

Production and Gene Cloning of Chitinases

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ABSTRACT

In this study, *Aeromonas* sp. DYU-Too7 was stimulated to produce extra-cellular chitinases using various substrates, and the chitinases were then purified with chromatographic methods. Results indicated that the chitinases could be produced, when DYU-Too7 was cultivated in a medium containing either chitin or glucosamine (GlcN) as the sole carbon source. In the chitin medium, maximal chitinase production occurred when using a medium containing 2% chitin. Maximal glucosamine production occurred in the medium containing 0.1% GlcN. The content of this experimentally obtained 36 kDa chitinase (denoted as Chi36) was highest among the chitinases. The Chi36 chitinases produced using both media were chromatographically purified separately, and their properties were compared. There were no significant differences in the enzymatic properties of Chi36 produced with the chitin medium versus the glucosamine medium. For instance, both of the Chi36s had an optimal reacting pH of 5.0 and showed high thermal stability between 10 and 60 °C and high pH stability in the range of pH 5.0 - 8.0. Using either Chi36 in the hydrolysis of colloidal chitin produces chitobiose, making the chitinase of *Aeromonas* sp. DYU-Too7 an exo-type enzyme. However, the Chi36 produced using a chitin versus glucosamine medium showed differing levels of activity in certain environments. For instance, after reacting the two Chi36s with 10 mM Hg²⁺ for 1 h, the Chi36 produced in a chitin medium retained 55% of its original activity, while the Chi36 produced in a GlcN medium retained 67% of its original activity. The feasibility study of protein collection and purification was performed through adsorption using modified nano-diamond as the absorber. The Chi36 purified in the previous study was used as the target protein to explore the optimal operating conditions. Results indicated the following optimal conditions: the ratio between the protein and modified nano-diamond was 75, the pH environment was 4.1, and the efficiency of protein adsorption was 86%. The enzymatic properties had no significant change after the chitinase was adsorbed. The efficiency of protein desorption from modified nano-diamond was almost 100% in a Tri-HCl buffer of pH 8.0 or 9.0, however, the desorption efficiency decreased to 76% in a buffer of pH 7.0. Next, modified nano-diamond was used to collect protein from a culture broth, replacing the often used ammonium sulfate precipitation procedure. Results showed that 87% of the crude protein was recovered after the adsorption step. The efficiency of protein desorption from modified nano-diamond was 88% in a Tri-HCl buffer of pH 8.0, and the properties of crude protein were not significantly altered through adsorption of modified nano-diamond and desorption from nano-diamond. The gene encoding Chi36 produced by *Aeromonas* sp. DYU-Too7 was amplified using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Results indicated that the open reading frame of the gene, *chi36*, is 1,080 bp long encoding the protein of Chi36 with 360 amino acids, of which 27 amino acids compose the N-terminal signal peptide. In addition, the sequence 137FDGIDIDLE145 of Chi36 is homologous with the consensus catalytic sequence of family 18 of glycosyl hydrolases. Furthermore, the *chi36* genes with and without the signal peptide were inserted into *E. coli* to produce recombinant proteins. Results showed that the recombinant protein produced from the gene, including a signal sequence to produce a signal peptide, showed chitinolytic activity, and produced chitobiose as the main hydrolysate in the hydrolysis of colloidal chitin. However, when the recombinant gene did not include the signal sequence, the recombinant protein produced thereafter did not show chitinase activity.

Keywords : chitin ; GlcN (glucosamine) ; chitobiose ; chitinase ; nano-diamond ; PCR (polymerase chain reaction)

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