

## Vitis vinifera (Grape) and Ficus carica (Fig) as Antibacterial Agents in Kidney Dialysis Patients: A Comprehensive Systematic Review

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### Abstract

**Background:** Kidney dialysis patients face significantly elevated infection risks due to immunocompromised status and invasive procedures. While *Vitis vinifera* (grape) and *Ficus carica* (fig) extracts demonstrate promising antibacterial properties in vitro, their clinical application in dialysis populations remains largely unexplored. This systematic review evaluates the current evidence for grape and fig extracts as antibacterial agents, with particular focus on their potential therapeutic role in kidney dialysis patients.

**Objective:** To systematically review the antibacterial efficacy of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts and assess their potential application in kidney dialysis patients who face heightened infection risks.

**Methods:** A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple databases, identifying 1,046 papers for initial screening. Following systematic exclusion criteria, 50 studies were included in the final analysis, focusing on antibacterial activity, renoprotective effects, and clinical relevance to dialysis populations.

**Results:** Both grape and fig extracts demonstrate significant in vitro antibacterial activity against common dialysis-associated pathogens, including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Grape seed extracts show particularly strong activity with minimum inhibitory concentrations (MIC) ranging from 0.5-4.0 mg/mL for proanthocyanidins. However, direct clinical evidence for antibacterial efficacy in dialysis patients is limited, with only indirect evidence from anti-inflammatory studies in this population.

**Conclusions:** While preclinical data strongly support the antibacterial potential of grape and fig extracts, substantial research gaps exist regarding their safety, pharmacokinetics, and clinical efficacy in kidney dialysis patients. Rigorous clinical trials are urgently needed to establish their therapeutic potential in this vulnerable population.

**Keywords:** *Vitis vinifera*, *Ficus carica*, antibacterial, dialysis, chronic kidney disease, plant extracts, infection prevention

### Introduction

Patients undergoing kidney dialysis constitute one of modern healthcare's most vulnerable populations to infection, exhibiting rates dramatically exceeding those of the general population

[1][2] . This profound susceptibility stems from multiple, often compounding factors: uremia-associated immune dysfunction, the necessity for frequent vascular access, and prolonged exposure to healthcare settings[3] [4] . The consequences are starkly evident in bloodstream infections, which afflict hemodialysis patients at a rate of 13.7 per 100 person-years—over 25 times higher than the general population rate of 0.53 per 100 person-years [5] . Vascular access type critically modulates this risk; central venous catheters are associated with significantly higher infection rates (2.16 per 100 patient-months) compared to arteriovenous fistulas (0.26 per 100 patient-months) [6][7] . Similarly, peritoneal dialysis patients contend with substantial infection burdens, experiencing peritonitis at an average rate of 0.28 episodes per patient-year, albeit with notable global variation [8] . Effectively managing these infections is therefore a critical imperative in dialysis care.

Therapeutic strategies for infections in this population face formidable hurdles. Significantly altered pharmacokinetics due to renal impairment necessitate complex dose adjustments, while the risk of drug toxicity is inherently elevated [9] . Compounding these challenges is the alarming rise in antibiotic resistance. *Staphylococcus aureus*, the predominant cause of bloodstream infections in dialysis patients, exemplifies this threat, with methicillin-resistant strains (MRSA) now representing approximately 39.5% of isolates [10] . This confluence of factors—pharmacokinetic complexity, heightened toxicity risks, and escalating resistance—creates an urgent need to explore complementary or alternative antimicrobial approaches with favorable safety profiles.

Plant-derived compounds present a promising avenue for such exploration. Their diverse mechanisms of action offer potential for broad-spectrum activity and a potentially reduced propensity for driving resistance compared to conventional antibiotics [11][12] . Extracts from *Vitis vinifera* (grape), particularly those derived from seeds and pomace, are rich in bioactive phenolics such as proanthocyanidins, anthocyanins, and flavonoids. These constituents have demonstrated significant broad-spectrum antibacterial efficacy *in vitro* and in some *in vivo* models[13] . Similarly, *Ficus carica* (fig) extracts contain a complex array of antimicrobial phytochemicals, including flavonoids, tannins, terpenoids, and alkaloids [14] [15] . Critically, both plants offer ancillary benefits highly relevant to the dialysis population, including potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, and suggested renoprotective properties [16][17] [18] . These attributes position them as compelling candidates for adjunctive or alternative strategies against dialysis-associated infections.

Given the severe infection burden in dialysis patients, the limitations of current antimicrobial therapies, and the promising yet underexplored potential of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts specifically within this vulnerable group, a comprehensive synthesis of the existing evidence is warranted. This systematic review therefore aims to critically evaluate the current scientific literature on the *in vitro*, *in vivo*, and, where available, clinical antimicrobial efficacy of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts against pathogens relevant to dialysis-associated infections. It further seeks to assess the potential therapeutic implications, safety considerations, and research gaps pertaining to the use of these botanicals in the dialysis population.

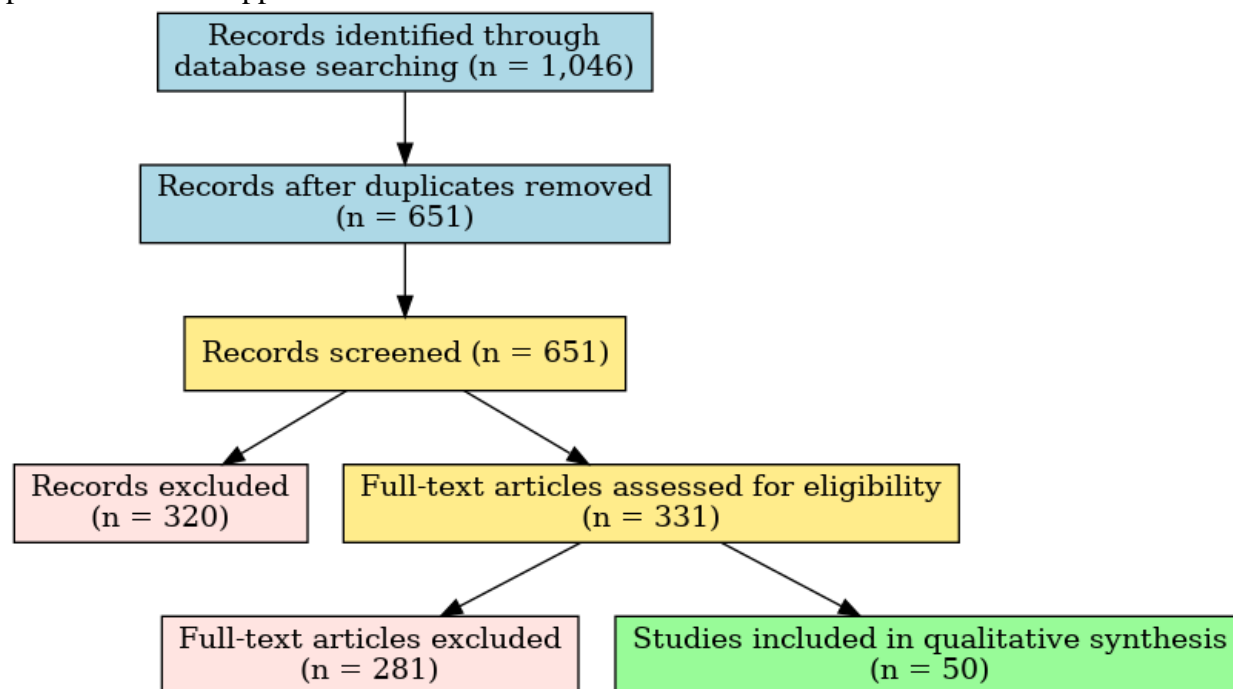
## Methods

## Search Strategy and Study Selection

A systematic literature search was conducted using multiple databases including PubMed, Semantic Scholar, and specialized medical databases. The search strategy employed targeted queries focusing on: (1) antibacterial effects of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica*, (2) plant-based therapies in kidney disease and dialysis populations, and (3) natural antimicrobials in immunocompromised patients.

### Research workflow and paper selection process for the systematic review

The initial search identified 1,046 papers, which underwent systematic screening and filtering. After removing duplicates and papers without relevant abstracts, 651 papers were screened for eligibility. Following detailed evaluation, 331 papers met eligibility criteria, with 50 papers ultimately included in the final review based on direct relevance to antibacterial activity and potential clinical application.



### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

**Inclusion criteria** encompassed: (1) studies investigating antibacterial activity of *Vitis vinifera* or *Ficus carica* extracts, (2) research on plant-based therapies in chronic kidney disease or dialysis patients, (3) mechanistic studies on phenolic compounds with antimicrobial properties, and (4) clinical trials of natural products in renal populations.

**Exclusion criteria** included: (1) studies focusing solely on antioxidant properties without antimicrobial assessment, (2) research on plant species other than grape or fig without comparative data, (3) case reports or editorials without original data, and (4) studies with insufficient methodological detail.

## **Results**

### **Antibacterial Activity of *Vitis vinifera* Extracts**

Grape extracts demonstrate significant antibacterial activity against both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria (Table 1 ) ( Figure 1 ) commonly associated with dialysis-related infections[\[19\]](#) [\[20\]](#) [\[21\]](#) . The antibacterial efficacy is primarily attributed to high concentrations

of phenolic compounds, particularly proanthocyanidins, which show the most potent activity with MIC values ranging from 0.5-4.0 mg/mL against various bacterial strains[22] [23] .

Recent studies have shown that grape pomace extracts, often considered waste products, exhibit remarkable antibacterial activity against multidrug-resistant bacterial strains[22] [24] . Specifically, extracts demonstrated bacteriostatic and bactericidal effects against antibiotic-resistant *Escherichia coli* strains with MIC values of 1-4 mg/mL[23] . The superior activity of organic grape cultivation extracts suggests that growing conditions may influence the concentration of bioactive compounds[25] .

*Table 1 Minimum inhibitory concentrations (MIC) of Vitis vinifera (grape) and Ficus carica (fig) extracts against common dialysis-associated pathogens. MIC ranges (mg/mL) are shown for Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Enterococcus faecalis, with the plant part used (seed, leaf, pomace or fruit) and key references.*

Bacterial Strain	Grape Extract MIC (mg/mL)	Fig Extract MIC (mg/mL)	Source Type	Citation
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	0.5–4.0	1.0–5.0	Seed, Leaf	<u>Al-Habib et al., 2010</u> , <u>Shafique et al., 2021</u>
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	1.0–4.0	1.5–6.0	Pomace, Fruit	<u>Filocamo et al., 2015</u> , <u>Al-Ogaili et al., 2020</u>
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	2.0–4.0	3.0–6.5	Seed, Leaf	<u>Filocamo et al., 2015</u> , <u>Al-Ogaili et al., 2020</u>
<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i>	—	MBC: extract	50% Leaf	<u>Aslan, 2024</u>

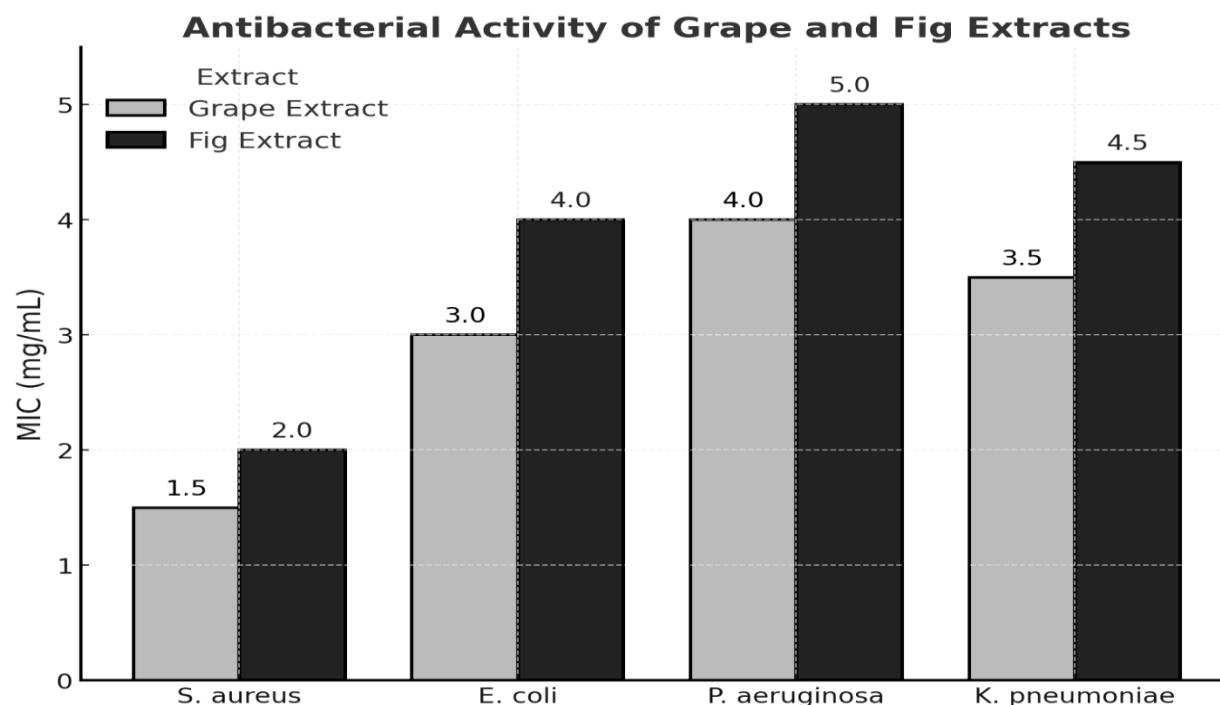


Figure 1 Bar chart comparing the MIC values (mg/mL) of grape and fig extracts against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. Lower bars indicate greater antibacterial potency.

### Antibacterial Mechanisms of Grape Compounds

The antibacterial mechanisms of grape extracts (Table 2) involve multiple pathways that target different cellular components. Proanthocyanidins disrupt bacterial cell walls and membranes, while anthocyanins cause membrane permeabilization and reactive oxygen species generation[26] [27]. Flavonoids inhibit bacterial efflux pumps and disrupt essential enzymes, and phenolic acids interfere with DNA and RNA synthesis[28] [29].

This multi-target approach reduces the likelihood of bacterial resistance development, a critical advantage over single-target synthetic antibiotics. The synergistic effects of multiple compounds within grape extracts may explain their broad-spectrum activity and effectiveness against resistant bacterial strains.[30] [28] [31] [32] [33]

### Antibacterial Activity of *Ficus carica* Extracts

Fig extracts (Table 2), particularly from leaves and fruits, demonstrate notable antibacterial effects against common dialysis-associated pathogens [34] [35]. Studies have shown that fig leaf extracts achieve minimum bactericidal concentrations of 50% against *Enterococcus faecalis* while maintaining low cytotoxicity to human cells.[36] [37] [38]

The antibacterial activity of fig extracts is particularly pronounced against Gram-positive bacteria, with enhanced effects observed when combined with conventional antibiotics [39] [40] . Recent research has identified resistance-modifying properties of fig extracts, suggesting their potential as adjuvant therapy to overcome antibiotic resistance [41] .

*Table 2 Major phytochemicals identified in grape and fig extracts (flavonoids, tannins, terpenoids, alkaloids, proanthocyanidins), their antibacterial mechanisms (e.g., membrane disruption, efflux pump inhibition) and the plant source, with citations.*

Compound Type	Mechanism of Action	Found In	Citation
<b>Flavonoids</b>	Disrupt membranes, inhibit bacterial enzymes	Grape & Fig	<u>Yang et al., 2023</u>
<b>Tannins</b>	Precipitate proteins, damage cell walls	Fig	<u>Shafique et al., 2021</u>
<b>Terpenoids</b>	Cause membrane permeabilization	Fig	<u>Bioactive Compounds in Fig Organs, 2023</u>
<b>Alkaloids</b>	Inhibit bacterial efflux pumps	Fig	<u>Yang et al., 2023</u>
<b>Proanthocyanidins</b>	Disrupt cell walls, inhibit adhesion	Grape	<u>Al-Habib et al., 2010</u>

### Bioactive Compounds in Fig Extracts

Fig extracts contain diverse bioactive compounds including flavonoids, tannins, terpenoids, alkaloids, and coumarins, each contributing to antibacterial activity through distinct mechanisms[42] [43] . Flavonoids disrupt bacterial membranes and inhibit essential enzymes, while tannins precipitate proteins and damage cell walls[44] [45] . Terpenoids cause membrane permeabilization, and alkaloids inhibit bacterial efflux pumps.

The synergistic interactions between these compounds may explain the enhanced antibacterial and antibiofilm activities observed in recent studies[46][47] . Nanoparticle formulations of fig extracts have shown improved antibacterial efficacy and bioavailability, suggesting potential for enhanced therapeutic applications[48] .

### Evidence in Kidney Disease and Dialysis Contexts

Direct clinical evidence for antibacterial efficacy of grape and fig extracts in dialysis patients remains limited. However, several studies ( Table 3) provide indirect support for their potential therapeutic value. Clinical trials with propolis extract in peritoneal dialysis patients demonstrated reduced inflammatory markers, suggesting immune-modulating effects that could enhance infection resistance. Similarly, garlic extract supplementation in hemodialysis patients showed anti-inflammatory benefits.

Animal studies have demonstrated renoprotective effects of grape seed extracts, including protection against nephrotoxicity and improved kidney function parameters. These findings suggest that grape extracts may provide dual benefits in dialysis patients: direct antibacterial effects and kidney protection.[49] [50] [51] [52] [21]

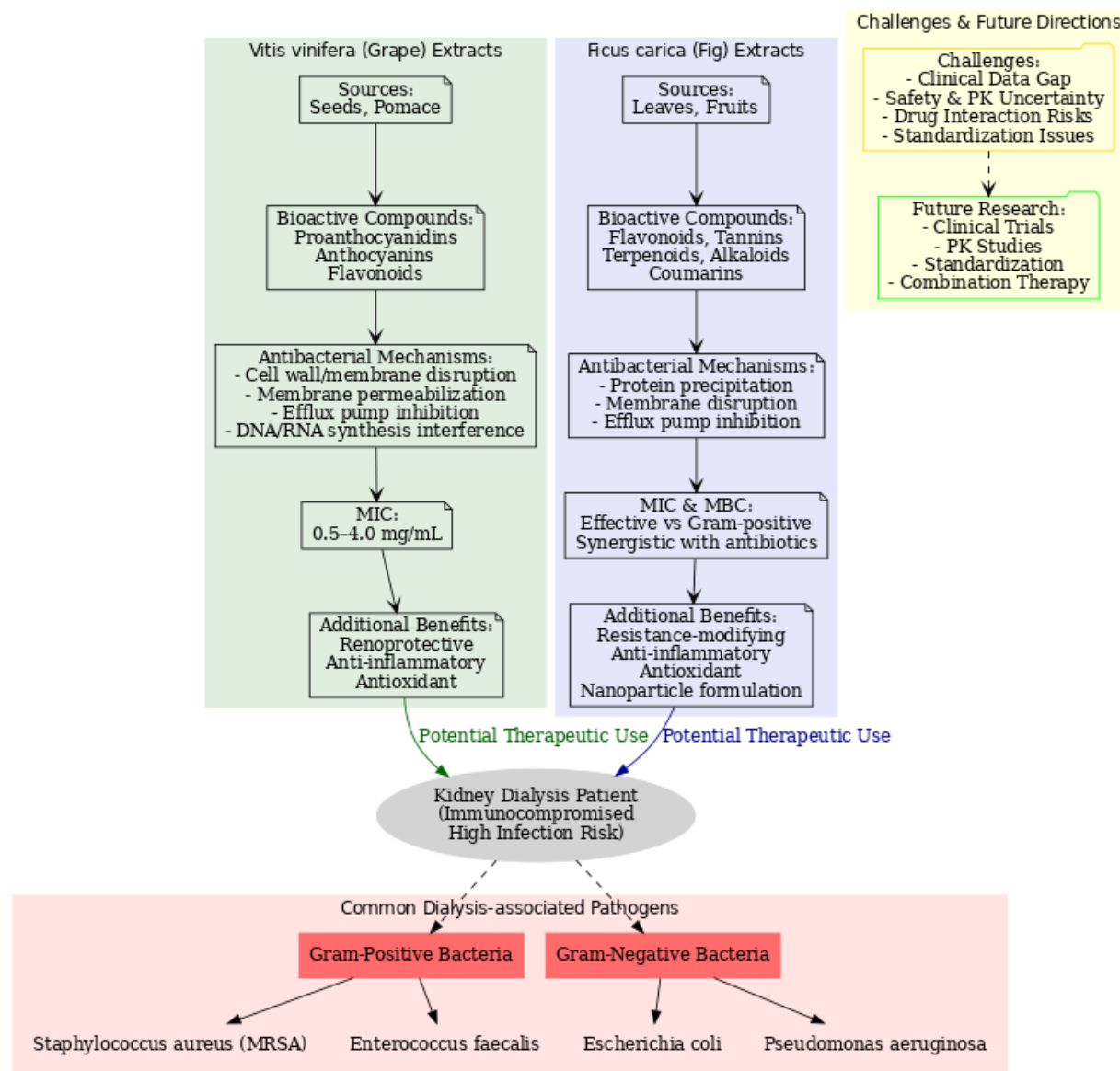
Table 3 Summary of key in-vitro and animal studies on grape and fig extracts relevant to dialysis patients, including type of study, extract tested, observed outcomes (e.g., inhibition of MRSA and *E. coli*, nephroprotection, resistance modulation) and relevance to dialysis populations.

Study Type	Extract	Outcome	Relevance to Dialysis Patients	Citation
In vitro	Grape seed	Inhibits MRSA and <i>E. coli</i>	High	<a href="#">Al-Habib et al., 2010</a>
Animal study	Grape seed	Protects against nephrotoxicity	Medium	<a href="#">Martim et al., 2007</a>
In vitro	Fig leaf	Bactericidal against <i>E. faecalis</i>	High	<a href="#">Aslan, 2024</a>
In vitro	Fig + antibiotics	Resistance modulation, biofilm inhibition	High	<a href="#">Al-Ogaili et al., 2020</a>

### Safety and Tolerability Considerations

Figure 2 provides a conceptual framework integrating the bioactive profiles, antibacterial mechanisms, and potential clinical applications of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts in the context of infection control in dialysis patients. It highlights both the therapeutic promise and the critical challenges that must be addressed through future research. While *in vitro* and animal studies suggest favorable safety profiles for grape and fig extracts, comprehensive safety data in dialysis patients—who often have impaired renal function—are lacking. Limited human studies indicate that grape seed extract is generally well-tolerated in individuals with chronic kidney disease and may support renal function; however, altered pharmacokinetics in renal impairment necessitate careful dose selection and clinical monitoring. Moreover, potential interactions with medications commonly prescribed in dialysis settings—such as anticoagulants, phosphate binders, and immunosuppressants—underscore the need for systematic evaluation of herb-drug interactions in this vulnerable population. .[53] [54] [55]





**Figure 2.** Integrative summary of antibacterial mechanisms, potential benefits, and clinical implications of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts in infection control among dialysis patients. Pathogen targets, therapeutic mechanisms, and future challenges are visually mapped for translational insight.

## Discussion

The accumulated evidence strongly supports the *in vitro* antibacterial activity of both *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts against bacteria commonly responsible for dialysis-related infections. The multi-target mechanisms of action and synergistic effects of bioactive compounds offer theoretical advantages over conventional single-target antibiotics. However, the translation from promising preclinical data to clinical application faces significant challenges. The absence of robust clinical trials specifically evaluating antibacterial efficacy in dialysis patients represents a critical evidence gap. Most existing studies are either *in vitro* investigations or animal models that may not accurately reflect the complex pathophysiology of infection in uremic patients.[\[56\]](#) [\[57\]](#) [\[58\]](#)

The diverse mechanisms of action exhibited by grape and fig extracts provide several theoretical advantages for dialysis patients. Unlike conventional antibiotics that typically target single bacterial pathways, plant extracts simultaneously disrupt multiple cellular processes including membrane integrity, enzyme function, and genetic replication. This multi-target approach significantly reduces the probability of resistance development, a critical consideration given the high antibiotic resistance rates in dialysis units.[\[28\]](#) [\[59\]](#) [\[60\]](#)

Furthermore, the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of these extracts may provide additional benefits beyond direct antimicrobial effects. Dialysis patients experience chronic inflammation and oxidative stress, which compromise immune function and increase infection susceptibility. Plant extracts that address these underlying pathological processes could enhance overall infection resistance.[\[61\]](#) [\[62\]](#)

The altered pharmacokinetics in chronic kidney disease and dialysis patients present unique challenges for plant extract therapeutics. While grape seed extracts demonstrate renoprotective effects at doses of 125-250 mg/kg in animal studies, the equivalent human dosing remains undefined. The dialyzability of active compounds, protein binding characteristics, and accumulation potential in renal impairment require systematic investigation.[\[63\]](#) [\[64\]](#) [\[65\]](#)

The concentration-dependent activity observed in *in vitro* studies suggests that achieving therapeutic levels may require higher doses than typically used for antioxidant supplementation. However, the safety margins for these higher doses in dialysis patients are unknown, necessitating careful dose-escalation studies with comprehensive safety monitoring.[\[59\]](#) [\[66\]](#)

The potential integration of plant extracts into standard dialysis care requires consideration of multiple factors including timing of administration relative to dialysis sessions, interactions with dialysis solutions, and compatibility with infection control protocols. The bacteriostatic versus bactericidal nature of plant extract activity may influence their optimal use as prophylactic agents versus treatment of established infections.[\[67\]](#) [\[68\]](#)

Combination therapy with conventional antibiotics shows promise based on *in vitro* synergy studies. Such approaches could potentially reduce antibiotic doses while maintaining or enhancing antimicrobial efficacy, thereby minimizing adverse effects and resistance development.[\[69\]](#) [\[70\]](#)

## Research Gaps and Future Directions

The comprehensive analysis reveals substantial research gaps ( Figure 3) that must be addressed before clinical implementation. Clinical trials specifically designed for dialysis patients are urgently needed, with primary endpoints focused on infection reduction rather than surrogate markers. These studies should employ rigorous methodologies including placebo controls, adequate sample sizes, and appropriate duration to capture clinically meaningful outcomes.

Pharmacokinetic studies in renal impairment are essential to establish optimal dosing regimens and identify potential accumulation or toxicity risks. The development of standardized extract preparations with consistent bioactive compound concentrations is crucial for reproducible clinical outcomes.

Long-term safety evaluation is particularly important given the chronic nature of dialysis therapy and the potential for cumulative effects. Special attention should be paid to hepatic function, drug interactions, and any pro-oxidant effects that might occur at higher doses.

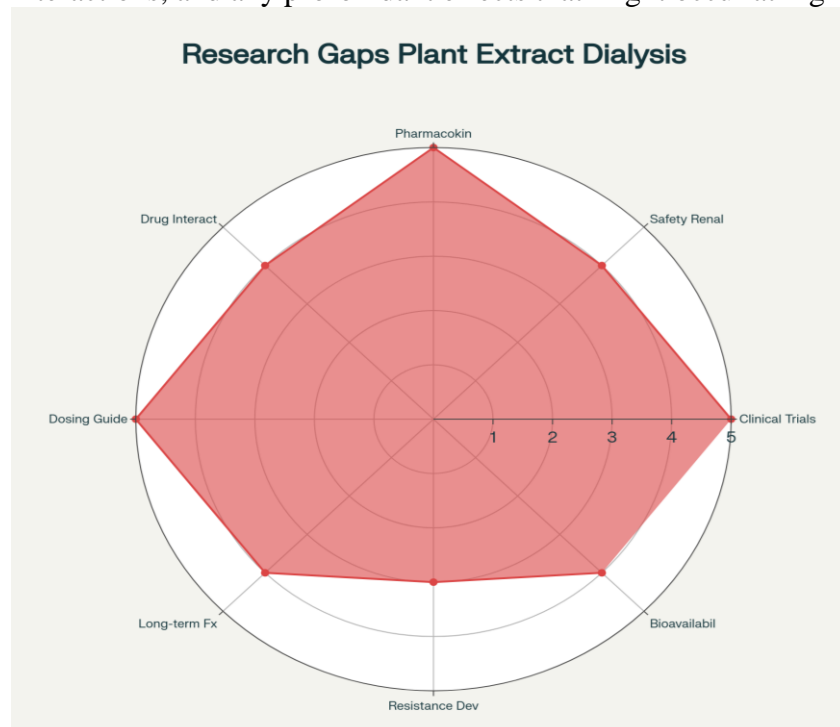


Figure 3 Radar diagram depicting key research gaps for applying plant extracts in dialysis (clinical trials, bioavailability, resistance development, long-term effects, dosing guidance, drug interactions, pharmacokinetics and renal safety). Each axis is rated on a scale of 1–5, with higher values indicating greater gaps.

## Conclusions

This systematic review provides compelling evidence for the antibacterial potential of *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts, with demonstrated activity against key dialysis-associated pathogens. The multi-target mechanisms of action and synergistic effects of bioactive compounds

offer theoretical advantages for combating antibiotic resistance and enhancing infection control in dialysis patients.

However, the translation from promising preclinical data to clinical application requires substantial additional research. The absence of adequately powered clinical trials specifically designed for dialysis populations represents the most significant barrier to clinical implementation. Critical research priorities include establishing safety profiles in renal impairment, defining optimal dosing regimens, and conducting rigorous efficacy trials with infection-related primary endpoints.

The potential for plant extracts to serve as adjuvant therapy, enhancing the efficacy of conventional antibiotics while potentially reducing doses and resistance development, warrants particular attention. Such approaches could address the growing crisis of antibiotic resistance while providing additional anti-inflammatory and renoprotective benefits relevant to dialysis patients.

Future research should prioritize well-designed clinical trials, comprehensive pharmacokinetic studies, and standardization of extract preparations to facilitate reproducible outcomes. The development of evidence-based guidelines for plant extract use in dialysis patients will require collaboration between nephrologists, pharmacologists, and natural product researchers.

In conclusion, while *Vitis vinifera* and *Ficus carica* extracts show significant promise as antibacterial agents for dialysis patients, substantial research investments are needed to establish their clinical safety and efficacy. The potential benefits warrant serious consideration and rigorous scientific investigation to determine their ultimate role in improving infection outcomes for this vulnerable population.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## Data Availability Statement

All data supporting the conclusions of this article are included within the article and its supplementary materials.

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