



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**PATHOGENICITY AND MOLECULAR CHARACTERISATION OF THE  
VP2 GENE OF INFECTIOUS BURSAL DISEASE VIRUS**

**MD. MAHFUZUL HOQUE**

**FPV 2001 14**

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VP2 GENE OF INFECTIOUS BURSAL DISEASE VIRUS**

**By**

**MD. MAHFUZUL HOQUE**

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
June 2001**



## **DEDICATION**

**TO MY PARENTS (LATE MD. ABDUS SATTAR AND BEGUM MAHFUZA),  
UNCLE (MR. JUSTICE M. A. ROUF), WIFE (RAHIMA KHANAM) AND  
SONS (RIZWANUL HOQUE AND ENAMUL HOQUE)**



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**June 2001**

**Chairman: Abdul Rahman Omar, Ph D.**

**Faculty: Veterinary Medicine**

Pathogenicity of four infectious bursal disease virus (IBDV) isolates was studied on specific-pathogen-free (SPF) chickens. Chickens inoculated with isolates 92/04, 94/B551 and 97/61 developed severe clinical manifestations with a high mortality ranging from 70-80%, whereas the 94/273 isolate caused 10% mortality. However, regardless of the isolates, significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were noted in the bursal scoring lesions and bursa to body weight ratio index in the infected groups in comparison to the control groups. The isolate 94/273 had limited and comparatively less haemorrhagic lesions in the bursal tissues. However, the presence of severe haemorrhagic lesions in the bursal tissues along with the non-bursal tissues (muscles, thymus, spleen and at the junction of proventriculus and gizzard) were found only in the 92/04, 97/61 and 94/B551 isolates.



The VP2 gene (1351 bp) of the isolates (92/04, 94/273 and 94/B551) was amplified and cloned and the sequences were compared with other IBDV strains. All the isolates have the unique amino acid residues at positions P222A, V256I, and L294I as found in other vvIBDV strains. Restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) and sequence analysis of the VP2 hypervariable region also indicated that all the isolates can be classified as vvIBDV based on the presence of *SspI* and *TaqI* sites at the nucleotide positions 1011 and 833, respectively. All the isolates except 94/273 also have a *StyI* site at nucleotide position 888. The absence of *StyI* site in this isolate is associated with amino acid substitution at 254 from G to S in variant strain. The 94/273 also has an amino acid substitution at 270 from A to E as found in apathogenic IBDV. Thus, this is a first report on the isolation of vvIBDV with some genotypic characteristic of variant and apathogenic IBDV strains. The 94/B551 also has one amino acid substitution at position 300 E to S, which is uncommon among other vvIBDV isolates. Based on the RFLP analysis the Malaysian (92/04, 94/273 and 97/61) and Bangladeshi (94/B551) isolates can be differentiated using the restriction enzymes *PstI*, *MboI* and *TaqI*. The deduced VP2 amino acids encoded by 92/04 is identical to the vvIBDV strains from Israel, Japan and UK, whereas the other isolates (94/273 and 94/B551) have one to three amino acid substitutions, indicating that the vvIBDV is evolving. However, the phylogenetic analysis suggested that the isolates are very close to each other and all of them may have derived from same origin as the vvIBDV strains isolated from China, Japan and Europe.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KEPATOGENAN DAN PENCIRIAN MOLEKUL GEN VP2 VIRUS  
PENYAKIT BURSA BERJANGKIT**

Oleh

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Kepatogenan empat strain virus penyakit bursa berjangkit (IBDV) ke atas ayam bebas patogen khusus (SPF) telah dikaji. Ayam yang diinokulat dengan strain 92/04, 94/273 dan 97/61 menunjukkan manifestasi klinikal yang teruk dengan kadar kematian tinggi diantara 70-80%, manakala isolate 94/273 menyebabkan kematian 10%. Walau bagaimanapun, tanpa mengambil kira strain, terdapat perbezaan yang ketara ( $p < 0.05$ ) dalam skor lesi bursa dan indek nisbah bursa kepada berat badan bagi kumpulan terjangkit berbanding dengan kumpulan kawalan. Strain 94/273 mempunyai lesi hemoraj yang kurang dan terhad dalam tisu bursa. Walau bagaimanapun, kehadiran lesi hemoraj yang teruk pada tisu bursa dan tisu bukan bursa (otot, timus, limpa dan pada persimpangan proventrikulus dan hempedal) dijumpai hanya dalam strain 92/04, 97/61 dan 94/B551. Gen VP2 (1351 bp) bagi strain (92/04, 94/273 dan 94/B551) diamplifikasi dan diklonkan dan jujukan tersebut dibandingkan dengan strain IBDV yang lain. Kesemua strain mempunyai residu asid amino pada kedudukan P222A,

V256I dan L294I sebagaimana yang dijumpai dalam strain vvIBDV lain. Analisa fragmen pembatasan polimorfoma (RFLP) dan jujukan bagi kawasan hiper boleh ubah VP2 juga menunjukkan bahawa kesemua strain boleh dikelaskan sebagai vvIBDV berdasarkan kehadiran tapak *SspI* dan *TaqI* pada kedudukan nukleotid 1011 dan 833. Kesemua strain kecuali 94/273 mempunyai tapak *StyI* pada kedudukan nukleotid 888. Ketiadaan tapak *StyI* dalam strain ini dikaitkan dengan penggantian asid amino pada 254 daripada G kepada S dalam strain varian. Strain 94/273 juga mempunyai penggantian asid amino pada 270 daripada A kepada E sebagaimana yang dijumpai dalam IBDV bukan patogen. Oleh itu, ini merupakan laporan pertama ke atas pemencilan vvIBDV dengan sebahagian ciri genotip bagi strain IBDV varian dan bukan patogen. Strain 94/B551 juga mempunyai satu penggantian asid amino pada kedudukan 300 E kepada S, yang mana jarang didapati di kalangan strain vvIBDV lain. Berdasarkan analisa RFLP, strain Malaysia (92/04, 94/273 dan 97/61) dan strain Bangladesh (94/B551) boleh dibezakan dengan menggunakan enzim pembatas *PstI*, *MboI* dan *TaqI*. Asid amino VP2 yang dikodkan oleh 92/4 adalah sama dengan strain vvIBDV dari Israel, Jepun dan UK, manakala strain-strain lain (94/273 dan 94/B551) mempunyai satu hingga tiga penggantian asid amino, menunjukkan bahawa vvIBDV terlibat sedang berubah. Walau bagaimanapun analisa filogenesis mencadangkan bahawa strain-strain tersebut adalah sangat hampir antara satu sama lain dan kesemua strain mungkin datang dari asal yang sama seperti strain vvIBDV yang dipencilkan dari China, Jepun dan Eropah.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my heartiest gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Abdul Rahman Omar, chairman of the supervisory committee for providing invaluable advice, untiring assistance, encouragement and motivation that enabled me to accomplish the PhD programme smoothly and efficiently.

My sincere thanks and appreciation are for Professor Dr. Aini Ideris, a member of the supervisory committee for her constructive suggestion, proper guidance and encouragement throughout my study period and her social support during my study period. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Associate Professor Dr. Mohd. Hair Bejo, who always accepted me with a smiling face and provided valuable suggestion, assistance and brilliant comments to accomplish my PhD project.

I am also grateful to Professor Dato' Dr. Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the Dean of the Faculty and Professor Dr. Mohamed Shariff Mohamed Din, the Deputy Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies for allowing me to use the facilities in the Faculty and being helpful whenever I ran into difficulties. I shall never forget the kindness of Professor Dr. Mohamed Shariff Mohamed Din who came forward to save my experimental chicks in a stormy night by restoring electricity at the chicken house.

I am also grateful to the staff members of the Biologics Laboratory, Puan Rodiah Husin and Mr. Adam Ahmad for always being so willing to





render assistance throughout the course of the study. Special thanks also goes to Mr. Fauzi Che Yusof and Mr. Ho Ooi Kaun for their assistance to develop the photograph in this study. I would also like to thank and appreciate Mr. Lee Weng Way for helping me to use various software programmes. I would also like to extend my thanks to all staff members of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Graduate School Office for helping me in one way or another, toward the completion of my study.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to my mother (Begum Mahfuza), brothers (Abu Raihan, Lutfur Rahman and Mustafizur Rahman), sisters (Nazma, Farida and Lipy), uncle (Mr. Justice M.A. Rouf) and other relatives and friends, who always encouraged and supported me during my study period. My special thanks and appreciation are for my wife and sons for their patience, spontaneous support and understanding during the period of my study. My special thanks goes to my friends Dr. Kamaruddin, Mr. Ajhar, Mr. Ziqrul, Mr. Ershad, Mr. Jahangir, Dr. Asad, Dr. Urrme and Mr Mollah for their cooperation during my study period. Special thanks to Dr. Kazi M.Emdadul Huque, Director General of BLRI as well as colleagues and friends of the same institute for their cooperation and moral support.

I would like to acknowledge the funding authority for bearing all the expenses of my study through Agricultural Research Management Project (ARMP), BLRI part of the IDA credit 2815-BD.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2001 to conduct the final examination of Md. Mahfuzul Hoque on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Pathogenicity and Molecular Characterisation of the VP2 Gene of Infectious Bursal Disease Virus" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:


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I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.



**MD. MAHFUZUL HOQUE**

**Date:** 25 June 2001

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AAF	Allantoamnionic fluid
AC	Antigen capture
AGDP	Agar gel diffusion precipitin
B	Bursa
B/B	Bursa/body weight
BGM	Baby grivet monkey kidney
BHK	Baby Hamster kidney
BLRI	Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute
bp	Basepair
C	Cytosine
Ca	Calcium
CAM	Chorioallantoic membrane
cDNA	Complementary deoxyribonucleic acid
CEB	Chick embryo bursa
CEF	Chicken embryo fibroblast
CEK	Chicken embryo kidney
cm	Centimetres
CMGF	Chicken myelomonocytic growth factor
CsCl	Caesium chloride
CEP	Cytopathic effect
°C	Degree Celsius
d-	Deoxy
DAS-ELISA	Double antibody sandwich
DI	Defective interfering
dd	Dideoxy
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
ds	Double stranded
DTT	Dithiothreitol
<i>E. coli</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
EDTA	Ethylene diamine tetra acetic acid
EID <sub>50</sub>	Embryo infective dose fifty
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
Fig	Figure
FMDV	Foot and mouth disease virus
HCl	Hydrochloric acid
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
hv	Hypervariable
IBD	Infectious bursal disease
IBDV	Infectious bursal disease virus
IFN	Interferon
kb	kilobase
kDa	kilodalton
KS	Karplus-Schulz



kV	kilovolt
LB	Luria-Bertani
LS	Least Square
M	Molar
Mab	Monoclonal antibody
MD	Maryland
ME	Minimum evolution
Mg	Magnesium
MK	Monkey kidney
ML	Maximum likelihood
MP	Maximum Parsimony
ml	Millilitre
SPF	Specific pathogen free
MVP	Malaysian Vaccine Pharmaceutical
mM	Millimolar
$\mu\text{m}$	Micrometre
$\mu\text{g}$	Microgramme
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NCR	Non coding region
ng	Nanogramme
NJ	Neighbour-joining
nm	Nanometre
NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen dioxide
OK	Ovine kidney
ORF	Open reading frame
OsO <sub>4</sub>	Osmium tetra-oxide
P <sub>2</sub>	Passage two
P <sub>3</sub>	Passage three
PBS	Phosphate buffered saline
PBL	Peripheral blood lymphocytes
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PHA	Phytohemmagglutinin
PHYLIP	Phylogenetic interference package
p.i	Post inoculation
QGDPT	Quantitative gel diffusion precipitin test
RE	Restriction endonuclease
RFLP	Restriction fragment length polymorphism
RK	Rabbit kidney
RT	Reverse-transcriptase
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RdRp	RNA dependent –RNA polymerase
rpm	Revolution per minute
S	Spleen
S/B	Spleen/Bursa
SD	Standard deviation
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulphate
SN	Serum neutralisation test

SPSS	Statistical package for social science
SS	Single stranded
STC	Standard Challenge strain
TAE	Tris-acetate-EDTA
TBE	Tris-borate-EDTA
TCVN	Tissue culture virus neutralisation
TE	Tris-EDTA
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy
TEMED	N,N,N',N', -tetramethyllenediamine
T <sub>m</sub>	Melting Temperature
Tris	2-amino-2-(hydroxymethyl)-1, 3 propanediol
U	Uracyl
UPGMA	Unweighted pair group with arithmetic mean
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
URI	Veterinary Research Institute
v <sub>v</sub>	Very virulent
VSA	Vesicular stomatitis virus
(w/v)	Weight/volume
X-gal	5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-β-D-galactopyranoside
>	Greater than
~	Approximately

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Single/Three Letter Amino Acid Code		
Alanine	A	Ala
Arginine	R	Arg
Asparagine	N	Asn
Aspartic Acid/Aspartate	D	Asp
Cysteine	C	Cys
Glutamine	Q	Gln
Glutamic Acid/Glutamate	E	Glu
Glycine	G	Gly
Histidine	H	His
Isoleucine	I	Ile
Leucine	L	Leu
Lysine	K	Lys
Methionine	M	Met
Phenylalanine	F	Phe
Proline	P	Pro
Serine	S	Ser
Threonine	T	Thr
Tryptophan	W	Trp
Tyrosine	Y	Tyr
Valine	V	Val

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Infectious bursal disease virus (IBDV) is the aetiological agent of infectious bursal disease (IBD) or Gumboro disease that causes significant losses to the poultry industries either by causing high mortality in an acute disease or as a consequence of immunosuppression in young chickens (3-6 weeks old) (Lukert and Saif, 1991; Van Den Verg, 2000). Infection by IBDV causes destruction of lymphoid organs, especially B-lymphocytes in the bursa of Fabricius (Hirai *et al.*, 1974; Saif, 1991). Two distinct serotypes of IBDV, designated serotype 1 and 2 have been identified (Jackwood and Saif, 1987). The serotype 1 strains are pathogenic to chickens and vary in their virulence, whereas serotype 2 strains, isolated from turkeys, are apathogenic for both turkeys and chickens (Ismail *et al.*, 1988; Jackwood *et al.*, 1982 and McFerran *et al.*, 1980). Serotype 1 can be divided on the basis of virulence and antigenic variation into classical virulent strain, very virulent (vv) strain and antigenic variant strain (Brown *et al.*, 1994; Lasher and Shane, 1994; Snyder, 1990 and Zierenberg *et al.*, 2000).

Infectious bursal disease is considered to be among the most costly infectious diseases affecting commercial poultry producers (Kibenge *et al.*, 1988c; Lasher and Shane, 1994 and Shane *et al.*, 1994). Economic losses





from IBD arise from direct mortality, a reduction in the performance of clinically ill birds, cost of control measures and increased carcass downgrades and condemnation due to gangrenous dermatitis, colisepticemia and air-sacculitis (Lasher and Shane, 1994; Lukert and Saif, 1997). Virus-induced immunosuppression adds to these costs, in the form of vaccination failures and increased incidence or severity of bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases (Anderson *et al.*, 1977; Lasher and Shane, 1994).

IBDVs are non-enveloped, icosahedral particles with a genome consisting of two segments (A and B) of double-stranded (ds) RNA that are packed inside a single-shelled capsid of about 60 nm in diameter. Nucleotide sequence analysis shows that segment A (~ 3.3 kb) has a long open reading frame (ORF) of 3036 bp in length and a short ORF of 435 bp (VP5), which overlaps with the 5' end of the long ORF (Kibenge *et al.*, 1990). The long ORF encodes the VP2-VP4-VP3 polyprotein (110-kDa) which is cleaved by auto-proteolysis into individual viral proteins (VP2 and VP3) (Azad *et al.*, 1985; Hudson *et al.*, 1986). The shorter ORF has been shown to encode a small cystine-rich 17-kDa protein (Mundt *et al.*, 1995). Of the three viral proteins, VP2 and VP3 are the major viral structural proteins, whereas VP4 is a minor protein involved in the processing of the precursor polyprotein (Dobos *et al.*, 1979; Jagadish *et al.*, 1988). The VP2 protein is exposed on the surface of the virion and contains strain-specific epitopes. *In vitro* expression of VP2 and its utilisation as an antigen revealed that VP2 is the