

Peer Review

Review of: "Molecular Characterization of *Vibrio cholerae* Outbreak Isolates from Western India"

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This manuscript presents the molecular characterization of *Vibrio cholerae* O1 isolates obtained during a diarrheal outbreak in Maharashtra, India. The subject is timely and relevant for molecular epidemiology and public health surveillance. However, the manuscript requires major revisions to address methodological weaknesses and interpretation of findings.

1. Only 5 *V. cholerae* isolates were analyzed. This number is too small to support epidemiological conclusions. Please explicitly acknowledge this limitation in the discussion and modify the conclusions accordingly.
2. The Introduction provides background but does not clearly state the research objective or hypothesis. Please add a clear statement of aims at the end of the Introduction.
3. The claim of polymyxin B sensitivity is based only on phylogenetic relatedness, without direct phenotypic testing. Please clarify this point and avoid definitive wording. Consider rephrasing to "closely related to polymyxin B-sensitive strains." If possible, add phenotypic susceptibility testing.
4. The detection of atypical EPEC is presented abruptly and is not well integrated into the manuscript. Either provide stronger justification for including these findings in the current study or present them as a secondary observation.
5. Several methods are insufficiently described (primer sequences, PCR conditions, sequencing quality control, BLAST thresholds, phylogenetic model details). Please expand the Materials and Methods section to provide full reproducibility.
6. The discussion does not address key study limitations. Please add a dedicated paragraph covering: small sample size, absence of phenotypic testing, limited clinical/epidemiological data, and possible

selection bias.

Recommendation: the manuscript addresses an important public health issue with relevant molecular methods. However, substantial revisions are required before it can be considered for publication.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.