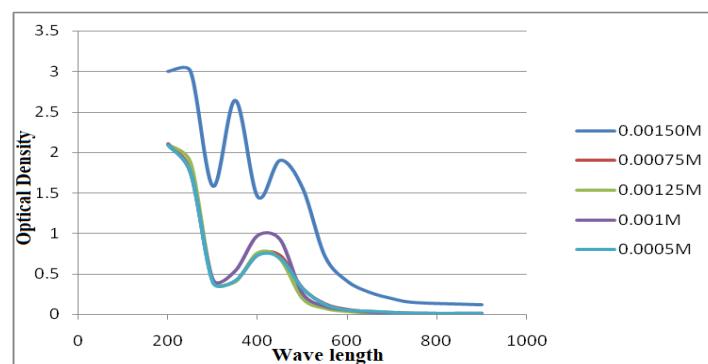
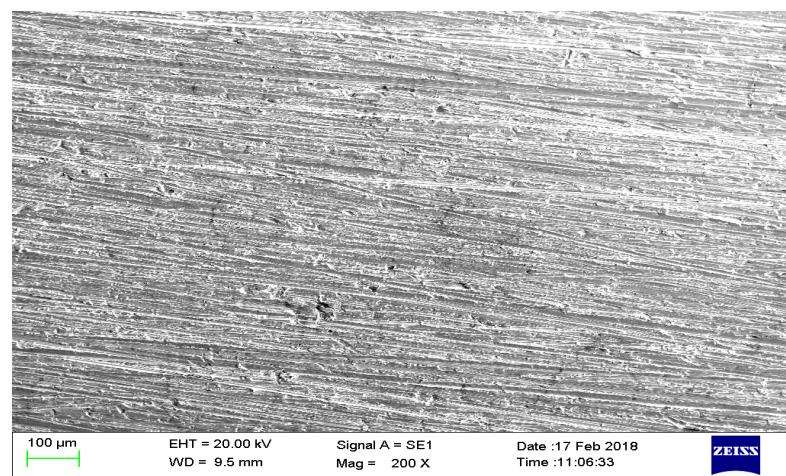


Fig 1: UV-Vis spectroscopy , Characteristic peak in the region of 380nm and 420nm is typical for nanoparticle synthesis.

4.2 Characterization of coated metal



The SEM analysis of the copper plate revealed the rough surface of the metal and the elementary analysis shows the purity of the metal plate

Fig.2: SEM image of uncoated copper plate

Table II: Elemental composition of uncoated copper plate

Element	Atomic (%)	Weight (%)
O K	1.35	5.09
Si K	0.84	1.81
Cu K	97.81	93.10

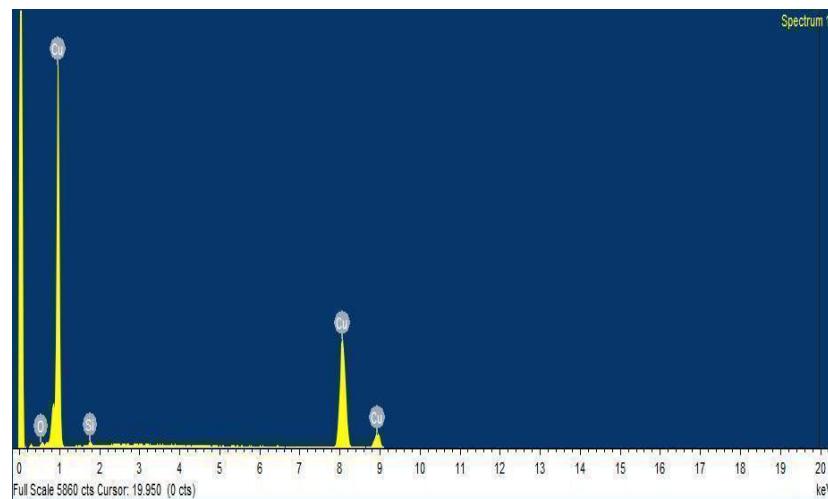


Fig.3: EDAX analysis of uncoated copper plate shows a strong signal for Copper atoms, as well as weaker signals for O and Si atoms.

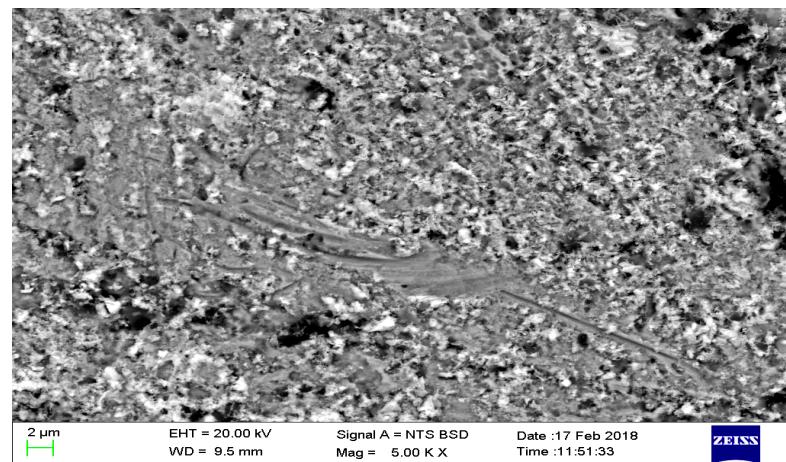


Fig.4: SEM image of dip coated copper plate shows the morphology and uniform coating of silver Nanoparticles over copper plate as aggregates of mixed phase.

Table III: Elemental composition of dip coated copper plate

Element	Atomic(%)	Weight(%)
O K	8.23	32.85
Cu K	31.10	31.24
Ag K	60.67	35.91

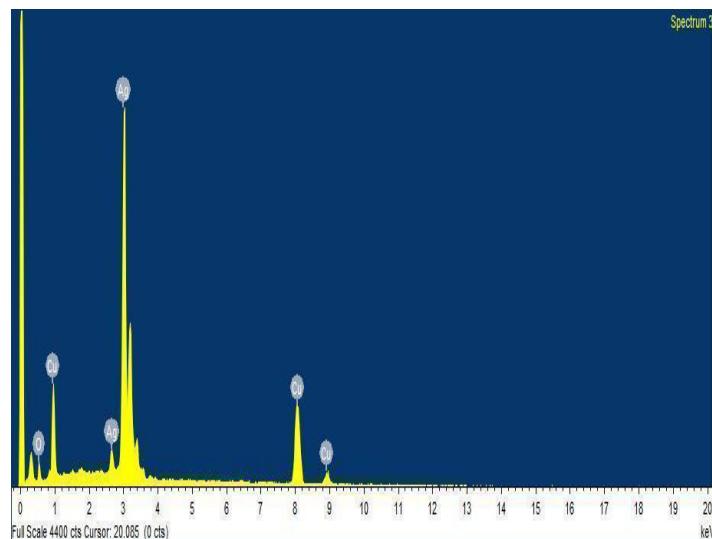


Fig.5: EDAX analysis of dip coated copper plate shows the elemental constituents and relative abundance of AgNPs. The EDX spectrum reveals the percentage of AgNPs coated over copper plate

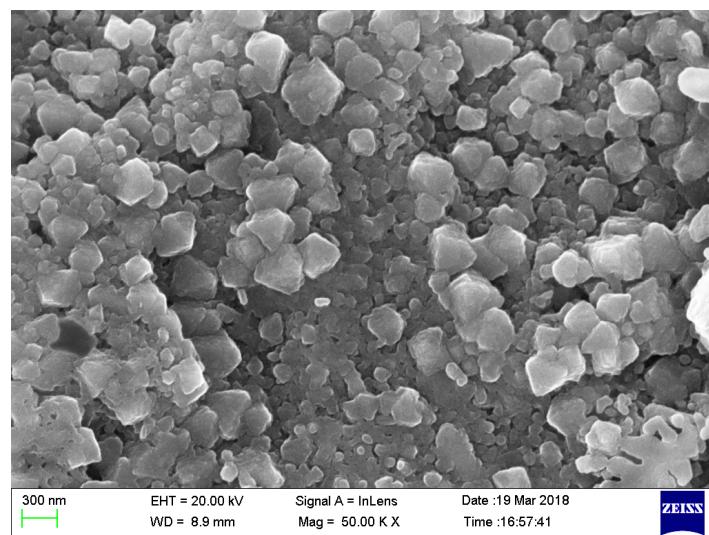


Fig.6: SEM image shows the morphology of the Silver Nanoparticles in Copper plate after dipping in simulated uterine medium. The elementary analysis reveals the percentage of silver Nanoparticles dissolved in the medium.

Table IV: Elemental composition of coated plate dipped in simulated uterine medium

Element	Atomic (%)	Weight (%)
O K	13.82	44.49
Si K	0.94	1.72
Cu K	39.32	31.87
Ag K	45.93	21.93

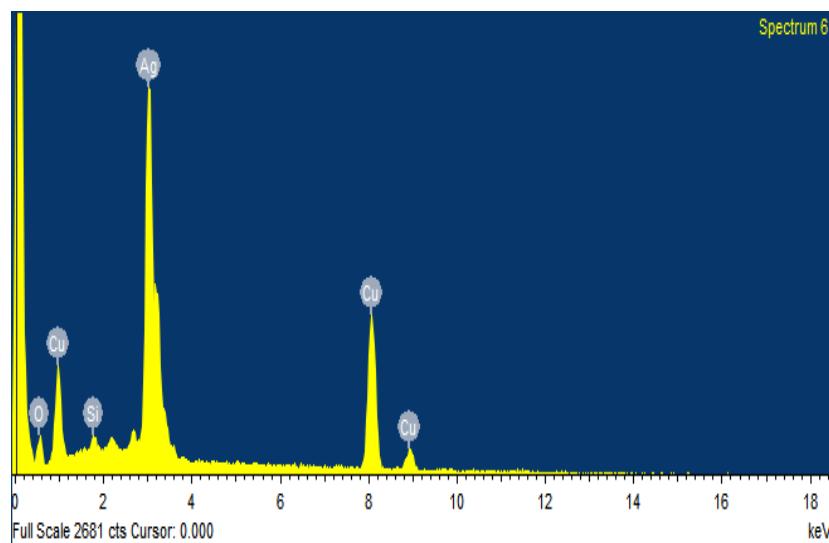


Fig.7.EDAX analysis of coated copper plate after overnight dipping in simulated uterine medium reveals that nearly 45percent of silver Nanoparticles were attached to the copper plate.

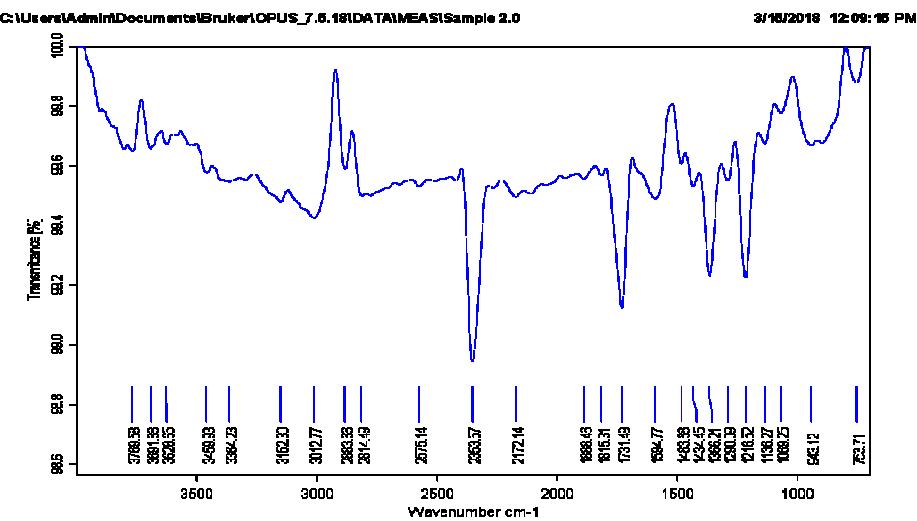


Fig.8. FTIR analysis of Silvernanoparticles coated Copper plate

reveals clear peaks throughout the whole range of observation. FTIR analysis expressed visible bands at 2883.66,2814.49,2353.57,1731.49,1463.68,1366.21,1216.52,943.12,753.71.

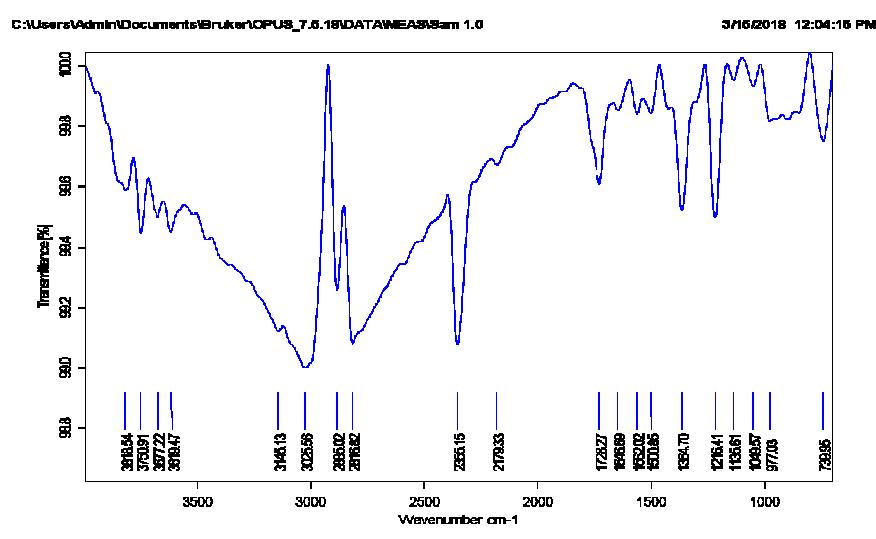


Fig.9. FTIR analysis of simulated uterine medium dipped silver coated copper plate reveals clear peak at 3750.91,3677.22,3619.47,3025.56,2885.02,2816.82,2355.15,1728.27,1364.70,1216.41,977.03,739.

4.3 Antibacterial activity

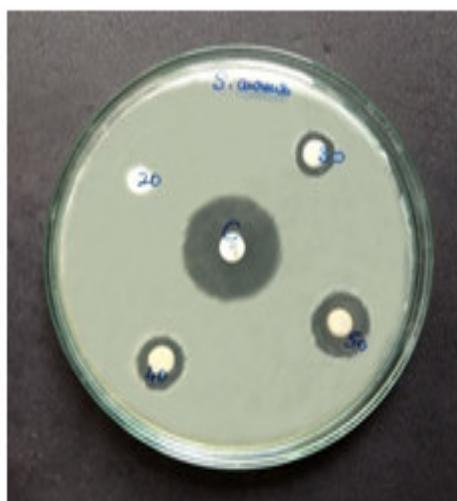


Fig.10. *S.aureus*

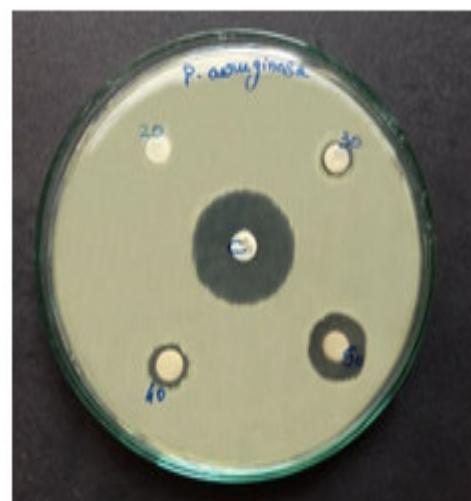


Fig.11. *P.aeruginosa*

The mean of three replicates of the diameter of inhibition zones (in millimeters) around each well with different concentration of AgNPs solution is represented in Table V. In both the species the Zone of Inhibition was found to increase as

the concentration increases when compared to control whereas the inhibition rate of *S.aureus* when compared to *P.aeruginosa*. Hence its potency is dosage dependent.

Table V: Inhibition diameter for antibacterial activity

Organism	Control \pm SD	20 μ l	30 μ l \pm SD	40 μ l \pm SD	50 μ l \pm SD
<i>S.aureus</i>	24.5 \pm 1.55mm	0 mm	10.4 \pm 0.53 mm	12.45 \pm 0.98 mm	15.65 \pm 1.24mm
<i>P.aeruginosa</i>	25.6 \pm 1.89mm	0 mm	8.4 \pm 0.20 mm	10.45 \pm 0.45mm	14.55 \pm 0.50mm

Values are mean \pm standard deviation of triplicates. The values were found to be significant ($p<0.05$) when compared to control.

4.4 Antiparasitic activity

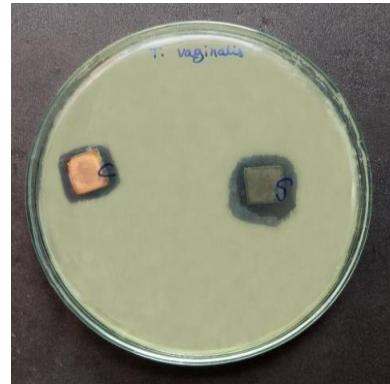


Fig.12. *Trichomonas vaginalis*

Growth inhibition zone of silver nano particles coated copper metal and copper metal on *T.Vaginalis*. The Zone of Inhibition was found to be higher in silver doped copper metal when compared to uncoated copper metal(Control). This indicate that silver nano particles has more antiparasitic activity when compared to copper metal.

Table VI: Inhibition diameter for antiparasitic activity

Organism	Control \pm SD	Sample \pm SD
<i>Trichomonas vaginalis</i>	25.65 \pm 0.98 mm	31.54 \pm 2.35mm

Values are mean \pm standard deviation of triplicates. The values were found to be significant ($p<0.05$) when compared to control.

4.5 In vitro cytotoxicity assay

4.5.1 Micrographs of normal and sample treated VERO cell line

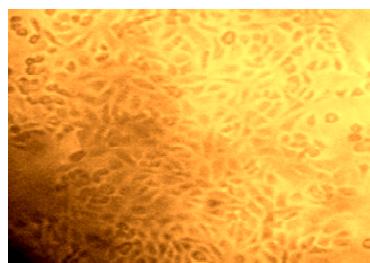


Fig.13.Normal VERO cell line

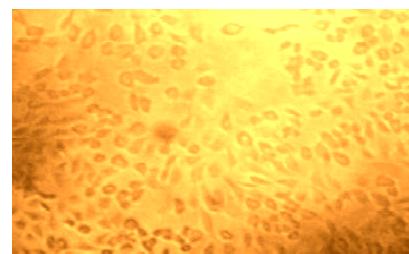


Fig.14.Sample treated cells after 24 hrs

Morphological alteration in Vero cells lines showed no massive cell death on exposure to silver nano composite.

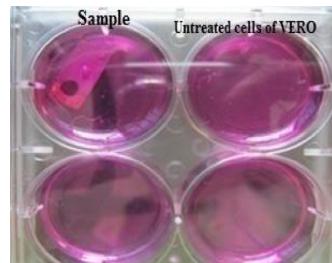


Fig 15 Dip coated copper metal sample in 6 well plate, purple colour change indicates that the reaction has taken place and the viability is proportional to the colour intensity.

Table VII: Cytotoxicity effect of silver nanocomposite on VERO Cell line

S.No	Samples	After 24 hrs	
		Optical density(O.D)	Percentage Cell Viability
1.	Sample	0.48	81.35
2.	Control	0.59	100

The viability of cells after exposed to silver Nanoparticles doped copper metal was evaluated by the amount of viable cells stained by MTT assay. The absorbance was read at 570nm by incubating for 24 hours. Percentage cell viability of Vero cell lines indicate that the synthesized silver Nanoparticles are most suitable to perform Cytotoxicity studies.

5. DISCUSSION

Bioengineered nano materials have witnessed a dramatic growth within the previous couple of years to satisfy the growing demand for novel technologies in both the scientific and industrial sectors³³⁻³⁶. Medical implants though successful in treating disease and injury, it suffers from various complications like infections and inflammatory reactions instigated by bacteria colonizing and biofilm formation. This can be minimized either by Impregnating or coating with antibacterial agent which is one of the strategy and silver Nanoparticles has gained enormous attention³⁷⁻³⁸. Silver nanoparticle is one of the most vital and fascinating metallic nano materials in biomedical application. Plasmon resonance properties of the silver nanoparticles have become the focus of extensive research due to their wide range of applications in the field of medicine, agriculture, catalysis³⁹, colorimetric sensors, optical encoding, and metal-enhanced fluorescence⁴⁰. SNPs (Silver Nanoparticles) are conventionally synthesized by using chemical reducing agents and stabilizers^{41,42}. Different molar concentrations (0.00050mM, 0.00075mM, 0.001mM, 0.00125mM, and 0.00150mM) of aqueous silver nitrate solution and 1% tri sodium citrate solution was used in the present study to synthesis Silver Nanoparticles. Confirmation of synthesized silver Nanoparticles was made by the colour change from colorless to pale yellow. The most widely used technique for nanoparticle confirmation is based

on the surface Plasmon absorption band and the synthesized nanoparticle showed the characteristic peak at 410nm at 0.001mM as in Fig1 that indicates citrate is a reducing agent. Further investigations were carried out with 0.001mM concentration. The absorption band ranging between 350 nm to 450 nm is typical for the silver nanoparticles⁴³. The Ag-NPs has found to be an effective biocide against a broad-spectrum bacteria both Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacteria⁴⁴. The antibacterial activity against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *streptococcus aureus* were performed in Mueller Hinton Agar to determine effectiveness of different millimolar concentrations of the synthesized silver nanoparticle. *Streptococcus aureus* were found to be more susceptible than *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* as in Fig 10 and 11. High inhibition zones were observed in 50µl concentration as in Table 5 that might be due to the release of silver ions, from the SNPs—the reservoirs⁴⁵. Fig.3, 4 and 5 showed typical SEM and EDAX results for copper specimen immersed in synthesized nanoparticle solution in comparison to that of uncoated metal represented in Fig.2 .The SEM image of silver nanoparticles was due to interactions of hydrogen bond and electrostatic interactions between the bioorganic capping molecules bound to the AgNPs. The nanoparticles were not in direct contact even within the aggregates, indicating stabilization of the nanoparticles by a capping agent⁴⁶. FTIR spectra was carried out to investigate the possible functional groups and chemical bonds of citrate-

reduced and stabilized SNPs. Interferogram from the FTIR analysis as shown in Fig 8 revealed the presence of characteristic functional groups at 1290.09 cm⁻¹ (Nitro compounds), 1483.68 cm⁻¹ (Aromatics) are in agreement with the findings of ⁴⁷ and these groups are responsible for the reduction of silver nitrate into silver nanoparticle. Table 2, 3 and 4 establishes the elemental composition of coated plate as their atomic and weight percentage. The oxygen presence indicates oxidation and agglomeration of particles by the formation of silver oxide, in a very minute quantity, whereas the rest of them are still stabilized and also provided with no other new elements on the surface of the composite. Chemical immersion tests were carried out in the SUF (simulated uterine fluid) solution. Prerequisite for *in vitro* measurements is creation of an environment similar to the human womb. As it is well known, human uterine fluid is a complicated mixture. Conventionally, a synthetic medium is prepared for *in vitro* measurements. The fluid consists of the compounds encountered predominantly in human uterine fluid and believed to play an important role in corrosion. This might be the reason for the shift in bands between Fig 8 and 9 that the components in the simulated uterine fluid could have reacted with the silver nano particle coated copper plate. Coated plate was immersed in the simulated uterine solution overnight to check its dissolution nature. Then the overnight immersed metal was dried and characterized using SEM (Fig 6), EDAX (Fig 7) and FTIR (Fig 9), it was observed that immersed metal shows no dissolution. Hence it confirms that the fabricated nano composite was found to be effective. Ag-NPs exhibit excellent antimicrobial activity against various species of fungi ⁴⁸ such as strains of *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* (*T. mentagrophytes*) and *Candida albicans* (*C. albicans*) that showed 80% inhibitory concentration (IC80). So fabricated metals can destroy the membrane integrity and might cause morphological changes in the protozoa species (*Trichomonas vaginalis*), one of the causative agents of pelvic inflammatory disease common among IUD users leading to cell death. Result of the antiprotozoa activity showed more inhibition (31mm) in nanocomposite sample than the copper control (25mm) as in the Figure 12 and Table 6. This confirms that Ag-NPs can act against pelvic inflammatory disease and can overcome various microbial infections among IUD users. Although silver is toxic to mammals but at a low concentration it has proven to be non-toxic to human cells ⁴⁹, hence it has numerous uses in *in-vitro* and *in-vivo* studies. In order to understand the cytotoxic effect of silver nano composite in non-cancerous VERO cell line, the present study demonstrates the cytotoxicity indices as a measure of percentage cell mortality by MTT assay at the end of 24hr incubation. Resulting MTT assay as in Table 7 showed 81% viability in the sample treated Vero cell line when compared to normal. ⁵⁰ Studies in cell

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viability analysis on titanium implants modified with copper found 27ng/mm² has 80% viability in fibroblast cell lines. Morphological alteration in Vero cells lines upon exposure to Nano composite was observed under phase contrast microscope and showed no indication of massive cell death (Fig 13 and 14) ⁵¹ and thus evaluated the cytotoxicity level of TCu220C and Cu/LDPE (Copper/ low density polyethylene nano composite intrauterine device) in L929 fibroblasts . We found that burst release of cupric ions from TCu220C induced high level of cytotoxicity and also significant decrease in cell viability when compared to Cu/LDPE in terms of RGR (Relative growth rate) and CTG (Cytotoxicity grade) . The RGR, CTG of TCu220C and Cu/LDPE were found to be 11.4, 4 and 87.82, 1 respectively³². Hence, in our present study the activity demonstrated by the Fabricated Nano composite in the Vero cell line, *in vitro* provides is rationale and suitable for IUD users.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the most widely used reversible form of contraception worldwide is the intrauterine device (IUD) in the world. The IUD is also the most cost-effective reversible contraceptive method because of its long-acting properties and excellent efficacy. But the problem is development of Pelvic inflammatory disease and no protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Hence the present study focused on coating the silver nanoparticles over copper metal plate of similar thickness to that of Copper T. Characterization studies like SEM, EDAX, UV-Vis and FTIR confirmed the surface morphology, elemental composition and functional groups of coated metal. Fabricated metal were tested for its dissolution rate and activity against *Trichomonas vaginalis*, which is one of the causative for pelvic inflammatory disease common among IUD users in artificial uterine fluid and found to be (31mm zone of inhibition) to be effective. In vitro cytotoxic studies of the fabricated nanocomposite in Vero cell line exhibited 81% cell viability and hence it could be used as future benchmark for implant functionalization.

7. AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Dr.B.Prabasheela conceptualized and designed the work. Ms.V.Sakithya carried out the work under the mentorship of Dr.B.Prabasheela. All authors discussed the methodology and results and contributed to the final manuscript.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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