Encapsulation of fish oil in nanofibers by emulsion electrospinning: Physical characterization and oxidative stability

The encapsulation of fish oil in poly(vinyl alcohol) (PVA) nanofibers by emulsion electrospinning was investigated. Independently of the emulsifier used, whey protein isolate (WPI) or fish protein hydrolysate (FPH), PVA concentration had a high influence on fiber morphology. Fibers without bead defects were only produced for solutions with 10.5% (w/w) PVA, which presented sufficient number of polymer chain entanglements. On the other hand, increasing oil load from 1.5 to 3% (w/w) resulted in fibers with larger diameters containing spindle-like enlargements interspersed. High omega-3 encapsulation efficiency (92.4 ± 2.3%) was obtained for fibers produced from 10.5% (w/w) PVA-5% (w/w) emulsion blend stabilized with WPI, resulting in an oil load capacity of 11.3 ± 0.3%. Moreover, the encapsulated oil was randomly distributed as small droplets inside the fibers. However, the electrospun fibers presented a higher content of hydroperoxides and secondary oxidation products (e.g. 1-penten-3-ol, hexanal, octanal and nonanal) compared to emulsified and unprotected fish oil.