



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Disease

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/apjtd

Document heading

doi:10.1016/S2222-1808(14)60309-1

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Isolation of *Shigella* species and their resistance patterns to a panel of fifteen antibiotics in mid and far western region of Nepal

Salman Khan^{1*}, Priti Singh², Mukhtar Ansari³, Ashish Asthana⁴¹Department of Microbiology, Nepalgunj Medical College Affiliated to Kathmandu University, Nepal²Department of Biochemistry, Nepalgunj Medical College Affiliated to Kathmandu University, Nepal³Department of Pharmacology, National Medical College Affiliated to Tribhuvan University, Nepal⁴Department of Microbiology, Neta ji Subhash Chandra Bose subharti Medical College Affiliated to Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, India

PEER REVIEW

Peer reviewer

Dr. Bharti bais, Professor & Head,
Department of Microbiology, S.S.R.
Medical College, Mauritius.
Tel: 00230-4912265/7135979
E-mail: dr.bharti.bais@gmail.com

Comments

The work is very good in which the authors evaluated the distribution of *Shigella* species and their antibiotic resistance pattern that were found to be different between isolates. Overall the work done can add additive support to treat the shigellosis.
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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the antimicrobial resistance patterns of *Shigella* species to the most commonly used antibiotics in mid and far western part of Nepal.

Methods: Stool samples were collected from 458 patients who came from mid and far western region of Nepal, attending OPD & IPD Departments of Nepalgunj Medical College, Nepal, between the periods of September 2011 to March 2013. Standard microbiological procedures were used for isolation and identification of *Shigella* species while the disc diffusion test was used to determine the antimicrobial resistance patterns of the recovered isolates.

Results: A total of 65 isolates were identified as *Shigella* species. *Shigella flexneri*, *Shigella dysenteriae*, *Shigella boydii* and *Shigella sonnei* were accounted respectively for 43.07%, 27.69%, 21.53% and 7.69% of the total number of *Shigella* isolated. Resistances to nalidixic acid (95.38%), ampicillin (84.62%), co-trimoxazole (81.54%) and ciprofloxacin (46.15%) were observed. Greater number of isolates (38.46%) was recovered from those aged 1–10 years. This was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$), compared to the other age groups.

Conclusions: The study revealed the endemicity of shigellosis with *Shigella flexneri* as the predominant serogroup. Children were at a higher risk of severe shigellosis. The results also suggest that nalidixic acid, ampicillin, co-trimoxazole and ciprofloxacin should not be used empirically as the first line drugs in the treatment of shigellosis. Periodic analysis of resistance patterns is necessary for the appropriate selection of empirical antimicrobial therapy.

KEYWORDS

Shigella, Dysentery/diarrhea, Antimicrobial resistance, Mid & far western region of Nepal

1. Introduction

Shigellosis remains a public-health problem in most developing countries where communities are ravaged by poverty, war, poor sanitation, personal hygiene, and water supplies[1]. Epidemiologic reports show that about 140 million people suffer from shigellosis with estimated 600 000 deaths per year worldwide[2,3]. There are four major

O antigen groups, viz. group A as *Shigella dysenteriae* (*S. dysenteriae*), group B as *Shigella flexneri* (*S. flexneri*), group C as *Shigella boydii* (*S. boydii*) and *Shigella sonnei*[4]. It is a major cause of dysentery/diarrhea in children and others. Many of them are hospitalized immediately after the onset of the disease. Though, oral rehydration is the principal means of management, as the enteroinvasiveness antibacterial treatment may be necessary[5]. The

*Corresponding author: Mr. Salman Khan, assistant professor, Department of Microbiology, Nepalgunj Medical College, Chisapani, Banke, Nepal.

Tel: 009779848354981

E-mail: salman186631@gmail.com

Foundation Project: Supported by Nepalgunj Medical college and teaching hospital Nepal [Grant No. 2(16)OTA-II/12].

Article history:

Received 6 Oct 2013

Received in revised form 15 Oct, 2nd revised form 22 Oct, 3rd revised form 25 Oct 2013

Accepted 20 Dec 2013

Available online 28 Feb 2014

emergence of antimicrobial resistance to members of the Enterobacteriaceae family is posing serious problems in the treatment of outbreaks of infections. Since its first report in studies conducted in the 1950s, multiple-drug resistance transmitted by plasmids among *Shigella* species has been reported from many countries[6–8]. Moreover, an increase in resistance against many different drugs has been observed in the last two decades. In one study, a significant decrease was observed in the susceptibility of the species to ampicillin and cotrimoxazole from 1988–89 to 1991–92[9]. In another report, it was shown that co-trimoxazole resistance of *Shigella* increased from 3% to 40% within ten years[10]. Another study showed that the percentage of resistant *Shigella* strains in Madrid (Spain) increased from 39.6% to 97.9% for ampicillin, from 34.4% to 96.9% for co-trimoxazole, from 6.3% to 18.0% for tetracycline, and from 1.6% to 15.1% for chloramphenicol[11]. In Ethiopia, strains of *Shigella* that were resistant to many commonly used drugs have been reported in different parts of the country by several studies[12–14]. Belay *et al.* have reported a strain that was resistant to eight drugs out of the nine antimicrobials they used[14]. In India, Over 70% of *Shigella* isolates were resistant to two or more drugs including ampicillin and co-trimoxazole during 2002 to 2007[15]. Reports from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Nepal showed increasing frequency of *Shigella* with multiple resistance to ampicillin, trimethoprim-sulphamethoxazole, tetracycline, and nalidixic acid[16–19]. Similar resistance profiles were reported from Africa[20], Central America[21], Europe[22–24], and South America[25,26]. Besides the temporal changes in the antibiogram of *Shigella* species, it is well known that antibiotic susceptibility patterns in *Shigella* may differ between geographical areas. Such differences are never stable and may change rapidly, especially in places where antibiotics are used excessively (particularly in developing countries)[27]. This warrants for frequent observation on the change in the pattern of antibiogram for this organism. To our best knowledge, no report exists regarding the antibiotic resistance pattern of *Shigella* species in mid and far western region of Nepal. This study was thus carried out to determine the antimicrobial resistance patterns of *Shigella* species to the most commonly used antibiotics in mid and far western part of Nepal.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Study background and subjects

This was a prospective study conducted on 458 patients of diarrhea/dysentery who come from mid and far western region of Nepal, attending out-patients and in-patients of the Departments of Nepalgunj Medical college and teaching Hospital, Banke, Nepal, between the periods of September 2011 to March 2013.

2.2. Sample collection and processing

Stool specimens were collected and processed following the standard microbiological methods at the central Laboratory of Microbiology[28]. The specimens were inoculated on plates of Hektoen enteric agar, *Salmonella*–*Shigella* agar and deoxycholate citrate agar (Himedia Lab.

Pvt Ltd.). The plates were incubated at 37 °C for 24 h. The *Shigella* isolates were speciated biochemically as outlined by Cowan and confirmed by the slide agglutination test using polyvalent and monovalent antisera (Denka Seiken, Japan) [29].

2.3. Antibiotic susceptibility testing

Antimicrobial sensitivity testing was determined by the Kirby–Bauer disc diffusion method on Mueller Hinton agar using the antimicrobial agents including amikacin, ampicillin, amoxycylav, cefotaxime, ceftazidime, ceftriaxone, chloramphenicol, ciprofloxacin, cotrimoxazole, doxycycline, gentamicin, imipenem, nalidixic acid, norfloxacin, and ofloxacin[30]. The plates were incubated at 37 °C for 24 h, and the diameters of zone of inhibition were compared with recorded diameters of the reference isolate (*Escherichia coli* ATCC 25922) in order to determine susceptibility or resistance.

2.4. Statistical analysis

Data obtained were analyzed using the SPSS software for windows version 18. Comparison of data in respect of *Shigella*, sex, and age-groups were performed by *Chi*-square. $P < 0.05$ was consider to be statistically significant.

3. Results

Of the 458 diarrheal/dysenteric stool samples screened, *Shigella* strains were identified in 65 (14.19%) samples, 36 (55.38%) in male and 29 (44.62%) in female (Table 1). *Shigella* spp. were isolated from patients with ages ranging between 1 to >60 years. Of these, 38.46% ($n=25$) were from children from 1–10 years age groups, which was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) compared to the other age groups. However, there was no significant difference in the overall number of isolates recovered in the study based on sex ($P > 0.05$). *S. flexneri* strains were identified in 28 (43.07%) *Shigella* positive cultures, while *S. dysenteriae* accounted for 18 (27.69%), *S. boydii* in 14 (21.53%) and *S. sonnei* in 5 (7.69%) of the total number of isolates (Table 2). *S. flexneri* has been the predominant isolate during the period of the study.

Table 1

Sex distribution of all positive cases in different species of *Shigella*.

<i>Shigella</i> species	Sex distribution of positive cases		
	Male	Female	Total No (%)
<i>S. flexneri</i>	16	12	28 (43.07)
<i>S. dysenteriae</i>	9	9	18 (27.69)
<i>S. boydii</i>	8	6	14 (21.53)
<i>S. sonnei</i>	3	2	5 (7.69)
Total No. (%)	36 (55.38)	29 (44.62)	65 (100)

The resistance pattern of *Shigella* spp. isolated between September 2011 to march 2013 is shown in Table 3. Over 80% of *Shigella* isolates were resistant to two or more drugs including ampicillin, nalidixic acid and co-trimoxazole. Resistance rate of nalidixic acid was 95.38%, ampicillin 84.62%, co-trimoxazole 81.54%, ciprofloxacin 46.15%, gentamicin, 24.62%, norfloxacin 24.62%, ceftriaxone 24.62%, ofloxacin 21.54%, ceftazidime 20%, amikacin 16.92%,

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