

Antimicrobial Resistance and Sensitivity among Isolates of *Esherichia coli* from Patients in Kahramanmaras, Turkey

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To determine the level of resistance to the widely used antibiotics in clinical isolates of *Esherichia coli*. 74 isolates were collected from different hospitals in Kahramanmaras and recorded at specimens. Antibiotic resistance was determined by agar disc diffusion method using Mueller-Hinton agar according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute recommendations and the production of β -lactamase was detected with the iodometric slide test. This study was carried out in the laboratory of Kahramanmaras Sütcü Imam University, Biology Department. The results indicated that resistance rate of antibiotics was in the range of 91% Penicilin(PEN), 65% Tetracycline (TET) and Amoxicillin (AMX), 62% Cefazolin(CEFX), 59% Streptomycine(STR), 34% Ofloxain (OFL), 32% Chlorampenicol (CHL) and Ceftriaxone (CEFT), 27% Gentamycin (GEN), 24% Cefoxitin(CEFX), 18% Nitrofurantoin(NIT), %12 Meropenem(MER). Among the 74 isolates of *E.coli* were showed 38(51%) beta lactamase activity and 36(49%) isolates of *E.coli* were showed no beta lactamase activity. Out of 74 isolates, 50(68%) isolates showed Multiple Antibiotic Resistance three to twelve antibiotics.

Key words: *Esherichia coli*, Antibiotic, Resistance, Beta lactamase activity.

Escherichia coli is one of the main causes of nosocomial infections in humans. *E.coli* is also a common inhabitant of the human and animal gut and is considered an indicator of fecal contamination in food. Recently it is thought that *E.coli* and certain other foodborne illnesses can sometimes trigger serious health problems months or years after patient survived that initial bout. The organisms is of clinical importance due to its cosmopolitan nature and ability to initiate, establish and cause various kinds of infections. Virulent strains of *E.coli* can cause gastroenteritis, urinary tract infections, blood stream infections and neonatal meningitis¹. For example, more than 80%

of urinary tract infections occur in outpatients and *E.coli* accounts for more than 50% of the infections in these patients^{2,3}. In rare cases, virulent strains are also responsible for Haemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), peritonitis, mastitis septicemia, and gram negative pneumoniae¹. It is one of the organisms most frequently isolated from different clinical cases of diarrhea and others⁴⁻⁶. Antibiotic resistance is a major, increasing problem in clinical microbiology as a whole and in the therapy of hospital infections in particular. *E. coli* and other Enterobacteriaceae are more resistant to β -lactams^{7,8}. *E.coli* often carry multi drug resistant plasmids and under stress readily transfer those plasmids to otherspecies⁹⁻¹¹.

We aimed in the present study to determine the status of antimicrobial resistance, underlying conditions, and determination of *E.coli* isolates with beta-lactamase from different hospitals in Kahramanmaras Turkey

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MATERIALS AND METHOD

Isolation of bacterial strains and identification

74 isolates were collected from hospital patients in Kahramanmaras and recorded at specimens. Mac Conkey agar and EMBagar (Eosin Metilen Blue) agar used for *E. coli* isolation. Isolates were considered to be presumptive *Escherichia* spp. gram-negative bacilli, mucoid colonies and lactose positive. Confirmation of isolates was performed by using classic chemical tests (motility test, ure hydrolysis, acid production from mannitol, production of H₂S, IMVIC (Indol, Metil Red, Voges-Proskauer and Citrate)^{12,13}.

Antibiotic resistance activity

Antibiotic resistance was determined by an agar disc diffusion test¹⁴ using Mueller-Hinton agar (Difco) according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute¹⁵ recommendations. Twelve different antibiotics were used. For antibiotic resistance determination, the isolates were grown in Luria-Bertani (LB) broth until the turbidity equal to the 0.5 McFarland standard. Cultures were swabbed on to the Mueller-Hinton agar and all isolates were tested against Meropenem (MER, 10µg/ml), Amoxicillin (AMO, 20µg/ml), Penicillin (PEN, 10µg/ml), Nitrofurantoin (NIT, 30µg/ml), Cefazolin (CEF, 30µg/ml), Cefoxitin (CEFX, 30µg/ml), Ceftriaxone (CEFT, 30µg/ml), Gentamycin (GEN, 10µg/ml), Tetracycline (TET, 30µg/ml), Streptomycin (STR, 10µg/ml), Chloramphenicol (CHL, 30µg/ml), Ofloxacin (OFL, 5µg/ml). The isolates those grown in inoculation were evaluated as resistant and the others were evaluated as susceptible¹⁵. The antibiotic discs were dispensed sufficiently separated from each other so as to avoid overlapping of inhibition zones. The plates were incubated at 37°C and the diameters of the inhibition zones were measured after 18 h. All susceptibility tests were carried out in duplicate and were repeated twice if discordant results had been obtained.

β-lactamase production

The production of β-lactamase was detected with the iodometric slide test¹⁶⁻¹⁷. Previously, iodine solution was added to penicillin solution. Later, emulsify organism tested in a drop of freshly prepared penicillin-iodine solution on flamed side of a glass slide; made a heavy suspension. Then starch solution was added.

Initially, solution of all samples will turn purple. An indication of β-lactamase production is clearing of solution, clearing of purple color to white within 5 min. But the entire mixture does not have to clear; clearing of definite clumps or areas is sufficient to denote a positive result. Starch and iodine react in solution to produce a purple color.

Multiple Antibiotic Resistance Index

For all isolates, we calculated the MAR index values (a/b, where a represents the number of antibiotics the isolate was resistant to, b represents the total number of antibiotics the isolate tested against). A MAR index value ≤ 0.2 is observed when isolates are exposed to high risk sources of human or animal contamination, where antibiotics use is common; in contrast a MAR index value < or = 0.2 observed when antibiotics are seldom or never used^{18,19}.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The resistance of *E. coli* isolates to antimicrobial agents (n=74) gave high resistance rates found that *E. coli* isolates diffusion tests for penicillin (91%), tetracycline and amoxicillin (65%), cefazolin (62%), streptomycin (59%), ofloxacin (34%), chloramphenicol and ceftriaxone (32%) and gentamycin (27%). The most effective drugs against *E. coli* were meropenem (12%), nitrofurantoin (18%) and cefoxitin (24%). The results were given table 1.

Among the beta lactam antibiotics, penicillin resistance rate was the highest (91%). The bactericidal antibiotics which inhibits bacterial cell wall synthesis, are penicillins. These bacteria offer resistance to penicillins by production of lactamases and by permeability barrier of the cell surface²⁰.

The fact that over 65% of *E. coli* isolates were resistant to amoxicillin is of great importance and means the antibiotic can not be used as empirical therapy for hospital patients infection. High frequency resistance to amoxicillin was also reported among *E. coli* isolates in Iran 83.7%²¹; in Cameroon 89.2%-79.5%²²; in Croatia 42%²³; in Portugal and Spain 54.3%²⁴, as well as in USA 39%²⁵ and UK 38.4%²⁶. Our results were in compliance with previous researchers.

As for the resistance rate of tetracycline, it was 65% (table 1). Some researchers have reported

that tetracycline resistance rate from 44 to 94%^{5,27,28}. Our results were in compliance with previous researchers.

As for the resistance rate of ceftazidime, it was 62% (table1). Some researchers have reported that ceftazidime resistance rate from 12% to 78%²⁹⁻³³. Our results were in compliance with previous researchers.

With respect to resistance of streptomycin, it was 59% (table1). Some researchers have reported *E.coli* resistance rate to streptomycin 0% to 28.08 %³⁴⁻³⁵. In contrast to previous researchers, our results were very high percentage (59%). Many factors may have

contributed to such high rates of resistance including misuse of antibiotics by health care professionals or non-skilled practitioners, misuse of antibiotics by the general public, and inadequate surveillance due to lack of information arising from routine antimicrobial susceptibility testing, like reports from other developing countries⁴.

Fluoroquinolones are antibiotics that are very effective against many gram negative microorganisms, including *E.coli*. The resistance rate was in ofloxacin with 34% (table1). Ofloxacin resistance has been reported to be 13% and 60% in different studies^{28,29,36}. Koksaldi-Motor *et al* (2010)³⁷ reported that resistance of quinolones have increased year by year. Our results are similar to that reported by Ates (2007)³⁶ who also reported that *E.coli* showed resistance of 30% to ofloxacin. In her study, a total of 200 common pathogenic bacteria were recovered from patient with urinary tract infections *E.coli*, *Klebsiella*, *Streptococci*, *Enterobacter*, *Proteus*, *Coagulase negative Staphylococci*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterococci*, *Pseudomonas*, *Citrobacter*, *Serratia* species were obtained from this study.

In respect of resistance rate of chloramphenicol, it was 32% (table1). Some researchers have reported that chloramphenicol resistance rate from 2.17 to 60%^{34,35,38}. Our results were in accordance with previous researchers.

Taking into account the total number of clinical isolates in the present study period 32% of

Table1. Antibiotic resistance pattern of *Esherichia coli* isolated from clinical samples

Antibiotics	Sensitive	Intermediate	Resistance
Pen	7(%9)	-	67(%91)
Amx	17(%23)	9(%12)	48(%65)
Tet	19(%26)	7(%9)	48(%65)
Cef	23(%31)	5(%7)	46(%62)
Str	24(%32)	6(%8)	44(%59)
Ofi	47(%64)	2(%3)	25(%34)
Chl	45(%61)	5(%7)	24(%32)
Ceft	39(%53)	11(%15)	24(%32)
Gen	46(%62)	8(%11)	20(%27)
Cefx	54(%73)	2(%3)	18(%24)
Nit	59(%79)	2(%3)	13(%18)
Mer	63(%85)	2(%3)	9(%12)

Table 2. Multiple Antibiotic Resistance Index of 74 *Esherichia coli* strains

Source of isolates	Total Isolates	Multiple Antibiotic Resistance Index (MAR)	Beta lactamase
Urine	52	0.08(6i), 0.17(3i), 0.25(4i), 0.33(5i), 0.42(8i), 0.5 (8i)	29(+) 23(-)
Drain	1	0.5(1i)	1(+)
Abscess	4	0.33(3i), 0.67(1i)	3(+), 1(-)
Blood	2	0.67(1i), 0.33(1i)	2(-)
Tissue	1	0.42(1i)	1(+)
Wound	6	0.17(1i), 0.25(1i), 0.42(2i), 0.58(1i), 0(1i)	6(-)
Appendicitis	1	0.33(1i)	1(+)
Vaginal fluid	4	0.08(1i), 0.5(1i), 0.75(1i), 0(1i)	3(+), 1(-)
Probe tip	1	0.42(1i)	1(+)
Abdominal Internal Fluid	1	0.08(1i)	1(+)
Tracheolaringeal aspirate	1	0.42(1i)	1(-)
Total	74		38(+), 36(-)

i:isolates +:Present, -: Absent

the *E. coli* species were resistant to cefoxitin (table1). Some researchers have reported resistance rate of cefoxitin 2%-32.1% in different studies^{22,29,34,39-41}. Our results were similar to Pieboji *et al* (2004)²² who also reported that gram negative bacilli isolates (n=522), obtained from a wide range of clinical specimens (urine, pus and blood) from inpatients and outpatients at Yaounde Central hospital between March 1995 and April 1998, were evaluated for resistance to antibiotics.

As for resistance rate of ceftriaxone, it was 32% (table1). Many researchers have tested resistance of ceftriaxone to *E. coli*. According to previous studies resistance of *E. coli* was from 0% to 100%^{29,31,36,38,42-45}. Our results were in compliance with previous researchers.

Among the aminoglycosides group, gentamycin resistance rate was 27% (table1). Some researchers have reported gentamycin resistance rate to *E. coli* from 1.5% to 54%^{37,40,46,47}. Our results were similar to Cho *et al* (2011)⁴¹ who also reported that gentamycin resistance rate was 29.2% patients with diarrhea. Koksaldi-Motor *et al.*, (2010) reported that when it compared to previous year's data susceptibility of *E. coli* isolated from urine to gentamycin were decreased and also different resistance rate occurred different locations³⁷.

In this study hospitalized patients *E. coli* isolates were found to be sensitive to nitrofurantoin 18% resistant (table1). Nitrofurantoin still exhibited low resistance frequencies in all countries investigated (0-25 %) despite many years of usage^{24,30,32,48-50}. Our results were similar to Ay *et al* (2001)⁴⁸ who also reported that nitrofurantoin resistance rate was 22% in hospitalized patients.

Carbapenems, mainly meropenem, resistance rate of meropenem was showed in 12 % (table1). Some researchers have reported meropenem resistance rate to *E. coli* from 0% to 9.1%^{29,33,45}. Our results were similar to Uzun *et al.*, (2006)⁴⁵ who also reported that percentage of meropenem resistance was 9.1% in Turkey. It can be suggested that meropenem can be used for infections based on *E. coli*.

Among the 74 isolates of *E. coli* were showed 38 (51%) beta lactamase activity and 36(49%) isolates of *E. coli* were showed no beta lactamase activity (tableII). The main mechanism of bacterial resistance to the β -lactam class of antibiotics consists of the production of β -

lactamases, which are hydrolytic enzymes with the ability to inactivate these antibiotics, before they reach the penicillin-binding proteins located at the cytoplasmic membrane⁵¹. Some researchers have reported beta lactamase activity rate to *E. coli* from 6.5% to 65.94%^{27,42,52-54}. Our results were similar to Kumar *et al* (2011)⁵⁴ who also reported that 57.69% beta lactamase activity rate to *E. coli*.

In present study, the lowest MAR index was 0.008 obtained from urine, vaginal fluid and abdominal Internal fluid samples. In contrast to the highest MAR index was 1 obtained from urine. The lowest MAR index was 0 obtained from tissue samples, none of the isolates showed no resistance all tested antibiotics. Out of 74 isolates, 50 (68%) isolates showed Multiple Antibiotic Resistance three to twelve antibiotics. The MAR index were determined 0.25 and above (table 2). Some researchers have reported Multi Drug Resistance rate to *E. coli* from 2% to 97%⁵⁵⁻⁶¹. Our results were in compliance with previous researchers. Study shows that multiple resistance is a common hospital pathogens. Higher resistance exhibited to penicillin, tetracycline and amoxicillin may have accounted due to increased use of these drugs in this area and referral hospital status of our hospital and prior treatment with multiple antibiotics.

In conclusion, it is suggested that meropenem and nitrofurantoin could be better for treatment of infections based on *E. coli* according to the present study. Penicillin, tetracycline and amoxicillin were non-advisable antibiotics for *E. coli* infections according to the MAR results. Also, the high number of multidrug resistant isolates gives rise to concern. Regular monitoring of antimicrobial drugs. Resistance seems to necessary to improve our guidelines for empirical antibiotic therapy.

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