Author's response to reviews

Title: Using BOX-PCR to exclude a clonal outbreak of melioidosis

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editors

Thanks for the opportunity to revise our manuscript. We addressed all the Reviewer Revision recommendations as follows:

Reviewer 1
No Major Revisions suggested
Minor revisions
1. The full reference for MEGA now included - Ref 12.
2. Ref 4 - authors added as requested.

Discretionary
We have added to the discussion on limitations of the method - see Rev 2, point 4 below.

Reviewer 2
Major Revisions
1. As requested we have clarified the Figure 2 numbers both a) in the text by expanding Results by adding that Figure 2 "...shows results for the 27 isolates in the cluster study, represented by 8 STs within the 5 clonal groups, with 4 additional unlinked isolates each from a different ST included for comparison" and b) by adding ST details to the Legend for figure 2 as suggested - "Four unrelated isolates are included for comparison; 0875 (ST 115), 1153 (ST 117), 1869 (ST 337) and 1839 (ST 336). Clonal Group I includes ST 109 and ST 338; Clonal Group II includes ST 132 and ST 133; Clonal Group III is ST 123; Clonal Group IV is ST 284 and Clonal Group V includes ST 125 and ST 126."
2. As requested we have added a gel photograph of a BOX-PCR - see the new Figure 3.
3. The comparison between PFGE and MLST was previously documented in a previous publication from us - we now include a brief discussion of this in the first paragraph of Discussion - "We have previously shown that there is excellent congruence between PFGE and MLST, with PFGE and MLST providing similar results for local epidemiological investigations[13]."
4. We now include note of the two software modules in Methods - "The BioNumerics application modules used were the Fingerprint types and the Comparison and Cluster Analysis modules." And we also have added to the end of Discussion as follows - "In addition, while BOX-PCR gels can be visualised directly for assessing small numbers of isolates (Figure 3), our methodology for electronic analysis of larger isolate numbers requires purchase of software modules."
5. We have altered the text to refer directly to Figure 1 for the reader to visualise the clustering - ".... as evident from Figure 1".

Minor Revisions
1. We have altered the text to include clonal "group" so it is consistent with Figure 2, while still also referring to clusters in relation to outbreaks.
2. Reference 17 corrected as requested.

Thanks

Bart Currie