

Plant-wearable sensors made on eco-friendly mats for on-site and fast pesticide detection

Nathalia O. Gomes, Rafaella T. Paschoalin, Stanley Bilatto, Cristiane S. Farinas, Luiz H. C. Mattoso, Sergio A. S. Machado, Osvaldo N. Oliveira Jr., Paulo A. Raymundo-Pereira

Sustainable materials for designing of eco-friendly wearable sensors are needed to reach the crescent demand for new technologies for agriculture 5.0. Herein, we present the use of biocompatible mats made of poly(lactic acid) (PLA) fibers obtained by solution-blow spinning technique as substrate for screen-printed carbon electrodes (SPCE) fabrication. The low-cost plant-wearable sensor (<US\$ 0.08 per unit) was used to detect carbendazim and diquat pesticides in food and crop samples using differential pulse voltammetry (DPV). The current signals increased linearly from 0.2 to 1.4 μM for carbendazim and diquat. The linear regression of $I \text{ (A)} = 3.42 \times 10^{-8} + 2.85 C_{\text{Carbendazim}} \text{ (M)}$ and $I \text{ (A)} = -2.95 \times 10^{-8} + 16.55 C_{\text{Diquat}} \text{ (M)}$ yielded the detection limits of 43 and 57 nM for carbendazim and diquat, respectively. We also compared the analytical performance of plant-wearable sensor made on PLA substrate with petroleum-derived polyethylene terephthalate (PET) substrate reaching a 5-fold and 4-fold increase in the sensitivity of the carbendazim and diquat detection. The plant-wearable sensor was used to detect agrochemicals residues in apple and cabbage samples providing good recovery values between 90 and 110%. Thus, plant-wearable sensor could be helpful to give real-time alerts on pesticide residues in fruit and vegetable samples. The eco-friendly sensor was successfully used on the skin of apples and cabbage surfaces for discriminating the carbendazim and diquat. All those outcomes show the potential of the eco-friendly mats made of poly(lactic acid) fibers as substrate for the development of screen-printed electrodes providing a sustainable technology for non-enzymatic pesticide detection.

Keywords: Sustainable materials, poly(lactic acid), Plant-wearable, electrochemical sensor, pesticides