



A Review on Self-Healing Concrete - A Biological Approach

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ABSTRACT

Concrete is one of the most popular and used construction materials. It is strong, durable, and relatively inexpensive, but it has a higher tendency to form cracks. The cracks provide a low service life for the concrete and high maintenance costs. The penetration of aggressive ions through cracks results in corrosion of steel reinforcement, carbonation, sulphate attack, alkali-aggregate reaction, etc. However, prevention of cracks formation is impossible, however, they can be controlled or repaired by various methods. Self-healing concrete is well known as a suitable remedial method to improve concrete's long-term durability. It is a new, rapid, and environmentally friendly approach. In this technology, when concrete is exposed to water, the healing agent material produces calcium carbonate (CaCO_3), which fills in the cracks and decreases permeability while enhancing concrete durability. The materials that are used as the healing agents are mostly bacteria, polymers, and chemical compounds. Bacteria are the most preferred material in concrete for healing. Therefore, bio concrete or bacterial concrete is another name for self-healing concrete. This article provides a comprehensive overview of self-healing concrete including, the system, process, mechanical properties, and durability of healed concrete.

1. Introduction

Concrete is the most well-known construction material globally because it is strong, durable, and it has low cost (Wiktor and Jonkers, 2011). Aggressive ions can enter concrete through cracks, which is a common property of the material. Concrete cracking is mostly caused by restrained deformation, external loads, and temperature gradients (Jonkers et al., 2010). Concrete is low in tensile strength, it cracks due to shrinkage, chemical reactions, etc (Luo et al., 2015). Khaliq and Ehsan (2016) stated that the deterioration of reinforced concrete resulted in high maintenance costs for both steel and concrete. Repairing cracks in concrete structures is required because cracks significantly affect service life and safety (Zhong and

Yao, 2008). Therefore, to increase the service life of cracked concrete, it should be repaired.

Typically, two forms of crack repair are available; passive treatment and active treatment. In the passive treatment method, after detecting the cracks, repair agents are applied manually to the concrete, however, this method requires more effort and is costly. However, the active treatment method, also known as self-repair or self-healing, involves filling in the cracks without the assistance of humans.

Monitoring, detecting, and repairing are steps in the conventional repair process. Repair work can be done once the cracks have been found. A repair agent is applied from outside of the concrete and afterward it penetrates into the cracks. Repairing large cracks with

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this technology is quite suitable, but it is difficult for small and deep cracks. Therefore, an alternative repair method has been established which is called self-healing.

Self-healing concrete is a type of concrete that can repair its small cracks autonomously. It can prevent small cracks from developing into larger ones and is effective at healing deep micro-cracks (Wang et al., 2012). In the last ten years, numerous studies on the phenomenon of healing concrete have been conducted (Li and Yang, 2007). Only a few articles on self-healing concrete were published in the 1980s, but since the late 1990s, significant research has been done. Bacterial-concrete was developed by a microbiologist Dr. Henk Jonkers from the Netherlands during 2011. In this technology during concrete casting, some healing agents are added into the matrix. Later, if any cracks develop, the concrete's internal healing agents can be released by dripping into the cracks and sealing (Tziviloglou et al., 2016). Cracks can heal without any external human intervention. The healing is done only by activation of the healing agent which is released later during crack formation, thus bridging the crack openings.

The concept of self-healing in concrete was provided from the idea of the organic phenomena of organisms like plants and animals. Animals and trees can repair their own damaged skin on their own (Breugel, 2007). The healing agent is mostly calcium-based nutrients, also called calcium lactate with a small fraction of bacterial spores. The spores become active and the bacteria can access the bacterial substrate by activating to carbon dioxide (CO_2) when water flows into the cracks. Due to the calcium-rich environment and pH of 12 - 13 of the concrete, the formed CO_2 reacts with calcium ions resulting in the formation of calcium carbonates. Thus, bacterial development may cause the development of mineral precipitates in cracks, and significant reduction in the water permeability of the concrete (Vermeer et al., 2021).

The material using healing agents is mostly bacteria, polymers, and chemical compounds such as sodium silicate (Na_2SiO_3) and magnesium oxide (MgO). Since bacteria are the most commonly used healing agent, self-healing concrete is also called bacterial concrete or bio concrete. Siddique and Chahal (2011) stated that the bacteria's capacity to survive in an alkaline environment plays a crucial part in the selection of the bacteria. The majority of microorganisms will die and be unable to survive at a pH of 10 or higher. There are two distinct kinds of self-healing process: natural and artificial. In the natural process which is called autogenous, the cracks between 0.1 and 0.3 mm can be repaired by hydration of un-hydrated cement. But in an artificial process called autonomous, engineered admixtures are introduced to the concrete by chemical or biological methods. Biological methods are the youngest approaches among all self-healing designing methods. This article reviews the general concept, production mechanisms, and properties

of self-healing concrete.

2. Self-healing concrete system

In concrete, self-healing systems can be divided into two categories: autogenic and autonomic (De Rooij et al., 2013).

2.1. Autogenic self-healing

It is an inherent material-healing characteristic where the process of self-healing starts with the currently available generic materials. For instance, the ability of cementitious materials to self-heal is caused by the property of hydration of the un-hydrated cement that remains on the crack surface (Neville, 2002).

In this system the volume of the healing product is limited. Concrete cracks that have been autogenously repaired come in sizes varying from 5 to 10 mm (Edvardsen, 1999; Aldea, et al., 2000), 100 μm (Jacobsen et al., 1996), 200 to 300 μm (Wiktor et al., 2011), and 0.05 to 0.87 mm (Gavimath, 2012). Because of a high content of un-hydrated cement at an early ages, autogenic self-healing has higher performance at this stage. Superplasticizer in engineered cementitious composite (ECC) can be used to lower the water/cement ratio while fibers can be used to control crack opening to improve the autogenic healing mechanism.

2.2. Autonomic self-healing

Unlike the autogenous healing system, this system requires the releasing of healing agent from a continuously formed vascular network or reserved encapsulation. The commonly used materials in autonomic self-healing mechanism can be categorized as bacteria, chemical compounds such as Na_2SiO_3 , MgO , and polymers such as; superabsorbent polymers (SAP) and non-absorbent polymers. The healing capacity for this method is greater than the autogenic method.

3. Process of self-healing concrete

Concrete can undergo three different types of self-healing: natural, chemical, and biological self-healing.

3.1. Natural self-healing

As illustrated in Figure 1, there are several natural processes that can partially fix the concrete fracture. In natural processes, four different processes can block concrete cracks: (A) formation of CaCO_3 or calcium hydroxide ($\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$) which block cracks; (B) cracks are blocked in the presence of water by some impurities; (C) cracks are further obstructed by hydration of un-hydrated cement or cementitious materials; and (D) cracks are prevented from forming by the development of hydrated

cementitious pattern in the crack flanks (such as swelling of calcium-silicate-hydrate gel).

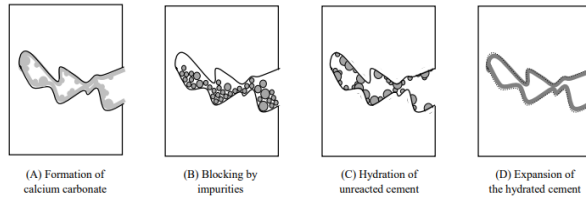
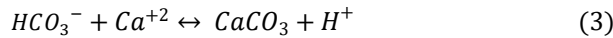
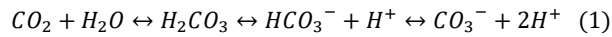


Figure 1. Mechanisms of natural self-healing in cementitious materials, adapted from Talaiekhazani and Abd Majid (2014)

One or more of these mechanisms may operate in parallel in many circumstances. Actually, the majority of these techniques are unable to completely fill the cracks; only some of them can. However, it is helpful to stop cracks from forming and the entry of harmful chemicals like acids introduced into the crack. CaCO_3 and $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ formation is the most successful natural healing technique among the described techniques. The concrete's exterior surface in this mechanism has a white residue that is CaCO_3 . On the exterior of the concrete, CaCO_3 can be seen as a white residue in this mechanism. The fundamental mechanisms for the production of CaCO_3 are described in equation 1-3.



The first step is started by dissolving CO_2 in the water, resulting in releasing CO_3^{2-} ions. Next, these free CO_3^{2-} ions react with Ca^{+2} released ions from cement hydration and form CaCO_3 crystals. Those developed crystals can grow, thus covering the cracks and filling the gaps. Actually, the second and third reactions can only occur at pH above 8 or within 7.5 and 8. Hence, it is needed to control the pH around these values. However, the natural process can only be used on concrete that is still quite young, and as concrete ages, the formation of CaCO_3 is likely what prompts self-healing. Natural self-healing is useful for cracks that are between 0.1 and 0.2 mm wide.

3.2. Chemical self-healing

Chemical self-healing is the term for artificial healing that involves adding chemicals to the crack to promote healing. In a small container, freshly mixed cement is combined with chemical liquid reagents (glue) to create the concrete. Two well-known chemical techniques are used to employ addition into concrete for self-healing.

3.2.1. Hollow pipettes and glue-filled vessel networks

Concrete can chemically self-heal in two different ways: (A) active mode and (B) passive mode. The glue is

distributed in the active mode using a vessel network connected to an external supply. However, the glue in passive mode, which is not connected to any external glue source, is distributed using hollow pipettes, vessel networks, or capsules. Depending on the active or passive mode, either the vessel network or hollow pipettes can be utilized to create self-healing concrete. Different lengths of hollow pipettes have been used to create various self-healing materials, including polymers. It has glue mixed into it, which will rupture whenever cracks are growing and allow the glue to leak into the cracks, which will then heal them. A blood vessel in a creature served as inspiration for the design of self-healing pipettes.

Ethyl cyanoacrylate, methyl methacrylate, epoxy resin, and acrylic resin are a few types of glue that can be utilized to fill the pipettes in concrete (Homma et al., 2009).

Other than using hollow pipettes filled with glue for concrete self-healing. In order to distribute glue, Dry (1994) suggested using a network of vessels inside a concrete sample. A concrete specimen housed the delicate vessel network; one end of the network was attached to the glue supply, and the other end was sealed. Other researchers, including Mihashi et al. (2000) conducted a related study as well.

3.2.2. Encapsulated glue

Both macro and micro-scale applications are possible for glue encapsulation. The size of capsules at the micro-scale level varies from micro-capsules to nano-capsules. The concept of encapsulation is producing the capsules containing glue into the concrete for self-healing purposes. When the crack occurs, the glue is released from the capsules into the crack faces resulting in filling the cracks.

3.3 Biological self-healing

The use of microorganisms has been categorized as a biological strategy to design self-healing concrete (Siddique and Chahal, 2011; Wu et al., 2012). Nearly anywhere, including oil and water reservoirs, soil, acidic hot springs, and industrial wastewater, is a suitable environment for the growth of microorganisms. Several researchers have proposed using microorganisms to create self-healing concrete, including Bang et al. (2001), Jonkers et al. (2010), and Su et al. (2021). The three main categories of microorganisms are viruses, fungi, and bacteria. This technique involves pouring microbial broth right into the freshly mixed concrete. The additions could be distributed by vascular networks as described in the chemical method, or they could take the form of spores, capsules, immobilized forms on activated carbon or silica gel. A bacteria cannot grow in concrete because of its moisture content, temperature, or pH. As a result, in some situations a resistant type of bacteria (spores) is used

instead of fresh microbial broth. Over 60 years is the maximum lifespan of some spores. It is also possible to use microorganisms that have been enclosed to withstand the harsh concrete environment, but this method is costly and difficult.

Another way to protect microorganisms from inappropriate conditions is using vascular networks for distributing the microbial broth throughout the cementitious matrix. However, this approach is difficult to implement and has poor constructability when using current technology. The best method in terms of the economical aspect was suggested to immobilizing of microorganisms on silica gel or activated carbon. However, it is still unclear how using these materials will affect the strengthening of concrete.

The most well-known and used healing agent in concrete is calcium-based nutrient also called calcium lactate $\text{Ca}(\text{C}_3\text{H}_5\text{O}_2)_2$, which is added to the concrete with a small amount of bacterial spores. The ratio of calcium lactate to the spores is commonly 2:1. When the bacteria come into contact with both water and oxygen, they begin to activate and can convert the available lactate to limestone (CaCO_3) resulting in filling the crack openings. Table 1 shows various types of bacteria with crack-healing capacity.

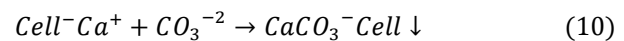
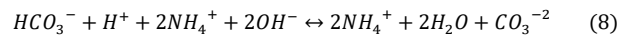
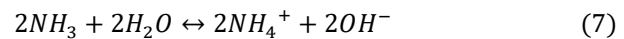
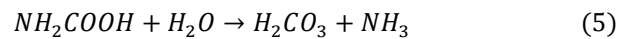
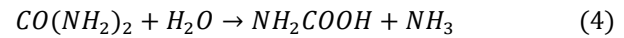
Selecting the type of microorganism is the first step of the process. If bacteria are chosen, the process will use one of two mechanisms to create self-healing concrete:

3.3.1 Precipitation of CaCO_3 (*Ureolytic process*)

The temperature of self-healing concrete can arise up to 70 °C and its pH is between 10 to 13, also the water content reduces with drying the concrete. The selected bacteria need to be highly resistant to high temperature, pH, and serious limitations of water. In these conditions, mesophilic microorganisms typically cannot grow. Thermophilic bacteria were successfully tested by Ghosh et al. (2006) to create self-healing concrete to address this issue. During photosynthesis, hydrolysis, and surface reduction, microbial CaCO_3 may precipitate as a by-product. Gas and water permeability may be decreased by bacterial CaCO_3 precipitation on concrete surfaces. All over the world, carbonate precipitation occurs most frequently in the oceans. Because of their ability to increase the pH of the surrounding environment through a variety of bacterial metabolisms, bacteria are thought to have a major role in the precipitation of CaCO_3 . One of the most popular biological ways is applying CaCO_3 using ureolytic bacteria to design self-healing concrete. The shape of bacteria is commonly Bacilli, Cocci, or Spirilla. Different families of microorganisms, such as Mesophilic (Al-Thawadi, 2011) and Thermophilic (Ghosh et al., 2006), can be utilized in design of self-healing concrete. Among the shapes and types of bacteria, *Bacillus pasteurii* and *sphaericus* family are the most commonly used microorganisms.

It is clear that microorganisms, particularly bacteria, are capable of producing a variety of minerals, including phosphates, carbonates, and silicates (Fortin et al., 2018). CaCO_3 is one of the best fillers for concrete because of its high compatibility with cementitious compositions.

Calcium carbonate is produced through a series of biochemical processes (Stocks-Fischer et al 1999; Dick et al., 2006; Mitchell et al., 2010): 4) Urease-producing bacteria speed up the precipitation of calcium carbonate by hydrolyzing urea to produce ammonia (NH_3) and carbamic acid (NH_2COOH), 5) The carbamic acid spontaneously breaks down into one mole of ammonia and carbonic acid (H_2CO_3), 6) the carbonic acid decomposes, 7) As ammonia hydrolyzes, ammonium and hydroxide ions are produced, 8) As a result of the formation of hydroxide ions, the pH of the medium will rise, which promotes the production of bicarbonate (HCO_3^-) and carbonate ions (CO_3^{2-}), 9) During microbial metabolic activity, the negatively charged bacterial cell wall can draw positively charged calcium ions (Ca^{+2}) and deposit them on the cell wall surface, and 10) CaCO_3 is precipitated as a result of the reaction between the calcium and carbonate ions.



The rate of biological calcite precipitation is influenced by several factors such as: 1) concentration of the inorganic carbon content in dissolved solutions, 2) the rate of biological calcite precipitation, 3) concentration of calcium ions (Ca^{+2}), 4) pH, and 5) presence of nucleation sites (Li and Yang, 2007).

3.3.2. Polymorphic iron-aluminum-silicate precipitation (*Silica process*)

A complex iron-aluminum-silicate $[(\text{Fe}_2\text{Al}_3)(\text{SiAl})\text{O}_{10}(\text{OH})_5]$ precipitation was found in a lake contaminated with metal sediment, and it was located on the surface of isolated bacteria cells (Jonkers et al., 2010). In areas with acidic soils, the bacteria *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* play a significant role in the silica precipitation. This bacterium uses carbohydrates to produce lactic acid, which results in an acidic environment and lower colloidal silica solubility, which causes precipitation (Gollapudi et al., 1995). Due to the acidic condition, this method is not popular, also regarding the durability of concrete, it is not a good choice.

Table 1
Types of bacteria with crack-healing capacity in concrete

| Types of bacteria | Crack-healing capacity | References |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Bacillus pasteurii</i> | Crack depth = 3.175 mm Crack width = 3.18 mm Crack depth = 25.4 mm | (Ramchandran et al., 2001) (Bang et al., 2001) |
| <i>Sporosarcinapastuerii</i> , <i>Bacillus sphaericus</i> | - | (Kashyap, 2013) |
| <i>Bacillus subtilisaureolytic</i> | - | (Naveen and Sivakamasundari, 2016) |
| <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> | Crack depth = 4000 μ m Crack width = 0.3 mm | (Su et al., 2021) |
| <i>Bacillus sphaericus</i> | Crack depth = 10 and 20 mm Crack width = 0.5 mm | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> | Crack width = 1-1.8 mm | (Huynh et al., 2017) |
| <i>Bacillus cohnii</i> | Crack width = 0.1-0.4 mm | (Xu and Yao, 2014) |
| <i>Bacillus</i> sp. CT-5 | Crack width = 3.0 mm Crack depth = 13.4-27.2 mm | (Achal et al., 2013) |

4. Evaluating self-healing concrete

According to numerous research studies, self-healing concrete shows better behavior than conventional concrete without healing agents. Testing the self-healing concrete samples is necessary to ensure the property of the material compared to the normal concrete sample. Table 2 shows the most common techniques and methods used for evaluating self-healing concrete. The simplest way is evaluating visually either by the naked eye or using simple tools such as optical microscopy. Similar to conventional

concrete, checking the material to resist various stresses such as; compression, tension, bending, etc. is required. In terms of durability, the self-healing concrete must be checked for various exposure conditions during its service life, for example; permeability and corrosion, etc. Testing the material for its microstructure is very important to ensure the healing performance at that level, tests such as; X-ray diffraction analysis, Scanning electron microscopy, etc. can be carried out. The combination of those tests can give an exact indication of the healing in the concrete.

Table 2
Concrete measurement techniques for self-healing performance

| Self-healing evaluation technique | Methods | References |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Visual observation | Digital image correlation | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| | Optical microscopy | |
| | Crack sealing observation with eye | |
| Mechanical strength recovery | Compressive strength test | (Park et al., 2010; Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2018) |
| | Tensile strength test | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| | Three-point bend test | (Qureshi and Al-Tabbaa, 2014) |
| | Four-point bend test | (Snoeck et al., 2014) |
| | Impact loading slab | - |
| | Resonance frequency analysis | - |
| | Structural element deformation measurement | - |
| | Air permeability | (Qureshi et al., 2018) |
| | Water permeability | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011; Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013; Snoeck et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2018) |
| | Sorptivity/capillary water uptake | (Siddique and Chahal, 2011; Achal et al., 2013; Sahmaran et al., 2013) |
| Durability | Chloride permeability | (Siddique and Chahal, 2011; Achal et al., 2013; Sahmaran et al., 2013) |
| | Freeze-thaw test | - |
| | Corrosion test | - |
| | Neutron radiography | - |
| | Ultrasonic transmission measurement | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| | Osmotic pressure | - |

Table 2 continued

Concrete measurement techniques for self-healing performance

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Microstructural evaluation | Environmental scanning electron microscopy (ESEM) | (Li et al., 1998; Jonkers et al., 2010) |
| | Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) | (Chahal et al., 2011; Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013; Sahmaran et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2018) |
| | X-ray diffraction analysis (XRD) | (Park et al., 2010; Chahal et al., 2011; Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013; Sahmaran et al., 2013) |
| | Energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDS) | (Chahal et al., 2011; Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013; Sahmaran et al., 2013) |
| | X-ray radiography/tomography | - |
| | Infrared analysis | - |
| | Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) | (Qureshi et al., 2018) |
| | Raman spectroscopy | - |

4.1. Mechanical properties

Mechanical properties mainly include compressive, shear, flexural (three-point bending and four-point bending), and tensile strength of concrete. The ability of a material to resist a compression load is known as its compressive strength. Compressive strength is the most crucial factor in structural design and concrete quality control among mechanical properties. Normal concrete has a 25-50 MPa range for its compressive strength. Ordinary concrete continues to be constructed using self-healing technology.

The ability of a material to resist deformation while under load is known as its bending strength, and it corresponds to the material's maximum internal stress at the time of rupture. Two different bending tests exist, both the three- and four-point bending tests. The uniform stress area under the center loading point in a three-point bending test is relatively small and concentrated there. In

the four-point bending test, the region of uniform stress is located between the inner span loading points. Numerous research studies can be found which achieved an amount of regain in compressive strength of concrete by self-healing. They tested the samples before and after healing and the regain strength efficiency of the healed concrete was present. The compression test results of some studies when the different types and concentrations of bacteria were used are collected in Table 3. For most of these studies, the temperature of the media was about 25 °C, which is a suitable degree for bacterial activation.

Other researchers used various polymers as concrete healing agents. After testing the samples using various methods, they could achieve good results in terms of sample strength improvement, Table 4. Healing agents such as sodium silicate (Na_2SiO_3) and magnesium oxide (MgO) were used by previous researchers for the purpose of healing the concrete, Table 5.

Table 3

Compressive strength improvement caused by different bacteria

| Type of bacteria | Concentration | pH of media | Test methods | Regain efficiency | References |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> | 30×10^5 cell/ml | 6.5 | Compression | 24 % | (Andalib et al., 2016) |
| <i>Sporosarcina. pasteurii</i> | 5.2×10^7 cell/ml | 8.6 | Compression | 12 % | (Ramchandran et al., 2001) |
| <i>Sporosarcina. pasteurii</i> | - | 9.25 | Compression | 33 % | (Abo-El-Enein et al., 2013) |
| <i>Sporosarcina pasteurii</i> | 10^3 cell/ml | - | Compression | 22 % | (Chahal et al., 2012) |
| <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> | 0.33 cell/ml | 8 | Compression | 14.8 % | (Pei et al., 2013) |
| <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> | 10^5 cell/ml | - | Compression | 19.2 % | (Vempada et al., 2011) |
| <i>Bacillus cereus</i> | 10^6 cell/ml | 8.5 | Compression | 38 % | (Maheswaran et al., 2014) |
| <i>Shewanella sps</i> | 10^5 cell/ml | 7.2 | Compression | 25.3 % | (Ghosh et al., 2005) |
| <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> | 2.8×10^8 cell/ml | - | Compression | 12 % | (Khaliq and Ehsan, 2016) |
| <i>Bacillus sp. CT-5</i> | Optical density (OD ₆₀₀ of 1) | 8 | Compression | 36.15 % | (Achal et al., 2013) |
| <i>Bacillus sphaericus</i> | - | - | Compression | 14.3 % | (Gandhimathi and Suji, 2015) |
| <i>Bacillus sphaericus</i> | - | 10 - 11 | Compression | 11.2 % | (Gavimath et al., 2012) |

Table 4
Strength improvement from various types of polymers

| Type of polymers | Methods | Test methods | Efficiency | References |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Epoxy resin | Microcapsules | Compression | 1.9 time normalized strength | (Li et al., 2013) |
| | | Three-point bending | 1.3 time normalized strength | |
| Polyurethane | Encapsulation | Three-point bending | 54 % improvement in strength and 52 % stiffness | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| Polyurethane Superabsorbent polymers (SAP) | Encapsulation | Three-point bending | 35 % stiffness | (Feiteira et al., 2016) |
| | | Three-point bending | 8 % improvement in strength | (Gruyaert et al., 2016) |
| Methyl methacrylate monomer | Micro-encapsulation | Compression | 30.4 % improvement in strength | (Yang et al., 2010) |

Table 5
Strength improvement of concrete by using sodium silicate (Na₂SiO₃) and magnesium oxide (MgO)

| Healing concrete | Methods | Test methods | Efficiency | References |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| By using sodium silicate (Na ₂ SiO ₃) | Mixed with concrete | Three-point bending | 5 % improvement in compressive strength | (Qureshi and Al-Tabbaa, 2016) |
| | Encapsulated | Three-point bending | 6 % load regain | (Qureshi et al., 2016) |
| | Encapsulated | Three-point bending | 12 % load regain | (Kanellopoulos et al., 2015) |
| By using magnesium oxide (MgO) | Encapsulated | Three-point bending | 17 % load regain | (Kanellopoulos et al., 2015) |
| | Micro-encapsulated | Ultrasonic wave transmission | 12.3 % specific stiffness regain | (Mostavi et al., 2015) |
| | Micro-encapsulated | Three-point bending | 26.2 % flexural regain | (Pelletier et al., 2010) |

Alkali-resistant bacteria that produce spores were used by Luo et al. (2015) in their investigation into self-healing concrete. The results demonstrated a reduction in crack width with increasing repairing time, Figure 2. Additionally, bacteria were used as a healing agent in concrete by Gavimath et al. (2012). The samples were then examined for tensile and compressive strength in both normal and healed concrete. Bacterial concrete samples outperformed the controls in terms of strength, Figure 3.

4.2. Durability

For concrete structures, durability is the main concern because it has to do with the material's service life.

Durable concrete means resisting or penetrating any aggressive ions into the concrete. Sulphate resistance, alkali-aggregate reaction, steel reinforcement corrosion, and carbonation are the main factors of concrete deterioration. Deterioration of concrete mainly occurs by being permeable. A system of self-healing is a novel technique used to make the concrete more durable by bridging the cracks, thus resisting opening and making the concrete impermeable.

The durability of self-healing concrete can be assessed and verified using a variety of test methods. Table 6 shows various studies which used different healing materials and then tested the samples for water absorption, their results showed a significant reduction in porosity.

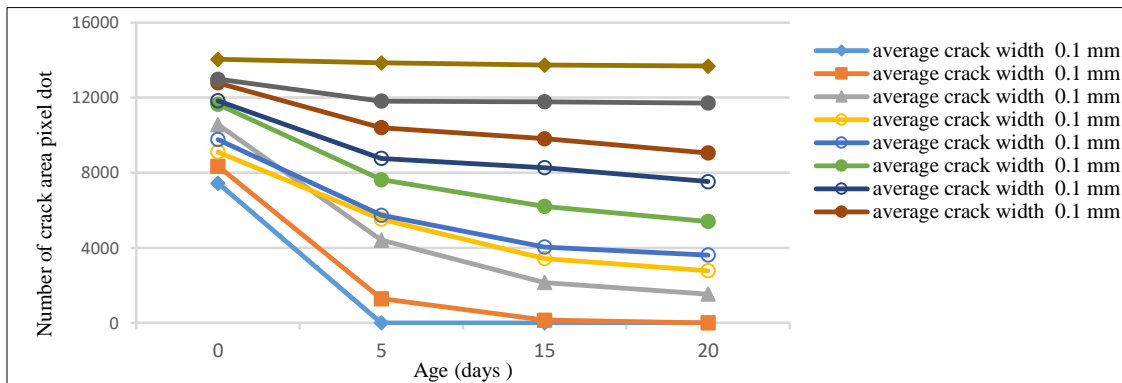


Figure 2. Number of crack area versus average crack width with time (Luo et al., 2015)

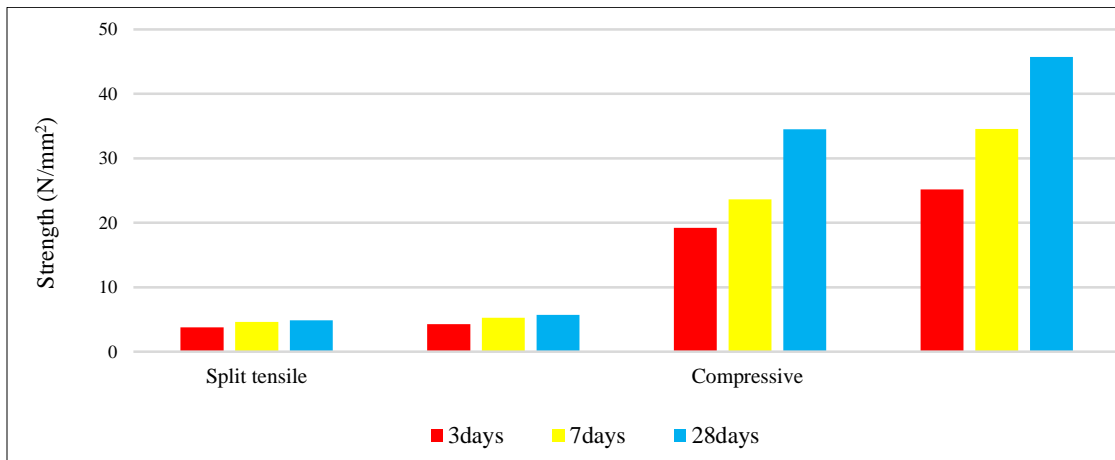


Figure 3. Strength comparison in control and bacterial concrete (Gavimath et al., 2012)

Table 6
The effect of various healing materials on water absorption after cracking

| Type of healing materials | Methods | K-value untreated | k-value treated (healing agent) | Efficiency factor | References |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Polyurethane in ceramic capsule | Water entering a repaired crack | 1×10^{-6} | 1×10^{-12} | 2 | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2011) |
| <i>Bacillus. sphaericus</i> with hydrogel | Water entering a repaired crack | $1 \times 10^4 - 1 \times 10^5$ | $1 \times 10^5 - 1 \times 10^6$ | 1.25 | (Wang et al., 2014) |
| Superabsorbent polymers (SAP) | Water entering a repaired crack | 1×10^{-6} | 1×10^{-10} | 2 | (Snoeck et al., 2014) |
| <i>Bacillus. sphaericus</i> immobilized in polyurethane | Water entering a repaired crack | 1×10^{-5} | 1×10^{-10} | 2 | (Wang et al., 2012) |
| <i>Bacillus. sphaericus</i> in sol gel+CaCl ₂ | Water entering a repaired crack | 1×10^{-4} | 1×10^{-12} | 3 | (Van Tittelboom et al., 2010) |

Achal et al. (2013) investigated how healing mortar samples were impacted by *Bacillus* sp. CT-5. The samples' porosity was examined and contrasted with the control samples' porosity percentage. Figure 4 shows the reduction in porosity of self-healed mortar samples.

The durability of self-healing concrete was also

investigated by Tziviloglou et al. (2016). The mortar samples were examined for water permeability. Healing agents were used in some of the samples and then compared to the controls. According to their research, samples that had been healed had much lower water leakage than samples that had not been healed, Figure 5.

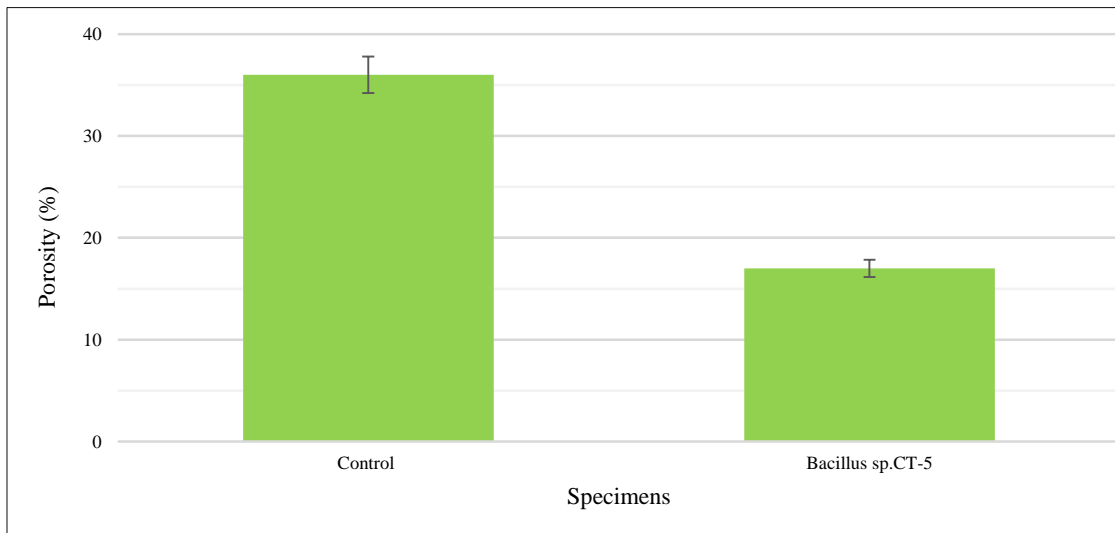


Figure 4. Comparison of total porosity in control and *Bacillus* sp. CT-5 bacterial mortar (Achal et al., 2013)

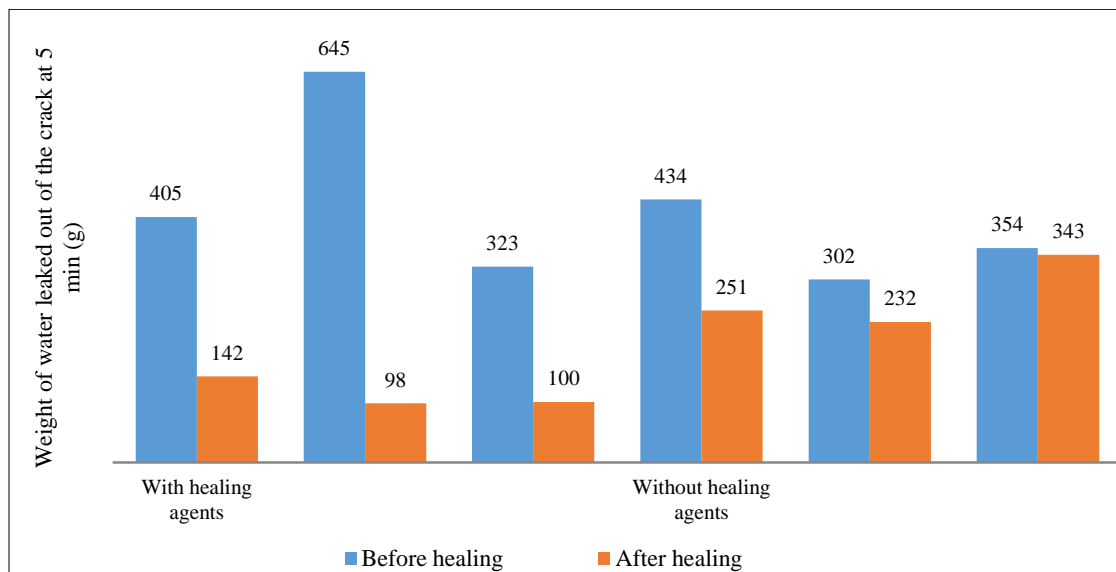


Figure 5. Effect of healing agents on mortar specimens' permeability both before and after healing (Tziviloglou et al., 2016)

4.3. Microstructural evaluation

Microstructural evaluation is needed for healed crack visualization, crystal materials determination, deposited crystal visualization, etc. There are a lot of evaluation techniques that are used for microstructural measurement of self-healing concrete, such as X-ray diffraction, scanning electron microscopy, energy dispersive spectrum, etc. Majority of the research studies on self-healing concrete have tested the samples for analyzing their microstructures besides testing for mechanical properties and durability such as strength, permeability, corrosion, etc.

Khaliq and Ehsan (2016) prepared four concrete mixtures. The mixture was the same in all but incorporation techniques of the bacteria were different in all. The first one was a control mix without adding bacteria. While for the second mix, the bacteria were added directly to the water during mixing the concrete. However, nanoplatelets were utilized for the third and fourth mix carrier compounds, such as light aggregate and graphite, respectively. The formation of CaCO_3 for all mixes through scanning electron microscopy analysis was observed, Figure 6.

Furthermore, Tziviloglou et al. (2016) used EDS analysis on the crystalline formation to check the formation of CaCO_3 . High peaks of calcium (Ca), carbon (C), and oxygen (O) were detected in the test results, indicating that CaCO_3 was in fact present. Gruyaert et al. (2016) used scanning electron microscopy (SEM) to check the healing process on mortar specimens using SAP as a healing agent, Figure 7. Qureshi et al. (2018) used ESEM, XRD, and TGA analysis to check the healing performance. The crack width before healing was 0.17mm, and after 28 days of healing was reduced to 0.14mm, Figure 8.

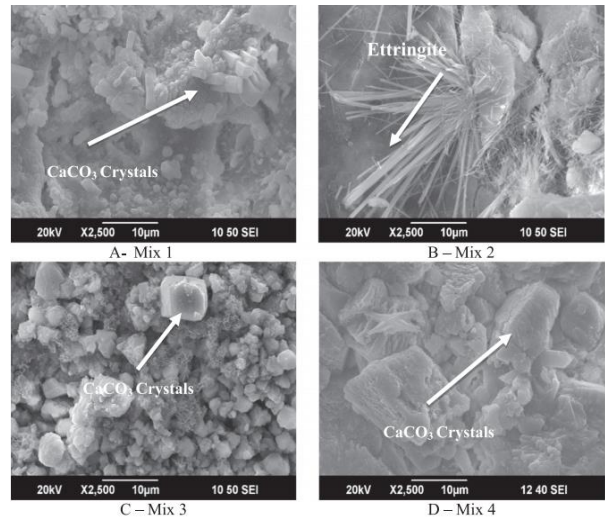


Figure 6. Magnified Scanning Electron Microscopy; analysis of 28 days of samples before cracking (Khaliq and Ehsan, 2016)

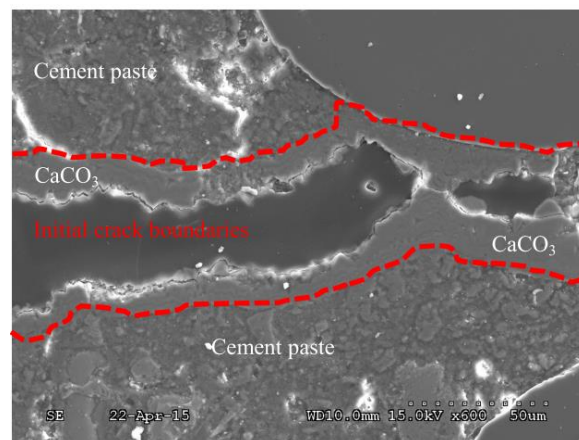


Figure 7. SEM for a mortar specimen with cracks and some healing that contains SAP (Gruyaert et al., 2016)

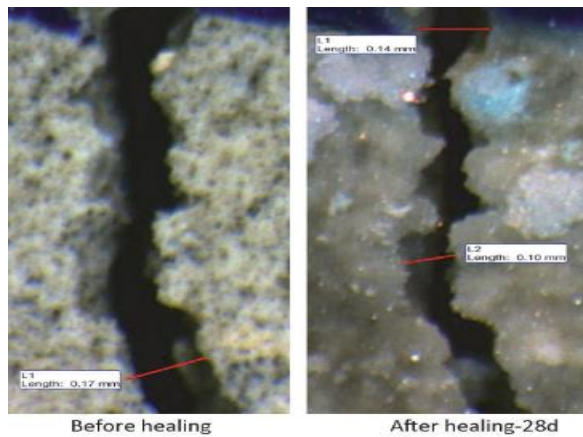


Figure 8. Crack width comparison of cement mix before and after healing by ESEM analysis (Qureshi et al., 2018)

5. Advantages

In a summary, the main advantages of self-healing in concrete can be drawn as:

1. Improvement of the compressive strength of concrete.
2. Remedying cracks quickly.
3. Reduction in corrosion of reinforcement.
4. Reduction in permeability of concrete.
5. Increasing the durability of concrete.
6. Eco-friendly, natural and it is pollution free.
7. Lower repair and maintenance costs.
8. Decreasing production of concrete.
9. Through this solution system, the aesthetic appearance is not harmed.
10. Better resistance to freezing-thawing.
11. Reducing CO₂ emission from concrete production.

6. Disadvantages

Despite the advantages explained, the self-healing approach has some disadvantages in various manners such as:

1. The price of bacterial concrete is higher; it is almost twice as expensive as regular concrete.
2. In any environment or medium, bacterial growth is insufficient. The cultivation of calcifying microorganisms involves the use of a variety of nutrients and metabolic products that influence the survival, growth, biofilm, and crystal formation of the organisms. A lot of research has been conducted on the metabolic products and retention of nutrients in building materials.
3. No IS code is provided yet because it is a new research material, therefore it is difficult to get optimum performance when the bacteria are used in concrete.

4. The cost of the investigation process will be high because bacteria have different properties thus they contribute to different behavior. Therefore, some testing methods are needed to investigate the microstructure of the concrete such as SEM, which is costly, and good skill to carry out the test are required as well.
5. The self-healing agent, which accounts for 20 % of the concrete volume, is carried by the clay pellets.

7. Applications

Using of bacterial concrete has become increasingly popular, it can be used for:

- Healing of concrete cracks and
- Repairing of monuments constructed in limestone.

Also for:

- Durable roads with low cost,
- River banks,
- High - strength buildings, and
- Durable housing with low cost.

For creating self-healing concrete, a number of processes have been proposed. It has not yet been used in all new constructions, and self-healing bacteria-based concrete is still in the early stages of development.

8. Conclusions

Based on reviewing various research study articles on self-healing concrete, some points can be drawn. Self-healing is a novel strategy that can be used to remediate the cracks in concrete internally when they start to grow. Since cracking is the main problem in concrete structures, it cannot be prevented, but controlling and repairing the cracks is necessary. Externally remediating the cracks on the concrete surface is one of the classic techniques, and it requires special materials, machines, and skilled labor. Hence, self-healing is a good alternative to classical repairing. Self-healing concrete needs some material as a healing agent, and bacterial spore is usually used and added to the concrete during mixing. By reducing permeability, this technology significantly improves the durability of concrete. It can also reduce inspection labor, maintenance cost, and cement production by providing safer and more sustainable material. Despite the positive results of self-healing, the application of self-healing concrete in all engineering constructions is still quite limited because of a few drawbacks, most notably economic ones. The optimum volume fraction of the bacteria is still unknown, and there is no design code to produce appropriate bacterial-healing concrete. Self-

healing concrete is an interested subject for research studies, the concept can be improved by using other materials and using new technology in order to withstand the small defect.

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Osvrt na samozaceljujući beton - biološki pristup

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INFORMACIJE O RADU

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I Z V O D

Beton je jedan od najpopularnijih i najviše korišćenih građevinskih materijala zbog svoje čvrstoće, izdržljivosti i relativno niske cene, ali on ima i veću tendenciju za stvaranje pukotina. Pojava pukotina smanjuje vek trajanja betona i povećava troškove održavanja. Prodiranje agresivnih jona kroz pukotine dovodi do korozije čelične armature, karbonizacije, stvaranja sulfata, alkalno-agregatne reakcije, itd. Međutim, sprečavanje nastanka pukotina je nemoguće, ali one se mogu kontrolisati ili popraviti brojnim metodama. Samozaceljujući beton je poznat kako prikladna metoda za ispunjavanje pukotina, kao i za poboljšanje dugoročne trajnosti betona. To je nov, brz i ekološki prihvatljiv pristup. U ovoj tehnologiji, kada je beton izložen vodi, materijal za popunjavanje stvara kalcijum karbonat (CaCO_3) koji ispunjava pukotine i smanjuje propustljivost, a produžava trajanje betona. Materijali koji se koriste za popunjavanje pukotina su uglavnom bakterije, polimeri i hemijska jedinjenja. Bakterije predstavljaju najpoželjniji materijal za ovaj postupak. Zbog toga, drugo ime koje se koristi za samoisceljjujući beton glasi biobeton ili bakterijski beton. U ovom radu je predstavljen pregled tehnologije samozaceljujućeg betona koji obuhvata sistem, proces, mehanička svojstva i trajnost ovog betona.
