

ANTIMICROBIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY OF *PASTEURELLA MULTOCIDA* ISOLATED FROM SHEEP AND PIGS IN SPAIN – SHORT COMMUNICATION

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Pasteurella multocida is responsible for economically important diseases in sheep and pigs. Antimicrobial susceptibility studies are essential for initiating rational and effective empirical therapy of *P. multocida* infections. In this study we investigated the antimicrobial susceptibility to 18 antimicrobial agents of 156 clinical isolates of *P. multocida* from sheep (n = 87) and pigs (n = 69) using the microdilution method. Both sheep and pig isolates exhibited low levels of resistance ($\leq 15\%$) to ceftiofur, gentamicin, neomycin, spectinomycin, chlortetracycline, tulathromycin, florfenicol, danofloxacin, and enrofloxacin and trimethoprim/sulphamethoxazole, high resistance rates ($> 15\%$ up to 50%) to oxytetracycline, tilmicosin, and tiamulin, and very high resistance rates ($> 50\%$) to tylosin tartrate, clindamycin, and sulphadimethoxine. However, sheep isolates exhibited significantly lower percentages of resistance and lower MIC₉₀ values ($P < 0.05$) than pig isolates for most of the antimicrobials tested. In addition, sheep isolates exhibited also significantly lower phenotypic antimicrobial resistance diversity (8 resistotypes vs. 30 resistotypes). LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC was the resistotype most frequently detected in sheep (39.1%) and LIN-SUL-MAC in pig isolates (26.1%). The differences in susceptibility patterns could be influenced by the lower use of antimicrobials in the small ruminant industry compared with the pig farming industry.

Key words: Antimicrobial resistance, *Pasteurella multocida*, pigs, sheep, production system

Pasteurella multocida is an important pathogen responsible for a diversity of diseases with an economic impact in different livestock species, including sheep and pigs. (Wilson and Ho, 2013). Although this pathogen is usually susceptible to several antimicrobials, resistance in different animals has been report-

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ed (San Millan et al., 2009; Tang et al., 2009), which represents a threat regarding treatment options. Therefore, monitoring antimicrobial susceptibility is essential to acquire regional information and help veterinarians to initiate rational and effective empirical therapy in acute situations. Antimicrobial susceptibility studies in *P. multocida* have mainly been performed in isolates from cattle, poultry, or pigs (Post et al., 1991; Lizarazo et al., 2006; Kumar et al., 2009; Furian et al., 2016). However, similar studies including isolates from sheep are scarce (Berge et al., 2006; Sarangi et al., 2015; Cucco et al., 2017). In Spain, information on the antimicrobial susceptibility of porcine *P. multocida* isolates has been reported (Lizarazo et al., 2006), but no similar studies have been conducted in sheep. Thus, the aim of this study was to assess the antimicrobial susceptibility of clinical *P. multocida* isolates from sheep and pigs, providing information on their antimicrobial resistance patterns. This study provides the first data about the antimicrobial susceptibility of ovine *P. multocida* isolates in Spain.

One hundred and fifty-six *P. multocida* isolates obtained between 2001 and 2009 from sheep (n = 87) and pigs (n = 69) were included in this study. All porcine isolates were recovered from clinical cases of pneumonia, septicaemia, and arthritis, and most of the ovine isolates from cases of pneumonia (García-Alvarez et al., 2017). Bacteria were isolated from samples on Columbia blood agar plates (bioMérieux) incubated at 37 °C for 24 h. Isolates were biochemically identified by the commercial identification system API 20E strips (bioMérieux, S.A.) and further confirmed by a species-specific PCR assay (Townsend et al., 1998). Capsular types and sequence types (STs) were determined previously (García-Alvarez et al., 2017).

Antimicrobial susceptibility was determined by the microdilution method using a commercially prepared, dehydrated 96-well microtitre MIC panel (BOPO6F, Sensititre; Trek Diagnostic Systems Inc., UK). The antimicrobial agents used and their respective dilution ranges are indicated in Tables 1 and 2. Inocula were prepared from a 24-h Columbia blood agar plate by suspending four colonies in 5 mL of sterile distilled water. The inoculum was adjusted to 0.5 McFarland standard and further diluted 1/100 in 10 mL of Muller-Hinton broth. Fifty microlitres of the adjusted inoculum was deposited in each well of the microplate panel. Microdilution panels were sealed and further incubated at 37 °C for 24 h. The breakpoints used are shown in Tables 1 and 2. *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 29213 and *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25922 were included as quality controls with each batch of organisms tested. In this study, resistance rates were classified into three categories: low rates, percentage of resistant strains < 15%; high rates, 15–50%; and very high rates, > 50%. Multidrug-resistance (MDR) was defined as acquired non-susceptibility to at least one agent in three or more antimicrobial categories. For the purpose of this study, a bacterial isolate was considered resistant to an antimicrobial category when it was resistant to at least one agent in that category. The association between the host origin, clinical

origin, capsular type or sequence type of *P. multocida* isolates and antimicrobial susceptibility was determined using the Chi-square test, with $P < 0.05$ considered significant. Data were analysed using the Epi Info™ 7 program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Antimicrobial resistance data of *P. multocida* have been commonly generated using different methodologies and different antimicrobials as well as using different breakpoints, which can hamper comparison of our results. Despite these drawbacks and using the breakpoints indicated in Tables 1 and 2, we detected in both sheep and pig isolates low levels of resistance to CEF, GEN, NEO, SPE, CTET, TUL, FFN, DANO, ENRO and SxT ($\leq 15\%$; Tables 1 and 2, Fig. 1), which agrees with most previous reports both for pig (Yoshimura et al., 2001; Tang et al., 2009; Sellyei et al., 2009; Nedbalcová and Kučerová, 2013; Dayao et al., 2014; de Jong et al., 2014; El Garch et al., 2016; Cucco et al., 2017) and sheep isolates (Sarangi et al., 2015; Cucco et al., 2017). On the other hand, high resistance rates ($> 15\text{--}50\%$) to OXY, TIL and TIA and very high resistance rates ($> 50\%$) to TYLT, CLI, and SDM were identified (Tables 1 and 2, Fig. 1). Overall, similar high or very high levels of resistance to these antimicrobials have also been reported previously (Lizarazo et al., 2006; Tang et al., 2009; Nedbalcová and Kučerová, 2013; de Jong et al., 2014; Tahamtan and Hayati, 2014; El Garch et al., 2016; Cucco et al., 2017). Based on these high levels in the resistance *in vitro*, these antimicrobials should not be used empirically to treat *P. multocida* infections or be used with caution under field conditions. Of special concern are the very high levels of resistance to TYLT and SDM found in this study both in pig and sheep isolates, as these antimicrobials are considered critically important and highly important, respectively, for human medicine (World Health Organization, 2019).

It was unexpected that all strains of *P. multocida* from sheep were resistant to ampicillin (Table 1), compared with the low level of resistance (1.2%) detected for penicillin. As no CLSI-defined breakpoints for ampicillin are available for ovine *P. multocida* isolates, in this study we used the breakpoint recommended in the Clinical and Laboratory Standard Institute Vet08 guideline for cattle isolates (CLSI, 2018; $\geq 0.25 \mu\text{g/ml}$) which is much higher than that recommended for swine isolates ($\geq 2 \mu\text{g/ml}$). Similarly, using the breakpoint recommended by the European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing for *P. multocida* (EUCAST, 2019; $\geq 1 \mu\text{g/ml}$), all sheep isolates would have been considered susceptible. Therefore, the high percentage of resistance to ampicillin among sheep isolates is likely biased and overestimated by the breakpoint used in this study and point out the necessity for establishing specific breakpoints for ovine isolates.

Table 1
Minimum inhibitory concentrations (MICs) for 18 antimicrobial agents of ovine *Pasteurella multocida* isolates (n = 87)

Anti-microbial	Number of isolates with MIC of (µg/ml)															Breakpoint (µg/ml)	MIC ₉₀	Resistance (%)
	0.12	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	256	>256					
PEN	<81	5		1			>									≥ 1 ^b	0.12	1.2
AMP	<87			1			>									≥ 0.25 ^b	0.25	100
CEF	<86			1			>									≥ 8 ^b	0.25	0
GEN				<66	19	2										> 4 ^a	2	0
NEO						<84	3									> 16 ^a	4	0
SPE							<5	72								≥ 128 ^b	32	0
CTET							1									> 8 ^a	4	0
OXY							14	14								> 8 ^a	16	16.1
TYLT							5	50								≥ 8 ^e	32	96.6
TUL							2	1								≥ 64 ^b	4	1.2
TIL							<65	10	4	4	5	1	1	1		≥ 32 ^d	32	29.9
TIA																≥ 32 ^c	32	31.0
FFN							<				2	12	46	27		≥ 8 ^b	0.5	0
DANO							41	1								≥ 1 ^b	0.12	0
ENRO																≥ 2 ^b	0.12	0
CLI																≥ 4 ^e	16	100
SDM																> 256 ^a	> 256	73.6
SXT	2/38	4/76														> 8/152 ^a	2/38	0

^aBreakpoints recommended by the Comité de l'Antibiogramme de la Société Française de Microbiologie for *Pasteurellaceae* (CASFM-VET, 2019).
^bBreakpoints recommended by the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) for *P. multocida* (2018-VET08); when available, specific breakpoints for cattle and swine were applied to sheep and pig isolates, respectively. ^cBreakpoints recommended by the CLSI for bacteria isolated from animals (2002; M31-A2). ^dBreakpoints recommended by the CLSI for *Pasteurella* spp. other than *P. multocida* (2017; VET06). ^eFor TYLT no breakpoint is available. For this antimicrobial, the considered breakpoint was established based on the distribution of MIC values of the tested strains. Abbreviations: PEN, penicillin; AMP, ampicillin; CEF, ceftriaxone; GEN, gentamicin; NEO, neomycin; SPE, spectinomycin; CTET, chlorotetracycline; OXY, oxytetracycline; TYLT, tylosin tartrate; TUL, tulathromycin; TIL, tilimicosin; TIA, tiamulin; FFN, florfenicol; DANO, danofloxacin; ENRO, enrofloxacin; CLI, clindamycin; SDM, sulphadimethoxine; SXT, Trimethoprim/Sulphamethoxazole. (<): minimum value of concentration used; (>): maximum value of concentration used. Resistance percentages that were statistically significant (P < 0.05) with respect to pig isolates are shown in bold

Table 2
Minimum inhibitory concentrations (MICs) for 18 antimicrobial agents of porcine *Pasteurella multocida* isolates (n = 69)

Anti-microbial	Number of isolates with MIC of ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)															Breakpoint ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	MIC ₉₀	Resistance (%)
	0.12	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	256	>256					
PEN	<35	4	7	5	2	2	14	>							$\geq 1^b$	8	33.3	
AMP	<39	1	6	4	4	4	1	4	10						$\geq 2^b$	>32	33.3	
CEF	<55	1	5	2	2	6	>								$\geq 8^b$	2	8.7	
GEN			<23	30	11	1	4	>							>4 ^a	4	7.2	
NEO					<43	12	6	8	>						>16 ^a	32	11.6	
SPE						<5	36	18	9	1	>				$\geq 128^d$	>128	13.0	
CTET	<18	14	10	13	8	9	>								>8 ^a	8	10.1	
OXY	<17	10	10	10	3	4	>	25							>8 ^a	>16	36.2	
TYLT	<	3		3	6	28	32	>							$\geq 8^e$	32	95.7	
TUL				<43	12	4	1	1	8	>					$\geq 64^b$	64	11.6	
TIL					<39	15	2	2	11	>					$\geq 32^b$	64	18.8	
TIA					3	5	8	33	13	>					$\geq 32^c$	32	18.8	
FFN		<12	37	9	6	5	>								$\geq 8^b$	2	7.2	
DANO	<49	6	9	1	4										$\geq 2^d$	0.5	5.8	
ENRO	<60	3	3	2	1	>									$\geq 1^b$	0.25	4.3	
CLI	<1		3	3	9	8	16	32	>						$\geq 4^e$	16	81.2	
SDM															>256 ^a	>256	89.9	
SXT	2/38	4/76													>8/152 ^a	4/76	0	

^aBreakpoints recommended by the Comité de l'Antibiogramme de la Société Française de Microbiologie for *Pasteurellaceae* (CASFM-VET, 2019).
^bBreakpoints recommended by the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) for *P. multocida* (2018-VET08); when available, specific breakpoints for cattle and swine were applied to sheep and pig isolates, respectively. ^cBreakpoints recommended by the CLSI for bacteria isolated from animals (2002; M31-A2). ^dBreakpoints recommended by the CLSI for *Pasteurella* spp. other than *P. multocida* (2017; VET06). ^eFor TYLT no breakpoint is available. For this antimicrobial, the considered breakpoint was established based on the distribution of MIC values of the tested strains. Abbreviations: PEN, penicillin; AMP, ampicillin; CEF, ceftiofur; GEN, gentamicin; NEO, neomycin; SPE, spectinomycin; CTET, chlorotetracycline; OXY, oxytetracycline; TYLT, tylosin tartrate; TUL, tulathromycin; TIL, tilimicosin; TIA, tiamulin; FFN, florfenicol; DANO, danofloxacin; ENRO, enrofloxacin; CLI, clindamycin; SDM, sulphadimethoxine; SXT, Trimethoprim/Sulphamethoxazole. (<): minimum value of concentration used; (>): maximum value of concentration used. Resistance percentages that were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) with respect to pig isolates are shown in bold

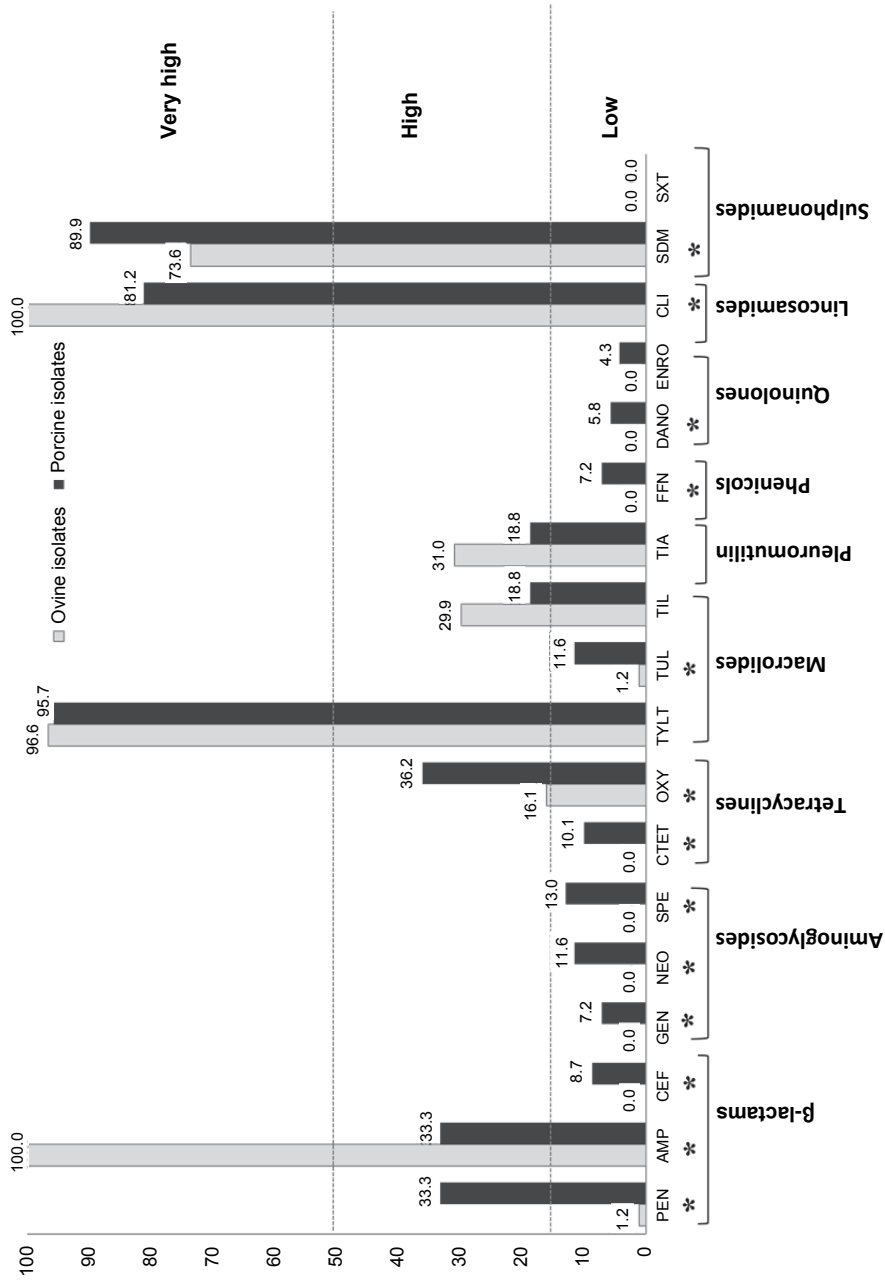


Fig. 1. Antimicrobial resistance to 18 antimicrobials tested of *P. multocida* isolates obtained from sheep and pigs. * Statistically significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between sheep and pig isolates

The resistotypes identified in this study and their distribution among sheep and pig isolates are shown in Table 3. None of the ovine or porcine *P. multocida* isolates was susceptible to the nine antimicrobial categories tested, with the resistotype LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC being the most frequently detected among sheep isolates (39.1%) and the resistotype LIN-SUL-MAC among pig isolates (26.1%; Table 3). No statistically significant differences were detected between percentages of sheep and pig MDR isolates (97.7% vs. 92.8%) but sheep isolates exhibited lower phenotypic antimicrobial resistance diversity (8 resistotypes vs. 30 resistotypes) than pig isolates (Table 3). More than half (55.8%) of the *P. multocida* isolates of this study were genetically characterised by MLST by García-Alvarez et al. (2017), with most of the ovine and porcine isolates belonging to a limited number of sequence types (ST50 and ST19 among ovine isolates and ST3, ST11 and ST62 among porcine isolates). A comparison of the antimicrobial resistance patterns and STs of the isolates included in both studies did not detect any association between resistance patterns and prevalent genotypes ($P > 0.05$; data not shown). Therefore, unlike in other pathogens (Klugman, 2003; Durante-Mangoni and Zarrilli, 2011; Edelstein et al., 2013), the differences in the antimicrobial resistance between sheep and pig isolates should not be related to the presence of particular resistant genotypes within the population of *P. multocida*. Moreover, capsular types A and D were the most frequent in *P. multocida* isolates in both animal species as determined previously (García-Alvarez et al., 2017). No associations were identified between resistance patterns of *P. multocida* with capsular types or with the clinical origin of the isolates (data not shown).

Sheep isolates exhibited significantly lower percentages of resistance ($P < 0.05$) than pig isolates for 12 antimicrobials (Tables 1 and 2, Fig. 1). Moreover, the MIC₉₀ values for most antimicrobials were also lower in sheep than in pig isolates (Tables 1 and 2). The differences in the level of antimicrobial susceptibility between sheep and pig isolates could be associated with the different amount of antimicrobials used in the two farming sectors. In fact, pig farming is one of the livestock activities with the highest antimicrobial use (Moreno, 2014), while the use of antimicrobials is minimal in the small ruminant industry (Santman-Berends et al., 2014). Therefore, the higher resistance rates observed among pig isolates might reflect the selective pressure related to the higher use of antimicrobials in pig farming, at least for some antimicrobials.

Furthermore, the resistance rates and MIC₉₀ values observed in this study among porcine *P. multocida* isolates for most antimicrobials were higher than those observed in a similar study carried out in Spain (Lizarazo et al., 2006), suggesting a shift in the resistance to these antimicrobials in Spanish *P. multocida* isolates from pigs. These results point out the need for active surveillance programmes to monitor the antimicrobial resistance patterns of *P. multocida*.

Table 3Resistance phenotypes (resistotypes) of *Pasteurella multocida* isolates according to host species

Resistance to	Ovine		Porcine		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
LAC-LIN	2	2.3			2	1.3
LAC-SUL			3	4.3	3	1.9
LIN-MAC			2	2.9	2	1.3
LAC-LIN-MAC	15	17.2	1	1.4	16	10.3
LAC-LIN-PLE			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-SUL-MAC	1	1.1			1	0.6
LIN-SUL-MAC			18	26.1	18	11.5
LIN-MAC-TET			2	2.9	2	1.3
SUL-MAC-ANF			1	1.4	1	0.6
SUL-MAC-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
MAC-PLE-TET			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-MAC-TET			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-MAC-PLE	5	5.7			5	3.2
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC	34	39.1	6	8.7	40	25.6
LAC-SUL-MAC-TET			3	4.3	3	1.9
LIN-SUL-MAC-PLE			4	5.8	4	2.6
LIN-SUL-MAC-TET			3	4.3	3	1.9
SUL-MAC-TET-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
SUL-MAC-TET-QUIN			1	1.4	1	0.6
LIN-MAC-SUL-TET			2	2.9	2	1.3
LIN-SUL-MAC-AMI			4	5.8	4	2.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-TET	11	12.6	2	2.9	13	8.3
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-PLE	16	18.4	1	1.4	17	10.9
LIN-MAC-PLE-TET-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
LIN-MAC-SUL-PLE-TET			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-AMI-QUIN			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-TET-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-PLE-TET	3	3.4	1	1.4	4	2.6
LIN-SUL-MAC-TET-AMI-QUIN			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-SUL-MAC-PLE-TET-ANF-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-PLE-TET-ANF-AMI			1	1.4	1	0.6
LAC-LIN-SUL-MAC-PLE-TET-ANF-AMI-QUIN			2	2.9	2	1.3
Total	87	100.0	69	100.0	156	100.0

Abbreviations: LIN: lincosamides; SUL: sulphonamides; MAC: macrolides; TET: tetracyclines; LAC: β -Lactams; QUIN: quinolones; AMI: aminoglycosides; ANF: phenicol; PLE: pleuromutilins

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