

Molecular typing of *Salmonella enterica* serovars of significance in  
Australia using MLVA and bacteriophage genes

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 <i>Salmonella</i> .....	1
1.1.1 <i>Salmonella</i> nomenclature.....	1
1.1.2 <i>Salmonella</i> species and subspecies.....	2
1.1.3 <i>Salmonella</i> serovars.....	2
1.1.4 Natural habitat and clinical significances.....	2
1.1.5 Typhoidal salmonellosis.....	3
1.1.6 Non-typhoidal salmonellosis.....	3
1.1.7 Epidemiology of non-typhoidal <i>Salmonella</i> infections.....	4
1.2 Bacterial typing systems.....	4
1.2.1 Phenotypic versus molecular methods.....	4
1.2.2 Evaluation criteria of typing methods.....	5
1.2.3 Performance criteria.....	5
1.2.3.1 Typability.....	6
1.2.3.2 Discriminatory power.....	6
1.2.3.3 Stability of typing markers.....	6
1.2.3.4 Reproducibility.....	7
1.2.3.5 Epidemiological concordance.....	7
1.2.3.6 Convenience criteria.....	7
1.2.4 Typing methods for <i>Salmonella</i> .....	8
1.2.4.1 Serotyping.....	8
1.2.4.1.1 Epidemiological typing using serotyping.....	8
1.2.4.1.2 Molecular serotyping schemes.....	9
1.2.4.2 Bacteriophage typing.....	9
1.2.4.2.1 Epidemiological typing using phage typing.....	9
1.2.4.2.2 Phage type conversion.....	10
1.2.4.2.3 Practical drawbacks of phage typing.....	10
1.2.4.3 Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis.....	11
1.2.4.3.1 PFGE the 'gold standard' typing method.....	11
1.2.4.3.2 Approaches to improve differentiating ability of PFGE.....	12
1.2.4.3.3 Practical drawbacks of PFGE.....	12
1.2.4.4 Recently developed typing methods.....	13
1.2.4.4.1 Multilocus sequence typing.....	13
1.2.4.4.1.1 Practical advantages of MLST.....	13
1.2.4.4.1.2 Epidemiological typing using MLST.....	14

1.2.4.4.2	Amplified fragment length polymorphism.....	14
1.2.4.4.2.1	Comparison of AFLP and PFGE.....	15
1.2.4.4.2.2	Epidemiological typing using AFLP.....	15
1.2.4.4.3	Multiple-locus variable-number tandem repeat analysis.....	15
1.2.4.4.3.1	Epidemiological typing using MLVA.....	16
1.2.4.4.3.2	MLVA typing of <i>Salmonella</i> .....	16
1.2.4.4.3.3	MLVA the next gold standard typing method for <i>Salmonella</i> ?.....	17
1.2.4.4.4	Multiple amplification of prophage locus typing.....	17
1.3	Bacteriophages.....	19
1.3.1	Morphology of tailed-phages.....	19
1.3.2	Lytic versus lysogenic life style.....	20
1.3.3	Gene regulatory pathways for lytic and lysogenic life cycles.....	20
1.3.4	Prophage possessed immunity.....	24
1.3.5	Prophage induction.....	25
1.3.6	Impact of lysogeny on bacterial evolution.....	31
1.3.6.1	Lysogenic conversion.....	31
1.3.6.2	Transduction.....	31
1.3.6.3	Impact of lysogeny on bacterial genome diversification.....	32
1.3.7	Bacteriophage evolution.....	32
1.4	Aim of the study.....	35
<b>CHAPTER 2 GENERAL METHODS AND MATERIALS.....</b>		<b>37</b>
2.1	Media.....	37
2.1.1	Solid media.....	37
2.1.2	Liquid media.....	37
2.2	Chemicals and reagents.....	38
2.2.1	Antibiotics.....	38
2.2.2	Oligonucleotide primers.....	38
2.2.3	Enzymes.....	39
2.3	Bacterial isolates.....	39
2.4	Extraction of bacterial chromosomal DNA.....	39
2.5	Polymerase chain reaction.....	40
2.5.1	PCR cycling parameters.....	40
2.5.2	PCR amplification of <i>sucA</i> gene locus.....	40
2.5.3	Agarose gel electrophoresis of DNA.....	40
2.6	DNA fragment size analysis.....	41
2.7	DNA sequencing.....	41

2.8	Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis.....	42
2.8.1	Agarose plug preparation.....	42
2.8.2	Cell lysis.....	42
2.8.3	Restriction endonuclease digestion.....	42
2.8.4	Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis.....	43
2.8.5	Visualisation.....	43
2.9	Typing data analysis.....	43
<b>CHAPTER 3 MOLECULAR TYPING OF SALMONELLA VIRCHOW.....</b>		<b>56</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	56
3.2	Materials and methods.....	59
3.2.1	Bacterial isolates.....	59
3.2.2	Detection and propagation of inducible bacteriophages.....	59
3.2.2.1	Bacteriophage induction.....	60
3.2.2.2	Plaque assay.....	60
3.2.2.3	Bacteriophage propagation.....	60
3.2.2.4	Determination of bacteriophage titres.....	61
3.2.3	Genetic characterisation of induced bacteriophages.....	61
3.2.3.1	Bacteriophage DNA extraction.....	61
3.2.3.2	DNA quantification.....	62
3.2.3.3	Degenerate-oligonucleotide primed (DOP)-PCR.....	62
3.2.3.4	<i>in vitro</i> of DOP-PCR products.....	63
3.2.3.5	M13 PCR and sequencing.....	63
3.3	Results.....	65
3.3.1	MAPLT.....	65
3.3.1.1	Identification of prophage loci useful for strain differentiation.....	65
3.3.1.2	MAPLT differentiation of <i>S. Virchow</i> isolates.....	65
3.3.2	PFGE.....	66
3.3.3	MLVA.....	66
3.3.4	Composite assay of MAPLT / STTR-5.....	77
3.3.5	Comparison of differentiating abilities between MAPLT, PFGE and composite MAPLT/ STTR-5.....	77
3.3.6	Outbreak investigations using MAPLT/ STTR-5 typing method and PFGE.....	77
3.3.7	Comparison of typing profiles between all PT 8 isolates....	78
3.4	Discussion.....	85
3.5	Chapter summary.....	90

<b>CHAPTER 4 MOLECULAR TYPING OF <i>SALMONELLA BOVISMORBIFICANS</i></b> .....	91
4.1 Introduction.....	91
4.2 Materials and methods.....	93
4.2.1 Bacterial isolates.....	93
4.2.2 Direct DNA extraction from non-viable PT11 outbreak isolates.....	93
4.3 Results.....	94
4.3.1 PFGE.....	94
4.3.2 MAPLT.....	95
4.3.3 MLVA.....	97
4.3.4 Composite assay of MAPLT/ MLVA.....	98
4.3.5 Comparison of the differentiating abilities between the four molecular typing approaches.....	98
4.3.6 Use of the combined MAPT/ MLVA for outbreak epidemiological typing.....	112
4.4 Discussion.....	116
4.5 Chapter summary.....	119
<b>CHAPTER 5 MOLECULAR TYPING OF <i>SALMONELLA HEIDELBERG</i></b> .....	121
5.1 Introduction.....	121
5.2 Materials and methods.....	123
5.2.1 Bacterial isolates.....	123
5.2.2 Identification of novel MLVA loci.....	123
5.2.3 Evaluation of the usefulness of the novel MLVA loci.....	124
5.3 Results.....	126
5.3.1 MAPLT.....	126
5.3.2 PFGE.....	126
5.3.3 MLVA.....	133
5.3.3.1 Allelic variability of the published MLVA loci.....	133
5.3.3.2 Allelic variability of the novel MLVA loci.....	133
5.3.3.3 MLVA differentiation of the sixty-four <i>S. Heidelberg</i> isolates.....	133
5.3.4 Composite assay of MAPLT and MLVA.....	136
5.3.5 Comparison of the differentiating abilities between the four molecular typing approaches.....	136
5.4 Discussion.....	141
5.5 Chapter summary.....	144
<b>CHAPTER 6 GENETIC CHARACTERISATION OF BACTERIOPHAGES IN <i>SALMONELLA</i></b> .....	145
6.1 Introduction.....	145
6.2 Materials and methods.....	147

6.2.1	Bacterial isolates.....	147
6.2.2	Purification of bacteriophages.....	147
6.2.3	Propagation of extracted bacteriophages.....	150
6.2.4	Bacteriophage DNA extraction, quantity and quality evaluation.....	150
6.2.5	Bacteriophage genome sequencing.....	151
6.2.6	DNA sequence analysis.....	151
6.3	Results and discussion.....	153
6.3.1	Genomic sequence analysis of PV10.....	153
6.3.1.2	Genetic relationships between PV10 and <i>Salmonella</i> (cryptic) phages in NCBI database.....	163
6.3.2	Genomic sequence analysis of PH03.....	165
6.3.2.1	Genetic relationships between PH03 and <i>Salmonella</i> (cryptic) phages in NCBI database.....	165
6.3.2.2	Pair-wise comparison between Gifsy-2 related phages of <i>S. Heidelberg</i> .....	177
6.3.3	Usefulness of Gifsy-like phage elements for differentiation of <i>Salmonella</i> strains.....	179
6.3.4	Putative virulence genes carried by Gifsy-related phages PV10 and PH03.....	184
6.4	Chapter summary.....	186
<b>CHAPTER 7 GENERAL SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....</b>		<b>188</b>
7.1	Concluding remarks.....	191
<b>References.....</b>		<b>193</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>		<b>214</b>
Appendix 1.1	The complete list of 62 <i>S. Virchow</i> isolates used in Chapter 3.....	214
Appendix 1.2	The complete list of 73 <i>S. Bovismorbificans</i> isolates used in Chapter 4.....	216
Appendix 1.3	The complete list of 64 <i>S. Heidelberg</i> isolates used in Chapter 5.....	218
Appendix 2.1	The complete positive MAPLT reactions for the 43 <i>S. Virchow</i> isolates.....	220
Appendix 2.2	The complete positive MAPLT reactions for the 60 <i>S. Bovismorbificans</i> isolates.....	222
Appendix 2.3	The complete positive MAPLT reactions for the 60 <i>S. Heidelberg</i> isolates.....	228

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

aa	Amino acid
ATCC	American type culture collection
AFLP	Amplified fragment length polymorphism
AGRF	Australian Genomic Research Facility
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ASRC	Australian <i>Salmonella</i> Reference Centre
bp; kb	Base pair(s); kilobase(s)
BHI	Brain heart infusion
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
CHEF	Clamped homogeneous electric field
DI	Simpson's index of diversity
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DOP-PCR	Degenerate-oligonucleotide primed – PCR
dNTP	Deoxyribobucleic acid
dsDNA	Double-stranded DNA
DT	Definitive type
EDTA	Ethylene-diaminetetra-acetic acid
g; mg; µg	gram; milligram; microgram
HBA	Columbia horse blood agar
IMVS	Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science
IS	Insertion sequence
l; ml; µl	Litre(s); millilitre(s); microlitre(s)
LB	Luria Bertani
LMP	Low melting point
M; mM; µM	Molar; millimolar; micromolar
MAPLT	Multiple amplification of prophage locus typing
MH	Mueller Hinton
MLEE	Multilocus enzyme electrophoresis
MLST	Multilocus sequencing typing
MLVA	Multiple-locus variable-number tandem repeat analysis
MOI	Multiplicity of infection
mPCR/RLB	Multiplex PCR-based reverse line blot hybridisation
MPU	Media Production Unit
n/a	Not applicable

NCTC	National collection of type cultures
NGS	Next generation sequencing
nt	Nucleotide
O/B	Outbreak
ORFs	Open reading frames
O/S	Overseas
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PFGE	Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis
pfu	Plaque forming units
PT	Phage type
RAPD	Randomly amplified polymorphic DNA
RDNC	Reacts does not conform
Rep-PCR	Repetitive element PCR
RFLP	Restriction fragment length polymorphism
SNP	Single-nucleotide polymorphism
SPI	<i>Salmonella</i> pathogenicity island
TAE	Tris- Acetate-EDTA
TE	Tris-EDTA
Tris	(hydroxymethyl) aminomethane
TRF	Tandem Repeat Finder
TSI	Triple sugar iron
TTSS	Type III secretion system
UN	Untypable
UPGMA	Unweighted-pair group method with arithmetic averages
VNTR	Variable-number tandem repeat
WGS	Whole genome sequencing
v/v	Volume per volume
w/v	Weight per volume
XLD	Xylose-lysine-desoxycholate

## DECLARATION

I Chun Chun Young declare that the work described herein contains no material that has been previously submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university and to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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Young, C. C., I. R. Ross and M. W. Heuzenroeder. 2012. A new methodology for differentiation and typing of closely related *Salmonella enterica* serovar Heidelberg isolates, *Curr Microbiol*, DOI: 10.1007/s00284-012-0179-3

## SUMMARY

*Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* is the leading causes of food-borne infections and outbreaks worldwide and are therefore routinely monitored in many countries. Both epidemiological surveillance and tracking outbreaks require typing systems to characterise bacterial isolates. Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) is the most widely applied molecular method for *Salmonella* outbreak epidemiological typing despite that the method being relatively labour-intensive, generating restriction patterns that are subjective in nature and can be difficult to analyse. Furthermore, the recent emergence of homogeneous *Salmonella* phage groups (e.g. *S. Typhimurium* DT104) has hampered the discriminatory power of PFGE in outbreak settings.

The combination of these factors has led to the exploitation of alternative methods. Two of these emerging typing methods are multiple-locus variable-tandem repeat analysis (MLVA) and multiple amplification of prophage locus typing (MAPLT) that have been developed for the globally significant serovars: *S. Typhimurium* and *S. Enteritidis*. In this study, MLVA and MAPLT were being further investigated for use in other *Salmonella* serovars that are of significance to Australia. These serovars include *S. Virchow*, *S. Bovismorbificans* and *S. Heidelberg*. Overall, the developed MAPLT schemes demonstrated a comparable differentiating ability with PFGE for the serovars as a whole. However development of discriminative MLVA methods in the study was not always successful using the published MLVA loci, therefore prompting the need of examining the MLVA loci from the complete genomes of the serovars.

Differentiation within predominating phage types of the studied serovars was also examined. Both MAPLT and PFGE displayed similar levels of intra-phage type differentiation suggesting the usefulness for outbreak investigations. However strains were separated optimally when using MAPLT in association with discriminative MLVA primers. The composite assay of MAPLT/MLVA for *S. Bovismorbificans* and *S. Virchow* were further examined in the retrospective outbreak studies. It was observed that outbreak isolates generally showed identical or highly similar MAPLT/MLVA profiles (one locus difference). The results suggested that MAPLT / MLVA could confirm the close genetic relationship between outbreak isolates. However result interpretation guidelines might need to be established individually for each serovar due to the differences in the relative genetic similarity displayed within each serovar. It is expected that further enhancement of the composite assays could easily be carried out even when the complete genomic data of the *Salmonella* serovars are lacking. It is an advantage that MAPLT could be improved through using a DOP-PCR (degenerate oligonucleotide primed-PCR) procedure to detect additional prophage loci for further strain differentiation. Overall, the

study suggested that composite assays can also be developed for fine levels of differentiation of other *Salmonella* serovars to meet local epidemiological needs when required.

Development of MAPLT involved genetic characterisation of phages residing in the studied serovars. It was noted that DNA elements shared between phages Gifsy-1 and Gifsy-2 were frequently detected from these serovars. Complete genome analysis were subsequently performed on a *S. Virchow* phage (PV10) and a *S. Heidelberg* phage (PH03), which demonstrated their high DNA similarity to Gifsy-1 and Gifsy-2 respectively. Further analysis demonstrated that Gifsys-related phages are possibly widespread within *Salmonella*. Since the phages were observed to carry different sets of virulence genes between serovars, this study hypothesised that Gifsy-related phages may have a significant role in shaping the epidemiology of *Salmonella*.