1	Rapid Increase of CTX-M-Producing Shigella sonnei Isolates in Switzerland:
2	Spread of Common Plasmids and International Clones
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ABSTRACT

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The Swiss Centre for Antibiotic Resistance (ANRESIS) has recently noted an increase of extended-spectrum cephalosporin-resistant (ESC-R) S. sonnei isolates nationwide (3.8% in 2016 vs. 37.5% in 2019). To understand this phenomenon, we analyzed 25 representative isolates (of which 14 ESC-R) collected in Switzerland during 2016-2019. Whole-genome sequencing was achieved using both Illumina and Nanopore platforms. Both ESC-R and susceptible isolates belonged to ST152. The ESC-R isolates carried bla_{CTX-M-3} in IncI1-pST57 (n=5), bla_{CTX-M-15} in IncFII (F2:A-:B-) (n=5), bla_{CTX-M-15} in IncI1-pST16, and bla_{CTX-M-27}, bla_{CTX-M-55}, or bla_{CTX-M-134} in other IncFII plasmids (n=1 each). Plasmids having the same bla and Inc group exhibited high genetic identity to each other, but also to plasmids previously reported in other Enterobacterales. Core-genome analysis showed that there were 4 main clusters, each of which included strains that differed by <58 SNVs, both bla_{CTX-M}-positive and bla_{CTX-M}-negative isolates. Moreover, most isolates belonging to the same cluster shared an identical cgST. For instance, cluster-1 included 4 isolates of cgST113036, of which only 3 harbored the IncI1-pST57 bla_{CTX-M-3}-positive plasmid. The 25 S. sonnei isolates were also subjected to phylogenetic comparison with deposited international strains. As a result, matching isolates (same cgST and differing by <8 SNVs) have been reported in the UK, USA, France, and the Netherlands. Overall, our results suggest that some common S. sonnei clusters can spread between continents and can be imported into other nations after international trips. Such clusters include, in part, isolates that do not possess bla_{ESBL}-harboring plasmids, indicating their tendency to acquire them from other Enterobacterales.

47 INTRODUCTION

48 Shigella flexneri is one of the most common causes of diarrhea in low-/middle-income countries and is associated with high morbidity and mortality rates. In contrast, Shigella 49 sonnei is the leading species in high-income nations with the majority of cases described in 50 returning travelers, men who have sex with men (MSM), and young children (1-3). 51 52 The emergence of antibiotic-resistant S. sonnei isolates is nowadays a matter of concern 53 (4). The high resistance rates to first-line options (e.g., ciprofloxacin and azithromycin) have made ceftriaxone the drug of choice for empirical treatment. However, there has also been a 54 significant recent increase in extended-spectrum cephalosporin-resistant (ESC-R) isolates, 55 56 especially in Asia (1, 5). Usually, ESC-R S. sonnei (ESC-R-Ss) isolates produce extended-spectrum β-lactamases 57 (ESBL) of the CTX-M-type, of which CTX-M-3, CTX-M-14, CTX-M-15, CTX-M-27, and 58 59 CTX-M-55 are the most common (6). However, only a few studies have implemented wholegenome sequencing (WGS) to characterize the bla_{CTX-M}-carrying plasmids in detail. So far, a 60 61 bla_{CTX-M-3}- IncI1 from Italy (7), a bla_{CTX-M-14}- IncB/O/K/Z from China (8), a bla_{CTX-M-15}- IncI1 62 from South Korea (9), a bla_{CTX-M-27}- IncFII from the UK (10), and a bla_{CTX-M-55}-harboring 63 IncI2 plasmid from China have been described in S. sonnei (11). For Switzerland, we note 64 that the first two ESC-R-Ss strains (CTX-M-14 and CTX-M-15 producers) were isolated in 65 2009, but no WGS analyses were performed on the 8 strains detected during 2009-2014 (12). Due to the ability of S. sonnei to acquire multidrug-resistant (MDR) plasmids and the fact 66 67 that it shows a higher prevalence in industrialized countries compared to S. flexneri (3), attention needs to be focused on the clonality of ESC-R-Ss. Just recently (2018), in the 68 European Union, 17 outbreaks due to S. sonnei have been documented (13). 69 70 Several authors have implemented the multilocus sequence typing (MLST), which has revealed that sequence type (ST) 152 is the most frequent lineage among ESC-susceptible S. 71

sonnei (ESC-S-Ss) isolates (14-19). Other recent studies have also used core-genome analyses to investigate epidemiological events (2, 15, 20, 21), although only one UK survey analyzed exclusively ESBL-producing S. sonnei strains (10). Overall, these studies have shown that single nucleotide variant (SNV) analysis represents a high-resolution tool for determining clonality and tracking outbreaks at the community and global levels.

In this study, therefore, we used WGS to characterize the plasmids of ESC-R-Ss isolates detected in Switzerland. Moreover, to investigate the hidden epidemiological profile of contemporary circulating isolates, we implemented a core-genome analysis to determine the

clonality of ESC-R- and ESC-S-Ss strains.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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82 Rate of ESC-R-Ss and analyzed strains. According to the ANRESIS database, 53, 39, 85, and 56 S. sonnei isolates were identified nationwide in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 by 83 participating laboratories, respectively. Of them, 2 (3.8%), 5 (12.8%), 12 (14.1%) and 21 84 85 (37.5%) were reported as ESC-R, respectively. Unfortunately, such results could not be compared to those of other countries. In fact, 86 87 though the spread of ESC-R Shigella spp. is of concern, recent studies analyzing their trends are lacking (1, 4). Nevertheless, we note that in China the rate of ESC-R-Ss increased from 88 89 31.6% in 2012 to 64.3% in 2015 (22), whereas lower rates were recorded in other nations 90 during point-prevalence surveys (e.g., in 2015, 12% in England/Wales and 0% in Nepal; in 2015-2016, 7.1% in New Zealand) (10, 23, 24). It is therefore difficult to interpret our data on 91 the persistent increase in resistance to ESCs. In this context, we emphasize that the Swiss 92 93 population is at greater risk of acquiring and importing MDR Shigella spp. from endemic areas due to its high propensity for international travel (12, 25). For this reason, in order to 94 95 better understand this general epidemiological phenomenon, a molecular characterization of the strains is essential. 96 97 In the present study, we analyzed 14 ESC-R-Ss and 11 ESC-S-Ss collected in Switzerland 98 during 2016-2019. Species identification (ID) and antibiotic resistance phenotypes of all strains were confirmed by appropriate methods before further molecular analyses (see 99 100 Material and Methods section and Tab. S1). 101 Antimicrobial resistance genes (ARGs). As shown in Tab. 1, both ESC-R- and ESC-S-Ss 102 isolates carried numerous ARGs conferring resistance to different classes of antibiotics, 103 including quinolones (e.g., qnrS1) and macrolides [e.g., erm(B) and mph(A)] (6). Those 104 phenotypically resistant to ESCs mainly possessed bla_{CTX-M-3} (n=5) or bla_{CTX-M-15} (n=6) ESBL

- genes, but unique isolates harboring $bla_{\text{CTX-M-27}}$, $bla_{\text{CTX-M-55}}$ and $bla_{\text{CTX-M-134}}$ were also detected.

 Although studies analyzing the prevalence of specific bla_{ESBLs} in *S. sonnei* are lacking, $bla_{\text{CTX-M-134}}$ and $bla_{\text{CTX-M-3}}$ appear to be the most frequent worldwide (6). In particular, CTX-M-3 producers were described in Turkey, Switzerland and Italy (7, 12, 26, 27), while those with CTX-M-15 have been found in various countries, including South Korea, where an outbreak
- was described (9). With regard to the other ESBLs, a CTX-M-27-producing *S. sonnei* clone
- was responsible for an outbreak in 2015 among MSM in England (10), CTX-M-55 was
- reported in *S. sonnei* isolates from China and South Korea (11, 28), while CTX-M-134 was
- only recently described in *E. coli* (29).
- Since $bla_{\text{CTX-Ms}}$ are usually carried by plasmids that can be exchanged between different species of enterobacteria (e.g., from *E. coli* to *S. sonnei* in the human gut) (30), their
- 118 IncII bla_{CTX-M-3}-carrying plasmids. As shown in Fig. 1A, 5 S. sonnei isolates harbored 86-

characterization is crucial for understanding the expansion of ESC-R-Ss isolates.

- 87kb IncI1-pST57 *bla*_{CTX-M-3} carrying plasmids with a high genetic identity to each other and
- to the Italian pLC1477_18_1 that we recently described (conjugation frequency, 1.2 x 10⁻⁴)
- 121 (7).

- In all of these plasmids, $bla_{CTX-M-3}$ was associated with a truncated ISEcp1 in the same
- 123 element reported in the Italian plasmid. Considering the strong genetic similarity of the five
- 124 IncI1-pST57 bla_{CTX-M-3} carrying plasmids collected in Switzerland, it is quite possible that
- other plasmids with similar genetic characteristics exist outside the country. For instance, an
- 126 Enterobase S. sonnei strain from the UK in 2019 (named 811053; BioSample:
- 127 SAMN12881824) of the same cgST as our 509-1022 and 19-0822-3296 isolates
- 128 (cgST115537) was found to harbor *bla*_{CTX-M-3} and contained at least one pST57 plasmid (CGE
- analysis; data not shown). Similarly, an E. coli strain from a 2013-2015 study in the

Netherlands was reported to be carrying an IncI1-pST57 plasmid that possessed bla_{CTX-M-3} 130 131 (31).132 IncFII bla_{CTX-M-15}-harboring plasmids. As depicted in Fig. 1B, 5 other ESC-R-Ss harbored 133 IncFII (F2:A-:B-) bla_{CTX-M-15}-carrying plasmids (83-89kb) with high genetic identity to each 134 other and to pF93-2_1 (GenBank: CP026158) from K. pneumoniae found in China in 2014. 135 Globally, the F2: A-: B- is the predominant F plasmid type carrying bla_{CTX-Ms} among 136 Enterobacteriaceae and is highly conjugative (32). 137 The 5 bla_{CTX-M-15}-carrying plasmids identified in the present work shared an identical genetic 138 environment around bla_{CTX-M-15}, including both full (IS26 and ISKpn19) and partial (ΔTn3 139 and $\Delta IS3$) transposable element coding sequences (CDS), along with the *qnrS1* (Fig. 1B). The 140 plasmid p19-0820-1561 also contained additional ARGs [mph(A), sul1, aadA5, and dfrA17] 141 that were only present in pF93-2_1 in the form of the IS26-mph(A)-MFS transporter-142 tetR/acrR-IS6100-sul1-aadA5-dfrA17-intl1 Δ -IS26-Tn3 Δ -IS1R Δ unit. This element has been 143 reported in multiple species such as E. coli and K. pneumoniae (BLAST analysis; data not 144 shown). 145 Other bla_{CTX-M}-carrying plasmids. The remaining 4 ESC-R-Ss isolates possessed unique 146 bla_{CTX-M}-positive plasmids (Tab. 1). In particular, a bla_{CTX-M-15} associated with ISEcp1 was 147 carried in an 89kb IncI1-pST16 plasmid (p6607-69), but without further ARGs. This plasmid showed a high identity with others found in both S. sonnei and E. coli isolates (mostly from 148 149 Asia), including some expressing the CTX-M-55 that is a single amino acid variant of CTX-150 M-15 (Fig. S1). Likewise, one of our S. sonnei isolates carried the bla_{CTX-M-55}, but in this case 151 the gene was located in a 74kb IncFII (F2:A-:B-) plasmid (p0401952027) and was flanked by two IS26. This plasmid showed a high genetic identity with others possessing bla_{CTX-M-55} or 152 153 bla_{CTX-M-15} that came from E. coli or K. pneumoniae isolates detected in Europe or North America, but, interestingly, none of them co-carried the tetR/acrR-MFS trans-mph(A) unit between IS6100 and IS1R Δ (Fig. S2).

156 Another ESC-R-Ss carried a 67kb IncFII (F2:A-:B-) plasmid (p09163633) that harbored only *bla*_{CTX-M-27} and showed a high identity with the backbone of plasmids from *E. coli* and *S.* 157 flexneri isolates. Nevertheless, only p09163633 possessed the IS26-IS903B Δ -bla_{CTX-M-27}-158 159 IS $Ecp1\Delta$ -IS26 unit (Fig. S3), which has been reported in multiple E. coli and K. pneumoniae 160 isolates from Vietnam and China (BLAST analysis; data not shown), and also described in a 161 Japanese epidemic ST131 E. coli (33). Moreover, it was also present in the 69kb IncFII (F35:A-:B-) plasmid (p3123885) found in our last ESC-R-Ss (Fig. S4), though this mobile-162 163 genetic element (MGE) encoded the single amino acid variant CTX-M-134 instead of the 164 CTX-M-27 (29). 165 Co-resistance to azithromycin. Besides the specific ESBLs identified, 6 of the 25 S. sonnei 166 isolates were macrolide-resistant due to the presence of erm(B) and/or mph(A) ARGs (Tab. 1 and Tab. S1). As mentioned above, 3 ESC-R isolates carried mph(A) in different IncFII 167 168 plasmids co-harboring bla_{CTX-M-15}, bla_{CTX-M-55}, or bla_{CTX-M-134}. Of note, two of these plasmids 169 carried the element IS26-mph(A)-MFS trans- tetR/acrR-IS6100 (Fig. 1B and S4) and the other 170 one carried, with a slightly different arrangement, IS6100-tetR/acrR-MFS trans-mph(A)-171 IS IRA (Fig. S2). These two very similar elements have been found in many plasmids carried 172 by E. coli, K. pneumoniae, Salmonella enterica (BLAST analysis; data not shown), and also 173 identified in the chromosome of a CTX-M-15-producing Salmonella Haardt isolated from 174 Japanese food workers (34). 175 Overall, these findings are epidemiologically relevant, since co-resistance to azithromycin and ESCs makes the treatment of shigellosis difficult (1, 5). Such MDR 176 177 plasmids have been rarely reported in S. sonnei, though an IncFII (F2:A-:B-) plasmid possessing $bla_{CTX-M-27}$, mph(A), and erm(B) was associated with the outbreak among MSM in 178

England (10), while an IncB/O/K/Z co-harboring $bla_{\text{CTX-M-14}}$ and mph(A) was linked to a waterborne outbreak in China in 2015 (8). Having observed that at least three of our IncFII plasmids carried very similar macrolide resistance elements, we speculate that under a certain antibiotic selective pressure (e.g., azithromycin), mph(A) can be acquired via integration of transposable elements (e.g., IS26-mph(A)-MFS trans- tetR/acrR-IS6100) (35).

MLST and cgMLST. Regardless of the presence of *bla_{CTX-M}* genes, 24 *S. sonnei* isolates were of ST152, while one was of its single allele variant ST1503 (<u>Tab. 1</u>). ST152 has been previously reported in ESC-S-Ss in many countries (e.g., California, China, Germany and Iran) (15-19). Recently, we also described the ST152 CTX-M-3-producing strain LC-1477-18 isolated in Italy from a girl who acquired the infection in Albania (7). Overall, since our *S. sonnei* isolates were acquired in different periods and/or in diverse geographic areas (<u>Tab. 1</u>), one could speculate that a unique clone (ST152) is spreading worldwide.

To better investigate the clonality of our *S. sonnei* isolates, we performed a cgMLST analysis according to the *E. coli* scheme. The higher resolution of cgMLST resulted in multiple cgSTs: *i*) three *bla*_{CTX-M-3}-possessing isolates and one ESC-S of cgST113036; *ii*) two *bla*_{CTX-M-3}-positives of cgST115537; *iii*) four *bla*_{CTX-M-15}-harboring of cgST112958; and *iv*) two ESC-S isolates carrying *mph*(*A*) and *erm*(*B*) were of cgST107674. The remaining isolates showed different cgSTs, but overall maintaining high allele matches among the 2513 analyzed (i.e., >98.5% for ESBL producers and >98.6% for those ESC-S) (<u>Tab. 1</u>). These results support the hypothesis that common ESC-R clones may spread in different countries and could be imported to other nations (e.g., Switzerland) after international trips. Based on the identification of clones including both ESBL producers and not producers, it can be also speculated that some ESC-S-Ss may be well-predisposed to acquire MDR plasmids from other Enterobacterales.

Core-genome analyses. To determine the distance and clonality between our S. sonnei strains, a high-resolution SNV analysis was performed (87% core-genome coverage among all strains). As shown in Fig. 2, the 4 S. sonnei clones identified by cgMLST were also confirmed as 4 independent SNV clusters, though several additional isolates were grouped within cluster-2 and cluster-4. To summarize: cluster-1 and cluster-2 included CTX-M-3-producing or ESC-S-Ss; cluster-3 encompassed CTX-M-15 producers; and cluster-4 included the CTX-M-134 producer and ESC-S-Ss. Notably, strains belonging to the same cluster differed by only a limited number of SNVs (i.e., cluster-1: Δ =7-26 SNVs; cluster-2: Δ =12-34 SNVs; cluster-3: Δ =5-19 SNVs; and cluster-4: Δ =2-58 SNVs). Together, these results corroborate the above hypothesis on the dissemination of CTX-Mproducing hyperepidemic S. sonnei clones. This is consistent with what has been observed by other authors for the fluoroquinolone-resistant international clones (e.g., the global lineage III, GIII) (36, 37). However, our data also indicate that MLST analysis alone has a limited resolution for studying the spread of such MDR pathogens. In fact, although almost all of our S. sonnei isolates were identified as ST152, several clusters with different ARG and plasmid patterns could be differentiated using cgMLST and/or core-genome SNV analyses. We also note that isolates included in cluster-1 and cluster-2 carried the same IncI1pST57 bla_{CTX-M-3} plasmid (Fig. 1). This finding was surprising, as the two bacterial groups were genetically different (i.e., Δ =235 SNVs; Fig. 2). We do not have a clear explanation for the independent clustering, but it can be hypothesized that ESC-S S. sonnei isolates belonging to cluster-1 and cluster-2 acquired the pST57 plasmid from a common enterobacterial ancestor, including other Shigella spp. Link with international isolates. To explore the lineage origins of our Swiss S. sonnei isolates, we performed a database search in Enterobase for strains of global lineage and matching cgST. A core-genome analysis was then performed using the results of the

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Enterobase phylogenetic analysis as reference. Overall, we compared our collection (n=25) to a subset of 114 strains of global lineage (38), 16 of matching cgST, and the Italian LC-1477-18 isolate (7). The alignment of all strains (n=156) resulted in 4551 SNVs and 42% coregenome coverage among all isolates.

As depicted in <u>Fig. 3 and Tab. S2</u>, all *S. sonnei* isolates included in cluster-1 were related to an Iranian GIII strain detected in 2003, and were almost identical to another one found in the UK in 2016 (same cgST and Δ =2-3 SNVs). We also note that one of our isolates (7111-69) had its clinical origin in Turkey (<u>Tab. 1</u>), the area where the first CTX-M-3-producing *S. sonnei* was described (2001) and subsequently caused epidemic events (26, 27).

The cluster-2 and cluster-3 isolates were part of a large group shared by two GIII strains of Egyptian origin reported in 2005-2006, LC-1477-18, and four detected in the UK: one CTX-M-3 producer isolated in 2019, two CTX-M-15 producers detected in 2015-2016, and one ESC-S found in 2015 (Fig. 3). These UK strains showed $\leq 5 \Delta$ SNVs when compared to cgST- matching isolates from Switzerland, indicating their commonality. Further evidence of their possible origin could be seen in isolates 6105-15, 0401930105, 19-0821-3486, and 0401952027 where Egypt was their origin (Tab. 1), suggesting that these strains may have originated in that geographic area.

S. sonnei cluster-4 isolates were grouped with recently detected ESC-S strains in the UK, the USA, and France. Two additional CTX-M-15 producers, one from the UK (821179) and one from the Netherlands (IBESS820), were also highly related with the cluster-4 isolates (Fig. 3). The latter was identified in 2017 during a cross-sectional multicenter study (39), and was genetically identical to our ESC-S-Ss 6412-75 strain (same cgST and Δ =0 SNPs). In that study, the patient of strain IBESS820 was reported to have a history of travel to India, as was the Swiss patient with an infection caused by 6412-75 (<u>Tab. 1</u>). Despite these similarities, the

Swiss *S. sonnei* was ESBL-negative; nevertheless, this finding highlights the great capacity of certain clones to acquire bla_{CTX-M} -harboring plasmids.

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In total, 12 of the 16 international S. sonnei strains that have the same cgST as our Swiss isolates were detected in the UK, while the remaining 4 were isolated in the USA, France, and the Netherlands. This indicates that common S. sonnei lineages have been circulating in Europe at least since 2015, and are now expanding in Switzerland. In fact, we note that all 10 Swiss ESC-R-Ss detected in 2019 were linked to isolates detected in the same year in the UK and France (Tab. 1 and Fig. 3), most of which were producers of CTX-M-3 or CTX-M-15, as in the case of those in Switzerland. It can be speculated that the same common plasmids described in the present work (e.g., the IncI1-pST57 bla_{CTX-M-3}-positive) are also carried by contemporary non-Swiss ESC-R-Ss isolates (as demonstrated for LC-1477-18). However, since the matching cgST isolates identified from the Enterobase database are in the form of whole genome shotgun assemblies generated from short-read data, without the full characterization of bla_{CTX-M}-carrying plasmids with long-read sequencing data as in our study, this hypothesis cannot be fully corroborated. Conclusions. In this work, we presented the first detailed molecular investigation of S. sonnei isolates detected in Switzerland. Hybrid WGS assemblies were implemented to accurately describe the bla_{CTX-M} -harboring plasmids, while core-genome and phylogenetic analyses were used to study the clonality of the strains. Based on our results, we conclude that most of the contemporary Swiss ESBL-producing S. sonnei isolates carry identical bla_{CTX-M}-positive plasmids that often have their counterparts in other reported Enterobacterales worldwide. More importantly, due to transnational travel, common international clones of MDR S. sonnei are emerging in Switzerland and this limits

our therapeutic armamentarium. Overall, our findings underline the importance of

- 277 continuously conducting epidemiological surveys using the WGS approach and linking the
- results with other countries (40).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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Epidemiological data. Phenotypic data regarding the S. sonnei isolates detected in Switzerland during 2016-2019 were retrieved from the Swiss Centre for Antibiotic Resistance (ANRESIS) database (http://www.anresis.ch/) that collects information from 30 Swiss clinical laboratories. Strains were categorized as ESC-R when non-susceptible (i.e., intermediate or resistant) to ceftazidime, ceftriaxone, and/or cefepime according to the criteria implemented for Enterobacterales by the routine clinical laboratories during the corresponding years. The research project was exempted from the requirement for ethical approval because no healthrelated personal data were used, while age, gender, and trip-related information (if available) were retrieved from the laboratory databases. Strains, ID and antimicrobial susceptibility tests. All ESC-R- and ESC-S-Ss isolates available at -80°C and collected during 2016-2019 at the Institute for Infectious Diseases, MCL Medizinische Laboratorien, and labormedizinisches zentrum Dr. Risch were analyzed. The initial ID obtained by implementing the MALDI-TOF MS (Bruker) was confirmed with the Type Strain Genome Server (TYGS) tools using Genome BLAST Distance Phylogeny (https://tygs.dsmz.de/) based on genome data (see below). MICs were obtained by implementing the Sensititre GNX2F microdilution panels (ThermoFisher). For isolates possessing erm(B) and/or mph(A) genes, MICs for azithromycin were obtained using the Etest (bioMérieux). Results were interpreted according to the EUCAST 2019 criteria (41). Whole-genome sequencing (WGS). WGS was performed using both NovaSeq-6000 (Illumina) and MinION (Oxford Nanopore) sequencing platforms as previously described (42-45). In brief, Illumina raw reads were quality-filtered with Trimmomatic (v0.36), followed by whole-genome shotgun assembly with SPAdes (v3.12.0). Adaptors from Nanopore raw reads were trimmed with Porechop (v0.2.4), and quality filtered with Filtlong (v0.2.0). Long-read assemblies were done with Canu (v1.7). The final hybrid assemblies were

304 generated by aligning the paired-end Illumina reads to the Canu assemblies with Bowtie2 305 (v2.3.4.1), and followed by multiple rounds of polishing with Pilon (v1.22). 306 Illumina SPAdes assemblies were used for: whole genome ID, analysis with the tools of the 307 for Genomic Epidemiology (CGE; http://www.genomicepidemiology.org/): Center ResFinder, MLST with the E. coli scheme #1, PlasmidFinder, and pMLST. Hybrid assemblies 308 309 were used to characterize the *bla*_{ESBL}-carrying plasmids. 310 Annotations of both Illumina and hybrid assemblies were carried out by the NCBI 311 Prokaryotic Genome Annotation Pipeline. All annotated features presented in Fig. 1 and Fig. S1-S4 were manually curated with UniProt (https://www.uniprot.org/blast/) and ISfinder 312 313 (https://isfinder.biotoul.fr/), and annotated accordingly. 314 Core-genome analyses. All S. sonnei isolates underwent cgMLST with CGE cgMLSTFinder 315 (v1.1) using Illumina raw reads as input and species' database set to E. coli Enterobase. These 316 isolates also undertook core-genome SNV analysis as previously done (46). Briefly, the core-317 genome alignment was performed with Parsnp v1.2. All strains were treated as curated 318 genomes (-c parameter), and the Italian ST152 CTX-M-3-producing S. sonnei strain (LC-319 1477-18; GenBank: JAATWD000000000) was used as reference (7). The –C parameter was 320 set to 200, and other parameters were let as default. Variants with no flags (PASS) were 321 determined as reliable, and used for downstream SNV analysis with a custom R (v3.6.2) 322 script. The Parsnp-generated core-genome SNV phylogenetic tree was visualized with FigTree (v1.4.4), and set to midpoint-rooted, and nodes by decreasing order (Fig. 2). 323 324 A SNV tree dendrogram of the Swiss S. sonnei collection vs. global lineage and 325 matching cgST strains was created in the Enterobase Escherichia/Shigella database (https://enterobase.warwick.ac.uk/species/index/ecoli) (Fig. 3). The analyzed strains consisted 326 327 of 156 total strains of which 114 were of global lineage (38), 16 of matching cgST, 25 from

Switzerland, and the Italian LC-1477-18 as reference. The following search queries were used

to find the global lineage strains (date: April 10, 2020) in Enterobase: Species equals 329 330 "Shigella sonnei"; Comment contains "Holt Lineage"; and to find matching cgST strains (date: April 21, 2020): Experiment type= cgMLST V1 + HierCC V1; ST=108909, 108083, 331 332 64457, 108763, 117387, 101592, 108068, 114011, 107674, 113036, 67380, 109254, 98334, 20888, 37499, 118753, 115537, 112958. The Illumina raw reads of our 25 S. sonnei isolates 333 334 were uploaded to Enterobase for processing. The resulting assembled genomes by Enterobase 335 were used to create a SNV project of 156 strains with default settings (min % sites present: 336 95). The tree was visualized with the web-based browser. An independent core genome analysis (Tab. S2) with Parsnp was used to analyze the strain 337 338 clusters identified in Fig. 3, which also included the 156 S. sonnei assemblies. As described 339 above, the Italian LC-1477-18 was used as reference genome, the Parsnp -C parameter was 340 set to 300, and the rest as default. 341 Data availability. Illumina SPAdes assemblies were deposited under BioProject number

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Hybrid assemblies

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corresponding

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Strain	Year	Age / Sex ^a	Sample	Origin of infection ^a	Group b	Co-resistance b	ST °	Antimicrobial resistance genes / plasmid replicons (pMLST, approximated size) ^c	Called alleles (%) among a total of 2513 d	Allele matches in cgST (%) d	cgST ^d
L4094	2018	na/na	na	na	ESC-R	-	ST152	ola _{CTX-M-3} , aadA1, mdf(A), dfrA1 / 11 (pST57, 86kb), Col156, Col(BS512)		2496 (99.32)	cgST113036
1205-3131	2018	35/M	Stool	Unknown	ESC-R	-	ST152	a _{CTX-M-3} , aadA1, mdf(A), dfrA1 / 11 (pST57, 86kb), Col156, Col(BS512)		2492 (99.16)	cgST113036
7111-69	2019	20/M	Stool	Turkey	ESC-R	-	ST152	TX.M.3, aadA1, mdf(A), dfrA1 / 11 (pST57, 86kb), Col156, Col(BS512)		2491 (99.12)	cgST113036
LC-1477-18 e	2018	10/F	Stool	Albania	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-3} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / I1 (pST57, 85kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2505 (99.68)	2498 (99.40)	cgST118753
509-1022	2019	50/F	Stool	Unknown	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-3} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / l1 (pST57, 88kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2503 (99.60)	2495 (99.28)	cgST115537
19-0822-3296	2019	5/F	Stool	Unknown	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-3} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / l1 (pST57, 88kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2504 (99.64)	2495 (99.28)	cgST115537
6607-69	2017	60/F	Stool	Sri Lanka	ESC-R	SXT	ST1503 ^r	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, tet(A), sul2 / I1 (pST16, 90kb), FII, Col156, Col(BS512)	2504 (99.64)	2496 (99.32)	cgST64457
19-0821-3486	2019	45/M	Stool	Egypt	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, qnrS1, sul2, tet(A) / FII (F2:A-:B-, 83kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2500 (99.48)	2493 (99.20)	cgST112958
0401930105	2019	50/M	Stool	Egypt	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, qnrS1, tet(A), sul2 / FII (F2:A-:B-, 83kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2502 (99.56)	2496 (99.32)	cgST112958
6904-27	2018	35/M	Stool	Local	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, qnrS1, tet(A), sul2 / FII (F2:A-:B-, 83kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2502 (99.56)	2497 (99.36)	cgST112958
19-1125-3493	2019	40/F	Stool	Unknown	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, qnrS1, tet(A), sul2 / FII (F2:A-:B-, 83kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2496 (99.32)	2489 (99.04)	cgST112958
19-0820-1561	2019	15/F	Stool	Nepal	ESC-R	SXT, CIP, AZT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-15} , aadA5, mdf(A), mph(A), dfrA1, dfrA17, qnrS1, sul1 / FII (F2: A-:B-, 83kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2493 (99.20)	2477 (98.57)	cgST117387
0401952027	2019	45/M	Stool	Egypt	ESC-R	SXT, AZT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-55} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), mph(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / I1, FII (F2:A-:B-, 74kb), Col156, Col(BS512)	2498 (99.40)	2489 (99.04)	cgST20888
09163633	2019	50/M	Stool	Unknown	ESC-R	SXT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-27} , aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / FII (F2:A-:B-, 68kb), B/O/K/Z, Col156, Col(BS512)	2497 (99.36)	2489 (99.04)	cgST67380
3123885	2019	30/M	Stool	Israel	ESC-R	SXT, CIP, AZT	ST152	bla _{CTX-M-134} , aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), mph(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / FII (F35:A-:B-, 69kb), B/O/K/Z, Col156, Col(BS512)	2489 (99.04)	2480 (98.69)	cgST114011
7103-58 ^g	2018	10/M	Stool	Romania	ESC-S	SXT, CIP, AZT	ST152	bla _{TEM-1B} , aadA5, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), mph(A), erm(B), dfrA1/A17, sul1/2, tet(A) / Col156, Col(BS512)	2489 (99.04)	2482 (98.77)	cgST107674
7103-28 ^g	2018	50/M	Stool	Romania	ESC-S	SXT, CIP, AZT	ST152	bla _{TEM-1B} , aadA5, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), mph(A), erm(B), dfrA1/A17, sul1/2, tet(A) / Col156, Col(BS512)	2490 (99.08)	2481 (98.73)	cgST107674
6407-57	2017	40/M	Stool	Local	ESC-S	SXT, CIP, AZT	ST152	bla _{TEM-1B} , aadA5, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), mph(A), erm(B), dfrA1/A17, sul1/2, tet(A) / 11, Col156, Col(BS512)	2492 (99.16)	2484 (98.85)	cgST108068
6110-62	2016	60/F	Stool	Brazil	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	bla _{TEM-1B} , aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA8, sul2 / FII, Col156, Col(BS512)	2499 (99.44)	2492 (99.16)	cgST108083
6105-15	2016	35/M	Stool	Egypt	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / FII, Col156, Col(BS512)	2497 (99.36)	2487 (98.97)	cgST37499
6101-40	2016	40/F	Stool	Western Africa	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / FII, Col156, Col(BS512)	2492 (99.16)	2479 (98.65)	cgST98334
6412-75	2017	50/M	Blood, stool	India	ESC-S	CIP	ST152	mdf(A), dfrA1 / Col156, Col(BS512)	2495 (99.28)	2487 (98.97)	cgST101592
6502-32	2017	40/F	Stool	Dominican Republic	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A), dfrA1, sul2, tet(A) / 11, Col156, Col(BS512)		2484 (98.85)	cgST108763
7111-23	2019	25/F	Stool	Philippines	ESC-S	-	ST152	sul2, dfrA14, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, mdf(A) / 11, FII, Col156	2495 (99.28)	2481 (98.73)	cgST108909
7109-28	2019	30/M	Stool	Colombia	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	aadA1, aph(3")-lb, aph(6)-ld, sul2, mdf(A), dfrA1, qnrB19/B5/B81, tet(A) / I1, Col156	2499 (99.44)	2486 (98.93)	cgST109254
7001-38	2018	50/F	Stool	Local	ESC-S	SXT	ST152	aadA1, mdf(A), dfrA1 / Col156, Col(BS512)	2503 (99.60)	2494 (99.24)	cgST113036

Table 1. S. sonnei strains analyzed in the present study: summary of the demographic and travel-related (if any) data along with the results for the whole-genome sequencing (WGS) analyses

Note. M, male; F, female; ESC-R, extended-spectrum cephalosporin-resistant; ESC-S, ESC-susceptible; SXT, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole; CIP, ciprofloxacin; AZT, azithromycin; ST, sequence type; cgST, core-genome sequence type; na, not available

^a Based on the information provided to the clinical laboratory analyzing routine samples. Age has been approximated at ±5 years. The origin of infection has been attributed to a foreign country if symptoms (i.e., diarrhea) occurred during or after returning from a specific country)

^b Based on the MICs obtained with the Sensititre GNX2F panel and interpreted according to the EUCAST 2019 criteria. Only key antibiotics showing non-susceptibility have been reported in the "co-resistance" column (see Tab. S1 for full MIC results)

e Performed implementing the tools of the Center for Genomic Epidemiology (CGE). Specifically, MLST (v2.0; E. coli #1 configuration), ResFinder (v3.2), PlasmidFinder (v2.0), and pMLST (v2.0) when available. In bold the main bla genes and their associated carrying plasmids

^d Core-genome results obtained with cgMLSTFinder (v1.1)

e This strain was detected in Italy (7). It was added to the analysis as control

^f ST1503 is a single allele variant of ST152 ^g These two patients are relatives

LEGEND TO THE FIGURES

Figure 1. BLAST comparisons of *S. sonnei bla*_{CTX-M}-carrying plasmids against reference sequences. **A)** Five *S. sonnei bla*_{CTX-M-3}-carrying IncI1 plasmids against *S. sonnei* IncI1 plasmid: pLC1477_18-1 (GenBank: CP035009) reference sequence. **B)** Five *S. sonnei bla*_{CTX-M-15}-carrying IncFII (F2:A-:B-) plasmids against *K. pneumoniae* IncFII (F2:A-:B-) plasmid: pF93-2_1 (GenBank: CP026158) reference sequence. Rings were constructed using BRIG (BLAST Ring Image Generator) v0.95 software. Similarities with the reference plasmid are represented by the colored rings. Genome accession numbers are indicated in the legend. Red and blue arrows above the rings correspond to gene features of interest. Delta symbol (Δ) next to feature label corresponds to partial/incomplete gene CDS. For each plasmid, we report GenBank accession, species of isolation, tree cluster from Fig. 2, year, plasmid name, and plasmid size.

Figure 2. Analysis of the core genome phylogeny of 25 *S. sonnei* isolates together with the Italian strain LC-1477-18. For each strain, we show: strain, collection year, main β-lactamase (if present), and cgST. Assembled WGS of strains is presented in a core-genome SNV tree. The Δ SNVs value (e.g., Δ =1 SNV) corresponds to the number of non-identical SNVs of the core-genome between two strains. The four main clusters (grey boxes) were defined when the nucleotide identity across two or more strains was ≥97.5% of shared SNVs (Δ ≤ 65 SNVs). The cluster matrix shows the maximum nucleotide identity (%) between all strains across two clusters (top right corner), and the number of SNVs not shared among all compared strains. The scale bar (0.05) represents the average number of nucleotide substitutions per site. Asterisks (*) represent identical cgST as determined by CGE's cgMLSTFinder (v1.1).

^a Core-genome represents the maximum total coverage (87%) of the alignment among all 26

S. sonnei conserved sequences, which corresponded to 2'608 SNVs.

^bCluster-1: Strains shared 98.77% SNVs

- ^c Cluster-2: Strains shared 98.01% SNVs
- ^dCluster-3: Strains shared 99.08% SNVs
- ^e Cluster-4: Strains shared 97.54% SNVs
- 556 f In cluster-1 and cluster-2, the *bla_{CTX-M-3}* was consistently carried by the same IncI1-pST57
- plasmid (see Fig. 1A)

- 559 Figure 3. Enterobase SNV tree dendrogram of the Swiss S. sonnei (n=25), global lineage
- 560 (n=114), matching cgST strains (n=16), and the Italian LC-1477-18 as reference. The
- 561 combined SNP profiles of all 156 strains mapped to the reference are represented in a
- 562 RAXML tree, corresponding to a total of 9'850 SNVs.
- Country labels are represented by colored circles (missing country labels correspond to strains
- IBESS820 from the Netherlands, Ss046 from China, and 53G from Korea). Holt lineages I, II,
- 565 III, GIII, and IV are presented in color boxes. Dashed black braces with lines correspond to
- zoom-in sections of the tree where the present study's strains are clustered. For the Swiss
- isolates we show cluster (if any) / ESBL (if any), while for international strains with matching
- 568 cgST we show only the ESBL (if any). Among these strains, those detected in 2019 are
- indicated with (*). The scale bar represents the average number of nucleotide substitutions per
- site. See Tab. S2 for more information regarding the Parsnp SNV analysis results for zoom-in
- 571 sections 1-7:
- ¹ Compared to the Swiss isolates possessing the same cgST, strains 811053, 266979, 175609,
- 573 152507, CFSAN091705, and 795376 show 0-1, 0-4, 1-5, 2, 5, and 4 SNVs, respectively
- ² Compared to the Swiss isolate, strain 526163 has the same cgST and shows 2 SNVs
- 575 Compared to the Swiss isolates, strain 299890 has the same cgST and shows 2-3 SNVs
- ⁴ Compared to the Swiss isolates possessing the same cgST, strains 190807, 201907857,
- 577 638735, IBESS820, 821179, and PNUSAE013040 show 6, 1, 1, 0, 8, and 1 SNVs,
- 578 respectively

- 579 ⁵ 61 SNVs between the Swiss isolate and the one found in Egypt
- ⁶ Compared to the Swiss isolate, strain 191891 has the same cgST and shows 2 SNVs
- ⁷ Compared to the Swiss isolate, strain 524350 has the same cgST and shows 4 SNVs

Figure 1A Figure 1B

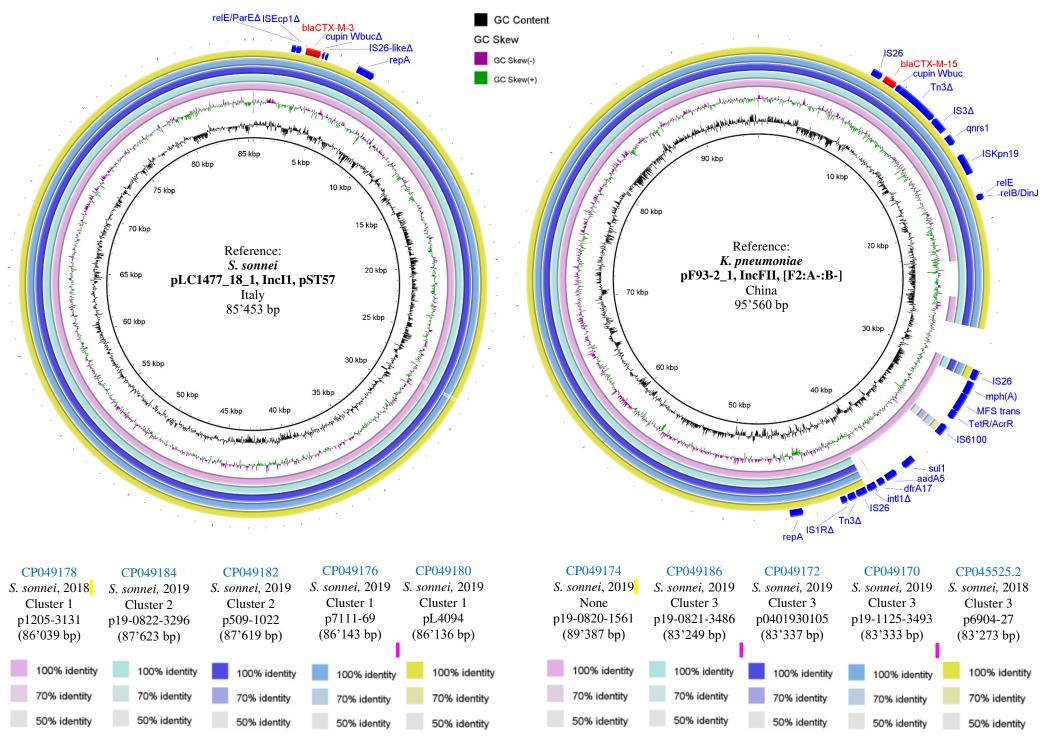


Figure 2

87% CORE-GENOME a 2'608 SNVs

	Cluster-1	Cluster-2	Cluster3	Cluster-4
Cluster-1	-	90.98%	91.56%	85.77%
Cluster-2	235 ∆ SNVs	-	95.66%	84.39%
Cluster-3	220 ∆ 5NVs	113 ∆ SNVs	-	85.12%
Cluster-4	371 Δ SNVs	407 Δ SNVs	388 Δ SNVs	-

= cgSNV clusters

* = cgST clones

