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Multidrug resistance and ESBL profile of *Salmonella* serovars isolated from poultry birds and foods of animal origin

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Abstract

Salmonella is a foodborne pathogen having a worldwide public health concern. The present study was undertaken to study antibiogram profiles of multidrug resistant *Salmonella* isolates and detection of β -lactamase (ESBL-Extended Spectrum β -Lactamases) activity by both phenotypic and genotypic methods. Out of 21 *Salmonella* spp. isolated from different sources, antibiogram revealed 100% susceptibility to co-trimoxazole and polymyxin-B, intermediate resistance against ampicillin (28.57%), cefotaxime (19.04%), gentamycin (14.28%), amikacin (9.52%), ceftriaxone (9.52%), ciprofloxacin (9.52%), tetracycline (4.76%) and streptomycin (4.76%) while, higher resistance was observed towards amikacin (61.90%) followed by ampicillin (52.30%), tetracycline (38.09%), ceftriaxone (33.33%), gentamicin, sulfamethoxazole, cefotaxime and nalidixic acid (28.57% each), ciprofloxacin (23.80%), doxycycline hydrochloride and chloramphenicol (19.04% each) and streptomycin (9.52%). Of the 21 *Salmonella* isolates, 15 isolates were found resistant to β -lactam antibiotics like ceftriaxone (33.33%), cefotaxime (28.57%), aztreonam (23.80%) and ceftazidime (23.80%). β -lactamase genes were detected in a total of 11 isolates (11/21, 52.38%) where *bla*TEM being the predominant gene detected (9/11, 81.18%), followed by *bla*CTX-M group-2 (2/11, 18.18%), *bla*OXA (1/11, 9.09%) and *bla*CTX-M group-9 (1/11, 9.09%) and no single isolate showed *bla*CTX-M group-1 and *bla*SHV genes.

Keywords: *Salmonella* typhimurium, enteritidis, antibiogram, ESBL detection

Introduction

In the past few decades, the emergence of antibiotic resistance among different species of bacteria is on rise (Davies and Davies, 2010) [12]. This antibiotic resistance poses great threat to public health in case of zoonotically important bacteria transmitted from food animals. So, contaminated poultry products serve as an important threat to public health as it is important reservoir of *Salmonellae*. Irrational use of antibiotics as growth promoters in poultry is an important factor that has favoured the selection of resistant bacteria in faecal microflora of poultry. These resistant microflora easily pass into human beings through the food chain resulting in serious consequences in terms of treatment failure and leading to rapid outbreaks of antibiotic resistant *Salmonellae* (Van Den Boggard *et al.*, 1999) [31].

In present days, *Salmonella* species showing increasing resistance to commonly used antimicrobials and those strains that have acquired multiple drug resistance (MDR) against two or more therapeutic agents have become a matter of concern. Although fluoroquinolones, such as ofloxacin, ciprofloxacin and extended-spectrum cephalosporins, such as cefotaxime and ceftriaxone, have proved to be effective alternatives but resistance to these agents also has emerged (Parry, 2003) [22].

The emergence and spread of antibiotic resistant strains particularly the detection of the Extended Spectrum Beta-lactamase (ESBL) *Salmonella* species, is fast becoming an emerging world threat (Ranjbar *et al.*, 2010) [24]. ESBLs are enzymes capable of hydrolyzing penicillin, cephalosporin and oxyiminino- β -lactam compounds (i.e. cefuroxime, third generation cephalosporin and aztreonam) with cephamycins and carbapenems as exceptions. Most ESBLs belong to the Ambler class "A" β -lactamases and are inhibited by β -lactamase inhibitors (Clavulanate, sulbactam and tazobactam). ESBLs are plasmid-mediated and as a result, are easily transmitted among members of the Enterobacteriaceae family. This potential exacerbates the spread of resistance against β -lactams and other commonly used antibiotics including quinolones and aminoglycosides (Kocgoz *et al.*, 2006) [18].

This has further limited the therapeutic options available and hence complicated the treatment and management of infections by such organisms. Hence the present study was undertaken to detect the multidrug resistant *Salmonella* spp. and their β -lactamase activity.

Materials and Methods

A total of 21 different *Salmonella* spp. (7 *S. Typhimurium*, 7 belonging to *Salmonella* group II, 3 belonging to group G, 2 *S. enteritidis*, 1 each of *S. Daytona* and *S. Linderburg*) which were isolated (from different sources like Poultry cloacal swabs, chicken, mutton and pork) at Department of Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology, NTR C.V. Sc, Gannavaram were selected for present study.

Antibiogram and β -lactamase production

About 14 antibiotics from different classes were used for the study of antibiogram profiles and determination of MDR *Salmonella*. The antibiotics used were Penicillins: ampicillin, Aminoglycosides: amikacin, gentamicin, streptomycin, tetracyclines: doxycycline hydrochloride, tetracycline, Sulfonamides: co-trimoxazole, sulamethazole, Quinolones: ciprofloxacin, nalidixic acid, Phenicols: chloramphenicol, Polymyxins: polymyxin, Cephalosporins: ceftriaxone and cefpodoxime by Kirby Bauer disc diffusion method on Muller Hinton agar (Bauer *et al.*, 1966) [3]. Resistance to atleast 3 antibiotic classes was taken as MDR (Minimum one in each class). Direct colony suspension of each isolate was made in PBS (pH 7.4) and the turbidity was adjusted to 0.5 McFarland units (equivalent to an approximate cell density of 1.5×10^8 CFU/ml). The diameter of inhibition zones was measured and susceptibility patterns of *Salmonella* species were interpreted according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) guidelines (CLSI, 2018).

Detection of ESBL production was done phenotypically by

Phenotypic Screening Test (PST) and Phenotypic Confirmation Test (PCT) as recommended by CLSI (2018) guidelines. PST was carried out using four indicator β -lactam antibiotics: cefotaxime (CTX, 30 μ g), ceftazidime (CAZ, 30 μ g), ceftriaxone (CTR, 30 μ g) and aztreonam (AT, 30 μ g). Resistance to at least one of the four antibiotics was considered to be positive PST for ESBL production. The positive PST isolates were then subjected to PCT by combination disc method using three pairs of antibiotic discs: ceftazidime (CAZ, 30 μ g), ceftazidime plus clavulanic acid (CAC, 30/10 μ g), cefotaxime (CTX, 30 μ g), cefotaxime plus clavulanic acid (CEC, 30/10 μ g) and ceftriaxone (CTR, 30 μ g), ceftriaxone plus tazobactam (CIT, 30/10 μ g). ESBL production was confirmed when zone diameter around the combination discs was more than or equal to 5 mm when compared to discs containing respective cephalosporin alone (Drieux *et al.*, 2008) [13].

Multiplex PCR for ESBL genes

mPCR assay was used to detect different classes of β -lactamase genes. In the present study, *bla*TEM, *bla*SHV and *bla*OXA gene (Fig. 1) primers have been used for the detection of broad spectrum as well as extended spectrum TEM, SHV and OXA β -lactamases, *bla*CTX-M group 1, 2 and 9 gene (Fig. 2) primers for CTX-M ESBLs.

DNA from all the PCT positive *Salmonella* isolates were subjected to two mPCR assays for detection of ESBL genes (Table 1). PCR assays were optimized in 25 μ l reaction mixture containing 2 μ l of DNA template, 12.5 μ l of 2x master mix (Go Taq Green Master Mix, Promega), 0.5 μ l each of forward and reverse primers (10 pmol/ μ l) and the rest of the volume is made by adding nuclease free water, under standardized cycling conditions: initial denaturation at 94°C for 10 min; 30 cycles of 94°C for 40 s, 60°C for 40 s and 72°C for 1 min and a final elongation step at 72°C for 7 min.

Table 1: Oligonucleotide primers used for the detection of different β -lactamase genes (Dallene *et al.*, 2010)

Primer	Target	Nucleotide sequence	Amplicon size (bp)
m-PCR I			
MultiTSO-T	<i>bla</i> TEM gene	CATTTCCGTGTGCGCCCTTATTC CGTTCATCCATAGTTGCCTGAC	800
MultiTSO-S	<i>bla</i> SHV gene	AGCCGCTTGAGCAAATTAAC ATCCCGCAGATAAATCACCAC	713
MultiTSO-O	<i>bla</i> OXA gene	GGCACCAGATTCAACTTTCAAG GACCCCAAGTTTCTGTAAAGTG	564
m-PCR II			
MultiCTXM-Gp1	<i>bla</i> CTX-M group 1 gene	TTAGGAAATGTGCCGCTGTA CGATATCGTTGGTGGTACCAT	688
MultiCTXM- Gp2	<i>Bla</i> CTX-M group 2 gene	CGTTAACGGCACGATGAC CGATATCGTTGGTGGTACCAT	404
MultiCTXM- Gp9	<i>Bla</i> CTX-M group 9 gene	TCAAGCCTGCCGATCTGGT TGATTCTGCCGCTAAG	561

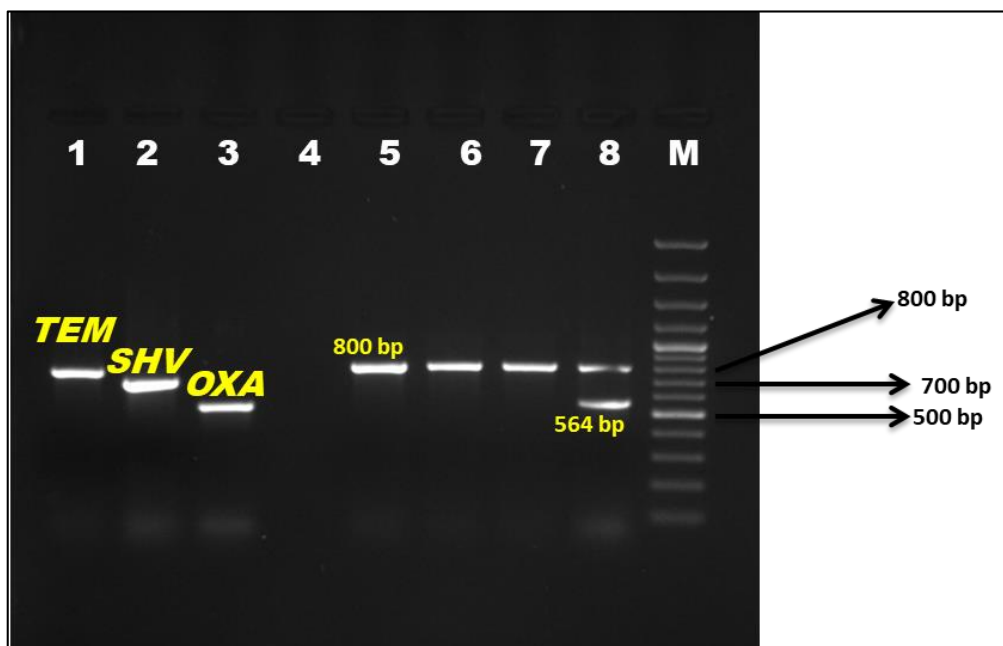


Fig 1: Gel photograph of m PCR I targeting *bla*_{TEM}, *bla*_{SHV} and *bla*_{OXA} genes in ESBL producing *Salmonella* isolates.

Lane 1	Known DNA standard for <i>bla</i> _{TEM} (800 bp)
Lane 2	Known DNA standard of <i>Klebsiellapneumoniae</i> (ATCC 700603) for <i>bla</i> _{SHV} (713 bp)
Lane 3	Known DNA standard for <i>bla</i> _{OXA} (564 bp)
Lane 4	Negative control
Lane 5 & 6	<i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium isolate carrying <i>bla</i> _{TEM} gene
Lane 7	<i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis isolate carrying <i>bla</i> _{TEM} gene
Lane 8	<i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium isolate carrying <i>bla</i> _{TEM} and <i>bla</i> _{OXA} gene
Lane M	Molecular weight marker (100bp)

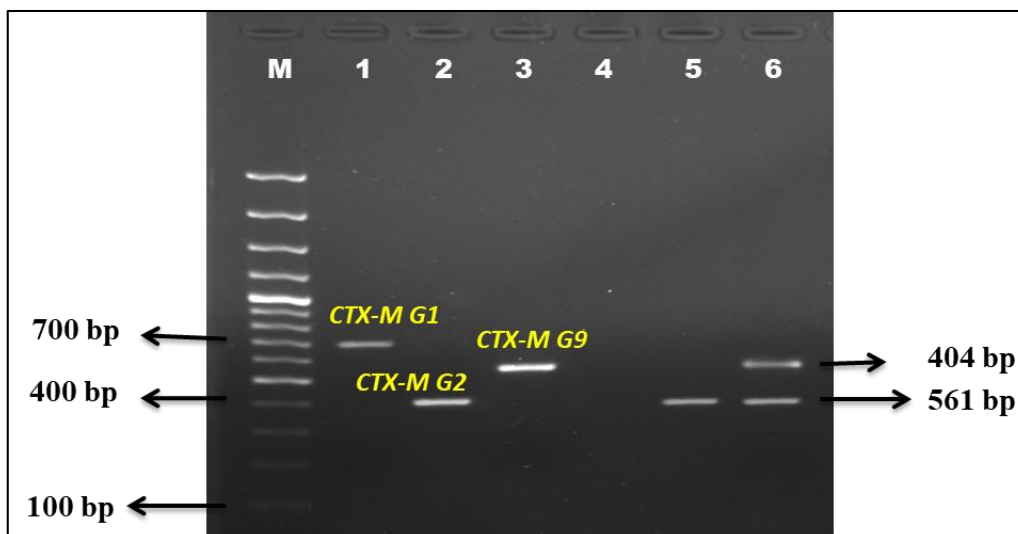


Fig 2: Gel photograph of m-PCR targeting *bla*_{CTX-M} group 1, group 2 and group 9

Lane M	Molecular weight marker (100bp)
Lane 1	Known DNA standard of for <i>bla</i> _{CTX-M} group 1 (688 bp)gene
Lane 2	Known DNA standard for <i>bla</i> _{CTX-M} group 2 (404 bp)gene
Lane 3	Known DNA standard for <i>bla</i> _{CTX-M} group 9 (561 bp) gene
Lane 4	Negative control
Lane 5	<i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium isolate carrying <i>bla</i> _{CTX-M} group 2 (404 bp) gene
Lane 6	<i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium carrying both <i>bla</i> _{CTX-M} group 2 and grop 9 (404bp & 561 bp)genes

Results and Discussion

Among *Salmonella* serotypes, *S. Typhimurium* and *S. Enteritidis* are the most important agents of foodborne salmonellosis in humans (Baay and Huisin'tveld, 1993 and Tan and Shelef, 1999). *Salmonella* group II, considered as

Salmonella enterica subspp. *salamae*, comprising of *Salmonella* Sofia, *Salmonella* Tranoroa, *Salmonella* Hagenbeck, *Salmonella* Nairobi serovars will be commonly associated with cold blooded animals but can be an occasional pathogen in man and other animals (Wuthe, 1969) [34].

Salmonella group G includes serovars like *S. Poona*, *S. Worthington*, *S. Mississippi*, *S. Grumpensis*, *S. Atlanta*, *S. Cubana*, *S. Wichita* etc. (Bridges and Scott, 1935) [5].

The emergence of multidrug resistance (MDR) among foodborne pathogens is a cause of grave concern to public health (Tiwari *et al.*, 2013) [29]. In this context, an *in vitro* antibiotic sensitivity test was performed for 21 *Salmonella* isolates obtained from different sources using 14 different antibiotics belonging to different classes, to know the multidrug resistance among *Salmonella* isolates (Table-2 & 3). It was found that all the isolates were sensitive to co-trimoxazole (100%) and polymyxin-B (100%) followed by higher susceptibility towards streptomycin (85.71%) chloramphenicol (80.95%), doxycycline hydrochloride (80.95%), nalidixic acid (71.42%), sulphamethoxyzole

(71.42%), ciprofloxacin (66.66%), tetracycline (57.14%), gentamycin (57.14%), ceftriaxone (57.14%), cefotaxime (52.38%), amikacin (28.57%) and ampicillin (19.05%).

Among different *Salmonella* strains, the highest percentage of resistance was observed against amikacin (61.90%), followed by ampicillin (52.30%), tetracycline (38.09), ceftriaxone (33.33%), cefotaxime, gentamicin, nalidixic acid and sulfamethoxazole (28.57% each), ciprofloxacin (23.80%), doxycycline hydrochloride and chloramphenicol (19.04% each) and streptomycin (9.52%). Notable percentage of isolates were intermediately resistant against ampicillin (28.57%) followed by cefotaxime (19.04%), gentamycin (14.28%), amikacin (9.52%), ceftriaxone (9.52%), ciprofloxacin (9.52%), tetracycline (4.76%) and streptomycin (4.76%).

Table 2: Antibiotic resistance/sensitivity pattern among *Salmonella* isolates

Antimicrobial Agent (dose)	Sensitive		Intermediate		Resistant	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amikacin-AK (30µg)	6/21	(28.57%)	2/21	(9.52%)	13/21	(61.90%)
Ampicillin- A (10µg)	4/21	(19.05%)	6/21	(28.57%)	11/21	(52.30%)
Cefpoxitaxime-CTX (30µg)	11/21	(52.38%)	4/21	(19.04%)	6/21	(28.57%)
Ceftriaxone-CTR (30µg)	12/21	(57.14%)	2/21	(9.52%)	7/21	(33.33%)
Chloramphenicol-C (30µg)	17/21	(80.95%)	0	0	4/21	(19.04)
Ciprofloxacin-CIP (5µg)	14/21	(66.66%)	2/21	(9.52%)	5/21	(23.80%)
Co-Trimoxazole-COT (25µg)	21/21	(100%)	0	0	0	0
Doxycycline-DO (30µg)	17/21	(80.95%)	0	0	4/21	(19.04%)
Gentamicin- GE (10µg)	12/21	(57.14%)	3/21	(14.28%)	6/21	(28.57%)
Nalidixic acid-NA (30µg)	15/21	(71.42%)	0	0	6/21	(28.57%)
Polymyxin B- PB (300 U)	21/21	(100%)	0	0	0	0
Streptomycin-S (10µg)	18/21	(85.71%)	1/21	(4.76%)	2/21	(9.52%)
Sulfamethoxazole- SM (300U)	15/21	(71.42%)	0	0	6/21	(28.57%)
Tetracycline-T (30µg)	12/21	(57.14%)	1/21	(4.76%)	8/21	(38.09%)

Table 3: Antibiotic resistance patterns of different *Salmonella* serovars

Antibiotic	Typhimurium	Group II	Enteritidis	Group G	Daytona	Linderburg	Total
Resistant strains/no.of strains examined							
AK	5/7	3/7	2/2	1/3	1/1	1/1	13/21
A	4/7	5/7	1/2	1/3	0/1	0/1	11/21
CTX	3/7	2/7	1/2	0/3	0/1	0/1	6/21
CTR	3/7	3/7	0/2	1/3	0/1	0/1	7/21
C	1/7	2/7	1/2	0/3	0/1	0/1	4/21
CIP	2/7	2/7	0/2	1/3	0/1	0/1	5/21
COT	0/7	1/7	0/2	0/3	0/1	0/1	1/21
DO	2/7	1/7	0/2	0/3	0/1	1/1	4/21
GE	2/7	2/7	1/2	0/3	0/1	1/1	6/21
NA	2/7	1/7	1/2	1/3	1/1	0/1	6/21
PB	0/7	0/7	0/2	0/3	0/1	0/1	0/21
S	2/7	1/7	0/2	1/3	0/1	1/1	5/21
SM	2/7	1/7	0/2	1/3	0/1	1/1	5/21
T	4/7	2/7	1/2	0/3	1/1	0/1	8/21

Murugakar *et al.* (2005) [21] in their study reported that 44.21% (95/654) of the *Salmonella* isolates were resistant to the tetracycline, 17.9% to nalidixic acid and 15.79% to chloramphenicol which were almost in accordance with the present findings of resistance towards tetracycline (38.09%), nalidixic acid (28.57%) and chloramphenicol (19.09%).

The findings of the present study revealed that 28.57% & 33.33% of *Salmonella* isolates were resistant to cefotaxime and ceftriaxone, while 100% sensitivity to cefotaxime was reported by both Mir *et al.* (2009) [19] and Smith *et al.* (2010) [27]. In contrast, 100% sensitivity to ceftriaxone was reported by Akter *et al.* (2012) [11], Hasan *et al.* (2011) [16] and Begum *et al.* (2010) [4]. However, a lower level of 6% sensitivity to

ceftriaxone was recorded by Chen *et al.* (2004) [7]. The study revealed 100% sensitivity of *Salmonella* isolates towards polymyxin B and co-trimoxazole while, Chandane *et al.* (2017) [6] reported 93.1% sensitivity to polymyxin B. As that of present study, higher sensitivity reports of 95.8%, 97% & 75% to co-trimoxazole were given by of Sharvani *et al.* (2016) [26], Ziech *et al.* (2016) [36] and Samanta *et al.* (2014) [25], respectively.

Out of 7 *S. Typhimurium* isolates, highest resistance was found against amikacin (71.42%) followed by ampicillin (57.14%), tetracycline (57.14%), ceftriaxone (42.85%), cefotaxime (42.85%), sulphamethoxyzole (28.57%), ciprofloxacin (28.57%), doxycycline hydrochloride (28.57%),

gentamycin (28.57%), nalidixic acid (28.57%), streptomycin (28.57%) and chloramphenicol (14.28%) and among all 7 *S. Typhimurium* isolates, 5 isolates showed MDR. The resistance pattern of *S. Typhimurium* observed towards different antibiotics like ampicillin (57.14%), ceftriaxone (42.85%), and ciprofloxacin (28.57%), were in agreement with the findings of Emmanuel *et al.* (2015) [14] who reported 43.5%, 39.5% and 29.5% resistance in *S. Typhimurium* isolates, respectively.

The two *S. Enteritidis* isolates have shown 100% resistance towards amikacin (2/2, 100%) and one isolate showed resistance towards ampicillin, cefotaxime, chloramphenicol, gentamicin, nalidixic acid and tetracycline.

Strains were considered multidrug resistant if they were resistant to at least three classes of antimicrobials (at least one antimicrobial of each class) (Ziech *et al.*, 2016). In present study, out of 21 *Salmonella* isolates, 12 (57.14%) were showing multiple drug resistance, MDR was found among 5 (41.66%, 5/12) *S. Typhimurium* isolates, 3 (25%, 3/12) *Salmonella* group II, 2 (16.66%, 2/22) *Salmonella* group G, one *S. Enteritidis* (8.3%, 1/12) and one *S. Linderburg* (8.3%, 1/12) isolate. Enabulele *et al.* (2010) and Perez-montano *et al.* (2012) reported 62% and 34% of MDR *Salmonella*, respectively. However higher MDR of 86% among *Salmonella* was reported by Zeich *et al.* (2016).

In the present study, as a part of first step recommended by CLSI, *Salmonella* isolates were screened for resistance to indicator cephalosporins (cefotaxime, ceftriaxone, ceftazidime and aztreonam), which revealed resistance to aztreonam in 5 (23.80%) isolates, cefotaxime in 6 (28.57%), ceftriaxone in 7 (33.33%) and ceftazidime in 5 (23.80%) isolates. Since ESBLs vary in their hydrolysis of these cephalosporins as substrates, resistance to at least one of them should be considered as positive (CLSI, 2018).

Of the 15 isolates that were positive in screening test, 9 isolates were phenotypically confirmed as ESBL producers by Combination Disc Method (CDM)-with an increase in inhibition zone diameter by a minimum of 5 mm), which includes *S. Typhimurium* (4), *S. Enteritidis* (1) and *Salmonella* group II (4) isolates. The overall prevalence of β -lactamase genes in *Salmonella* isolates was found to be 52.38% (11/21). Prevalence rates of β -lactamase genes among *S. Typhimurium* was 85.71% (6/7) and among 6 isolates 4 displayed *bla*TEM (57.14%, 4/7) and one isolate of *S. Enteritidis* (1/2, 50%) displayed presence of *bla*TEM gene. Among all *Salmonella* isolates, the most prevalent β -lactamase gene was *bla*TEM (9/11, 81.18%), followed by *bla*CTX-M group-2 (2/11, 18.18%), *bla*OXA (1/11, 9.09%) and *bla*CTX-M group-9 (1/11, 9.09%). *bla*TEM was found in 57.14% (4/7) of *S. Typhimurium* which was in accordance with the findings of Akiyemi *et al.* (2017) who reported 79% among *S. Typhimurium* isolates. One isolate of *S. Typhimurium* was carrying both *bla*CTX-M group-2 and *bla*CTX-M group-9 genes. Yu *et al.* (2011) also reported presence of *bla*CTX-M group-9 in *S. Typhimurium* isolates. One isolate of *S. Typhimurium* showed presence of both TEM and OXA genes.

Conclusion

The present study indicated that the results should be taken as precautionary warning for the spread of multidrug resistance. The difference in resistance patterns to antimicrobials in different places may be due to the usage of different antibiotics for therapy and mainly emerging of MDR *Salmonella* isolates are due to the sub therapeutic dose or

excessive use of commonly used antimicrobials for the treatment of livestock, poultry or in other sources. Contact with animal faeces, feeds, water sources, agriculture etc. may be cause of the transmission of resistant genes from various vectors to food producing animals. So, infections of *Salmonella* were no longer be treated by conventional therapeutic agents. Also, the emergence and spread of antibiotic resistant strains particularly the detection of the ESBL producing *Salmonella* species, is fast becoming an emerging world threat. ESBLs are frequently found in *K. pneumoniae* but recent studies have increasingly reported its occurrence in the *Salmonella* species and other Gram-negative organisms. Such *Salmonella* strains pose significant health problems worldwide by virtue of their acquisition of resistance against most beta-lactam antibiotics, which were previously used for treatment of *Salmonella* infections.

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