Reviewer's report

Title: Detection of virulence genes in Malaysian Shigella spp. strains by multiplex PCR assay

Version: 5 Date: 19 November 2004

Reviewer: Lei Wang

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions
This paper studied the prevalence of four virulence genes (set1A, set1B, ial and ipaH) in 110 Malaysian Shigella clinical isolates using multiplex PCR. Detection of these four genes in clinical isolates from various sources and location using monoplex PCR has already been reported in a number of studies. The authors modified the monoplex PCRs into a multiplex PCR employing the primers used in previous studies, and gave results showing that the pattern for the prevalence of the four virulence genes in different serotypes is in consistent with previous studies. The authors also did tests on spiked faecal samples and clinical specimens.

In the revised result "The described assay is reproducible, sensitive, easy to perform with a high throughput and is able to give a presumptive identification of the causal pathogen, which should be confirmed by culture techniques using selective media. An added advantage would be that EIEC, which gives a similar illness, may also be detected by this method, as EIEC also harbours ial and ipaH genes." was acceptable.

The other unclear points in the previous manuscript were revised in this new manuscript. The minor errors about writing could be checked by the author and the author can be trusted to make these.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:

None