

## Cinnamon as Traditional and Modern Medicine

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### Abstract

*Cinnamomum* is a middle sized evergreen tree, about 10-15 m tall, innate to Southern India and Sri Lanka, but also is found in central to Burma, southern mainland China, Cambodia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia. In brief, the tree is dispensed in regions between 500 and 1500 m in height. Cinnamon, a plant of the laurel species Lauraceae, as a spice in numerous cultures for centuries, has been consumed in China for thousands of years against many diseases, for instance the “thirsty disease,” which was an old expression for diabetes in China before the expression diabetes mellitus was created in modern medicine.

The constituents of procyanidins contain both procyanidin A-type and B-type bonds. These procyanidins are taken out from cinnamon and berries. They also own antioxidant activities. In the same way, the most important ingredients of cinnamon is trans-cinnamaldehyde or cinnamaldehyde which exists in the essential oil, therefore donating to the fragrance and to the diverse biological activities perceived with cinnamon. Essential oil from cinnamon leaves includes a high level of cinnamon. Subsequently, *C. osmophloeum* is also used as a replacement spice for *C. cassia*. One of the main constituents of essential oil obtained from *C. zeylanicum* termed (E)-cinnamaldehyde has an antityrosinase activity, whereas cinnamaldehyde is the main compound accountable for this activity. Utilization of cinnamon (short term) is related with a notable decrease in systolic Blood Pressure (BP) and diastolic BP. Even though cinnamon exhibits hopeful influences on BP-dropping potential, it would be premature to advise cinnamon for BP control owing to the limited number of investigations available. Its bark has been extensively used as a flavoring and spice agent for periods. Cinnamon has been suggested to have many pharmacological attributes, containing antimicrobial effects and antioxidant activity. *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (CZ) extracts on diabetes demonstrates numerous beneficial effects. CZ reduced total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides while increasing HDL-cholesterol in diabetics.

The essential oils obtained from the bark of CZ and eugenol has shown very powerful activities, decreasing 3-nitrotyrosine formation and inhibiting the peroxy-nitrite-induced lipid peroxidation in in-vitro assays. The volatile oils of CZ have shown 55.9% and 66.9% antioxidant activity at 100 and 200 ppm concentration, respectively. The dried fruit extracts of CZ with ethyl acetate, acetone, methanol and water exhibited antioxidant activity in the order of water > methanol > acetone > ethyl acetate. CZ bark extracts were found to be potent in free radical scavenging activity especially against DPPH radicals and ABTS radical cations, while the hydroxyl and super-oxide radicals were also scavenged by the tested compounds. CZ has 65.3% of anti-oxidant activity and strong free radical scavenging activity. Treatment of 54 healthy volunteers with CZ 100 mg/30ml of tea daily were significantly effective in the reduction of lipid peroxidation and increasing TAP and TTM in comparison with controls. Cinnamon bark extract entrapped in nanoparticles prepared with poly-DL-lactide-co-glycolide (PLGA), a biocompatible polymer widely used in the pharmaceutical industry and which could be used in the food industry to deliver antimicrobial compounds to food matrices. Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) bark essential oil (CBEO) has been used for thousands of years in Ayurvedic medicine to soothe aching joints and numb pain. It is still used for similar purposes in India, presumably because of its anti-inflammatory property. CBEO typically contains a very high amount of cinnamaldehyde and a small amount of eugenol, among many other aromatic compounds. CBEO and cinnamaldehyde have been studied for their antibacterial, antifungal, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer activities. Furthermore, CBEO has gained popularity for use in skin care products; however, research on its effects on human skin is largely scarce.

## Introduction

Cinnamon, a plant of the laurel species Lauraceae, as a spice in numerous cultures for centuries has been consumed in China for thousands of years against many diseases, for instance the “thirsty disease,” which was an old expression for diabetes in China before the expression diabetes mellitus was created in modern medicine [1,115]. On the whole, approximately 250 species have been recognized among the cinnamon genus, with trees being distributed all over the Earth [2]. The constituents of procyanidins contain both procyanidin A-type and B-type bonds [3]. These procyanidins are taken out from cinnamon and berries. They also own antioxidant activities [3]. In the same way, the most important ingredients of cinnamon is trans-cinnamaldehyde or cinnamaldehyde which exists in the essential oil, therefore donating to the fragrance and to the diverse biological activities perceived with cinnamon [4]. Equally important, in 2008, a study by Chang et al. (2008) on *Cinnamomum osmophloeum* demonstrated that the essential oil from cinnamon leaves includes a high level of cinnamon. Subsequently, *C. osmophloeum* is also used as a replacement spice for *C. cassia* [5]. One of the main constituents of essential oil obtained from *C. zeylanicum* termed (E)-cinnamaldehyde has an antityrosinase activity whereas cinnamaldehyde is the main compound accountable for this activity [6, 7]. Cinnamon has a long history of consumption in traditional medicine, but there are few evidences on its interacted pathophysiological mechanisms [8]. The fresh cinnamon sticks are crushed to prepare tea, to cook into sprinkle on toast, desserts or cereal. Since it may act together with certain medicines, it is notable to check other drugs before using cinnamon [9]. It can help relieve indigestion pain and toothaches. This creates it ideal for cooking and remedial use [10]. In the same way, cinnamon is a coagulant and stops bleeding (Hossein et al., 2013). It also enhances the blood circulation in the advances tissue renewal and uterus [11]. On the whole, this plant performs a key role as a spice, but its essential oils and other ingredients also have important activities, counting antifungal antimicrobial antidiabetic antioxidant anti-inflammatory antitermitic antimycotic nematocidal insecticidal mosquito larvicidal and anticancer activities [116,12-19]. It is the most significant modifiable risk agent for cerebrovascular, cardiovascular, and renal disease [20]. The relative risk assessment collaborating group has recognized hypertension as the leading worldwide risk agent for mortality and as the third leading risk agent for disease burden [21]. These interventions contain dietary sodium reduction, weight loss, and physical activity, limitation in alcohol consumption, potassium supplementation and variation of whole diets [22]. Therefore, the influence of dietary composition on BP is a subject of public health significance [23]. In 2011, Xue et al indicated that cinnamaldehyde increased rat vascular smooth muscle in an endothelium-independent method. The capability of cinnamaldehyde in vasodilatory performance might be due to inhibition of  $Ca^{2+}$  invasion and  $Ca^{2+}$  discharge [24].

Likewise, cinnamaldehyde prevents the development of hypertension in types I and II diabetes by reducing vascular contractility, as well as its insulinotropic effect in insulin fault [25]. Hypertension is very common in persons with T2DM, influencing up to 60%

of the people [26]. Akilen et al. (2010) exhibited a significant decrease in systolic BP or diastolic BP followed by a considerable reduction in glycemic signs (fasting plasma glucose or HbA1c). Cinnamon has been reported to positively affect the insulin system [27]. Several combinations of essential oils counting cinnamon, fenugreek, cumin, and oregano have been exhibited to increase insulin sensitivity in vitro trials. Talpur et al. (2005) realized that the capability to alter systolic BP in rat models was the most sensitive primary index of insulin sensitivity [28]. Utilization of cinnamon (short term) is related with a notable decrease in systolic BP and diastolic BP. Even though cinnamon exhibits hopeful influences on BP-dropping potential, it would be premature to advise cinnamon for BP control owing to the limited number of investigations available. Therefore, a long-term, sufficiently powered randomized controlled trial (RCT) containing a larger number of patients is required to assess the clinical potential of cinnamon on BP regulator among patients with T2DM [29]. *Cinnamomum* is a middle sized evergreen tree, about 10-15 m tall, innate to Southern India and Sri Lanka but also is found in central to Burma, southern mainland China, Cambodia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia [30,31]. In brief, the tree is dispensed in regions between 500 and 1500 m in height. Its bark has been extensively used as a flavoring and spice agent for periods. Cinnamon has been suggested to have many pharmacological attributes, containing antimicrobial effects and antioxidant activity [32].

Numerous reports have distributed with the numerous attributes of cinnamon in the forms of, essential oils, bark, bark powder, flavonoids, phenolic compounds, and isolated constituents. Each of these attributes plays a vital role in the improvement of person's health [33]. In spite of this, the exact BP-lowering procedure of cinnamon is still unknown and new studies are required to explain this issue [34]. In addition, agents associated with related disorders, containing stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and cancer, have also been exhibited to be improved by cinnamon and its constituents in in vitro findings [35].

The volatile oils obtained from the bark, leaf, and root barks vary significantly in chemical composition, which suggests that they might vary in their pharmacological effects as well [36]. The different parts of the plant possess the same array of hydrocarbons in varying proportions, with primary constituents such as; cinnamaldehyde (bark), eugenol (leaf) and camphor (root) [42]. Thus cinnamon offers an array of different oils with diverse characteristics, each of which determines its value to the different industries. For example the root which has camphor as the main constitute, has minimal commercial value unlike the leaf and bark [37]. It is this chemical diversity that is likely CZ, also known as Ceylon cinnamon (the source of its Latin name, *zeylanicum*) or ‘true cinnamon’ is indigenous to Sri Lanka and southern parts of India [37]. Three of the main components of the essential oils obtained from the bark of CZ are trans-cinnamaldehyde, eugenol, and linalool, which represent 82.5% of the total composition [38]. Transcinnamaldehyde, accounts for approximately 49.9–62.8% of the total amount of bark oil [39,40]. Cinnamaldehyde and eugenol are also the ma-

for components of CZ extracts [41].

The levels of coumarins in CC appear to be very high and pose health risks if consumed regularly in higher quantities. According to the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), 1 kg of CC (CC) powder contains approximately 2.1-4.4 g of coumarin, which means 1 teaspoon of CC powder would contain around 5.8-12.1 mg of coumarin [42]. This is above the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) for coumarin of 0.1mg/kg body weight/day recommended by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) [43]. The EFSA advocates against the regular, long term use of CC as a supplement due to its coumarin content [44]. In-vitro and in-vivo studies in animals and humans from different parts of the world have demonstrated numerous beneficial health effects of CZ, such as anti-inflammatory properties, anti-microbial activity, reducing cardiovascular disease, boosting cognitive function and reducing risk of colonic cancer [45].

A recent meta-analysis by Ranasinghe, et al. and a systematic review by Bandara et al., on the effects of CZ extracts on diabetes demonstrates numerous beneficial effects both in vitro and in vivo [46]. Hasan et al. (2012), also confirmed these effects and demonstrated that CZ reduced total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides while increasing HDL-cholesterol in diabetic rats. Similar results have also been observed in hyper-lipidaemic albino rabbits (Javed et al., 2012). Nyadjeu et al. (2011) examined the effects of CZ extracts (CZA) on mean arterial blood pressure (BP) of normotensive (NR) rats, salt-loaded hypertensive rats (SLHR), L-NAME hypertensive rats (LNHR) and spontaneously hypertensive rats (SHR).

The essential oils obtained from the bark of CZ and eugenol has shown very powerful activities, decreasing 3-nitrotyrosine formation and inhibiting the peroxynitrite-induced lipid peroxidation in in-vitro assays [47]. The volatile oils of CZ have shown 55.9% and 66.9% antioxidant activity at 100 and 200 ppm concentration, respectively [48]. The dried fruit extracts of CZ with ethyl acetate, acetone, methanol and water exhibited antioxidant activity in the order of water > methanol > acetone > ethyl acetate [49]. A. Kitazuru, et al. (2004) studied the effects of ionizing radiation on natural CZ antioxidants and showed that irradiation in the dose range applied did not have any effect on the anti-oxidant potential of the cinnamon compounds.

CZ bark extracts were found to be potent in free radical scavenging activity especially against DPPH radicals and ABTS radical cations, while the hydroxyl and super-oxide radicals were also scavenged by the tested compounds (Mathew and Abraham, 2004). Similar findings were noted by Prakash, et al. (2007) who showed that CZ has 65.3% of anti-oxidant activity and strong free radical scavenging activity [39]. Ranjbar et al. (2006) treated 18 operating room personnel with CZ (100 mg/300 mL tea) daily for 10 days and blood samples were analyzed for biomarkers of oxidative stress biomarkers including Lipid Peroxidation Level (LPO), Total Antioxidant Power (TAP) and Total Thiol Molecules (TTM).

Treatment of 54 healthy volunteers with CZ 100 mg/30ml of tea daily were significantly effective in the reduction of lipid peroxidation and increasing TAP and TTM in comparison with controls [50].

An aqueous extract of CZ is known to inhibit tau aggregation and filament formation, which are hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease [51]. Takasao et al. (2012) demonstrated that CZ extracts facilitates collagen biosynthesis in human dermal fibroblasts. CZ extract up-regulated both mRNA and protein expression levels of type I collagen without cytotoxicity; cinnamaldehyde was the major active component promoting the expression of collagen by HPLC and NMR analysis. This suggests that CZ extracts might be useful in anti-aging treatment of skin [52]. CZ extracts have also exhibited the strong inhibitory effects on osteoclastogenesis [53]. CZ dose-dependently inhibited osteoclast-like cell formation at concentrations of 12.5-50 µg/ml without affecting cell viability. This finding raises prospects for the development of a novel approach in the treatment of osteopenic diseases [53]. Other in-vivo effects in animals CZ is known to have anti-secretagogue and anti-gastric ulcer effects as shown by a study conducted by Alqasoumi (2012). Rao and Lakshmi (2012) induced diarrhoea in mice using the magnesium sulphate-induced diarrhoea test and showed that CZ extracts at 100 and 200 mg/kg doses significantly reduced the extent of the diarrhoea (71.7% and 80.4%) in test animals [54]. The CZ extracts served to accelerate the wound healing process and specifically increased epithelialisation [55]. In Wistar rats CZ given orally increased the wound breaking strength significantly in incision wounds model and in dead space wounds the granulation tissue breaking strength and hydroxyproline content were significantly increased [56].

CZ has also been shown to have hepato-protective effects in a study where liver injury was induced in rats by CCl<sub>4</sub> [57]. Water-based extract from CZ was a potent inhibitor of VEGFR2 kinase (Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor Receptor) activity which is involved in angiogenesis [58]. Domaracký et al. (2007) administered CZ for two weeks to female mice and evaluated the effects on the viability of embryos of mice, number of nuclei and the distribution of embryos according to nucleus number.

The average ED<sub>50</sub> from the first and second tests of the petroleum ether extract on these tumour cells were 60 and 24 µg/ml respectively and of the chloroform extract were 58 and 20 µg/ml respectively. Singh et al. (2009) investigated the cytotoxic effects of aqueous cinnamon extract from the bark of CZ on human and mouse cell lines. Cinnamon extracts are known to increase Tristetraprolin mRNA and protein levels, Tristetraprolins have anti-inflammatory effects due to destabilizing of pro-inflammatory mRNA [59].

The genus *Cinnamomum* (family Lauraceae) contains more than 300 evergreen aromatic trees and shrubs. Four species have great economic importance for their multiple culinary uses as common spices worldwide: *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* Blume (a synonym of *Cinnamomum verum* J. Presl, known as Sri Lanka cinnamon), *Cinna-*

mon loureiroi Nees (known as Vietnamese cinnamon), Cinnamon burmanni (Nees & T. Nees) Blume (known as Indonesian cinnamon) and Cinnamon aromaticum Nees (a synonym of Cinnamon cassia (L.). J. Presl, known as Chinese cinnamon) [60]. The term cinnamon commonly refers to the dried bark of *C. zeylanicum* and *C. aromaticum* used for the preparation of different types of chocolate, beverages, spicy candies and liquors [61,60]. Moreover, cinnamon is used in various savory dishes, pickles, soups, and Persian sweets. Cinnamon bark, leaves, flowers and fruits are used to prepare essential oils, which are destined for use in cosmetics or food products. Moreover, according to traditional Chinese medicine (dating roughly 4000 years), cinnamon has been used as a neuroprotective agent and for the treatment of diabetes [62,63]. Cinnamon has also been used as a health-promoting agent for the treatment of diseases such as inflammation, gastrointestinal disorders and urinary infections [64,65]. Another potential medical use of cinnamon would be with regards to its antimicrobial properties, especially antibacterial activity. It is well known that infection is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. According to the World Health Organization reports, in 2011, there were more than 55 million deaths worldwide with infection being responsible for one-third of all deaths [66]. The high prevalence of infection and long-term exposure to antibiotics has led to the antibiotic resistance of microorganisms. Therefore, much attention has been paid to the discovery and development of new antimicrobial agents that might act against these resistant microorganisms, and cinnamon could be an interesting candidate [67,68]. It was used for embalming by the ancient Egyptian people [69]. During the Dutch occupation in the 17th century, cinnamon cultivation started in Java, and the East India Company became the main cinnamon exporter to European countries [69]. Although Ceylon cinnamon cultivation diminished, Sri Lanka remains the main source of cinnamon oils, and Ceylon cinnamon oil from Sri Lanka has been broadly used by both pharmaceutical and food industries. Pharmaceutical industries also use Chinese cinnamon oils [60,69]. The average production rate of cinnamon is about 27,500 to 35,000 tons per year [71]. Cinnamon has mainly been cultivated in Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Madagascar and China [60,70,71]. The application of fertilizer containing urea, phosphate, and potash is known to increase cinnamon production [71].

The main compounds isolated and identified in cinnamon (*C. zeylanicum*) belong to two chemical classes: polyphenols and volatile phenols. Among polyphenols, cinnamon contains mainly vanillic, caffeic, Gallic, protocatechuic, p-coumaric, and ferulic acids [72]. With regards to volatile components, the chemical composition of cinnamon essential oils depends on the part of the plant from which they are extracted. In bark essential oil, cinnamaldehyde is the most represented substance, with a content ranging from 90% to 62%–73%, depending on the type of extraction, this being higher for steam distillation than Soxhlet extraction [73]. In cinnamon leaf essential oil, the main component is eugenol, which reaches a concentration of more than 80%. In the essential oil obtained from cinnamon fruit and flowers, (E)-cinnamyl acetate and caryophyllene are the major components [74,75].

It also shows beneficial effects on oral health and is used for toothaches, oral infections, and to remove bad breathe [76]. Cinnamon has also been used to treat acne and melisma [77]. Moreover, it has been used for the treatment of gastrointestinal and colonic [78]. Ayurvedic literature shows that cinnamon has potent antiemetic, anti-diarrheal, anti-flatulent, and stimulant activities [79]. Cinnamon has a coagulant effect and therefore it can be used against hemorrhaging [33]. Cinnamon increases the blood flow in the uterus and improves tissue regeneration [80]. Moreover, it possesses potent antibacterial, antifungal, antitermitic, larvicidal, nematocidal, and insecticidal properties [81,82,18,17,83]. More recently, scientific reports showed that cinnamon has potent neuroprotective, hepatoprotective, cardioprotective and gastroprotective effects due to its potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties [84]. Cinnamon essential oil could be also used in aromatherapy, which is the therapeutic use of plant essential oils that can be absorbed into the body via the skin or the olfactory system. A recent research article showed the benefits deriving from the use of cinnamon oil in massage for alleviating menstrual pain [85].

A search on the Clinical Trials Gov. database with the keyword “cinnamon” showed that there are 28 clinical trials, including 17 completed studies, six recruited studies, and one terminated study [86]. A search was conducted on the PubMed database using the keywords “antibacterial activity of cinnamon”. The results returned 45 papers from 2010 up to 2015; the most interesting of these were summarized and critically discussed to provide a consistent review. The results showed that the antibacterial activity, expressed as inhibition zone, ranges from 7 to 18 mm for the application of 30 L, suggesting a high antibacterial activity [87,88]. The authors concluded that *C. zeylanicum* could be considered a valuable support in the treatment of infection and may contribute to the development of potential antimicrobial agents against MRSA bacteria [89].

The results showed that cinnamon extract is active against both strains and, therefore, it represents an alternative source of natural antimicrobial substances for use in clinical practice for the treatment of cases of *M. cattarhalis* [90]. In 2012, Guerra et al. published an investigation on the antibacterial activity of the combination of *C. zeylanicum* essential oil and antibiotics, in which additive and synergistic effects were shown [91]. More recently, Yap et al. (2013) reached similar results. In fact, the authors showed that the combination of piperacillin and cinnamon bark essential oil induced a considerable reduction in the registered MIC values against a clinical strain of beta-lactamase-producing *E. coli*. The authors concluded that a reduced use of antibiotics could be employed as a treatment strategy to decrease the adverse effects and possibly to reverse the beta-lactam antibiotic resistance [92].

TLC and GC-MS analyses of chemical composition revealed the presence of t-cinnamaldehyde (which was the most abundant substance, corresponding to 4.3%), eugenol (0.32%) and minor components such as cuminaldehyde, and -terpinene [79].



In 2014, Al-Mariri and Safi studied the antibacterial activity against Gram-negative bacteria (using a microdilution broth susceptibility assay) of cinnamon bark essential oil obtained via hydro-steam-distillation. The sample showed good antibacterial activity against the Gram-negative bacteria (*E. coli* O157:H7, *Yersinia enterocolitica* O9, *Proteus* spp. and *Klebsiella pneumonia*) with very low MIC values (12.5 L/mL, 6.25 L/mL, 1.5 L/mL and 3.125 L/mL, respectively) [93]. More recently, in 2015 other research groups investigated the antibacterial activity of cinnamon essential oil and extracts and found similar results [94,95]. Another investigation focusing on Gram-negative bacteria was published by Seukep et al. (2013) who studied the in vitro antibacterial activity of several Cameroonian dietary plants, including *C. zeylanicum*, against multidrug resistant (MDR) Gram-negative bacteria overexpressing active efflux pumps, which make bacteria resistant to antibiotic treatment. The authors concluded that the antibacterial activity of that cinnamon methanolic bark extract could be used in the treatment of infectious diseases induced by bacteria expressing MDR phenotypes [96].

Some studies showed that cinnamon extracts and essential oils could be active against oral cavity infections. Chaudhari et al. (2012) showed that cinnamon essential oil was active against *Streptococcus mutans* and concluded that the use of cinnamon essential oils can be a good alternative to other antibacterial compounds against the bacteria responsible for oral infections. The results showed that the obtained inhibition zones vary with increasing concentration (5% to 20%) of cinnamon fresh leaf extract. Moreover, a complete inhibition of bacterial growth was registered after 12 h of contact, using NaOCl as a reference, which suggests that the cinnamon extract is active against both planktonic and biofilm-forms; this was also observed in vivo [97]. *L. acidophilus* was less sensitive to this essential oil (1.46 L/mL). The authors concluded that promising in vitro data would require in vivo studies to determine the dose to be used in products for oral hygiene, which have no cytotoxicity [98].

The essential oil, whose main constituents was cinnamaldehyde (97% w/w), showed antibacterial and bactericidal activity, with MIC values ranging from 250 to 1000 g/mL [99]. The authors showed the antibacterial activity, expressed as MIC and minimum lethal concentrations, of the essential oil obtained from *C. verum* [100]. In particular, cinnamon essential oil reduces the bacterial growth rate significantly in artificially contaminated samples when compared with an untreated control [101]. Similar investigations were performed a few years back by several research groups that studied the antibacterial activity of cinnamon against foodborne pathogens, especially in contaminated meat, such as *Salmonella typhimurium*, *S. aureus* and *E. coli*, *Arcobacter butzeiri* and *Arcobacter skirrowii* [102-104]. The following paper is particularly noteworthy because the extract obtained from a cinnamon stick resulted to be active at room temperature (~23°C) against *L. monocytogenes*, *S. aureus*, and *Salmonella enterica* in a food matrix different from meat and represented by cheese, suggesting that the extract is a potential natural food preservative [105]. Based on

these results, the authors concluded that cinnamon essential oil could be incorporated into food packaging materials or used to create an active modified atmosphere to reduce the contamination of *Cronobacter* species [106]. They suggested that these essential oils and their main active components could be used as natural alternatives for food preservation to retard or inhibit the bacterial growth of pathogenic and spoilage bacteria and to extend the shelf life of the food products [107].

Another practical application for the antibacterial activity of cinnamon essential oil was reported by Hill et al. (2013) who tested cinnamon bark extract entrapped in nanoparticles prepared with polyDL-lactide-co-glycolide (PLGA), a biocompatible polymer widely used in the pharmaceutical industry and which could be used in the food industry to deliver antimicrobial compounds to food matrices. Despite the above reported studies that promote the use of cinnamon applications in food and cosmetic products, the oral ingestion or skin applications of cinnamon or its components (i.e., cinnamaldehyde, eugenol, and cinnamic acid) is not always advisable and is recommended only in very small doses. Cinnamon oil should be diluted to less than 2% before oral use (National Institutes of Health; U.S., 2015). This recommendation is related to the capacity of cinnamaldehyde to deplete glutathione [108].

Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) bark essential oil (CBEO) has been used for thousands of years in Ayurvedic medicine to soothe aching joints and numb pain. It is still used for similar purposes in India, presumably because of its anti-inflammatory property. CBEO typically contains a very high amount of cinnamaldehyde and a small amount of eugenol, among many other aromatic compounds. CBEO and cinnamaldehyde have been studied for their antibacterial antifungal anti-diabetic anti-inflammatory and anticancer activities, among others. Furthermore, CBEO has gained popularity for use in skin care products; however, research on its effects on human skin is largely scarce. A recent study conducted on human keratinocytes demonstrated the antioxidant effect of cinnamaldehyde, as well as its potential for treating skin disorders [109-116].

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