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TECHNICAL REPORT

DIFFERENTIATION OF *Candida dubliniensis* FROM *Candida albicans* WITH THE USE OF KILLER TOXINS

Liliane A. SCHEID(1), Débora A. Nunes MARIO(1), Elizabeth Maria HEINS-VACCARI(2), Janio Morais SANTURIO(3) & Sydney Hartz ALVES (1,3)

SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to report the ability of killer toxins, previously used as biotyping techniques, as a new tool to differentiate *C. albicans* from *C. dubliniensis*. The susceptibility of *C. albicans* and *C. dubliniensis* to killer toxins ranged from 33.9 to 93.3% and from 6.67 to 93.3%, respectively.

KEYWORDS: Killer toxins; Biotyping: *Candida dubliniensis*.

Killer toxins are glucoprotein compounds secreted by *Hansenula* and *Pichia* strains, which may cause pores in the cytoplasmic membrane of the *Candida albicans*, inhibiting its growth. Because the susceptibility of *C. albicans* to killer toxins is variable, the phenomenon was employed as a method to biotype different *C. albicans* strains^{2,3,6}. In recent years, biotyping techniques have been advantageously substituted by molecular methods.

Since 1995 when *C. dubliniensis* was proposed as a new species of *Candida* genera, many techniques have been studied in order to phenotypically differentiate this species from *C. albicans* because both species are germ tube positive and form chlamydoconidia in corn meal agar¹⁴.

Nowadays, the definitive identification of *C. dubliniensis* requires molecular methods and thus old phenotypic tests have been re-evaluated, as well as new tests having been proposed for phenotypic identification. Among them, we can emphasize: niger seed agar¹³, sunflower agar⁷, sesame seed agar⁹ based on chlamydoconidia production, and colonial morphology. Other tests include absence of opacity on Tween 80 agar⁴, coaggregation of *C. dubliniensis* with *Fusobacterium nucleatum*⁵, inability of *C. dubliniensis* to grow in hypertonic broth (NaCl 6.5%)¹, and to grow at temperatures of 42 °C or 45 °C¹⁰. Among commercially disposable methods, the CHROMagar *Candida*⁸ and Bichro-Dublin Fumouze¹² are worthy of mention.

The aim of this study was to investigate the ability to differentiate *C. albicans* from *C. dubliniensis* based on susceptibilities to killer toxins as proposed by POLONELLI *et al.* (1983). The yeasts employed for the assays were: *Hansenula* sp Stumm 1034 (K1), *Pichia* sp Stumm

1035 (K2), *Hansenula anomala* UM (K3), *Hansenula anomala* CBS 5759 (K4), *Hansenula anomala* Ahearn UN 866 (K5), *Hansenula californica* Ahearn WC 40 (K6), *Hansenula canadensis* Ahearn WC 41 (K7), *Hansenula dimmenae* Ahearn WC 44 (K8), and *Hansenula mrakii* Ahearn W1C51 (K9)

The susceptibility of *C. albicans* and *C. dubliniensis* to killer toxins ranged from 33.3% to 93.3% and from 6.67% to 93.3%, respectively. Twenty-one biotypes were registered and the code numbers 111, 611, and 211 were the most frequently observed in both species. No biotypes occurred as a particular characteristic of *C. dubliniensis* and thus the killer toxins were unable to differentiate *C. albicans* from *C. dubliniensis*. As far as we know, this technique had not been explored until now.

RESUMO

Avaliação das toxinas killer na diferenciação entre *Candida albicans* e *Candida dubliniensis*

Avaliou-se a capacidade das toxinas killer, previamente utilizadas na biotipagem de *C. albicans*, como método para diferenciar *C. albicans* de *C. dubliniensis*. A susceptibilidade de *C. albicans* e *C. dubliniensis* às toxinas killer variou de 33,9% a 93,3% para *C. albicans* e de 6,67% a 93,3% para *C. dubliniensis*.

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(1) Curso de Pós graduação em Ciências Farmacêuticas. Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. Santa Maria, RS, Brasil.

(2) Faculdade de Medicina. Universidade de São Paulo. São Paulo, SP, Brasil.

(3) Departamento de Microbiologia e Parasitologia. Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, RS, Brasil

Correspondence to: Sydney Hartz Alves. Rua dos Andradas 1985/201. 97010-033 Santa Maria, RS, Brasil. E-mail: hartzsa@smail.ufsm.br

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