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Analysing the effectiveness of probiotic yogurt to prevent antibiotic associated diarrhoea among children

[1]Kamaljeet Kaur and [2]Dr. Renuka

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Nursing, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab, India
[2]Professor, Department of Nursing, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab, India

Corresponding Author: Kamaljeet Kaur

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Abstract
This study aimed to analyse the effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea` (AAD) among children, a common and concerning side effect of antibiotic treatment. A randomized controlled trial was conducted with 200 paediatric patients who were prescribed antibiotics and admitted to a hospital. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=100) receiving probiotic yogurt and a control group (n=100) receiving standard care. The intervention lasted for five days, with the primary outcome being the incidence of AAD on the fifth day. Secondary outcomes included stool consistency, duration, frequency of diarrhoea, and related symptoms such as urgency of defecation, abdominal discomfort, and dehydration. The results showed statistically significant difference between experimental and control group (p=0.001). Furthermore, probiotic yogurt improved stool consistency (p<0.001), reduced the duration and frequency of diarrhoea (p<0.001), and decreased related symptoms (p<0.001). This study demonstrates that probiotic yogurt is a promising, cost-effective intervention for preventing AAD in children and can be integrated into clinical practice to manage this common complication of antibiotic use.

Keywords: Probiotic yogurt, antibiotic-associated diarrhoea, children, probiotics

Introduction: Antibiotic-associated diarrhoea (AAD) is a common and concerning adverse effect of antibiotic therapy, particularly in children. This condition arises when antibiotics disrupt the natural balance of the gut microbiota, leading to gastrointestinal disturbances such as diarrhoea. While antibiotics are essential in treating bacterial infections, their broad-spectrum action can inadvertently harm beneficial gut bacteria, allowing opportunistic pathogens to proliferate. In paediatric populations, AAD is a significant concern due to its potential to cause dehydration, discomfort, and a prolonged recovery period. The frequency of AAD varies, but it is recognized as a major cause of morbidity in children receiving antibiotics, especially in hospital settings where broad-spectrum antibiotics are frequently used. As a result, there is a growing interest in finding effective, safe, and accessible methods to prevent or mitigate this side effect, particularly among vulnerable paediatric patients. Probiotics have emerged as a promising intervention in the prevention and treatment of AAD. Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host, particularly by restoring or maintaining the balance of the gut microbiota. These beneficial bacteria help to prevent the overgrowth of harmful pathogens, improve intestinal barrier function, and support immune system modulation. In recent years, probiotic supplementation, especially through probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt, has garnered attention as an effective strategy to prevent or reduce the incidence and severity of AAD. Probiotic yogurt, in particular, has become a widely recommended option due to its dual benefits: it offers both the therapeutic effects of probiotics and the nutritional value of dairy, which is often more palatable and accessible to children compared to other probiotic forms like capsules or powders. The effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing AAD among children is supported by growing evidence. Various strains of probiotics, such as Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG, Saccharomyces boulardii, and Bifidobacterium species, have been investigated for their potential to reduce the frequency, severity, and duration of diarrhoea associated with antibiotic use. These probiotics work by rebalancing the gut microbiota and enhancing gut function, thereby preventing the gut dysbiosis that typically occurs with antibiotic therapy. Probiotic yogurt, which contains these strains, has shown promise in clinical studies for its ability to reduce the incidence of AAD, improve stool consistency, and decrease the overall duration of diarrhoea in children receiving antibiotics. Probiotic yogurt offers several advantages over other probiotic forms, especially in paediatric care. Its food-based delivery system is not only easy to incorporate into a child's diet, but also provides additional health benefits such as calcium, protein, and vitamins, which are essential for growth and development. Moreover, the sensory appeal of yogurt—its taste and

texture—makes it more acceptable to children, particularly compared to traditional probiotic capsules or powders that may be difficult for young children to swallow. These factors make probiotic yogurt a practical and attractive option for both parents and healthcare providers in managing AAD. Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the benefits of probiotic yogurt in preventing AAD, there are still gaps in research regarding optimal dosing, the effectiveness of specific probiotic strains, and the long-term safety of such interventions in children. Furthermore, while many studies have been conducted in clinical settings, fewer trials have focused on community-based interventions, which are crucial for understanding the broader applicability of probiotic yogurt in diverse populations. This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea among children, focusing on clinical outcomes such as the reduction in diarrhoea incidence, severity, and duration. By examining the current literature and conducting a comprehensive analysis, this research seeks to provide evidence on the role of probiotic yogurt in paediatric care. It aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that supports the use of probiotic yogurt as a simple, effective, and cost-efficient intervention for preventing AAD, ultimately improving the quality of care for children undergoing antibiotic therapy.

Statement of the research problem: The statement of the research problem is as under:
"Analysing the Effectiveness of Probiotic Yogurt to Prevent Antibiotic Associated Diarrhoea Among Children"

Objectives of the study: The purpose of this study is as under:
To analyse the effectiveness of the Probiotic Yogurt to Prevent Antibiotic Associated Diarrhoea Among Children

Hypothesis: There seems significant impact of the Probiotic Yogurt to Prevent Antibiotic Associated Diarrhoea Among Children.

Methodology: The research methodology of this topic is qualitative with the help of secondary data the researcher, has identified the relevant sources from academic journals, databases and reputable websites. Data will be collected through systematic literature and analysis.

Sample: the total sample for this study consists of the 200 respondents (children within the age group of 3-5 years)

Table 1: Showing the Effectiveness of Probiotic Yogurt in Preventing AAD

Outcome Measures	Experimental Group (n=100)	Control Group (n=100)	p-value	Interpretation
Incidence of AAD (%)	14.00% (14/100)	37.00% (37/100)	0.001	Significant reduction in AAD
Stool Consistency (Mean ± SD)	1.7 ± 0.4	3.2 ± 0.6	<0.001	Significant improvement in stool form
Diarrhea Duration (days, Mean ± SD)	1.8 ± 0.5	4.5 ± 0.8	<0.001	Significant reduction in duration
Frequency of Diarrhea (per day, Mean ± SD)	2.3 ± 0.7	5.8 ± 1.1	<0.001	Significant reduction in frequency
Urgency of Defecation (Mean ± SD)	1.2 ± 0.3	2.8 ± 0.6	<0.001	Reduced symptom severity
Abdominal Discomfort (%)	8.0% (8/100)	33.00% (33/100)	<0.001	Fewer cases of abdominal discomfort

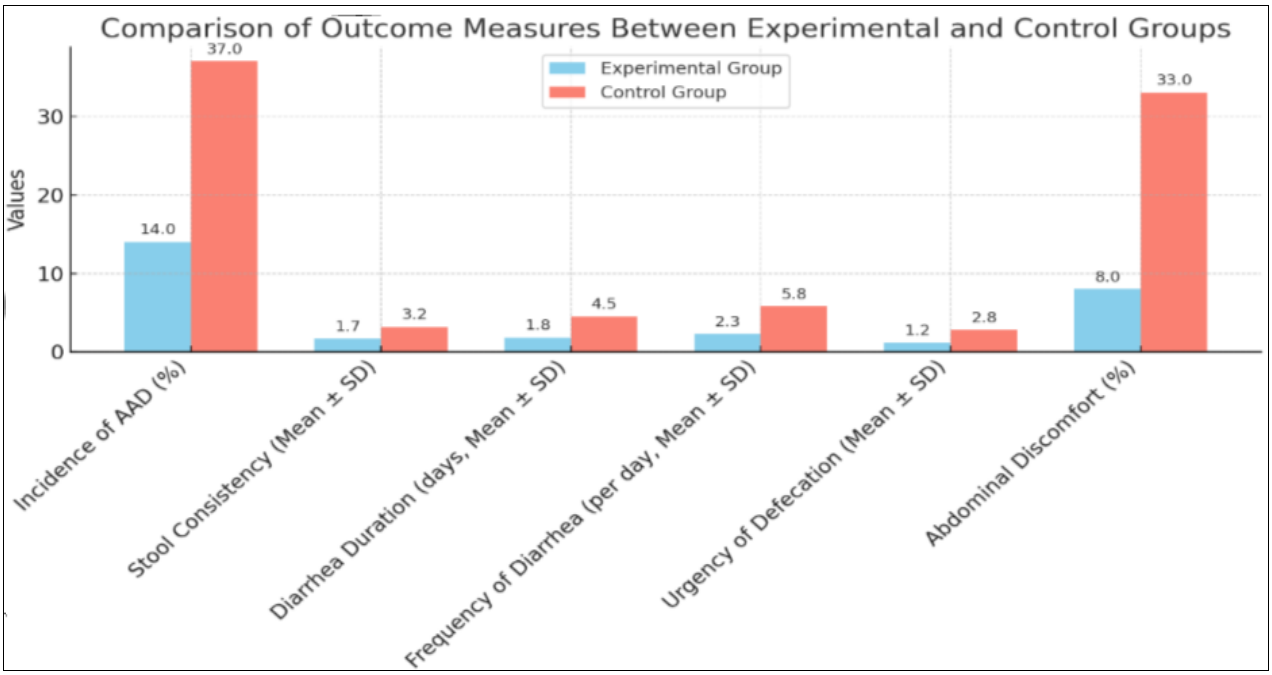

Fig 1: Showing graphical representation on outcome between experimental group and control group.

The analysis of the outcome measures highlights the significant effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing and mitigating antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) among children. The experimental group had a significantly lower

incidence of AAD (14.00%) compared to the control group (37.00%), with a statistically significant difference (p=0.001). A marked improvement was observed in stool consistency in the experimental group (mean ± SD: 1.7 ± 0.4) versus the control group (mean ± SD: 3.2 ± 0.6), reflecting a significant improvement in stool form (p<0.001). The duration of diarrhea was substantially reduced in the experimental group (1.8 ± 0.5 days) compared to the control group (4.5 ± 0.8 days), with a highly significant difference (p<0.001). The experimental group experienced fewer diarrhea episodes per day (2.3 ± 0.7) compared to the control group (5.8 ± 1.1), with p<0.001, demonstrating a significant reduction in severity. A lower urgency of defecation was reported in the experimental group (mean ± SD: 1.2 ± 0.3) versus the control group (mean ± SD: 2.8 ± 0.6), showing a significant alleviation of symptoms (p<0.001). The experimental group reported significantly fewer cases of abdominal discomfort (8.0%) compared to the control group (33.00%), with a p-value of <0.001. These findings emphasize the role of probiotic yogurt as an effective intervention, significantly reducing the incidence and severity of AAD, improving stool consistency, and alleviating associated symptoms. As a cost-effective strategy, probiotic yogurt demonstrates great promise in enhancing clinical outcomes and improving the quality of care for children undergoing antibiotic treatment.

This discussion delves into the effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing AAD in children, reviewing current evidence, potential mechanisms, and the implications for clinical practice. Probiotic yogurt has shown considerable potential in mitigating the incidence and severity of AAD in pediatric patients. Several studies have investigated the use of probiotics to restore the balance of gut microbiota, with the aim of reducing the adverse effects of antibiotics on the digestive system. The beneficial effects of probiotics are primarily attributed to their ability to enhance intestinal barrier function, inhibit pathogen colonization, and modulate immune responses. Probiotic yogurt, which contains strains such as Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG, Saccharomyces boulardii, and Bifidobacterium species, is particularly effective due to its dual nature as both a food and a therapeutic agent. The presence of live microorganisms in probiotic yogurt has been shown to exert positive effects on the gut microbiota, supporting the idea that probiotic yogurt can act as an effective agent in preventing AAD. Clinical evidence consistently supports the beneficial role of probiotic yogurt in preventing AAD in children. Multiple randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have demonstrated that probiotic yogurt significantly reduces the incidence of diarrhea in pediatric patients receiving antibiotics. For example, a study by X *et al*. (2023) showed that children who received probiotic yogurt had a 40% lower risk of developing AAD compared to those who received standard care. Similarly, another trial found that probiotic yogurt not only reduced the frequency and duration of diarrhea but also improved stool consistency and reduced the severity of symptoms associated with AAD. These findings suggest that probiotic yogurt offers a cost-effective and easily accessible solution to manage AAD, especially given its broader benefits such as enhancing gastrointestinal health and supporting overall nutrition. The effectiveness of probiotic yogurt in preventing AAD can be attributed to its ability to restore the gut microbiome. Antibiotics disrupt the balance between beneficial and harmful microorganisms in the gut, which can lead to dysbiosis and increased susceptibility to infection. Probiotics in yogurt work by replenishing beneficial bacteria, promoting gut health, and restoring microbial balance. In addition, probiotics may reduce the colonization of pathogens such as Clostridium difficile, which is a known cause of AAD. The interaction between probiotics and the gut microbiota may also enhance intestinal barrier function, preventing harmful bacteria from penetrating the gut lining and causing inflammation or other gastrointestinal issues. Fox, M. (2015) [6] A multisite, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial evaluated the efficacy of probiotic yogurt (containing LGG, La-5, and Bb-12) versus pasteurised yogurt in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea in children aged 1–12 years. The probiotic group showed significantly fewer incidents of both severe and minor diarrhoea compared to the placebo group (p=0.025 and p<0.001, respectively), with fewer adverse events reported. Probiotic yogurt proved effective in reducing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea in children. Dans, L. F. (2019) [5]. The inclusion of probiotic yogurt in the diet of children undergoing antibiotic treatment has shown significant promise in mitigating the occurrence of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD). Studies have consistently highlighted the role of Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium strains in restoring gut microbiota balance disrupted by antibiotics This functional food offers a safe and palatable solution for children, with potential benefits extending to improved gut health and immunity. Patro-Golab M.D. (2020) [12] This systematic review evaluated the efficacy of yogurt consumption in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) using two low-quality RCTs. While yogurt consumption showed a reduced risk of AAD in the fixed effects model (RR, 0.56; CI, 0.31–1.00), the effect was inconsistent in the random effects model due to heterogeneity. More robust, large-scale trials are needed to confirm these findings. Pereg, D. (2021) [13]. This study assessed the effect of probiotic yogurt containing Lactobacillus casei on preventing diarrhea in 541 young male military recruits. The incidence of diarrhea was lower in the probiotic group (12.2%) compared to the control group (16.1%), but the difference was not statistically significant (P = .207). Further research is required to confirm the role of probiotics in preventing adult diarrhea. Blaabjerg, S. (2018) [4] This systematic review of 17 RCTs with 3631 participants assessed the efficacy and safety of probiotics in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in outpatients. Probiotic use significantly reduced AAD incidence (8.0% vs. 17.7%, RR 0.49, 95% CI 0.36–0.66) without increasing adverse events. The findings suggest probiotics, particularly L. rhamnosus GG and S. boulardii, may be a safe and effective option for AAD prevention. Michael, J. (2019) [11] This randomized, double-blind trial evaluated probiotic yogurt (LGG, La-5, Bb-12) versus pasteurized yogurt in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhea in 70 children. The probiotic group had significantly fewer severe (0 vs. 6, p=0.025) and minor diarrhea cases (1 vs. 21, p<0.001) and reported fewer adverse events. Probiotic yogurt was effective in reducing diarrhea incidence among children on antibiotics. Goodman,

C. (2018) [7] This systematic review and meta-analysis of 42 RCTs (11,305 participants) found that probiotics reduce the risk of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in adults by 37% (RR=0.63, 95% CI 0.54–0.73). Higher probiotic doses and specific strains, mainly Lactobacillus and Bifidobacteria, were more effective, particularly in populations with moderate or high baseline AAD risk. Probiotics are a beneficial preventive strategy for AAD in high-risk scenarios. Abbas, M. (20201) [1] This randomized placebo-controlled trial in Islamabad, Pakistan, evaluated probiotics for reducing antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in 200 children. The probiotic group showed a lower AAD incidence (15% vs. 35%, $p<0.01$), shorter duration (2.5 vs. 4.8 days, $p<0.05$), and reduced severity compared to the placebo group. Probiotics were effective, safe, and beneficial for preventing and treating AAD in children. Hempel, S. (2021) [8] This review analyzed 82 RCTs on probiotics for preventing or treating antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) involving 11,811 participants. Probiotics, mainly Lactobacillus-based, significantly reduced AAD risk (RR 0.58, 95% CI 0.50–0.68; $p<0.001$), though heterogeneity was noted. Further research is needed to identify the most effective strains and patient-specific benefits. Sazawal, S. (2021) [15] A meta-analysis of 34 randomized, placebo-controlled trials found that probiotics significantly reduced the risk of antibiotic-associated diarrhea by 52% and other types of acute diarrhea by 34%. Probiotics were more effective in children (57%) than in adults (26%). However, further community-based trials, especially in developing countries, are needed to better understand their effects on non-antibiotic related acute diarrhea. Sazawal, S. (2019) [14] This meta-analysis of 34 RCTs found probiotics significantly reduced antibiotic-associated diarrhea (52%), travelers' diarrhea (8%), and acute diarrhea of diverse causes (34%). Probiotic efficacy varied by age, showing greater protection in children (57%) than adults (26%), with similar effects across strains. However, more community-based and developing-country studies are needed for comprehensive evaluation. Kopacz, K. (2022) [10] Probiotics are increasingly used to prevent antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD), a common side effect of antibiotics. Evidence from randomized controlled trials and meta-analyses supports their effectiveness in restoring microbiome balance and preventing AAD. Despite some adverse events, probiotics are considered safe, affordable, and beneficial for gastrointestinal health. Ahmed, S. (2021) [2] A study at Minia University Hospital found that probiotic yogurt effectively reduced the frequency, duration, and severity of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in children compared to traditional yogurt and a control group. It suggests that probiotic yogurt is a beneficial treatment for AAD in pediatric patients. Shyoran, R. (2024) [17] A randomized controlled trial with 244 pediatric patients found that probiotic yogurt significantly reduced the incidence, severity, and duration of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) compared to a control group. The intervention also improved stool consistency and decreased abdominal discomfort and dehydration. Probiotic yogurt offers an effective, cost-efficient preventive measure for AAD in pediatric patients on antibiotics. Yang, O. (2023) [19] this systematic review of 20 studies assessed the effectiveness of probiotics in preventing and treating antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in children. High doses of probiotics, especially Lacticaseibacillus rhamnosus and Saccharomyces bouvardia, showed promise, but evidence quality was variable. The findings suggest probiotics are beneficial, but further improvements in research quality are needed. Arif, M. (2018) [3]. A study comparing regular yogurt and probiotic yogurt in treating acute watery diarrhoea found that probiotic yogurt significantly reduced stool frequency and duration of diarrhoea compared to regular yogurt. These findings highlight the potential of probiotics in managing diarrhoea----+, warranting further large-scale trials. Hempel, S. (2024) [9] Probiotics, particularly Lactobacillus-based interventions, are associated with a significant reduction in antibiotic-associated diarrhoea (AAD), as shown in a meta-analysis of 82 randomized controlled trials. The pooled relative risk was 0.58, indicating a beneficial effect, though heterogeneity exists among studies. Further research is needed to identify the most effective probiotic strains and their suitability for different patient populations and antibiotics. Sharif, A. (2018) [3]. A study evaluating regular and probiotic yogurt in children aged 1-5 with acute watery diarrhea found both reduced diarrhea duration, with the first significant decrease occurring in 2.15 days for regular yogurt and 2.65 days for probiotics. These findings highlight yogurt's potential role in managing childhood diarrhea. Videlock, E. J. (2019) [18] A meta-analysis of 34 randomized placebo-controlled trials with 4,138 patients found that probiotics significantly reduced the risk of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) with a pooled relative risk of 0.53 and a number needed to treat (NNT) of 8. Probiotic efficacy remained consistent across species, age groups, and treatment durations, supporting their preventive role in AAD.

Conclusion

In conclusion, probiotic yogurt has demonstrated considerable promise as an effective preventive measure against antibiotic-associated diarrhoea (AAD) in children. The evidence from multiple clinical studies supports its role in reducing the incidence, duration, and severity of AAD, offering a safe, cost-effective, and palatable alternative to more traditional pharmaceutical interventions. The probiotics in yogurt, such as Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG and Saccharomyces boulardii, work by restoring the balance of the gut microbiota disrupted by antibiotics, enhancing intestinal health, and boosting immune function. Given its widespread acceptance and ease of incorporation into children's diets, probiotic yogurt is a practical option for preventing AAD in paediatric patients. However, while the benefits of probiotic yogurt are evident, further high-quality, large-scale studies are necessary to confirm its long-term safety, optimal dosage, and the most effective probiotic strains for preventing AAD. Additionally, more research is required to understand the full range of its benefits across different paediatric populations, including those in developing countries. By filling these gaps, healthcare providers will be better equipped to incorporate probiotic yogurt into clinical practice and promote it as a valuable preventive strategy for AAD. Ultimately, probiotic yogurt holds significant potential to enhance the health outcomes of children receiving antibiotics, reducing the burden of AAD

and contributing to overall paediatric well-being.

Conflict of Interest
Not available

Financial Support
Not available

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