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**Identification of cross-protective antigens to
develop a vaccine against intestinal pathogenic
E. coli strains: Special target to
enterohemorrhagic *E. coli***

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*In Memory of my sister Any and my father
(May and September 2016)*

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Abstract

Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) are a major cause of large outbreaks mainly affecting developed countries. From 1982 to 2002, a total of 350 *E. coli* O157 outbreaks were reported in the United States. EHEC infection causes diarrheal disease often associated with clinical complications like hemorrhagic colitis and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Although efforts focused on hygiene have been implemented in the food supply chain to reduce the risk of the foodborne *E. coli* O157 infection, outbreaks caused by this pathogen are still common. In addition, antibiotic-based therapy is discouraged for their potential undesirable effect in releasing shiga-toxin from the bacteria. Among non-antibiotic preventing strategies, vaccine development is warranted, still nowadays a licensed vaccine specific for human use against EHEC is not available. In this study, we used the Reverse Vaccinology approach applied on the EHEC O157:H7 genome to select new potential vaccine candidates. We identified a panel of 24 of potential protein antigens and we successfully expressed three of them in Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens (GMMA) delivery system. GMMA expressing these vaccine candidates resulted to be immunogenic, raising a specific antibody response for two of the selected antigens. In particular, immunization with MC001 candidate was able to reduce intestinal EHEC O157:H7 colonization lowering the bacterial count in feces, colon and cecum tissues in mice. This candidate was found to be homologue to the *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase enzyme (LpxR) and to our knowledge this study was the first report describing it as vaccine candidate. Also, gene distribution and sequence variability analysis showed that MC001 was mainly present and conserved in EHEC O157:H7 and in some EPEC. Given the high genetic variability among and within these pathotypes, the identification and inclusion of this conserved candidate in a vaccine might cover against major intestinal pathogenic strains. Furthermore, because it has been showed that during the infection process some autotransporters, as MC021 can be reactive, we also analysed molecular determinant with an important role for their proper secretion and folding, namely the autochaperon (AC) domain. It appeared the AC is a common feature of autotransporters but strictly associated with passenger domains exhibiting a β -helix fold. Their exposition at the bacterial cell the surface further position the AC as a potential antigenic target and/or development of new treatments. These findings further provide new research directions for the development of non-antibiotic preventive strategy against InPEC in human but also animal.

Keywords: Reverse vaccinology; InPEC; Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*; Vaccine development; GMMA.

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Introduction

An Overview of *Escherichia coli*

Escherichia coli is one of the more common microorganisms in the intestinal microbiota. *E. coli* bacterial colonization begins in the first hours after birth, establishing a symbiotic relationship (Nataro and Kaper, 1998b; Kaper *et al.*, 2004). However, some *E. coli* strains have evolved into pathogenic strains. Pathogenic *E. coli* are classified according to the place or system affected, namely intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (InPEC) and extra-intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (ExPEC); the latter comprises uropathogenic *E. coli* (UPEC) and neonatal meningitis *E. coli* (NMEC) (Nataro and Kaper, 1998b; Kaper *et al.*, 2004).

The InPEC strains are subdivided into six pathotypes according to the characteristics of the infection they cause, the extended variety in their genetic and phenotypic features, due to their process of evolution, the mechanism of their pathogenesis, clinical patterns and their interaction with the enteropathotype. These six pathotypes are classified as enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC), enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC), enteroinvasive *E. coli* (EIEC), enteroaggregative *E. coli* (EAEC), diffusely adherent *E. coli* (DAEC), and enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC).

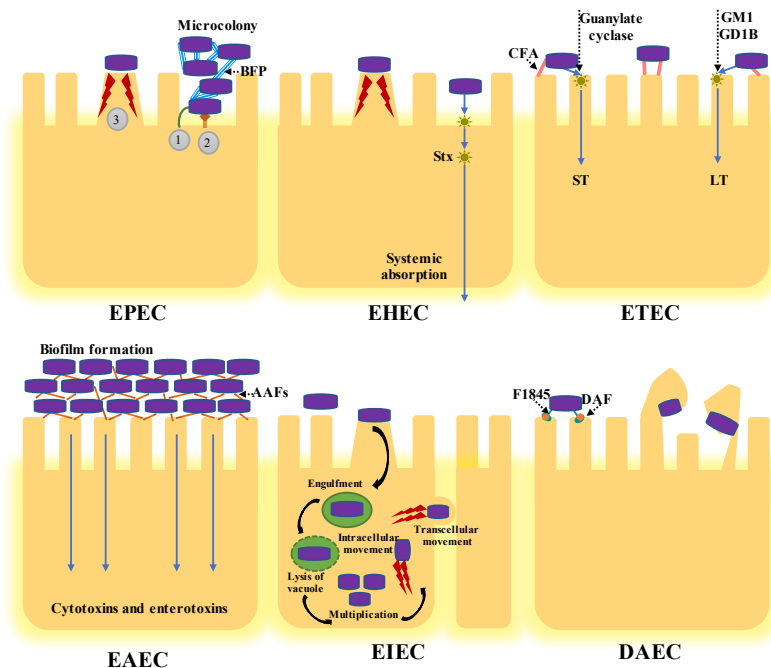


Figure 1. Representation of the six InPEC pathotypes, according to their most studied and representative virulence factors, and their interaction with the enterocyte (Figure based on Kaper *et al.*, 2004). EPEC colonizes small bowel enterocytes, destroys the normal microvillar architecture, and induces the characteristic attaching and effacing (A/E) lesion. Cytoskeletal remodeling occurs during the inflammatory response and diarrhea. 1. Initial adhesion, 2. Protein translocation by type III secretion, 3. Pedestal formation. EHEC colonizes the colon and also induces

the A/E lesion. The hallmark feature of EHEC is the expression of Shiga toxin (Stx). ETEC adheres to small bowel enterocytes provoking watery diarrhea due the secretion of heat-labile (LT) and/or heat-stable (ST) enterotoxins. EAEC adheres to both small and large bowel epithelia through a thick biofilm and elaborates secretory enterotoxins and cytotoxins. EIEC enters colonic epithelial cells, lyses the phagosome and moves through the cell by restructuring actin microfilaments. EIEC might move laterally through the epithelium by direct cell-to-cell spread or might exit and re-enter the basolateral plasma membrane. DAEC causes a characteristic signal transduction effect in small bowel enterocytes displaying the development of long finger-like cellular projections, wrapping around the bacteria. AAF, aggregative adherence fimbriae; BFP, bundle-forming pilus; CFA, colonization factor antigen; DAF, decay-accelerating factor; EAST1, enteroaggregative *E. coli* ST1; LT, heat-labile enterotoxin; ShET1, *Shigella* enterotoxin 1; ST, heat-stable enterotoxin.

Enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* (EHEC)

EHEC is an important pathogen because of its association with several diarrheal outbreaks, mainly following the consumption of water and food contaminated by these bacteria, including lettuce, lucerne, apple juice, and non-pasteurized products, as meat from cattle. The population at risk includes children and the elderly. In the United States in 2014, the incidence per 100,000 population was 690 for EHEC O157 and 445 for EHEC non-O157. The outbreak percentages were: 16% for EHEC O157 and 7% for EHEC non-O157. Regarding EHEC non-O157:H7, their incidence is increasing and becoming a human pathogen as important as EHEC O157:H7 (Stacy M. Crim and Matthew Cartter, 2015). One of the main adverse effects after infection with EHEC is hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). This syndrome is mainly driven by expression of Stx and is characterized by a triad of microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, and acute renal failure, with a 10% chance of HUS development in children under 10 years of age. Besides triggering HUS and later renal failure, EHEC is also responsible for strokes (Tarr *et al.*, 2005). Outbreaks have occurred in developed countries, as the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, France, and others in Europe. Furthermore, Latin American countries have reported EHEC outbreaks and it is a public health problem in Argentina, Brazil and Chile (Nataro and Kaper, 1998b; Kaper *et al.*, 2004) (WHO). (Caprioli *et al.*, 2005; Mejias *et al.*, 2016).

The clinical manifestations of O157 and non-O157 infections are similar: from mild watery diarrhea to bloody diarrhea known as hemorrhagic colitis (HC). The incubation period before the onset of symptoms for O157:H7 is about 3 days (Bell *et al.*, 1994). The main symptoms at the beginning of the infection are diarrhea, and in some cases fever, abdominal cramping, or vomiting (Tarr *et al.*, 2005). HC develops over the following days and it is

recommended that patients be hospitalized, to manage diarrhea and prevent further contagion (Tarr *et al.*, 2005). Usually, patients recover from EHEC infections after a week, but to date we have no way to prevent infection or the development of HUS. Nonetheless, the suggested treatments for EHEC infections are related to the patient's symptoms and signs, as hydration by intravenous fluid administration, renal function and platelet monitoring, but more importantly discouragement of the use of antimotility drugs, pain relief drugs and antibiotics (Holtz *et al.*, 2009).

As for each of the characterized InPEC, EHEC are primarily defined by an array of evidence based on clinical manifestations, *i.e.* clinical symptoms, histological and molecular features (Nataro and Kaper, 1998; Kaper *et al.*, 2004). Based on their incidence, involvement in outbreaks and association with severe disease, EHEC can be classified into 4 classes, namely (i) class A corresponds to the O157 serogroup with high virulence, (ii) class B to the so-called big six non-O157 serotypes O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H2, O111:H8, O121:H19 and O145:H28, with moderate virulence, (iii) class C to serotypes mainly involved in some sporadic cases with moderate virulence, and (iv) class D to serotypes never reported in human infection and thus avirulent (Karmali *et al.*, 2003).

As asymptomatic carriers, cattle are the natural reservoir of EHEC; as an anthroponosis, EHEC infection can occur via direct (meat, milk) or indirect (vegetables, water) contamination of food products by animal feces (Rivas *et al.*, 2016). The adhesion and persistence of the bacteria are key features in bacterial pathogenesis. EHEC O157:H7 mainly colonize human colon and carry a pathogenic island (PAI) known as the locus of enterocyte effacement (LEE) (like EPEC), which enables production of the A/E lesion in humans, but this phenomenon is mainly observed in *in vitro* assays. However, the PAI LEE is still a determinant factor for colonization and persistence in other reservoirs (e.g. cattle) and even its evolutionary selection is implied in the selection for pathogenic strains (Nataro and Kaper, 1998a; Coombes *et al.*, 2011; Lewis *et al.*, 2015). Interestingly, the EHEC non-O157:H7 strains do not necessarily carry the LEE PAI. (McWilliams and Torres, 2014; Monteiro *et al.*, 2016).

Virulence determinants in EHEC

Shiga toxins:

Stx is the characteristic virulence factor of EHEC strains, and the most important one in the pathogenesis of HUS. Stx is encoded by a chromosomally integrated prophage. It belongs

to the AB family, and has also been classified into two major types: Stx1 with 3 subtypes (a, c, and d), and Stx2 with 7 subtypes (a to g) (Scheutz *et al.*, 2012). The subtypes have been isolated not only from humans but also from other sources. The presence of Stx variants can be combined in EHEC strains; some strains carry one or both Stx, and even combine the subtypes. However, Stx2 is the toxin most associated with severe disease (Boerlin *et al.*, 1999). Overall, Stx causes cellular damage after being internalized into cells by interacting with the Gb3 receptor in Paneth and renal cells, causing the depurination (adenine) of the 28S subunit of the ribosome (rRNA 28S) and stopping protein synthesis following by death of eukaryotic cells. Stx can activate the coagulation cascade, intravascular hemolysis and ischemia (Nataro and Kaper, 1998b; Donnenberg and Whittam, 2001; Thorpe, 2004). The use of antibiotics in the treatment of EHEC infection can first lead to Stx2 production (e.g. fluoroquinolones) (Zhang *et al.*, 2000) and then to cellular damage, either by disrupting the bacteria releasing the toxin or by increasing the production of the toxin by activating the SOS system and stimulation of the lytic cycle of the prophage, e.g. with subinhibitory concentrations of fluoroquinolones and trimethoprim (Kimmitt *et al.*, 2000; McGannon *et al.*, 2010). The resulting secretion of the toxin into the blood stream can lead to worsening of the disease (Pacheco and Sperandio, 2012).

O157 Plasmid (pO157)

The mega plasmid of EHEC, the 92 kb pO157, is very common among the STEC/EHEC O157:H7 strains. It is an F-like plasmid that carries genes encoding important virulence factors, including: *stcE* (a zinc metalloprotease) secreted by the type II secretion system (T2SS); the genes *etp* that encode a T2SS; the operon that includes *hlyA*, for hemolysin; *katP*, which codes for a catalase peroxidase and a serine protease, *espP*, involved in the cleavage of coagulation factor V; the inhibitor of sterase C1 (C1-INH) of the complement viq, it has mucinase activity and is involved in colonization and tissue damage (Burland *et al.*, 1998; Donnenberg and Whittam, 2001; Torres, 2008)

Adherence factors

The mechanism of adherence of *E. coli* O157:H7 and other EHEC serotypes to the epithelial cells in the intestine is one of the crucial steps in pathogenesis. The adherence factor best studied and with major relevance in intestinal colonization *in vivo* and in animal models is the LEE, a 35 Kb pathogenic island organized in 5 operons (*LEE1-5*) and conferring the phenotype of the A/E lesion produced by tight adherence between the Tir and intimin proteins

encoded by the *tir* and *eae* genes, respectively. Furthermore, these adhesins are necessary but not sufficient to produce the A/E lesion *in vitro* and *in vivo*, which is evidence of the need for other factors of adhesion for the initial interaction with the enterocyte (Torres *et al.*, 2002; Torres *et al.*, 2005).

Complete genome sequencing of two EHEC O157:H7 strains indicated the existence of at least twelve non-fimbrial adhesins. The most studied factors for the adherence of this bacterium are: 1) EspA filament, assembled from the expression of the LEE-encoded gene, *espA*; 2) Intimin and Tir, encoded by *eae* and *tir*, respectively; 3) The pO157 product as ToxB, which regulates LEE gene expression; 4) Outer membrane protein A (OmpA); 5) The IrgA homologue adhesin (Iha), homologous to the IrgA in *Vibrio cholera*; and 6) the calcium-binding antigen 43 homologue (Cah), a surface protein (Stevens, 2005; Torres *et al.*, 2005)

Genome sequencing also showed at least sixteen putative fimbrial operons (Perna *et al.*, 2001). The most characterized are 1) type I fimbriae (McWilliams and Torres, 2014); 2) curli (McWilliams and Torres, 2014); 3) F9 fimbriae (McWilliams and Torres, 2014); 4) *E. coli* common pilus (Ecp) (Rendon *et al.*, 2007); 5) type IV pili, hemorrhagic *coli* pilus (HCP) (Xicohtencatl-Cortes *et al.*, 2007 and 2009); 6) ELF and (Samadder *et al.*, 2009); 10) the long polar fimbriae, Lpf1 and Lpf2. (Torres *et al.*, 2002; 2004).

As mentioned above, the molecular pathogenesis of the big six LEE-negative EHEC strains, which are also involved in diarrheal diseases and HUS, is different from that of the LEE-positive strains. The most recent outbreak in Germany was caused by an Stx-producing *E. coli*, but this strain is closer genetically to the EAEC pathotype (Rasko *et al.*, 2011) and to its mechanism of pathogenesis.

The most relevant adhesins found in LEE-negative EHEC are the Lpf2 homolog (LpfO113) (Doughty *et al.*, 2002), STEC autoagglutinating adhesin (encoded by *saa*) (Paton *et al.*, 2001), the STEC autotransporter contributing to biofilm formation (Sab) (Herold *et al.*, 2009) and the *E. coli* immunoglobulin-binding (Eib) protein G (Lu *et al.*, 2006; Merkel *et al.*, 2010).

Due the involvement of Stx in the course of infection and treatment restrictions, different preventive strategies have been implemented and are exemplified in the following sections.

First part

Chapter 1

Vaccine Development Against EHEC And Other Examples

Introduction

The burden of diarrheal diseases caused by several ethological agents is today a worldwide major public health problem that is exacerbated by a lack of preventive strategies such as vaccines to block infections. Besides InPEC, these diarrheagenic bacterial agents include *Cryptosporidium*, *Campylobacter*, *Shigella* and *Salmonella*, which are responsible for the vast majority of diarrheal diseases worldwide (MacLennan and Saul, 2014). Mathematical approaches have been developed to standardize the estimation of the burden of diarrheal disease, the etiology and the number of the most affected populations. Specifically, to calculate numbers in the burden of diarrheal disease in children under 5 years old (U5), focused not only on diarrheal diseases but other diseases as pneumonia, the Global Burden of Disease (GBD by Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2010) and Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group (CHERG by World Health Organization) (Kovacs *et al.*, 2015) indexes were implemented. The main goal of these approaches is the estimation of cause-specific disease and morbidity-mortality, but the output yields different numbers due the diverse data included in these methods. In addition, the Global Enteric Multicenter Study (GEMS), a case-control study still ongoing in Africa and Asia, is designed to identify the etiology and population-based burden of pediatric diarrheal disease (Kotloff *et al.*, 2013). Overall, the use of these approaches will allow us to refine the regulations, therapies, and control strategies and to estimate the real numbers of infectious diseases depending on the specific target (Pires *et al.*, 2015).

InPEC contribute significantly to the burden of diarrheal diseases, which are a critical issue in low- and middle-income countries (in Asia, Africa and Latin America). For instance, EPEC and ETEC are mainly endemic in developing countries and in travelers to these countries (Kaper *et al.*, 2004; Torres, 2017), whereas EHEC are responsible for large outbreaks around the world. This pathotype mainly affects developed countries and causes not only diarrheal disease, also clinical complications like hemorrhagic colitis and HUS, which is an increasing problem in Latin American countries like Argentina (Kaper *et al.*, 2004; Pianciola *et al.*, 2016;

Torres, 2017). Similarly, EAEC has also occasionally been involved in diarrheal diseases in developing and industrialized countries (Foster *et al.*, 2015) and in 2011 an EHEC-EAEC hybrid emerged and caused a large outbreak in Europe, with 3816 reported cases, leading to 845 HUS cases and 54 deaths (Brzuszkiewicz *et al.*, 2011; Frank *et al.*, 2011).

Overall, (i) the increase in the burden of the disease as traveler diarrhea (ETEC, EAEC), (ii) endemic ETEC and EPEC cases in developing countries, (iii) infections with EHEC and an increasing number of HUS episodes, (iv) the annual cost for the healthcare system, and (v) the emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains all point to the need for effective preventive treatment to reduce the burden of diarrheal disease. Although the use of antibiotics is still important in treating such infections, non-antibiotic strategies are either a crucial option to limit the increase in antibiotic-resistant strains, which become a threat to public health (Torres, 2017), or are absolutely necessary for diseases where antibiotic therapies are not recommended, e.g. EHEC infection (Goldwater and Bettelheim, 2012; Rivas *et al.*, 2016). Among non-antibiotic therapies, vaccine development is a strategy of choice but, to date, there is no universal or specific licensed vaccine against InPEC.

For years vaccine development has included different platforms and approaches as (i) pathogens attenuated by exposure to different environmental conditions (heat or oxygen) or by multiple passes in culture media (*in vitro*), a method considered as the most ancient and empirical form of vaccination; (ii) detoxified toxin forms, like the detoxified version of diphtheria and tetanus toxin; (iii) the use of protein-based vaccines, as hemagglutinin from influenza virus or the vaccine for *Bordetella pertussis*; (iv) genetically engineered vaccines, which have been the most exploited alternative to vaccine development, in which antigens can be produced in different vectors that reduce toxicity or collateral immunoreactions (allergies to certain components); (v) recombinant proteins engineered to be over-expressed, or antigens that are delivered in outer membrane vesicles, as the meningococcal group B vaccine (Mora *et al.*, 2003; Plotkin, 2014).

However, there are several infectious diseases for which these traditional approaches have failed and for which vaccines have not yet been developed. With the advent of whole-genome sequencing and advances in bioinformatics, the field of vaccinology has changed. Approaches like reverse vaccinology, based on the scanning of the annotated complete pathogen genome by bioinformatic prediction of the most likely vaccine candidates, have allowed the identification of promising antigens and the development of a safe broadly protective vaccine against the *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B pathogen (Pizza *et al.*, 2000;

Giuliani *et al.*, 2006; Feavers and Maiden, 2017). For other pathogens such as *Streptococcus ssp.*, and for extra-intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (ExPEC), a number of promising antigens have also been identified (De Gregorio and Rappuoli, 2012; Sjolting *et al.*, 2015). In particular, for ExPEC the genome sequence analysis of a neonatal meningitis isolate (NMEC) enabled the identification of 230 potential antigens. The most protective antigens uncovered by that analysis were a broadly conserved adhesin (FdeC) and a conserved secreted zinc metallopeptidase (SslE), which conferred cross-protection in three different murine models, including intestinal, ascending urinary tract infection and sepsis (Moriel *et al.*, 2010; Nesta *et al.*, 2012; Nesta *et al.*, 2014).

For several years now there has been a marked effort to pursue the development of vaccines against InPEC by various research groups around the world. To date, the main pathotypes considered for vaccine development are EHEC and ETEC, because of their major impact on public health burden. Although EPEC is a major issue in developing countries, no notable advances have been made.

In the case of EHEC vaccines, due the involvement of Stx in the course of infection and treatment restrictions, different preventive strategies, as vaccination, have been implemented. So far, there is no a licensed vaccine for EHEC and several studies are focused on finding suitable vaccine candidates. Some of these studies are exemplified below.

1. Development of Stx-based treatments

Neutralizing the effect of the toxin has been one of the strategies to limit its effect. Antibodies α Stx1 and α Stx2 have been directly engineered against the B subunit of Stx1 and A subunit of Stx2, respectively (Bitzan *et al.*, 2009). Tolerability and the pharmacokinetic profile have been evaluated using chimeric anti-Stx1 and anti-Stx2 antibodies. This combination comprises the variable regions of the murine Stx1-neutralizing or Stx2-neutralizing monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) 13C4 and 11E10, respectively, fused to the human kappa light chain-constant domain sequence and the human immunoglobulin G1 (IgG1) heavy chain constant-domain sequence. These antibodies were well tolerated and safe as antitoxins in healthy human volunteers in a human single-dose study. Although these mAbs neutralize the effect of Stx in mouse experiments, it remains to be shown whether or not they avoid the development of HUS after diarrhea caused by EHEC (Bitzan *et al.*, 2009).

More recently, camelid single antibodies against Stx2 have been tested for the protection they afford against Stx2 (Mejias *et al.*, 2016). Anti-single chain antibodies (VHH)

were obtained with two copies of anti-Stx2B VHH and one anti-serum albumin VHH. This trivalent molecule decreased toxicity in an Stx2 lethal mouse model. Because of its antitoxin effect, VHH has been proposed as an alternative for treatment of the consequences of HUS (Mejias *et al.*, 2016).

2. Attenuated bacteria and bacterial ghost platforms

Gene regulators (global or specific) are important players in the expression, or silencing, of virulence factors in pathogens. In fact, deleting those that promote the expression of specific virulence factors could be useful in attenuating a pathogen. This strategy has been applied to EHEC by deleting the LEE-encoded regulator (Ler). Ler is an important specific regulator that positively regulates the expression of LEE genes involved in the A/E phenotype, as well as genes out of the PAI, including adhesins and genes in the plasmid pO157. An EHEC O157:H7 86-24 strain in which the *ler* and *stx2* genes (*ler/Stx2*) have been deleted, but which carries a plasmid that expresses a detoxified version of the Stx1A and Stx2 A subunits, has been used as an attenuated vaccine candidate. These bacteria of reduced toxicity and safe for animal administration were used to immunize mice intraperitoneally. Animals were challenged using the EHEC O157:H7 wild-type strain, which after 6 days was not detected in feces, indicating that the attenuated strain reduces wild-type colonization. Also, in passively immunized suckling offspring born to mothers previously immunized with this vaccine there was a 70% survival rate after challenge with wild-type EHEC bacteria (Liu *et al.*, 2009).

As EPEC is the closest pathotype to EHEC, it has been used as live attenuated vaccine to assess cross-protection among the two pathotypes, but protection against EHEC was only partial. Intra-gastric immunization with a clinical isolate EPEC O126:H6 and challenge using the EHEC O157:H7 wild-type strain yielded sick mice, but with no dead mice reported. More importantly, it was shown that the EspB and intimin antibodies produced after EPEC vaccination were cross-reactive against EspB and intimin from EHEC (Calderon Toledo *et al.*, 2011).

Using a different delivery system, such as an attenuated *Salmonella* strain, recombinant EspA (300 amino acids of carboxyl-terminal), intimin and the B subunit of Stx2 proteins have been expressed. Mice either orally immunized only or orally immunized and subcutaneously boosted raised similar levels of specific IgG and IgA antibodies against these three antigens. However, intimin-specific antibody levels were higher in mice orally immunized and subcutaneously boosted than in mice orally immunized only. Yet, IgG antibodies specific for

Stx increased a week after the booster vaccination; IgA specific for Stx2B antibodies were only detected in feces and increased even more when boosted. An attenuated *Salmonella* strain harboring the three proteins (intimin, EspA and Stx) showed higher titers of specific antibodies, and specific lymphocyte proliferation, including better protection than in single or double recombinant strain.

Another attenuated bacterial vaccine was constructed to express a γ -intimin variant, encoded by the *eae* gene, in attenuated *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium χ 3987 (Δ *cya*, Δ *crp*, Δ *asd* and H683 Δ *aro* Δ *asd*). Vaccination using these attenuated bacteria expressing intimin was able to increase titers of IgG in serum and IgA in feces, indicating immune responses by the systemic and humoral immune systems. The attenuated bacteria expressing intimin were still detectable in Peyer's patches and spleen, while in feces the colony-forming unit (CFU) count decreased from day 2 to day 10 and later remained constant. In animals immunized with the attenuated *Salmonella*, EHEC O157:H7 shedding post-challenge decreased and IgA and IgG production increased (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012).

A mucosal antigen delivery system used for EHEC vaccine was based on Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) (a live attenuated strain of *Mycobacterium bovis*), because of its mucosal humoral immune reactivity. A recombinant rBCG-Stx2B expressing the Stx2 subunit B was generated and then used to immunize mice. This recombinant bacillus increased Stx2 IgG in serum to levels that were directly proportional to CFU concentrations. Protection was confirmed when, after challenge with a wild-type EHEC strain, there was a higher survival rate (63%) in immunized mice with higher CFU concentrations than in immunized mice with fewer CFUs of rBCG-Stx2 or null rBCG (Fujii *et al.*, 2012).

Finally, the most recent and studied delivery system for development of a vaccine against EHEC is based on the bacterial ghost (BG) platform. BGs of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been produced by the controlled expression of the X174 lysis gene. This gene produces empty bacterial cell envelopes with the composition of the cell envelope of a living cell, such as lipopolysaccharides (LPS), lipids, peptidoglycans (acting as adjuvants), but which lack the capability to produce infection. These bacteria show an antitoxicity effect on Vero cell cultures, and are safe for administration to mice (Mayr *et al.*, 2005; Cai *et al.*, 2010). Animals orally immunized twice (days 0 and 28) with BG and then challenged at 55 days stopped the shedding of the bacteria after day 3 post-EHEC and showed a rate survival of 93% (Cai *et al.*, 2010). By contrast, in mice rectally immunized against EHEC O157:H7 there was a 100% survival rate after challenge with bacterial shedding until 3 to 5 days after (Mayr *et al.*, 2012).

However, mice that were orally or intragastrically immunized still showed disease symptoms from day 2 to 7 post-challenge, including anorexia, slowing of activity, no stimulus reaction, and convulsions before death (Cai *et al.*, 2010). Data also showed that surviving mice recovered after 7 days and dead mice developed glomerular necrosis and enterocyte effacing. Interestingly, specific IgA and IgG antibody titers were raised in sera and colon from mice immunized twice orally with BG (Cai *et al.*, 2010). In fact, the vaccination of mice with BG is, per se, able to trigger the immune response, observed in Th1/Th2 cell proliferation and higher INF levels in spleen cells, leading to increase titers of IgG in serum and IgA, in both serum and colon samples (Mayr *et al.*, 2005; Cai *et al.*, 2010; Mayr *et al.*, 2012).

More recently, a BG (rSOBG) expressing an exposed Stx chimeric protein comprising the Stx2A and Stx1B subunits (Stx2Am-Stx1B) has been engineered. This rSOBG showed specific IgG and IgA antibody titers to StxA1 and StxB2, and the rate of survival was higher (52%) than with native bacterial ghost-OBGs (12%) when mice were challenged intragastrically with high doses of viable *E. coli* O157:H7. Also, there was no tissue damage in the liver, kidney or intestine of rSOBG-immunized (Cai *et al.*, 2015).

3. Protein-based vaccines

Among several strategies applied to the development of vaccines against, EHEC chimeric protein construction has proven attractive in recent years. A fusion protein comprising Stx2A and the N-terminus of EspA has been tested for its immunoreactivity. Mice subcutaneously immunized with EspA-StxA1 fusion protein showed high titers of IgG antibodies specific to EspA-StxA1 after 7 days. This strong humoral immune response resulted in > 95% survival in mice after a challenge with crude toxin Stx2. Although *in vitro* assays on HeLa cells showed that the anti-EspA-Stx2A1 serum neutralized the action of Stx2 and affected actin rearrangement, it did not prevent the adherence of bacteria to HeLa cells (Cheng *et al.*, 2009).

Another fusion protein constructed with the subunit B from Stx1 and Stx2 and a truncated intimin protein (SSI) increased IgG titers in mice, with specific IgG antibodies peaking at day 14 and IgG specific for Stx2B from the fusion protein decreasing only 54 days after the 3rd immunization. IgG titers were raised by immunization with intimin alone and also with intimin fused with the Stx protein. Immunized mice orally challenged with EHEC O157:H7 88321 showed a 100% survival rate. However, the protection using chimeric vaccines is dependent on the number of immunizations and the bacterial challenge dose (Cai *et al.*, 2011).

Immunization with this SSI chimeric protein avoided pathological damage in the colon and kidney; the antibodies also produced anti-toxin and had an anti-adhesion effect, which was absent in the vaccines using the single proteins (Gansheroff *et al.*, 1999) (Gao *et al.*, 2009). Even though the toxins could have contributed an adjuvant and neutralization effect, the fusion protein did not avoid wild-type adhesion in *in vitro* assays as in other vaccine subunits (Gansheroff *et al.*, 1999). Further, an Stx1B subunit and an enzyme-inactive Stx2A subunit (Stx2Am-Stx1B, SAmB) vaccine induced a Th2-mediated humoral immune response and its typical cytokines, IL4 and IL 10, but a low level of INF- γ . Mice immunized with this chimeric protein were challenged with a lysed EHEC 88321 preparation and showed 93% survival, and even higher rates of survival were obtained when challenging mice with Stx1, Stx2 or Stx1/Stx2. However, disease manifestations were still evident (Gao *et al.*, 2011).

Also, specific peptides have been designed for protection against EHEC. An example is the C terminal region of intimin associated with the A/E lesion that reduced bacterial attachment to Hep-2 cell cultures. Vaccination with this fragment was also associated with protection in mice infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 (Wan *et al.*, 2011). B-cell epitopes of this protein were predicted by structural and antigenicity analysis, and proposed as synthetic vaccine candidates for EHEC (Wan *et al.*, 2011). The best peptide found, KT-12 (KASITEIKADKT) conjugated with KLH, was used to immunize mice by either the subcutaneous (SC) or intranasal (IN) route. Both routes of immunization induced high concentrations of IgG, but SC more so. By contrast, IgA titer was higher with IN immunization. Although this peptide did not fully protect mice infected with the bacteria, it triggered the immune response in them (Wan *et al.*, 2011).

4. Plant-based vaccines

Safety is an important aspect of vaccine development. One approach to reducing the risk of unwanted side effects is the use of plant-based vaccines targeting mucosal immunity. The rationale for using plant cells is based on protecting the antigens from the gastrointestinal tract by plant microencapsulation systems, safe oral delivery and low production cost (Wen *et al.*, 2006; Amani *et al.*, 2009). A toxoid of Stx was engineered (by inactivating subunit A) to be expressed in the *Nicotiana tabacum* (tobacco) NT-1 cell line. Mice were orally immunized by feeding them with these cells expressing the toxoid, or by parenteral immunization and later oral immunization. Mice immunized orally (fed plant extracts once a week for 5 weeks) and mice immunized via the intraperitoneal route and later twice fed NT-1 cells expressing stx2,

showed elevated specific Stx2 anti-IgA in fecal samples, but levels were higher in the orally immunized mice. Furthermore, sera from these mice neutralized Stx2 toxicity in Vero cell cultured, but with greater neutralization using sera from orally immunized mice. The challenge showed that the best protection against the STEC wild-type strain B2F1 (producer of hyper-toxic Stx2d) was by oral immunization. The group immunized intraperitoneally and boosted by feeding showed survival of only 75% (Wen *et al.*, 2006).

Another example of synthetic genes from EHEC was the chimeric gene composed of *espA*, *eae*, and *tir* antigens (EIT). This gene was codon optimized for expression in plant cells and cloned into a plant-expression vector, using CaMV35S (cauliflower mosaic virus 35S) under the control of FAE promoters for tobacco and canola plants. The solubility of the expressed protein was low in this expression system, but it was still possible to produce a soluble product. The EIT protein was used to immunize mice either subcutaneously or orally, and a later challenge with *E. coli* O157:H7 significantly reduced bacterial shedding. These immunized mice showed increased levels of anti-EIT IgG and IgA and reduction of bacterial colonization and histological damage (Amani *et al.*, 2009; Amani *et al.*, 2010; Amani *et al.*, 2011).

5. DNA vaccines

DNA vaccines have been used in order to avoid pathogens or bacterial traces that could lead to the development of disease in vaccine recipients. The construction of a DNA vaccine encoding the entire Stx2 B subunit plus the last 32 amino acid residues of StxA2, including the signal peptides for A and B, was generated by cloning this construct into the pGMS-CSF plasmid encoding the gene for murine granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GMS-CSF). The Stx2AΔAB DNA vaccine expresses a nontoxic Stx2 mutated form (lacking an active site, consisting of a 32-amino-acid A2 and a complete B subunit as two non-fused polypeptides). This vaccine increased titers of IgG antibodies and also conferred protection to immunized mice challenged with native Stx2. In addition, antibodies raised in mice conferred toxin neutralization in Vero cell cultures (Bentancor *et al.*, 2009).

More recently, a selection of prospective DNA vaccine candidates was performed by bioinformatics analysis of EHEC O157:H7: EDL933 and Sakai strain genomes. The vaccines selected included, among others, a putative pilin subunit gene (Z1538), the gene of a T3SS structural protein (*escC*), the C-terminal side of *escC*, and the gene encoding an outer membrane protein of the bacteriophage Bp933W (*iomW*) (Garcia-Angulo *et al.*, 2014; Tapia *et*

al., 2016). Mice were immunized intranasally and then challenged with the wild-type bacteria. In comparison to the entire *escC* gene, only its C-terminal proved to be the best vaccine candidate, by reducing bacterial counts in feces, colon, and cecum, and also by triggering IgG in sera and IgA in feces. The most interesting finding of this study was that the efficacy and immunoprotection of a vaccine candidate depends on its length and how it is presented to the immune system. In fact, the immunoprotection against EHEC was improved when only the C-terminal domain of EscC was used (Garcia-Angulo *et al.*, 2014; Tapia *et al.*, 2016).

Another DNA vaccine candidate used was the lymphocyte inhibitory factor A-/EHEC factor for adherence-1 gene (*lifA/efaA*). This gene encodes a 360 kDa toxin mainly found in non-O157 EHEC strains and associated with LEE strains. It is exposed on the surface of EPEC bacteria and may play a role in colonization and adhesion by mucosal immunity regulation. This gene was originally found as a truncated form in EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 and annotated as *efa-1'*. EHEC carrying the truncated form showed reduced adhesion to human colon cells, showing that Efa-1' protein still has a role in adhesion. Furthermore, mice vaccinated with this *efa-1'* showed IgM, IgG and IgA. Intranasal immunization using pVAX-efa1 showed higher levels of antigen-specific mucosal IgA in nasal and bronchoalveolar lavages. In animal challenge, pVAXefa-1 reduced EHEC colonization in mice (Riquelme-Neira *et al.*, 2015).

6. Polysaccharide-based vaccines

Polysaccharides in conjugate vaccines against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, pneumococcal and meningococcal bacteremia, and meningitis have been successfully used for vaccine development. *E. coli* isolates produce two serotype-specific surface polysaccharides, namely the LPS O antigen and the capsular polysaccharide K antigen. Variations in structures of these polysaccharides give rise to ~170 different O antigens and ~80 K antigens (Whitfield, 2006). Immunization with an O-specific polysaccharide of *E. coli* O157:H7 led to a significant increase of IgG against LPS. *E. coli* O157:H7 O-specific polysaccharide conjugated to recombinant exotoxin A of *P. aeruginosa* (O157-rEPA) and administered to 2- to 5-year-old children led to a >4-fold increase of serum IgG after the first week of immunization. Anti-LPS IgG increased >8 fold in serum at week 6 and 20-fold at week 26, when there was no difference among the groups receiving one dose or two doses, but was >4-fold higher than in the pre-immune sera. The serum samples had an antibacterial activity correlated with the anti-LPS IgG antibody titers. More importantly, vaccinated children had mild to non-collateral reactions to the vaccine. This prospective vaccine proved to be a good candidate because of its safety and

immune reactivity (Konadu *et al.*, 1994; Konadu *et al.*, 1998; Konadu *et al.*, 1999; Ahmed *et al.*, 2006).

7. Improving the adjuvant effect

In vaccine development, the adjuvant is important as it enhances the immunogenicity and reactivity of the antigens in the host immune system. Vaccination with EspB or the C-terminal of γ -intimin (280 amino acids) co-administered with the MALP-2 adjuvant (TLR6 agonist) enhanced IgG specific antibodies after a first intranasal immunization, in contrast to vaccination without MALP-2, which increased IgG titers after a second boost. Co-administration of intimin and EspB result in higher titers of sIgA in bronchoalveolar lavage, as did intranasal immunization, while IgG levels in the intestine were always lower with MALP-2 as an adjuvant (Cataldi *et al.*, 2008).

The adjuvant effect has also been implemented by the combined expression of toxins and antigens at the same time, as a specific antigen combination. An example of this method, a chimeric protein of Tir, Stx1B, Stx2B and zonula occludens toxin (Zot), has been used in mice to test its immunoreactivity. This Zot protein was used as an adjuvant element in the chimeric construct. This toxin is encoded onto a filamentous bacteriophage CTX ϕ of *Vibrio cholera*, which increases the permeability of mucosa by binding to enterocytes and affecting the tight junctions. It does not damage the tissue and its effect is reversible. Intranasally immunized mice showed better immune responses than subcutaneously immunized mice: IgA and IgG response against the chimeric protein and reduced the bacterial shedding in feces post-EHEC wild-type challenge. Comparison of the adjuvant effect of Zot from the chimeric protein Stx2B-Tir-Stx1B-Zot against a chimeric protein lacking Zot protein has shown a better protection level in the presence of Zot, even though there was no specific IgG titer against it (Zhang *et al.*, 2011).

8. Autotransporters

Immunoproteomic analysis has also been employed to identify antigens that generate an immune response in the host during the process of infection. For this type of approach, reacting human or mice sera obtained after ETEC infections enable the identification of immune reactive molecules in culture supernatant, outer membrane, and outer membrane vesicle preparations by matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization–time of flight mass

spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS). In this analysis, hypothetical proteins homologous to other pathovars (UPEC, APEC, Crohn's disease-associated isolates) and pathogens (*Vibrio cholera* and group A streptococci) were identified, suggesting their role in pathogenesis. In addition, autotransporters (AT), such as EtpA, Antigen 43 and TibA, were also found to be reactive during the infection process (Roy *et al.*, 2010b).

In silico tools have been used to identify other remarkable virulence factors as immunogenic molecules. Autotransporters, which are important in biofilm formation, such as autotransporter (pAT), antigen 43 and EatA, have been identified exclusively in ETEC or other pathotypes, but are absent in commensal strains. Recombinant Ag43 and pAT autotransporters increased fecal IgA and provided relative protection against ETEC intestinal colonization in immunized mice. Interestingly, these autotransporters are also recognized by sera from patients with ETEC diarrhea, confirming their expression during ETEC infections (Harris *et al.*, 2011).

9. Membrane vesicles in vaccine development

Outer membrane vesicles have been largely employed as an antigen delivery system. Native OMV (NOMV) are naturally released from Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria. Genetically engineered bacteria can increase the amount of membrane vesicles in the media. More specifically, mutations in proteins as Braun's (murein) lipoprotein (Lpp) and proteins from the Tol-Pal system (TolA, B, Q and R) can lead to over-production of membrane vesicles, which are called generalized modules for membrane antigens (GMMA) (Berlanda Scorza *et al.*, 2012). The clear distinction concerning NOMV and GMMA is the way the membrane vesicles are extracted/obtained. Overall, the membrane vesicles approach to vaccination has proven attractive, because of the benefits provided as protection attributed to the presence of pathogen-associated molecular patterns (PAMPs), which are essential in the innate immune response and in promoting adaptive immune responses, and for the benefits of adjuvancy promoted. Hence, GMMA and NOMV represent the most attractive approach in vaccine development, for the expression of heterologous surface antigens, not only to amplify protection against different pathogens, but also to increase the antigenicity of such antigens. Some examples of the use of NOMV and GMMA in vaccinology are considered below.

Native OMV from *V. cholera* used to immunize female mice by the intranasal, intragastric, or intraperitoneal route induced specific, high-titer antibodies of similar levels against diverse antigens present in the NOMV. These antibody titers were stable over a long period (3 months). The induction of Ig isotypes depended on the route of immunization:

immunoglobulin A was induced to a significant level by mucosal immunization, like the intranasal route, which generated the highest titers. In subsequent experiments, offspring born to immunized female mice that were orally challenged with *V. cholerae* 30 and 95 days after the last immunization displayed protection against colonization with *V. cholerae* in both challenge periods, thus validating the development of NOMV-based vaccines (Schild *et al.*, 2008).

In other models, NOMV has been tested for protection against *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. The observations made by Morici's lab were that NOMV conferred protection against lethal aerosol, systemic and sepsis infection in BALB/c mice, as well as a humoral immune response to protective protein and polysaccharide antigens, without any associated toxicity or reactogenicity in non-human primates, both cases caused by *B. pseudomallei* (Nieves *et al.*, 2014; Petersen *et al.*, 2014). More specifically, the immune response in a mouse model was apparent from the induced specific IgG and IgM antibody response. Also, functional serum activity in *in vitro* assays of bacterial killing and passive transfer of *B. pseudomallei* NOMV immune sera protected naive mice against a subsequent challenge. Proposing NOMVs as an efficacious multivalent vaccine strategy against melioidosis (Nieves *et al.*, 2014).

The NOMV employed as a delivery system showed that serine proteases as heterologous proteins expressed on the surface of NOMV from *E. coli* can be used as prospective vaccines. The HtrA serine protease from *Chlamydia muridarum* DO (antigen that confers strong humoral and cellular responses in mice and humans) was fused to the OmpA leader sequence to lead it on *E. coli* NOMV. The sera recovered from mice immunized with NOMV having the HtrA (CM rHtrA-OMV) neutralized chlamydial invasion of LLC-MK2 cells *in vitro*. During this study, it was demonstrated that HtrA delivery through NOMV, where it appears to assume a conformation similar to that of the native one, enhanced immune response and functional antibodies more than the recombinant protein version of HtrA. This difference was associated with a diverse pattern of protein epitope recognition. According to this study, the epitope recognition profile of anti-CM HtrA-OMV antibodies was similar to that induced in mice during chlamydial infection (Bartolini *et al.*, 2013).

As noted above, the OMV are very attractive for the production of multivalent vaccines because of their built-in adjuvanticity and for their potential use as carriers of heterologous antigens. The antibody response induced by OMV from *E. coli* expressing antigens as Group A *Streptococcus* (GAS) Slo, SpyCEP, Spy0269 and Group B *Streptococcus* (GBS) SAM_1372 fused to a OmpA signal sequence, was assessed. The immunogenicity and protective activity

showed not only high functional antibody titers but also protection against GAS lethal challenge in mice by using Slo-OMV and SpyCEP-OMV as vaccines (Fantappie *et al.*, 2014)

Another example of the use of the NOMV system was reported more recently by Leitner *et al.* in the development of a vaccine against ETEC. NOMV from ETEC and *Vibrio cholerae* were used in two different ways. The first one used an ETEC mutated in lipid A acyltransferase (msbB) and labile toxin subunit A (eltA) (EΔmsbBΔeltA) to decrease the toxicity of OMV. The OMV generated from this mutant were used to immunize adult mice and test immunoreactivity. The detoxified OMV yielded higher titers of IgG1, IgM, and IgA, in comparison to the OMV from a wild-type strain. Offspring born to mothers immunized with the OMV-EΔmsbBΔeltA and passively immunized by suckling were challenged with wild-type ETEC, and displayed low colonization levels. In the second part of this approach, antigens from ETEC, adhesins FliC and CFA/I were expressed as heterologous proteins in OMV from *Vibrio cholerae* with mutations in msbB and cholera toxin subunits A and B (ctxAB) and the major flagellin FlaA (flaA). As in the previous test with the OMV from EΔmsbBΔeltA, the immune response displayed the same pattern in adult mice and the same pattern of colonization in neonatal mice. Even though they showed no differences in immunoreactivity pattern or protection, this approach showed the benefit of using OMV in vaccine development, not only for ETEC, but also for other pathogens. (Leitner *et al.*, 2015).

Also, membrane vesicles (NOMV or GMM) have been used to express and deliver heterologous proteins. NOMV from *E. coli* were used to express and deliver one, two, or three *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* antigens: ESAT6, Ag85B, and Rv2660c, fused to hemoglobin protease (Hbp) autotransporter from *E. coli*. The aim of fusing these *M. tuberculosis* antigens to the Hbp was to target to the surface of *Escherichia coli* NOMV, which was later expressed in a hypervesiculating attenuated *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium and mutant in *tolR* and *tolA* (GMMA) upon fusion to Hbp. More importantly, the GMMA from *Salmonella* decorated with Ag85B, a potent T cell antigen presented in cells *in vitro*, processed and presented an epitope functionally recognized from this protein by Ag85B-specific T cell hybridomas. This platform was shown to be efficient in exhibiting heterologous antigens individually or combined by detection of antigen-specific immune responses upon vesicle-mediated delivery (Daleke-Schermerhorn *et al.*, 2014).

Shigella sonnei strains genetically modified ($\Delta tolR:: kan \Delta virG:: nadAB \Delta htrB:: cat$) to produce penta-acylated LPS with reduced endotoxicity and to maintain the virulence plasmid encoding the immunodominant O antigen component of the LPS, were used to immunize

rabbits and mice. The data from mice demonstrated substantial anti-LPS antibody levels, but most importantly lower reactogenicity. The modified *S. sonnei* GMMA vaccine has been employed in Phase 1 dose-escalation clinical trials (Gerke *et al.*, 2015) To prevent invasive nontyphoidal *Salmonella* (iNTS, *Salmonella enterica* serovars Typhimurium and Enteritidis), the GSK Vaccines Institute for Global Health (GVGH) has extensively employed GMMA for vaccine development. GMMA with modifications to their LPS, from *Salmonella*, as lipid A modification reduces potential reactogenicity *in vivo*, are under study in vaccine development. GMMA with penta-acylated lipid A (by mutating *msbB* and *pagP*), reduced cytokine release from human peripheral blood monocytes in comparison to GMMA with wild-type lipid A, given that GMMA from *S. enteritidis* $\Delta msbB$ and $\Delta pagP$ had a slightly higher stimulatory potential than those from *S. typhimurium* (Rossi *et al.*, 2016). GMMA from *S. typhimurium* and *S. enteritidis*, both $\Delta msbB$ and $\Delta pagP$, showed similar immune stimulation to that of *Shigella sonnei* GMMA, which is currently in phase I clinical trials as mentioned above (Gerke *et al.*, 2015).

10. Future of vaccine development

EHEC infections and associated diseases are also related to other 6 STEC serotypes, O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H11, O11, O121:H19, O145, than the canonical serotypes O113:H21 and O157:H7. Treatments and prevention, like vaccine development, should also target these strains. More recently, new approaches have been implemented to find new antigens. For example, an immunoproteomics analysis developed by a Chilean group detected antigens with some immune reactive effect in patients infected with any of these STEC serotypes. It was mainly outer membrane proteins, like OmpT and Cah, that were reactive in HUS patients. The genes encoding these proteins are widely represented among *E. coli* pathotypes and commensal strains. Other detected proteins included FliC, Ag43 (ETEC), NmpC, OmpF, OmpC, OmpA, Hek, EF-Tu, and L-asparaginase II. (Montero *et al.*, 2014)

Chapter 2

Secreted Proteins and Adhesins

Introduction

As part of vaccine development, and as exemplified above, the main targets are all those exposed structures suitable for recognition as secreted proteins, fimbrial and afimbrial adhesins, colonization factors or outer membrane proteins. For these reasons, the study and description of them is important.

Basically, pathogenic organisms differ from their nonpathogenic counterparts by the encoding of specific virulence factors that are secreted at the bacterial cell surface or into the immediate environment (Finlay and Falkow, 1997). To date, nine protein secretion systems, the Type I to Type IX secretion systems (T1SS to T9SS), have been uncovered in Gram-negative bacteria (Chagnot *et al.*, 2013). Considering the wealth of systems and effectors, the secretome is a powerful concept to apprehend protein trafficking as a whole in living cells by considering both the secretion routes and their cognate secreted proteins (Tjalsma *et al.*, 2000; Antelmann *et al.*, 2001). While the LEE is a key and prominent molecular determinant in pathogenicity, neither EHEC nor STEC all possess the LEE, suggesting that they possess additional virulence and colonization factors (Paton *et al.*, 2001). In terms of the framework for STEC, including related enteropathotypes such as EHEC, the complement of the secretome associated with the expression of exposed structures is described here, especially those that are involved in colonization. Colonization processes are essential in human infection, but also for bacterial multiplication in animals and contamination of foodstuffs. In order to highlight the molecular mechanisms responsible for their correct expression and subcellular localization, the effectors are considered here from the perspective of a protein secretion system.

Colonization factors of STEC from a secretome perspective

Protein secretion is an essential cellular function present in all living cells. In bacteria, it is involved in a huge diversity of important functions in bacterial physiology, from adaptation and response to environmental cues, adhesion and biofilm formation, to pathogenicity and virulence (Chagnot *et al.*, 2013). While secretion refers to the active transport from the interior to the exterior of the cell compartment, secreted proteins have three main possible fates in diderm-LPS bacteria (archetypal Gram-negative bacteria): (i) remain associated with the

bacterial outer membrane (OM), (ii) be released into the extracellular milieu, or (iii) be injected into a target cell (either a eukaryotic or bacterial cell) (Gerlach and Hensel, 2007). Among the nine protein secretion systems in diderm-LPS bacteria (Chagnot *et al.*, 2013), T1SS to T8SS can be involved in surface colonization of STEC (Figure 1). Respective to those systems, the secreted proteins involved in the surface colonization process, namely adhesion and biofilm formation, are reviewed in STEC (Table 1). In addition, some outer membrane proteins (Omp) assembled by the β -barrel assembly machinery (Bam) complex (Knowles *et al.*, 2009), namely IrgA homologue adhesion (IhA) (Tarr *et al.*, 2000; Herold *et al.*, 2009b) or OmpA (Torres and Kaper, 2003), can also participate in the colonization process in STEC.

1. Type II subtype c secretion systems (T2cSS): Type 4 pili

T2SS, or the secretion-dependent pathway (SDP), is responsible for the secretion of proteins first exported via the Sec or Tat systems (Voulhoux *et al.*, 2001). While T2SS is primarily involved in the secretion of free soluble extracellular proteins, namely through the subfamilies Xcp, *i.e.* T2SS of subtype a (T2aSS), and Hxc, *i.e.* T2SS of subtype b (T2bSS), it can also be involved in pili assembly (Durand *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, the system responsible for subunit secretion, assembly and biogenesis of the type 4 pili (T4P) is a distant homologue to the paradigm Xcp T2aSS, and actually corresponds to the Type 2 subtype c secretion system (T2cSS) (Ayers *et al.*, 2010; Chagnot *et al.*, 2013). In pathogenic *E. coli*, T4P are involved in bacterial virulence, including the colonization process, especially host cell adherence, biofilm formation, bacterial aggregation and twitching motility (Craig *et al.*, 2004). In STEC, the T4P named hemorrhagic coli pili (HCP) is composed of a 19-kDa pilin subunit encoded by the *hcpA* chromosomal gene, also called prepilin peptidase-dependent (*ppdD*) in *E. coli* K-12. In EHEC O157:H7 EDL933, HcpA is directly involved in cell adherence and in the ability to invade human and bovine epithelial cells. HCP also contributes to biofilm formation due to its ability to bind some extracellular matrix (ECM) proteins, especially fibronectin and laminin (Xicohtencatl-Cortes *et al.*, 2009). In some EAEC, T4P are encoded on conjugative plasmids (thus encoding a T4bSS in addition) and contribute to bacterial adherence to epithelial cells and abiotic surfaces, as well as biofilm formation (Dudley *et al.*, 2006).

2. Type III secretion systems (T3SS): Injectisome and flagella

The injectisome and the flagellum are assembled by two phylogenetically distinct but homologous Type 3 secretion systems (T3SS) of subtypes a and b, *i.e.* T3aSS (injectisome system) and T3bSS (flagellar system); respectively (Desvaux *et al.*, 2006b; Diepold and

Armitage, 2015). Among InPEC, T3aSS is the hallmark of EPEC, but is also present in some but not all EHEC (Galan and Wolf-Watz, 2006). T3aSS consists of a double-membrane embedded nanomachine and promotes the delivery of bacterial effectors to the cytoplasm or plasma membrane of target eukaryotic cells, where they can modulate or subvert a large variety of host cell mechanisms, but also promote bacterial invasion and colonization (Cornelis, 2006). The injectisome formed by T3aSS is a needle structure, a multiring complex that spans the bacterial envelope and plasma membrane of the host cell providing a continuous path to the cytosol of the infected host cell. In EPEC, T3aSS is directly involved in cell adhesion and pedestal formation, resulting in characteristic histopathological A/E lesions (Wong *et al.*, 2011). Contrary to what is sometimes wrongly assumed in some of the scientific literature, such lesions are never observed from clinical samples after EHEC infection (Kelly *et al.*, 1987; Nataro and Kaper, 1998a; Lewis *et al.*, 2015). Nonetheless, A/E lesions are frequently observed *in vitro* from EHEC-infected epithelial cell cultures. The T3aSS structure is encoded by genes located in the LEE pathogenicity island (McDaniel *et al.*, 1995). Among all the proteins secreted by the injectisome T3aSS, Tir (translocated intimin receptor) is the primary molecule associated with intimate bacterial interaction with the epithelia and A/E lesions (Donnenberg *et al.*, 1993). Tir, encoded by the *espE* gene located in the LEE, is secreted and injected into the host cell by the injectisome T3aSS, and later localized at the plasma membrane of the infected host epithelial cell. This bacterial protein exposed at the host cell surface then acts as a receptor for direct and specific binding of the bacterial cell surface-exposed intimin. By protein-protein interaction, Tir activates the recruitment and rearrangement of the host cell cytoskeletal actin, which rearranges and results in the formation of a characteristic pedestal structure (Liu *et al.*, 1999b). Furthermore, the injectisome plays a role in adhesion to plants, with a marked tropism for the stomata (Shaw *et al.*, 2008; Berger *et al.*, 2010). Besides adhesion to the host cell, T3aSS also participates in invasion capability in EIEC (Schroeder and Hilbi, 2008; Croxen *et al.*, 2013).

While T3aSS is only present in a subset of InPEC, namely EPEC, EIEC and some EHEC, the flagellum is quite ubiquitous across *E. coli*. In this species, the flagella are peritricheous and form a ponytail when in motion (DiLuzio *et al.*, 2005). The different components of the flagellum are secreted by T3bSS, namely the hook-filament junction protein, the filament-capping protein, and flagellin, the major subunit of the filament (Macnab, 2004; Altegoer and Bange, 2015). Of course, flagella are primarily involved in cell motility, especially swimming and/or swarming in *E. coli* depending on environmental conditions (Turner *et al.*, 2010). Besides coordinated movement at surfaces contributing to colonization, that is swarming,

flagella participate in adhesion and invasion by providing motility towards surfaces or target cells (Haiko and Westerlund-Wikstrom, 2013). In EHEC, flagella play a role in adhesion to epithelial cells, but are down-regulated after contact with the epithelium and so just initiate the early stages of the adhesion process (Mahajan *et al.*, 2009). Following vaccination targeting the flagellin FliC, the colonization of EHEC in cattle was significantly decreased, providing evidence of the importance of flagella in host gut colonization (McNeilly *et al.*, 2008).

3. Type IV subtype b secretion system (T4bSS): Conjugative pili

In terms of protein secretion, T4SS can be divided into two subtypes. T4aSS includes effector translocator systems homologous to the prototypical VirB/D4 complex extensively investigated in *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* which is notably involved in the injection of effectors into infected host cells. T4bSS comprises conjugation machines homologous to the prototypical F-episome conjugal transfer (Tra) system, notably involved in the transport of nucleoprotein complexes (Christie and Vogel, 2000; Alvarez-Martinez and Christie, 2009; Christie *et al.*, 2014). While no T4aSS has been described so far in *E. coli*, conjugative plasmids can be present (Lawley *et al.*, 2003). Besides pO157 (Lim *et al.*, 2010), plasmid profiling in different *E. coli* O157:H7 strains revealed the presence of numerous additional plasmids, which greatly vary in size and number (Ostroff *et al.*, 1989; Paros *et al.*, 1993). Among them, pO157-Sal was identified and demonstrated to be a novel conjugative plasmid of the In1 family in STEC (Fratamico *et al.*, 2011; Wang *et al.*, 2011). This plasmid contains the full set of *tra* genes and thus encodes a T4bSS. From what is known of the F episome in *E. coli* K-12, such a plasmid could further contribute to bacterial colonization (Ghigo, 2001). Conjugative F pili assembled by T4bSS induce biofilm formation by improving the adhesion capability of bacterial cells. Horizontal transfer of the F episome to siblings within the biofilm further increases the proportion of transconjugant cells and further expands the colonization propensity of the bacterial population (Ghigo, 2001; May and Okabe, 2008; May *et al.*, 2010).

4. Type V secretion systems (T5SS): Adhesins by numbers

T5SS can be categorized into 5 subtypes, (i) the autotransporter system (subtype a), (ii) the two-partner secretion pathway (subtype b), (iii) the trimeric autotransporter system (subtype c), (iv) the hybrid autotransporter system (subtype d), and (v) the inverted autotransporter system (subtype e). Broadly speaking, T5SS refers to protein secretion via an OM pore formed by a β -barrel, the secreted proteins being first exported via the Sec translocon. Except for T5dSS, all four other subtypes can secrete proteins involved in surface colonization. Although T5bSS is

present in *E. coli* O157:H7 (Choi *et al.*, 2007), the exoprotein O157:H7 two-partner protein A (OtpA) does not display any adhesive properties towards intestinal epithelial cells and the possible contribution of this secretion system and cognate secreted proteins to surface colonization remains to be established.

5. Type V subtype a secretion system (T5aSS): SAAT and SPATE adhesins

Autotransporters are single polypeptides that can drive their own secretion through the OM via a C-terminal translocator forming a β -barrel in the OM allowing translocation of the N-terminal passenger domain. The main function of T5SS is to secrete virulence factors, but it also participates in cell-to-cell adhesion (Desvaux *et al.*, 2004b). The self-associating autotransporters (SAATs) are cell surface-exposed outer membrane proteins (Omps) encompassing adhesin diffuse adherence (AIDA), enterotoxigenic invasion locus b protein A (TibA) and antigen 43 (Ag43) (Benz and Schmidt, 1989; Klemm *et al.*, 2006) autotransporter family. Besides autoaggregation, SAATs are actively involved in bacteria-host interaction and biofilm formation (Sherlock *et al.*, 2004). Five autotransporters of the AIDA family have been identified in *E. coli* O157:H7 and are called enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* autotransporters (Eha) (Wells *et al.*, 2008). EhaA overexpression in *E. coli* K-12 appears to promote autoaggregation, biofilm formation and adhesion to bovine primary epithelial cells from the terminal rectum (Wells *et al.*, 2008). EhaB specifically binds to some ECM proteins, especially laminin and collagen I (Wells *et al.*, 2009). Similarly, EhaJ mediates specific adhesion to collagens I, II, III and V as well as fibronectin, fibrinogen and laminin (Easton *et al.*, 2011). While EhaD and EhaJ also promote biofilm formation, the function of EhaC in colonization remains to be established (Wells *et al.*, 2008). Interestingly, glycosylation of EhaJ is of importance for biofilm formation, but not for binding to the ECM (Easton *et al.*, 2011). While no TibA homolog has been reported in STEC, *E. coli* O157:H7 encodes an Ag43 homolog called calcium-binding antigen 43 homologous (Cah) that promotes cell autoaggregation, but is apparently not involved in adhesion to host cells (Torres *et al.*, 2005a). The serine protease autotransporters of *Enterobacteriaceae* (SPATEs) constitute another autotransporter family generally released into the extracellular milieu and primarily show proteolytic activity against various substrates, but also adhere to some of them (Henderson *et al.*, 2004). In *E. coli* O157:H7, extracellular serine protease plasmid-encoded (EspP) is directly involved in biofilm formation, but also adherence to epithelial cells (Dziva *et al.*, 2007; Puttamreddy *et al.*, 2010). Recently, EspP was shown to oligomerize to form megastructural ropes, which possess adhesive and cytopathic activities in host epithelial cells (Puttamreddy *et al.*, 2010; Xicohtencatl-Cortes *et al.*, 2010).

In STEC O26, protease secreted by STEC (PssA) was shown to participate in intestinal colonization of calves (van Diemen *et al.*, 2005). In STEC O113, STEC autotransporter contributing to biofilm formation (Sab) is involved in adherence to abiotic surfaces and epithelial cells (Herold *et al.*, 2009a). The high variability in the presence of those different autotransporters in STEC may significantly contribute to differences in colonization abilities and even modulate virulence. For example, the identification of Sab in LEE-negative STEC O113:H2 contrasts with its absence from a LEE-positive strain collection and suggests an alternative way to adhere to the host cells for strains defective in their ability to induce A/E lesions (Herold *et al.*, 2009a).

6. Type V subtype c secretion system (T5cSS): Trimeric autotransporter adhesin EhaG

T5cSS corresponds to autotransporters formed upon homotrimerization. All trimeric autotransporters characterized to date are exposed to the bacterial cell surface and play a role in adhesion (El Tahir and Skurnik, 2001; Linke *et al.*, 2006; Szczesny and Lupas, 2008). The EHEC adhesin G (EhaG) is present in diarrheagenic *E. coli*, from EHEC, ETEC, EPEC, EAEC to EIEC, and is highly prevalent in STEC (Totsika *et al.*, 2012). Upon overexpression in *E. coli* K-12, EhaG from *E. coli* O157:H7 was shown to mediate autoaggregation resulting in the formation of strong biofilm. In addition, adhesion to intestinal epithelial cells and specific binding to collagens I, II, III, and V as well as to laminin, fibronectin and fibrinogen were reported (Totsika *et al.*, 2012). STEC autoagglutinating adhesion (Saa) is involved in adhesion to intestinal epithelial cells and has been identified in various LEE-negative STEC (Paton *et al.*, 2001). On the other hand, *E. coli* immunoglobulin-binding protein G (EibG) contributes to a chain-like pattern of adhesion to human epithelial cells, also in LEE-negative STEC (Lu *et al.*, 2006; Merkel *et al.*, 2010).

6. Type V subtype e secretion system (T5eSS): Intimin

T5eSS refers to inverted autotransporters in the sense that the translocator is located at the N-terminal instead of the C-terminal region of the monomeric autotransporter (Oberhettinger *et al.*, 2012; Leo *et al.*, 2015; Oberhettinger *et al.*, 2015). Intimin from EPEC and EHEC is a prototypical member of this Omp family. Along with T3aSS, intimin is encoded by the *eae* gene in the LEE and, as already mentioned above, interacts specifically with Tir, resulting in intimate attachment of the bacteria to the host-cell surface, pedestal formation and A/E lesions (Schmidt, 2010). While five alleles (α , β , γ , δ and ϵ) have been reported for *eae* with a total of

27 variants (Adu-Bobie *et al.*, 1998; Oswald *et al.*, 2000), these intimins appear to be functionally interchangeable (Liu *et al.*, 1999b; Mallick *et al.*, 2012). Besides Tir, the binding of intimin to alternative receptors such as β_1 integrins or nucleolin remains unclear (Liu *et al.*, 1999a; Leo *et al.*, 2015). Nonetheless, intimin can also contribute to intestinal colonization independently of its ability to bind to Tir (Mallick *et al.*, 2012).

While no invasins have been reported to date in STEC (Leo *et al.*, 2015), the *E. coli* adherence factor FdeC was recently uncovered as another representative of T5eSS and is widely distributed in *E. coli*, including InPEC, *e.g.* STEC and EHEC (Nesta *et al.*, 2012; Easton *et al.*, 2014). FdeC binds to human epithelial cells and exhibits affinity for some ECM components, notably collagens I, III, V and VI (Nesta *et al.*, 2012). Its contribution to kidney and bladder colonization is associated with the propensity of UPEC bacterial cells for autoaggregation. In EHEC O26:H11, the expression of FdeC regulated by the histone-like nucleoid-structuring protein (H-NS) and occurring at temperatures above 39°C mediates biofilm formation and could contribute to colonization of the terminal rectum of cattle (Easton *et al.*, 2014).

7. Type VII secretion system (T7SS): Pili by numbers

In diderm-LPS bacteria, T7SS corresponds to the chaperone-usher (CU) pathway involved in the secretion and assembly of pili (Desvaux *et al.*, 2009). The nomenclature for pili formed via T7SS is messy, quite confusing, and essentially species-dependent; *e.g.* under the general denomination of Type 3 pili, the designations of coli surface (CS) pili, P pili, aggregative adherence fimbriae (AafD), adhesive fimbriae on RDEC-1 or diffuse adherence fibrillar adhesin/Dr blood group antigen (Afa/Dr) are also found, but all fall under the T7SS umbrella (Zav'yalov *et al.*, 2010; Busch and Waksman, 2012; Thanassi *et al.*, 2012). While numerous operons encoding such pili remain putative (Hayashi *et al.*, 2001; Low *et al.*, 2006b; Korea *et al.*, 2010), STEC secrete and assemble several pili via the T7SS. The operon encoding ECP (*E. coli* common pilus) is highly prevalent across *E. coli*, including EPEC (Saldana *et al.*, 2009). These pili participate in bacterial adhesion to human epithelial cells, intestinal colonization and biofilm development through interorganelle binding via the EcpA pilin (Rendon *et al.*, 2007). In *E. coli* O157:H7, these pili target arabinosyl residues in plant cell walls to mediate adhesion to vegetables (Rossez *et al.*, 2014). *E. coli* O157:H7 also contains two operons encoding the long polar fimbriae (Lpf), namely *lpf1* with six genes (*lpfABCC'DE*) forming LpfA pilus, and *lpf2* containing five genes (*lpfABCDD'*) forming LpfD2 pilus (Doughty *et al.*, 2002). Regarding the Lpf major subunits, five different genetic variants have been described for LpfA1 versus three for LpfA2 (Farfan and Torres, 2012). Lpf interact specifically with the

ECM, namely fibronectin, laminin or collagen IV components. They contribute to the adhesion of EHEC to the intestinal epithelium and can even influence bacterial tropism towards different intestinal tissues (Torres *et al.*, 2008; Farfan *et al.*, 2011). In EHEC O104:H4, LpfA contributes to bacterial adhesion to polarized intestinal epithelial cells, biofilm formation as well as cecum and large intestine colonization (Ross *et al.*, 2015). In EHEC, the *E. coli* YcbQ laminin-binding fimbriae (ELF) were found to bind laminin as well as to adhere to human epithelial cells (Samadder *et al.*, 2009a). The sorbitol-fermenting fimbriae (SFP) protein is responsible for hemagglutination activity in *E. coli* O157:H7, but also acts as adhesin via the SfpG pilin, which is involved in adherence to epithelial cells (Musken *et al.*, 2008). F9 pili are encoded in O-island 61 and are involved in the binding of EHEC to fibronectin and to bovine intestinal epithelial cells (Low *et al.*, 2006a). While encoded in numerous STEC (Li *et al.*, 1997), expression of Type 1 pili was only reported in a subset of STEC O26 and O118 strains (Enami *et al.*, 1999), where they participate in colonization of the bovine gut by mediating adhesion to intestinal epithelial cells, but also enable adhesion to abiotic surfaces (Galfi *et al.*, 1998; Cookson *et al.*, 2002). The expression of Type 1 pili is subject to phase variation of *fimA* encoding the major prepilin, but the environmental triggers remain to be determined (Li *et al.*, 1997; Roe *et al.*, 2001).

Like EAEC, EHEC O104:H4 lacks the LEE but encodes typical aggregative adhesion fimbriae (AAF) (Brzuszkiewicz *et al.*, 2011; Mellmann *et al.*, 2011). Just as all EPEC are AEEC, all EAEC are aggregative-adherence encoding *E. coli* (AAEC), *i.e.* *aaf*⁺, from which atypical EHEC O104:H4 have emerged (Brzuszkiewicz *et al.*, 2011; Mellmann *et al.*, 2011; Tietze *et al.*, 2015). In EAEC, AAF are associated with a strong ability to form biofilms on biotic and abiotic surfaces as well as with hemagglutination with human erythrocytes [43]. Four variants of AAF have been identified, namely AAF/I to AAF/IV, encoded on virulence plasmids of the pAA family (Boisen *et al.*, 2008). AAF/II binds to fibronectin (Farfan *et al.*, 2008). AAF act in concert with dispersin in the colonization of the intestinal mucosa, resulting in a highly virulent combination in EHEC O104:H4 when Stx is also present (Boisen *et al.*, 2015). While the expression of these different pili is subject to regulation by various environmental factors (Gonyar and Kendall, 2014), their global expression and respective contribution to the colonization process along the food chain, from the environment, animal reservoirs, food matrices to human infection, is far from understood. Besides, several operons encoding putative T7SS remain to be characterized in STEC.

8. Type VIII secretion system (T8SS): Curli

T8SS corresponds to the extracellular nucleation-precipitation (ENP) pathway involved in the secretion and assembly of peculiar pili, called curli (Desvaux *et al.*, 2009). In fact, curli are functional amyloid fibers predominantly composed of the major curli subunit protein CsgA following nucleation at the cell surface initiated by the minor curli subunit CsgB, which further promotes ramification along the fibers (Goyal *et al.*, 2014). Curli fibers are extremely adherent and are involved in cell aggregation, bacterial adhesion and, ultimately, biofilm development (Hammar *et al.*, 1996; Fronzes *et al.*, 2009). *E. coli* O157:H7 expressing curli are more virulent and exhibit greater adherence to eukaryotic cells than noncurliated strains (Uhlich *et al.*, 2002). The expression of curli seems to compensate for the absence of Lpf (Lloyd *et al.*, 2012). Rather than affecting initial attachment, curli enhance sessile development (Ryu and Beuchat, 2005).

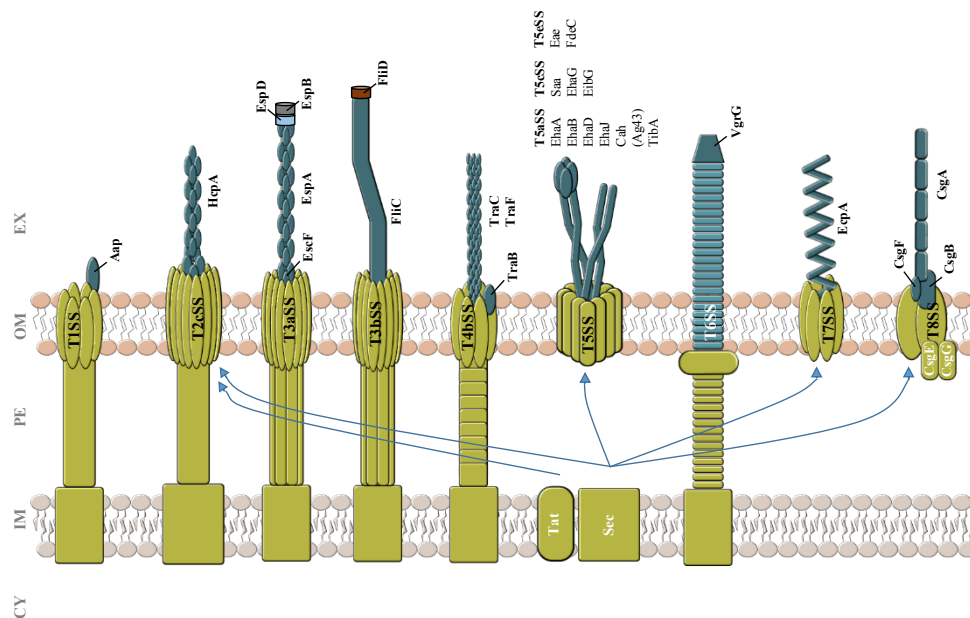


Figure 1: Overview of the complement of the secretome associated with surface colonization factors in STEC. Protein export systems are colored violet, protein secretion systems in diderm-LPS bacteria are colored green and their cognate effectors directly involved in surface colonization are colored blue. For details of the respective secretion systems and cognate colonization factors refer to the main text. T1SS: Type I protein secretion system or the ABC-MFP-TolC heterotrimeric system. T2SS: Type II protein secretion system or the secretion-dependent pathway (SDP), especially the type 4 pili (T4P) system (T2cSS). T3SS: Type III protein secretion system, including the injectisome (T3aSS) and flagellar (T3bSS) systems. T4SS: Type IV protein secretion system, especially the conjugative Tra system (T4bSS). T5SS: Type V protein secretion system, especially including the autotransporter (T5aSS), trimeric autotransporter (T5cSS) and inverted autotransporter (T5eSS) systems. T6SS: Type VI protein secretion system. T7SS: Type VII protein secretion system or the chaperone-usher (CU) pathway. T8SS: Type VIII protein secretion system or the extracellular nucleation-precipitation (ENP) pathway

Second part

Results

Chapter 1

The increasing incidence of EHEC infections, and of other diarrheal diseases caused by various etiological agents, is one of the reasons to pursue the development and discovery of new treatments to prevent these infections. In the case of EHEC, it is necessary to reduce the burden of the disease during the onset of infection since, paradoxically, the use of antibiotics is not recommended, and because of the emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains and collateral damage, such as hemorrhagic uremic syndrome (HUS). Increases in the number of cases of HUS have placed an increasing financial burden on healthcare systems, not only in developed countries, but also in countries in Latin America, as Argentina and Brazil. To date, there is no licensed human vaccine able to protect against enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*, either InPEC or ExPEC, and so there is a pressing need for a vaccine against pathogenic *E. coli*, and EHEC. As mentioned above, traditional approaches to vaccine development, ranging from the attenuation of pathogens to the identification of protective antigens or subunit vaccines, have been widely employed in the search for a suitable vaccine. However, traditional methods require years of work before a promising vaccine is finally produced. The new era of vaccine development has taken advantage of data generated by the “omics” technologies (genomics, proteomics, transcriptomics, etc.) to obtain new vaccines in a shorter period of time. Reverse vaccinology has become one of the best tools for vaccine development. It not only allows scrutiny of the entire coding DNA sequences of the genome, and prediction of their cellular localization and putative function, among other features, but also the combination of data, as from transcriptomics, the prediction of putative epitopes, and, most importantly, exploration of fastidious pathogens and how to get them to grow. The aim of the first part of this thesis consists of the identification of novel potential candidates against enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*, by a reverse vaccinology approach. During this work, bioinformatics approaches were applied to the EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain genome to predict the most promising vaccine candidates. Along with distribution analysis, we evaluated the prevalence and sequence variability of the selected antigens among other EHEC strains, serotypes and also other pathogenic *E. coli*. Subsequently, the antigens were obtained as recombinant proteins and expressed on generalized membrane modules for antigen delivery (GMMA), to evaluate their ability to confer immunoprotection and to reduce intestinal colonization in a mouse model.

Identification of a novel vaccine candidate against Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) O157:H7 by Reverse Vaccinology approach

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ABSTRACT

Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) are a major cause of large outbreaks mainly affecting developed countries. From 1982 to 2002, a total of 350 *E. coli* O157 outbreaks were reported in the United States. EHEC infection causes diarrheal disease often associated with clinical complications like hemorrhagic colitis and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Although efforts focused on hygiene have been implemented in the food supply chain to reduce the risk of the foodborne *E. coli* O157 infection, outbreaks caused by this pathogen are still common. In addition, antibiotic-based therapy is discouraged for their potential undesirable effect in releasing shiga-toxin from the bacteria. Among non-antibiotic preventing strategies, vaccine development is warranted, still nowadays a licensed vaccine specific for human use against EHEC is not available. In this study, we used the Reverse Vaccinology approach applied on the EHEC O157:H7 genome to select new potential vaccine candidates. We identified a panel of 24 of potential protein antigens and we successfully expressed three of them in Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens (GMMA) delivery system. GMMA expressing these vaccine candidates resulted to be immunogenic, raising a specific antibody response for two of the selected antigens. In particular, immunization with MC001 candidate was able to reduce intestinal EHEC O157:H7 colonization lowering the bacterial count in feces, colon and caecum tissues in mice. This candidate was found to be homologue to the *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase enzyme (LpxR) and to our knowledge this study was the first report describing it as vaccine candidate. Also, gene distribution and sequence variability analysis showed that MC001 was mainly present and conserved in EHEC O157:H7 and in some EPEC. Given the high genetic variability among and within these pathotypes, the identification and inclusion of this conserved candidate in a vaccine might cover against major intestinal pathogenic strains. This study provides a cost-effective approach of identifying not previously described immunogenic proteins to be used as potential vaccine candidates.

INTRODUCTION

Escherichia coli enterohemorrhagic (EHEC) is an anthropozoonose and etiology agent for diarrheal disease and hemorrhagic colitis. EHEC infections occur mainly in developed countries, the most often serotypes implicated in outbreaks are the O157:H7 serotype and the big six non-157 serotypes (O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H2, O111:H8, O121:H19 and O145:H28) (Kaper et al., 2004; Moriel et al., 2012; Croxen et al., 2013). The main reservoir of EHEC is known to be ruminants and therefore the infection can mainly occur from direct or indirect

contamination of food products from animal feces (Rivas et al., 2016). The EHEC strains are characterized for the expression of the shiga-like toxin (Stx), being this the hallmark of the pathotype. Furthermore, some strains also carry the Locus of Enterocyte Effacement (LEE) that encodes the type three secretion system (T3SS) responsible for the attachment and effacing (A/E) on the intestinal microvilli (Kaper et al., 2004).

The implications after the infection with this pathogen, include the development of the hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and later renal failure, due mainly by the Stx (Tarr et al., 2005). Although the use of antibiotic remains a key intervention strategy to treat many bacterial infections, this therapy is not recommended in diseases caused by EHEC (Goldwater and Bettelheim, 2012; Rivas et al., 2016). In fact, the use of antibiotics in the treatment against EHEC infections could lead to the cellular damage by increasing the production of stx toxin causing its release into the blood stream and further worsening the disease outcome (Pacheco and Sperandio, 2012).

Yet, the increasing burden of these *E. coli* diarrheal diseases, the emergence of hybrids strains (genomic plasticity) and the increasing annual cost for the health care systems point out the need to develop effective therapeutic and preventive strategies. Among these lasts, vaccination is the most promising strategy to control disease (Croxen and Finlay, 2010; Moriel et al., 2012; Croxen et al., 2013; Rappuoli et al., 2014)

So far, a number of vaccine candidates have been identified by different approaches. For instance, virulence factors expressed as recombinant proteins such as Shiga-toxin (Stx), Intimin and *E. coli* secreted protein A (EspA) or avirulent ghost cells of EHEC O157:H7 have been tested using different immunization routes and adjuvant combinations in a several animal models providing encouraged results (Rojas Lopez Submitted).

Additionally, previous studies have identified new promising vaccine candidates showing the potential of exploiting the Reverse Vaccinology approach (Pizza et al., 2000; Maione et al., 2005; Moriel et al., 2010; Garcia-Angulo et al., 2014). In particular, this strategy was performed on a complete sequence genome of a neonatal meningitis extraintestinal *E. coli* isolate (NMEC) leading to the identification of 230 potential antigens. Among these, the SsIE protein, a conserved zinc metallopeptidase, was one of the most protective antigens by conferring protection in three different murine models (Moriel et al., 2010; Nesta et al., 2014). Moreover, a recent *in silico* approach aimed to develop DNA based vaccine identified new EHEC antigens, including among others a putative pilin subunit, T3SS structural protein (*escC*), and an outer membrane protein from the bacteriophage Bp933W (*iomW*) (Garcia-Angulo et al., 2014; Tapia et al., 2016)

In addition to the available technologies, new vaccine development strategies have been recently explored. These innovations ideally serve to make vaccine production simpler, more cost effective, improve antigen presentation and immune response (MacLennan and Saul, 2014). Outer membrane vesicles are one of these systems employed in the vaccine development. Gram-negative bacteria naturally release native outer membrane vesicles (NOMV) that are rich in outer membrane lipids, outer membrane and periplasmic proteins, presenting these antigens in their natural conformation (Ellis and Kuehn, 2010). Therefore, NOMV-based vaccines have been largely employed against the organism from which they are recovered (Nieves et al., 2014; Petersen et al., 2014) or to express and deliver heterologous antigens (Bartolini et al., 2013; Daleke-Schermerhorn et al., 2014; Fantappie et al., 2014). However, in native conditions NOMV are recovered in small quantity, thus *E. coli* strains can be genetically modified by deletion of the *tolR* gene to enhance the level of vesicles production (Bernadac et al., 1998). This system has been successfully used for expressing properly folded membrane associated recombinant antigens and to induce functional immune responses (Bartolini et al., 2013). Recently, this antigen delivery approach, also known as Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens (GMMA), has been successfully implemented and largely used against different pathogens (Berlanda Scorza et al., 2012; Gerke et al., 2015; De Benedetto et al., 2017).

The main goal of our work was to identify novel antigens for vaccine development against infections caused by EHEC, using GMMA as delivery system. Our study led to the identification of a new potential vaccine candidate present in EHEC O157:H7 strains and able to reduce intestinal bacterial colonization level in mice.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Bacterial strains and culture conditions

All bacterial strains were routinely grown in Luria Bertani (LB) media with antibiotic selection pressure if needed at 37°C. The *E. coli* Mach1™-T1R (ThermoFisher) strain was used for cloning while BL21-DE3 (NEB) strain was used to express and purify the antigens as recombinant proteins. EHEC O157:H7 strain EDL933 is the prototype pathotype used in this study for antigen identification by Reverse Vaccinology approach. The strain EHEC O157:H7 86-24 was used in the animal challenging experiments.

Vaccine candidate selection by Reverse Vaccinology

In silico vaccine candidate identification was performed as follows. The 5675 CDS of EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain annotated genome (GeneBank sequence CP008957.1) were

analyzed by PSORT software (Yu et al., 2010) to predict the subcellular localization. TMHMM (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/TMHMM> (Krogh et al., 2001) was used for prediction of transmembrane regions in putative proteins. RNA-Seq mapping and RPKM (cutoff >10) calculation was performed using Geneious R9 software (<http://www.geneious.com>, (Kearse et al., 2012). Distribution and sequence variability analysis into 31 *E. coli* complete annotated genomes was performed by BLASTP (Altschul et al., 1997) using a cutoff of $\geq 90\%$ of query coverage and a $\geq 80\%$ of sequence protein identity. Only antigens present in more than 5 intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* strains were selected.

Cloning and recombinant protein production of vaccine candidates

All candidates were cloned and expressed as His-tagged fusion proteins without their predicted signal sequence. Prediction of the signal peptide was performed by Signal P (Nielsen, 2017). All fragments were amplified by PCR using primers enlisted in table S4 and using genomic DNA of *E. coli* EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain. The PCR amplicons were cloned into a pET-15b plasmid (Novagen, EMD Millipore) with a His-tag in the carboxyl-terminus by the polymerase incomplete primer extension (PIPE) method (Klock and Lesley, 2009) or the NEBuilder® HiFi DNA Assembly Master Mix (NEB). Plasmids were transformed in BL21-DE3 (NEB). Briefly, *E. coli* BL21-DE3 harboring pET-15b constructs were grown in EnPresso® (BioSilta) following the manufacturer suggestions and using IPTG 0.01M (Sigma-Aldrich) for induction. After biomass collection pellets were lysed by sonication. The suspension obtained was centrifuged and the supernatant passed through a Ni-NTA agarose chelating column (Qiagen). Proteins were eluted using imidazole-concentration gradient buffers. In the case of insoluble proteins, the imidazol-buffers for purification contained urea 6 M. Protein concentrations were measured by Pierce™ BCA Protein Assay Kit (Thermofisher).

Construction of TolR mutant

The *tolR* mutant in a *E. coli* K12 MC4100 strain was constructed by allelic marker exchange using the Lambda red system (Datsenko and Wanner, 2000). The *tolR* was interrupted with a chloramphenicol resistance cassette (*cat*). Briefly, the *cat* cassette was amplified using forward and reverse primers with ≈ 70 -nucleotides tail homologous to the flanking region of *tolR*, (Table 2). The PCR product was purified and used to transform an *E. coli* K12 recipient cells (carrying the plasmid expressing the recombinase E, pKD46) as previously described (Datsenko and Wanner, 2000). The deletion of the *tolR* gene was confirmed by PCR genomic DNA amplification using primers specifically annealing to the genes upstream (*tolQ*) and

downstream (*tolA*) to *tolR*.

NOMV and GMMA production

For NOMV isolation, the *E. coli* K12 MC4100 WT strain was grown at 37°C in liquid LB medium. For GMMA production, *E. coli* K12 Δ *tolR::cat* was grown at 37°C in liquid LB medium containing chloramphenicol (20 µg/ml) as previously described (Fantappie et al., 2014; Rossi et al., 2016). Briefly, 75 ml of media were inoculated with *E. coli* K12 WT or Δ *tolR::cat* and grown at 37 °C, 150 rpm overnight (≈16 hrs.). To recover the supernatants cultures were centrifuged for 30 min at 8,000 x *g* and 0.22 µm filtered. These media were ultracentrifuged using propylene ultracentrifuge tubes (Beckman Coulter) at 105,000 x *g* for 2 hours at 4°C. Pellets were washed once with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) and re-centrifuged. Finally, pellets were resuspended in 2 ml of PBS followed by 0.22-µm filtration and vesicles were stored at 4°C. To determine the total protein content present in these preparations a quantification was performed by DC protein assay (Bio-Rad) based on the Lowry assay (Rossi et al., 2015)

Negative-staining transmission electron microscopy

A drop of 10 µL of GMMA or NOMV suspension was placed on copper formvar/carbon-coated grids and adsorbed for 2 min. Grids were then washed with few drops of distilled water and blotted with a Whatman filter paper. For negative staining, grids were treated with Uranylless EM stain (Delta Microscopy with Chromalys, France) for 1 min, air-dried and viewed through transmission electron microscope Hitachi H-7650 at 80 kV. Electron micrographs were recorded at a nominal magnification of 120,000x.

Over-expression of antigens in GMMA

To overexpress the MC001, MC007 and MC020 candidates in GMMA, the corresponding coding sequences -including their own signal peptide- were cloned in frame into a pBAD-A plasmid (ThermoFisher) using the NEBuilder® HiFi DNA Assembly Master Mix (NEB). Also, a FLAG-tag sequence (DYKDDDDK) was introduced between the signal peptide of each protein and the rest of their sequence. The generated constructs (pBAD-MC001F, pBAD-MC007F, pBAD-MC020F), were transformed into the *E. coli* K12 Δ *tolR::cat* mutant and induced with arabinose (0.01% final concentration). The purified GMMA were named GMMA-MC001, GMMA-MC007 and GMMA-MC020. GMMA not expressing any antigen and obtained by transforming the empty pBAD-A plasmid were named GMMA-K12.

Mice immunization and colonization model

Five weeks-old BALB/c mice (Janvier) (10 mice per group) were immunized with PBS-alum hydroxide as adjuvant (Alhydrogel® 2%, Invivogen), GMMA- expressing the vaccine candidates (GMMA-MC001, GMMA-MC007 or GMMA-MC020) plus adjuvant or with GMMA-K12 (GMMA not expressing any candidate). All GMMA preparations were formulated using 2 mg/ml alum hydroxide as adjuvant. Animals were immunized by intraperitoneal injections (i.p.) with 10 µg of GMMA plus adjuvant at day 1 and with 5 µg of GMMA plus adjuvant at day 21 and day 35. Blood was collected from all the mice prior immunization and two weeks after the third dose. The challenge experiment was performed 2 weeks after the last immunization and using the EHEC O157:H7 strain 86-24. Mice were treated with streptomycin 24-hours prior infection. Also, animal received cimetidine 2 hours before infection via i.p. The animals were infected with 5×10^9 CFU via gavage. Animal monitoring was performed in a daily basis including weight, signs and symptoms surveillance. According to ethical rules, mice displaying signals of illness and losing more than 15% of the total weight were euthanized, collecting the colon and colon organs. Fecal pellets were collected every day from day 1 to day 7 post-infection. At day 7 the remaining mice were killed and organs were collected. This animal model was adapted from models previously reported (Mohawk and O'Brien, 2011; Garcia-Angulo et al., 2013; Garcia-Angulo et al., 2014). All animal experiments were reviewed and approved by the Auvergne Committee for Animal Experimentation C2EA (Agreement N°6065-2016071216144325V2).

Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA)

Ninety-six well Maxisorp plates (Nunc, Thermo Fisher Scientific) were coated with 1 µg/ml of GMMA preparations antigens or 1 µg/ml of recombinant protein in PBS overnight (O/N) at 4 °C. Next day, plates were washed 3 times with T-PBS (0.05% Tween 20 in PBS, pH 7.4) and blocked with 100 µl 2% BSA (Sigma® Aldrich) for 1 hour at 37 °C. Every incubation step was followed by triple T-PBS wash. Serum samples were initially diluted 1:200 in 2% BSA in T-PBS, transferred to coated-blocked plates and serially 2-fold diluted followed by 2-hours incubation at 37 °C. Then 100 µl/well of 1:2,000 diluted alkaline phosphatase-conjugated goat anti-mouse IgG (H+L) (Southern Biotech) were added and incubated for 2 hours at 37 °C. Bound alkaline phosphatase was visualized by adding SIGMAFAST p-Nitrophenyl phosphate (Sigma® Aldrich). After 30 minutes at room temperature, plates were analyzed at 405 nm in a microplate spectrophotometer. The endpoint titer of a sample is defined as the reciprocal of the

highest dilution that has a reading above the cut-off using the formula described by Frey and collaborators. (Frey et al., 1998).

Western Blotting

Western blots were carried out on whole cell extracts (wce), recombinant proteins or GMMA preparations. SDS page was performed in MES buffer (Thermofisher) and transferred to iBlot 2 nitrocellulose stacks (iBlot system, Thermofisher). To visualize transferred proteins, the membranes were stained with ponceau red. Then, membranes were blocked with 10% (w/v) blotting-grade blocker (Bio-Rad) in T-PBS. The membranes were later incubated with the respective mouse polyclonal antisera in a 1:1000 dilution in T-PBS-3% blocker 1 hr at room temperature. Membranes were washed three times with T-PBS and then incubated with goat anti-mouse horseradish peroxidase-conjugated IgG (Dako antibodies) diluted (1:2000) in T-PBS-3% blocker. Colorimetric staining was performed using Opti-4CN Substrate Kit (Bio-Rad) following manufacturer instructions. To detect the FLAG-tag monoclonal ANTI-FLAG® M2 secondary antibody was used (Sigma Aldrich).

Comparative structural modelling

Structural models of MC001 have been obtained by employing three different approaches: the threading/ab initio modelling method implemented in the I-TASSER pipeline (Roy et al., 2010), the membrane proteins-specific approach of MEMOIR (Ebejer et al., 2013) and the homology modelling method of SWISS-MODEL (Biasini et al., 2014). The search for suitable modelling templates has been carried out with PSI-BLAST (Position-Specific Iterated BLAST) (Altschul et al., 1997) sequence similarity search against the Protein Data Bank using the amino acid sequence of MC001 as a bait. While MEMOIR does not provide a proper quality assessment of the models, in the case of I-TASSER and SWISS-MODEL, the quality of the final models has been assessed through the parameters C-score and QMEAN4 (Benkert et al., 2009), respectively. The C-score is a confidence score calculated based on the reliability of threading template alignments and the convergence parameters of the structure assembly simulations. C-score values typically range between -5 and 2, higher values characterizing high confidence models and vice-versa. The QMEAN4 score is a linear combination of four statistical potential terms and is typically in the range 0-1, with higher values characterizing better quality models. MC001 models are characterized by a C-score of -5 and a QMEAN4 score of 0.74.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was performed by using GraphPad Prism 7 software. Mann-Whitney (unpaired and non-parametric) and Student t tests with threshold of $P < 0.05$ were used to analyze the data of the bacterial counts from the mouse colonization model and for the IgG antibody response.

RESULTS

Identification of Vaccine candidates by Reverse Vaccinology

To identify potential antigens in EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain we applied the reverse vaccinology approach summarized in figure 1. The first step was to analyze the putative cellular localization of the 5675 coding sequences (CDS) from the annotated genome of EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain using the PSORT algorithm. We focused mainly in chromosome encoded proteins predicted to be exported, surface associated, outer membrane associated and with an unknown localization. The selection also included proteins greater than 200 amino acids and with less than 3 transmembrane repeats determined by the TMHMM algorithm. As a result of this analysis, we selected 329 potential vaccine candidates (Table 1S). Next, we exploited RNA-Seq data available in NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA) seeking for genes that were expressed at transcriptional level. These RNA-Seq dataset were generated using EHEC EDL933 strain grown in LB, LB with antibiotics, LB-agar media and cattle feces (Landstorfer et al., 2014). Reads mapping on EHEC EDL933 resulted in 68 genes showing an absolute index number of ≥ 10 RPKM (reads per kilobase per million mapped reads) in at least one of the four growth conditions analyzed (Table S2). Another selection criterion was based on gene variability and distribution analysis of these 68 EHEC EDL933 potential antigens on 31 complete genomes, to select those present (query coverage: $\geq 90\%$) and conserved (sequence identity $\geq 80\%$) in more than 5 different intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* strains (Figure 1 and Figure 1S). This *in silico* selection led to the identification of 24 potential antigens which were cloned, expressed and purified as recombinant His-tagged fusion proteins in *E. coli*. Of these, 12 were successfully purified as soluble and 12 as insoluble proteins (Table S3).

The recombinant proteins were then used to immunize mice in order to generate antigen-specific polyclonal antibodies. These antibodies were subsequently tested in Western Blot analysis to assess the expression level of the corresponding potential candidates in the homologous EHEC O157:H7 strain whole cell extract, leading to the identification of 17 expressed proteins in standard laboratory growth conditions (Table S3). As proof of concept

among these expressed proteins we selected three potential antigens satisfying all the criteria mentioned above to further investigate their antigenic potential. In particular, these three vaccine candidates included an outer membrane protein (MC001), a putative aminopeptidase (MC007) and an autotransporter belonging to the AIDA family (MC020) (Table 1).

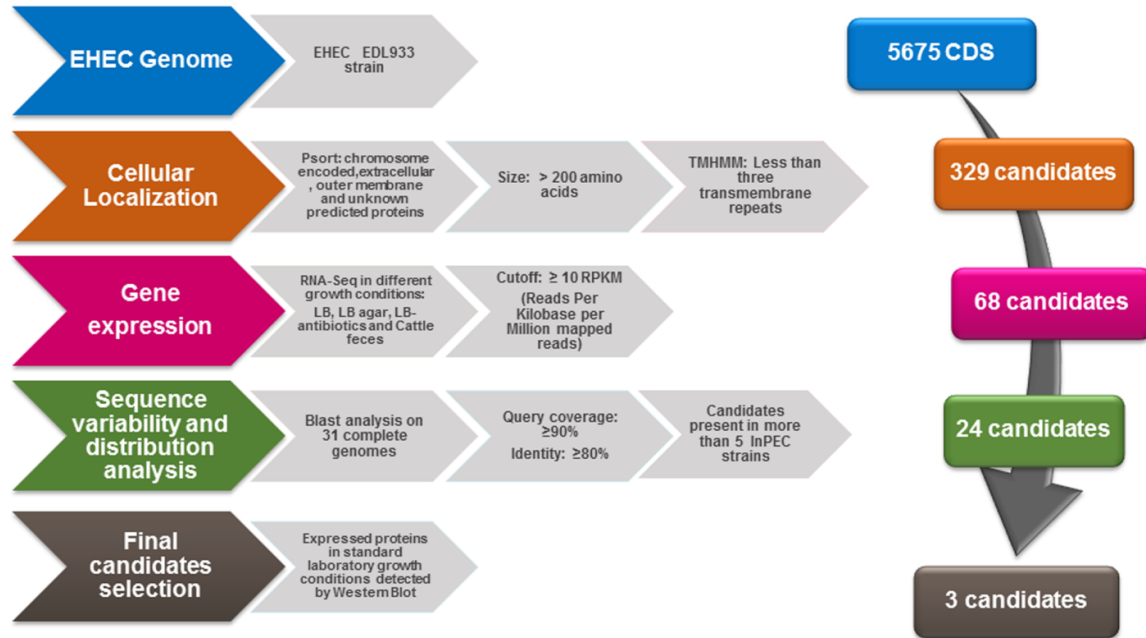


Figure 1. Vaccine candidate selection by Reverse Vaccinology in EHEC O157:H7. Schematic representation of the *in silico* pipeline used for vaccine candidate selection. The 5675 coding DNA sequences (CDS) chromosome-encoded of EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 strain were analyzed to identify potential antigens on the basis of their cellular localization (PSORT). The selection included proteins greater than 200 amino acids and with less than 3 transmembrane repeats determined by the TMHMM algorithm. RNA-Seq data were used to find candidates expressed at transcriptional level. Gene variability and distribution analysis of 62 potential antigens on 31 complete genomes were performed to select those present (query coverage: $\geq 90\%$) and conserved (sequence identity $\geq 80\%$) in more than 5 different intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* strains. Final selection was based also on those candidates expressed at the protein level on whole cell extracts.

Table 1. Features of the three selected candidates

Selected Candidates	Protein ID	Annotation feature	Localization prediction	Pfam Domain	Signal-Localization	Purified recombinant protein
MC001	AIG67060.1	Putative outer membrane protein	Extracellular	DUF2219	Non-Cytoplasmic	Insoluble
MC007	AIG66424.1	Putative aminopeptidase	Unknown	Unknown	Non-Cytoplasmic	Soluble
MC020	AIG69974.1	Pertactine precursor	Extracellular	AIDA, Pertactine	Unknown	Soluble

Antigen delivery in Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens (GMMA)

To express the three selected candidates in GMMA, we first generated an overblebbing

E. coli K12 by mutating the *tolR* gene (K12 $\Delta tolR::cat$). The native OMV (NOMV) released from the wild-type (wt) *E. coli* K12 and GMMA purified from the *tolR* mutant were observed by transmission electronic microscopy (TEM). This analysis showed that NOMV from wt strain appeared as closed spherical particles and homogeneous in shape with a size ranging from 20 to 100 nm (Figure 2A). On the other hand, GMMA from *tolR* mutant were released in higher amount (size ranging from 20 to 200 nm), and a small fraction of these vesicles showed an atypical shape characterized by more than one membrane layer (double-bilayer) a characteristic already observed by Perez-Cruz *et al.*, (Perez-Cruz *et al.*, 2013; Perez-Cruz *et al.*, 2016) (Figure 2B). Also, SDS-PAGE comparison of vesicles preparations showed that the *tolR* mutant was able to yield 25-fold more vesicles than wild-type strain in terms of total protein content, according to the amount of protein measured from GMMA preparations (Figure 2C). In order to express the three vaccine candidates (MC001, MC007 or MC0021) in GMMA, their coding sequence was cloned in frame onto pBAD plasmid and the FLAG-tag was inserted after their own signal peptide sequence (Figure 3A). The generated constructs (pBAD-MC001F, pBAD-MC007F, pBAD-MC020F) were transformed in the *tolR* mutant. To test whether these plasmids were expressing the vaccine candidates and incorporated into GMMA, we performed a western blot on the vesicles preparations using the anti-FLAG antibody. As shown in figure 3B all the three antigens were specifically recognized by the anti-FLAG antibody. These results indicate that the selected vaccine candidates were expressed in GMMA and these vesicles preparation can be used as antigen delivery system for animal model testing.

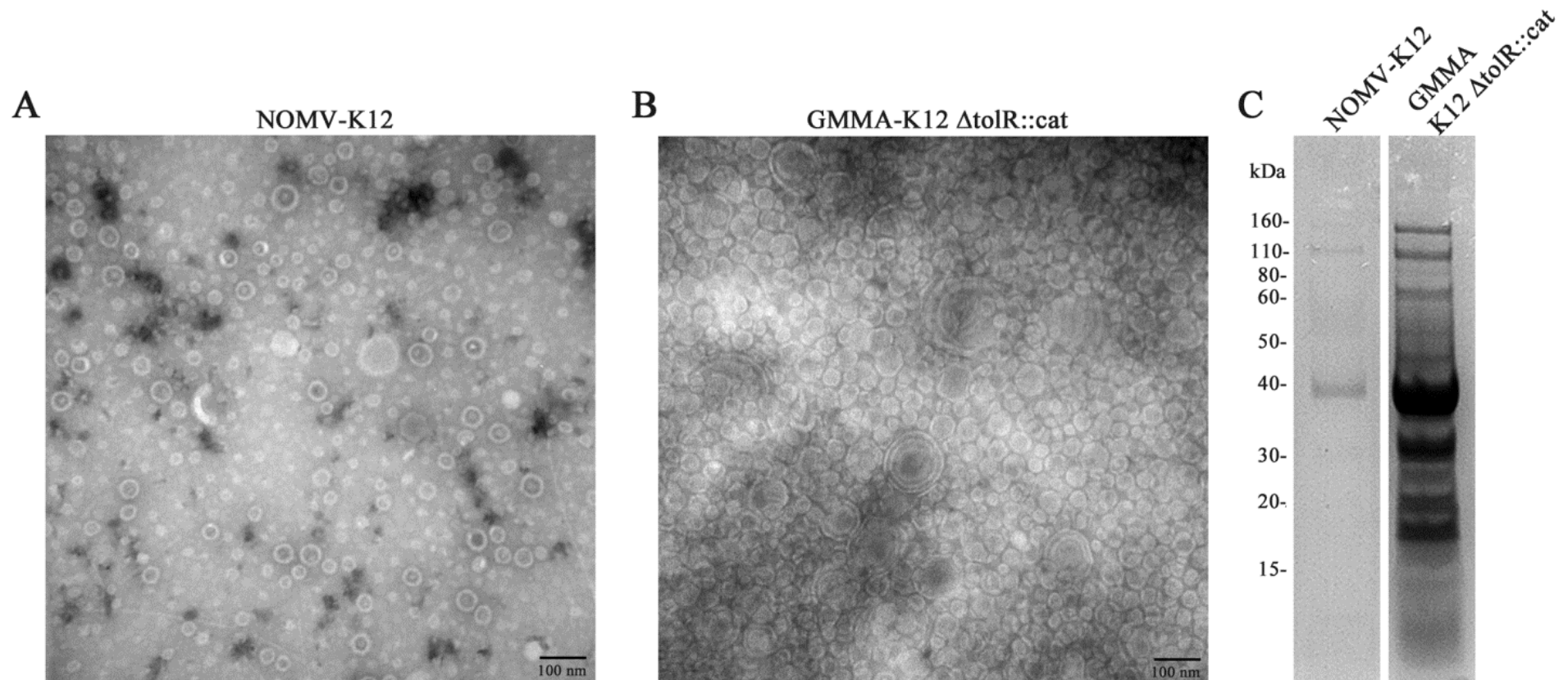


Figure 2. *E. coli* K12 engineering to generate Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens (GMMA). NOMV and GMMA were isolated by ultracentrifugation from supernatants of *E. coli* K12 WT and K12 $\Delta tolR::cat$ (A) Negative staining of native NOMV released from a wild-type *E. coli* K12 observed by transmission electron microscopy (TEM). NOMV from K12 WT strain appeared as closed spherical particles and homogeneous in shape with a size ranging from 20 to 100 nm. (B) Negative staining of GMMA produced by the K12 $tolR::cat$ (K12 $tolR::cat$) strain analyzed by TEM GMMA from $tolR$ mutant (size ranging from 20 to 200 nm) (magnification 120,000x). (C) SDS Page (4-12% bis-tris polyacrylamide) of membrane vesicles (NONV and GMMA) each purified from 75 ml of culture supernatants. Total protein content was quantified and 50 μ g of GMMA obtained from K12 $\Delta tolR::cat$ sample was loaded into the SDS-PAGE gel. An equivalent volumetric amount of NOMV from K12 WT obtained from 75 mL of supernatant was loaded. The $tolR$ mutant showed an extensive protein profile in the supernatant compared to wild type.

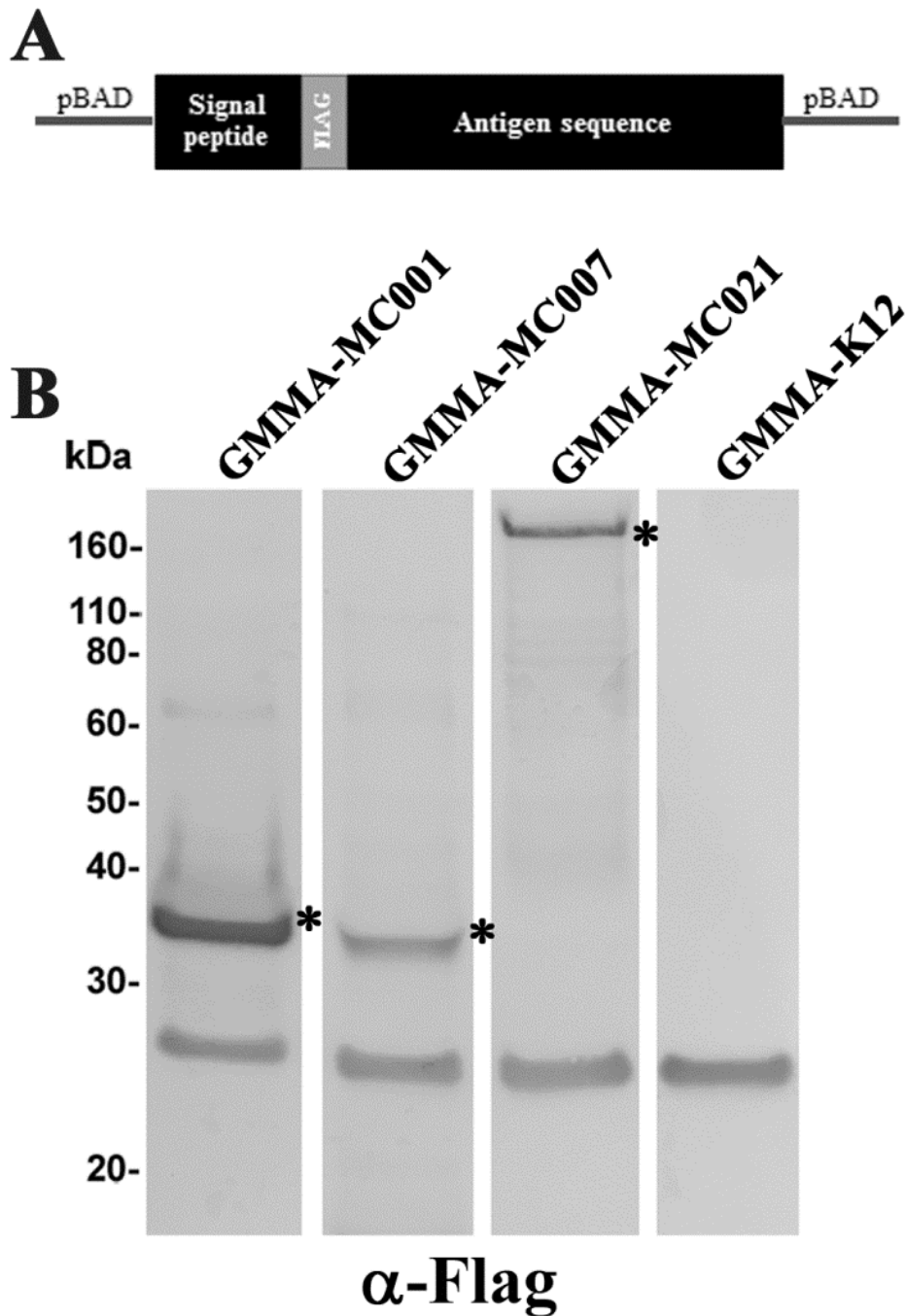


Figure 3. Antigen delivery into GMMA. (A) Schematic representation of the candidate cloning strategy. The three selected potential antigens were cloned into a pBAD vector using their own signal peptide. A FLAG-tag was inserted after the signal peptide of each construct. (B) Western blot of GMMA preparation expressing MC001, MC007 and MC021 candidates purified from the *K12tolR::cat* mutant using an anti-FLAG antibody. Asterisks (*) indicate the expected molecular size of each antigen.

Immunization with MC001-GMMA reduces EHEC intestinal bacterial colonization in mice

To test the possible ability of the selected potential antigens to prevent or reduce bacterial infection an intestinal colonization model was setup using BALB/c mice. Groups of ten mice were immunized with the GMMA vaccines over expressing the candidates or with empty GMMA-K12 via intraperitoneal at day 1, 21 and 39. At day 50, mice were infected with EHEC O157:H7 86-24 strain (5×10^9 CFU), via gavage. Fecal samples were collected in a daily basis performing bacterial counts. GMMA-MC001 immunized mice showed a ≈ 3 -logs reduction (P value = 0.0001) in fecal bacteria number compared to PBS-alum at day 5 after infection while a ≈ 2 -logs and ≈ 4 -logs reduction (P value = 0.0033 and 0.0037) were obtained in comparison to empty GMMA-K12 immunized groups at day 6 and 7 respectively (Figure 4A). For ethical reasons, at day 5 most of the PBS-alum immunized mice were euthanized due to their weight loss ($>15\%$ of initial body weight). By contrast, immunized mice with GMMA-MC007 and GMMA-MC020 preparations did not show significant bacteria reduction in comparison to PBS-alum and GMMA-K12 immunized mice (Figure 4A). In addition, at day 7 post infection, colon and caecum tissues were collected from all mice groups and bacterial count was performed. The number of bacteria in colon and caecum tissues was significantly reduced (3-logs and 5-logs, $P = 0.0003$ and 0.0006 respectively) in mice immunized with the GMMA-MC001 in comparison to GMMA-K12 while GMMA-MC007 immunized mice showed a reduction of ≈ 2 -logs and ≈ 3 -logs for colon and caecum respectively ($P = 0.0068$ and 0.0012) (Figure 4B and 4C).

A

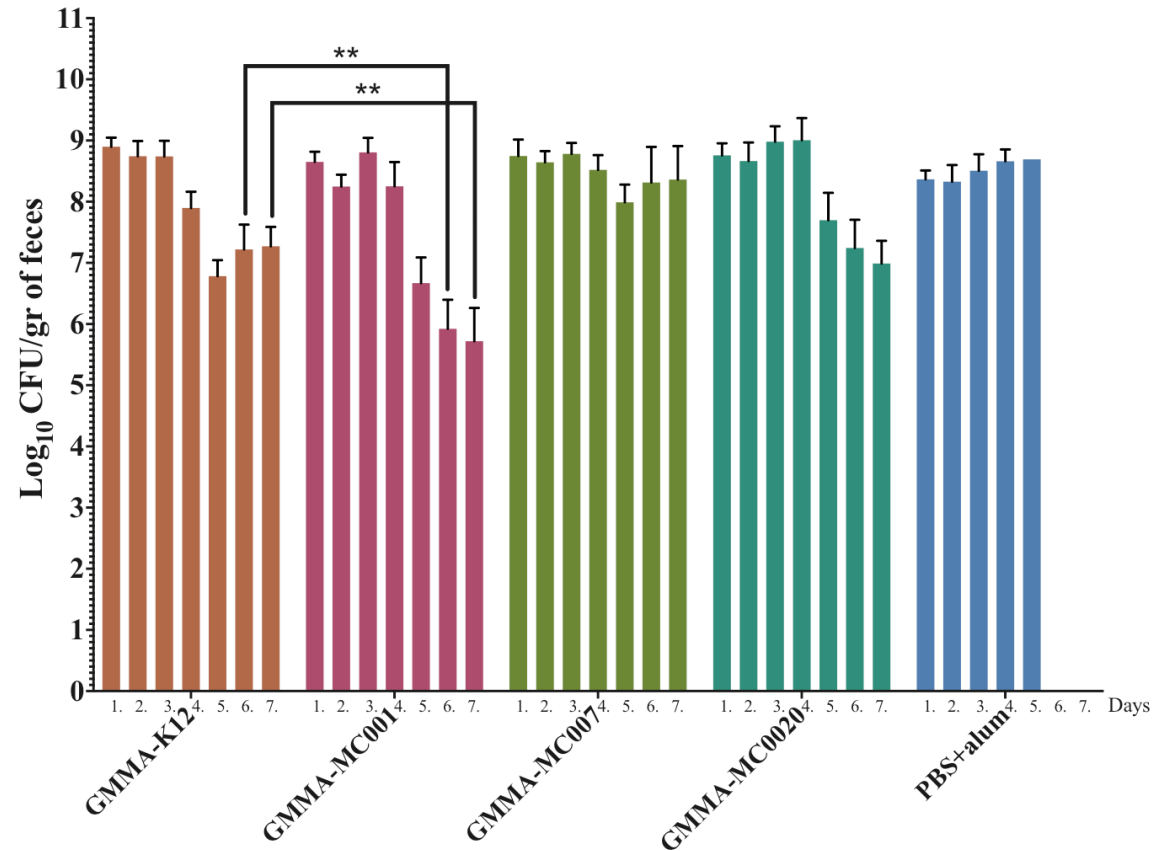
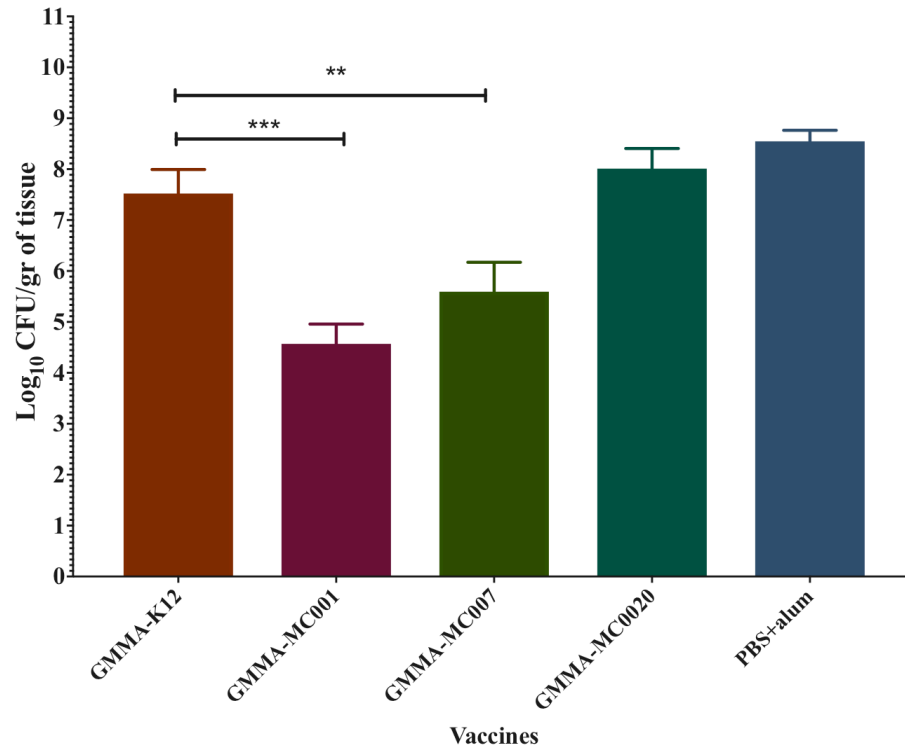
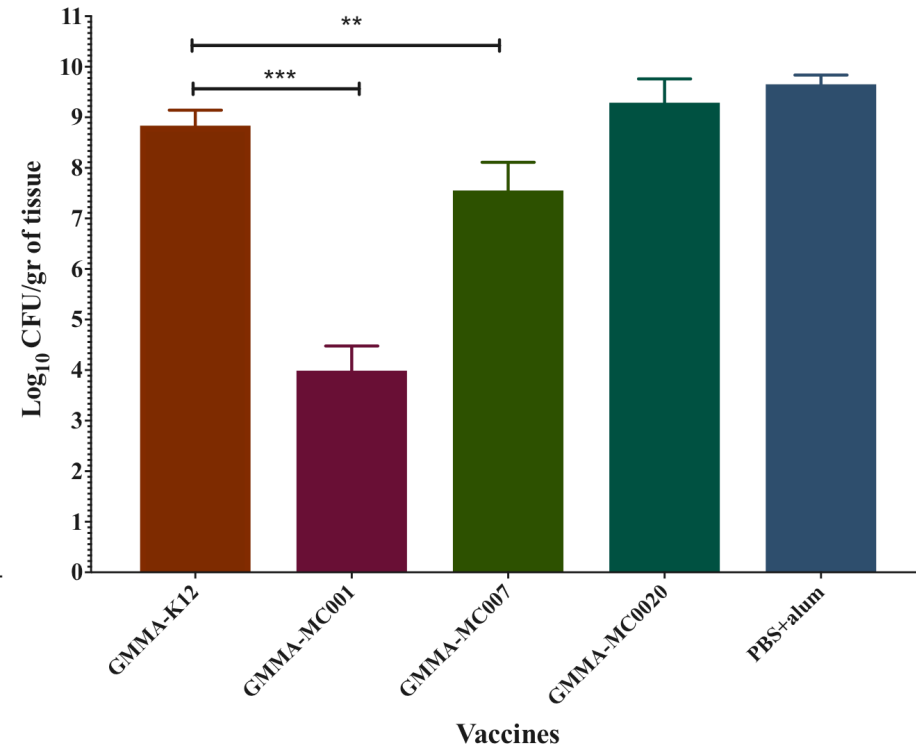


Figure 4. EHEC intestinal colonization model using mice immunized with GMMA overexpressing vaccine candidates. (A) Graphic representation of 7-days bacterial counts in feces of immunized mice with GMMA vaccines (GMMA-K12, GMMA-MC001, GMMA-MC007, GMMA-MC020) overexpressing the candidates or with empty GMMA-K12 or PBS-alum via intraperitoneal at day 1, 21 and 39. Mice were challenged using EHEC O157:H7 86-24 strain via gavage. Fecal samples were collected in a daily basis performing bacterial counts expressed as CFU number per gr of feces (CFU/gr).

B**C**

(B) Graphic representation of bacterial counts in colon tissue (CFU/gr) of immunized mice. (C) Graphic representation of bacterial counts in caecum tissue (CFU/gr) of immunized mice. The plots represent individual average. Data are expressed as means \pm the standard deviation (SD) of values from ten mice in each group, and asterisks indicate statistically significant differences (P value < 0.05) (**, P value = 0.0033 and 0.0037; ***, P value = 0.0003 and 0.0006) calculated by Mann-Whitney test. Student t tests, indicates a significant difference in CFU number per gr of feces or tissue between mice vaccinated with GMMA-K12 (control group) and GMMA overexpressing the vaccine candidates.

Immunization with GMMA-expressing induces antigen specific antibody response for MC001 and MC021 vaccine candidates

To assess the immune response induced by GMMA immunization *per se* and the possible contribution in raising specific response against the three vaccine candidates (MC001, MC007 and MC020) overexpressed in GMMA their serum antibody level was determined by ELISA.

To measure the total level of immunoglobulins G (IgG), serum samples were collected prior the first shot of immunization (preimmune sera) and two weeks after the third immunization, before challenging mice. Microtiter plates coated with purified preparations of each GMMA-K12 and GMMA carrying the vaccine candidates showed higher total IgG levels in all the immunized groups versus the preimmune sera. Non-significant difference was found among the four GMMA immunized groups (Fig. 5A). On the other hand, to test whether there was an induction of a specific immune response attributable to the antigens expressed in GMMA, we performed ELISA assay using microtitre plates coated with the MC001, MC007 and MC020 recombinant proteins. A significant increase in antibody response was found for GMMA-MC001 ($P = 0.0076$) and GMMA-MC020 ($P = 0.0075$) sera in comparison to GMMA-K12 sera (Fig. 5B). To confirm that the immunization with GMMA expressing these vaccine candidates was able to generate antigen specific antibodies, we performed western blot assay, using MC001, MC020 or MC007 recombinant proteins as target. As shown in figure 5C, only MC001 and MC020 recombinant proteins were detected using GMMA-MC001 and GMMA-MC020 sera respectively, while MC007 was not recognized by GMMA-MC007 serum.

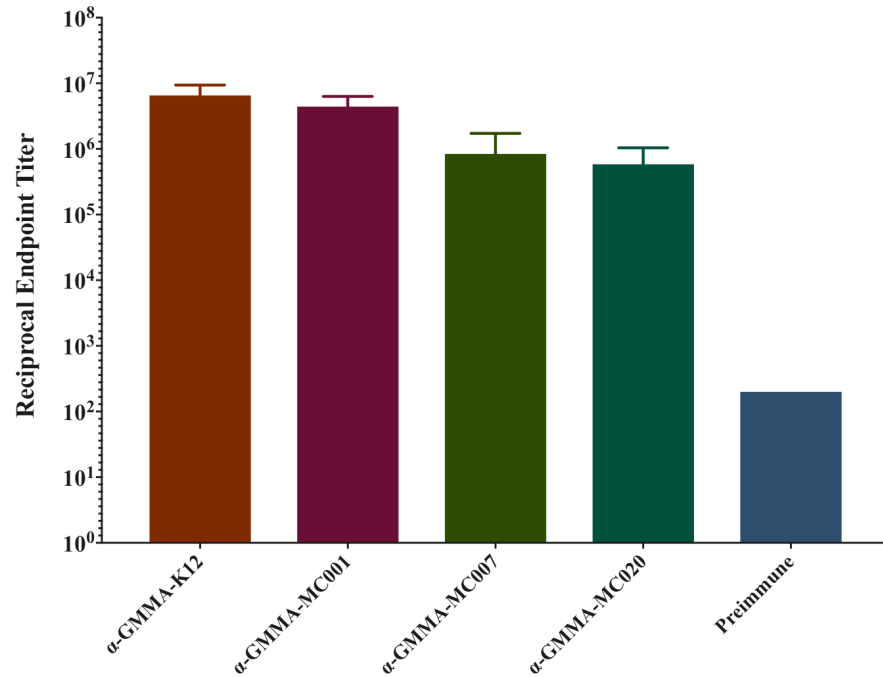
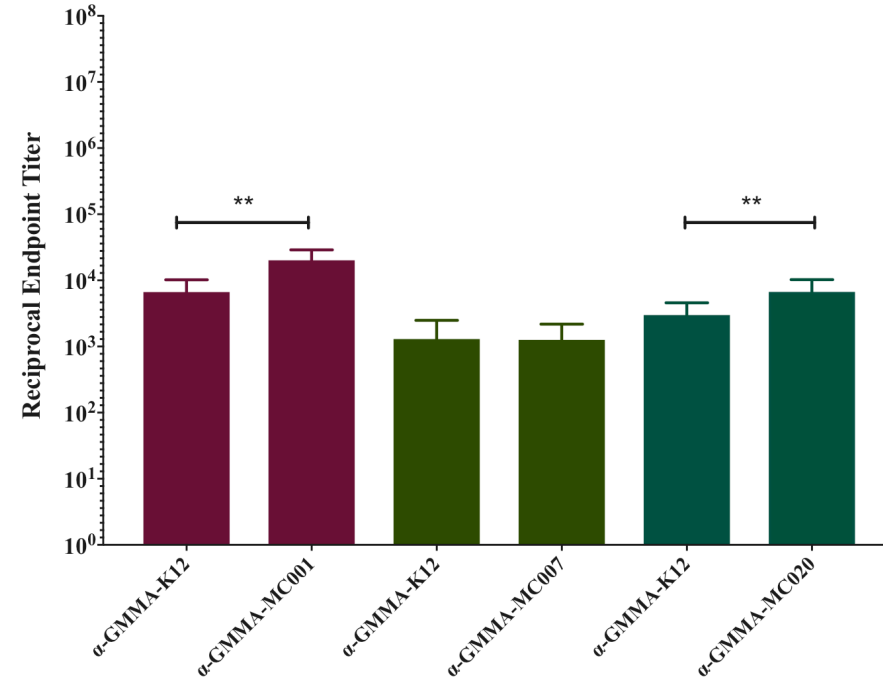
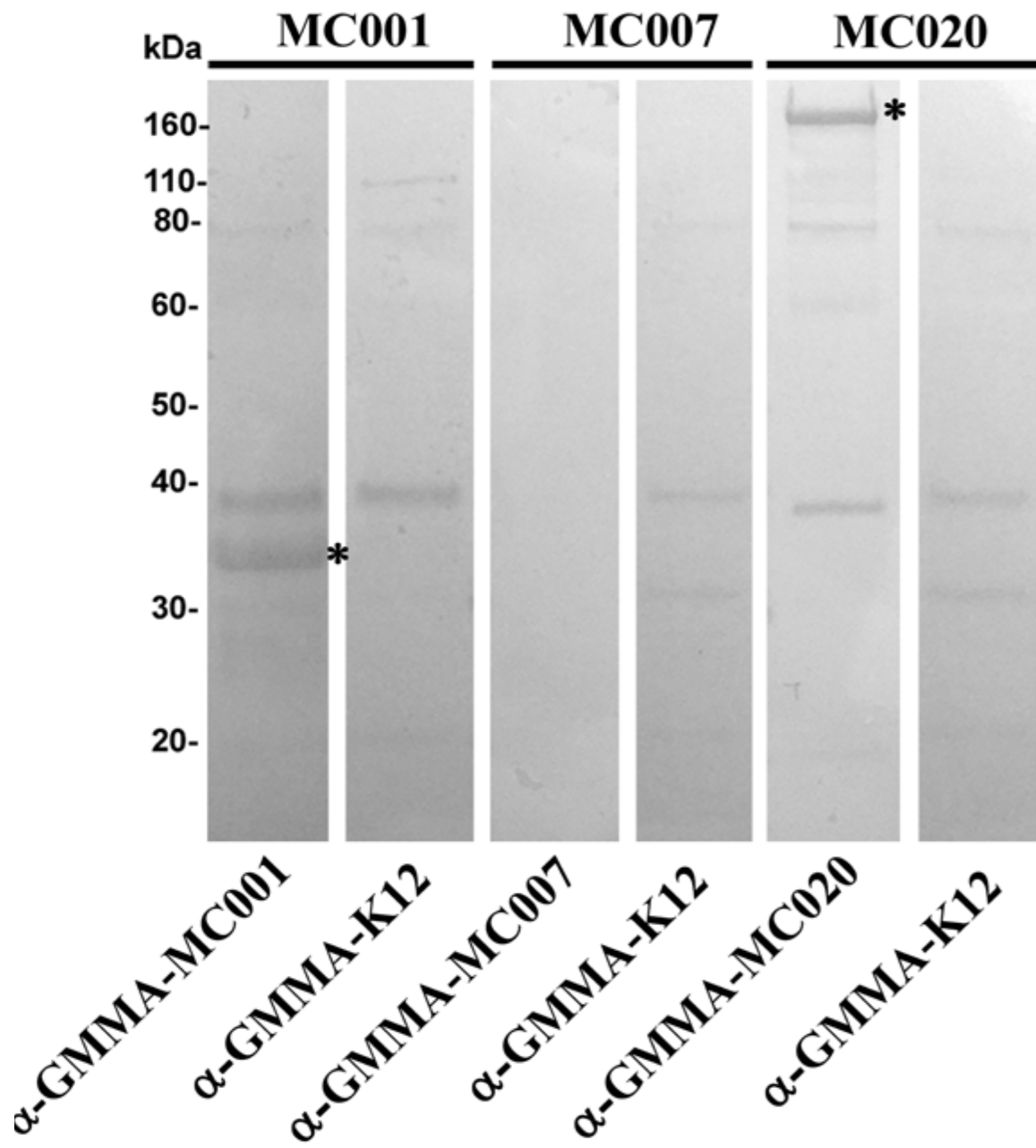
A**B**

Figure 5. Total IgG response after immunization and specific antibody detection of GMMA overexpressing vaccine candidates. (A) IgG antibody relative titers of GMMA overexpressing the antigens were measured by ELISA assay. Microtiter plates were coated with purified preparations of each GMMA-K12 and GMMA carrying the vaccine candidates. Sera raised against vaccine candidates overexpressed in GMMA were collected from vaccinated animals two weeks post the third immunization. Preimmune bar represents the sera pool of all groups. (B) Specific antibody (IgG) measurement of sera obtained by immunization of GMMA vaccines was performed by ELISA assay using microtitre plates coated with the MC001, MC007 and MC020 recombinant proteins. The plots represent individual average. Data are expressed as means ± the SD of values from ten mice in each group, and asterisks indicate statistically significant differences (P value < 0.05) (**, P value = 0.0076) calculated by Mann-Whitney test. Student t tests, indicates a significant difference in reciprocal endpoint titers between mice vaccinated with GMMA-K12 (control group) and GMMA overexpressing the vaccine candidates. The endpoint titer of a sample is defined as the reciprocal of the highest dilution that has a reading above the cutoff.

C



(C) Western blot assay, using MC001, MC020 or MC007 recombinant proteins as target. Each recombinant protein was tested using the respective serum raised against GMMA overexpressing the vaccine candidates and GMMA-K12 (negative control)

MC001 is homologous to *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase (LpxR)

To obtain more insights about the structural features of the MC001 vaccine candidate, an *in-silico* analysis was performed. In order to find proteins with known structure and significant sequence similarity with MC001, its protein sequence was used to run a PSI-BLAST search against the Protein Data Bank (PDB) (Berman et al., 2000). This search retrieved as first hit the sequence of the *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase (LpxR). Furthermore, a PSI-BLAST search over the non-redundant protein sequences database revealed a high sequence similarity also with LpxR from *Vibrio cholerae*, *Yersinia enterocolitica* and *Helicobacter pylori*. Structural MC001 models using the LpxR structure as a template (PDB code: 3FID) (Rutten et al., 2009) were built by I-TASSER, MEMOIR and SWISS-MODEL softwares. All the three generated models were in agreement with each other, showing a pairwise C α root mean square deviation in all cases lower than 0.5 Å. A representative structural model obtained with the SWISS-MODEL is shown in Figure 6A. In particular, the MC001 model was composed by a 12-stranded β -barrel, in which the β -strands were arranged in an antiparallel fashion similarly to a structure that is quite common in porins and other cell membrane proteins. The high homology between MC001 and *Salmonella* Typhimurium LpxR was confirmed by the presence in the active site of six conserved residues essential for Ca²⁺ binding and LpxR catalytic activity: (*Salmonella/E. coli*) Asn (9/31), Asp (10/32), Thr/Ser (34/56), His (122/144), Gln (118/140) and Glu (128/150) (Figure 6B). Sequence comparison revealed that MC001 has the same length of the LpxR *Salmonella* orthologue (319 amino acids) and shares approximately 74% sequence identity and 93.73% sequence similarity (74% of identity with 93% query coverage) (Figure 6C).

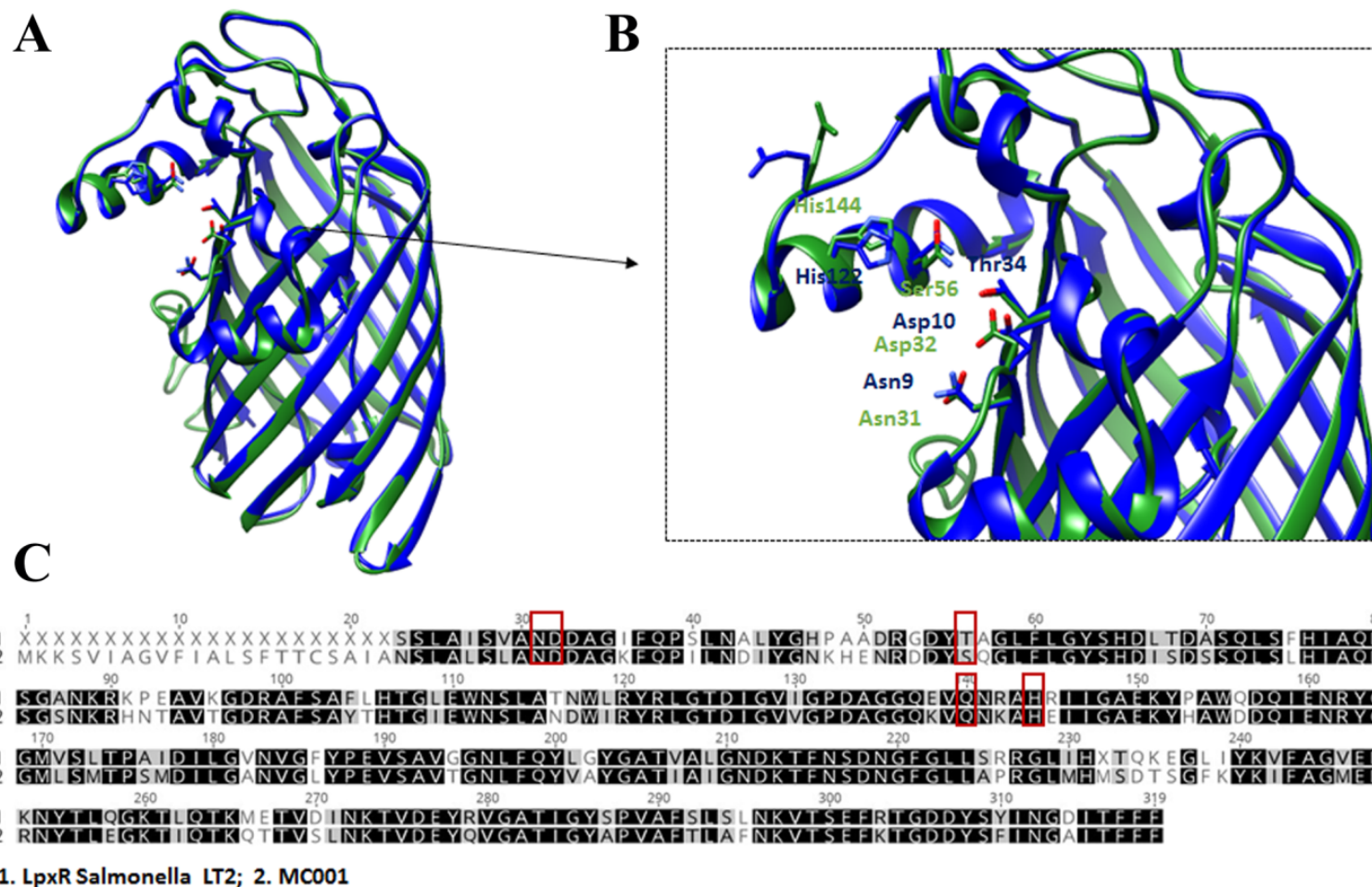


Figure 6. MC001 comparative protein modeling. (A) Structural model of MC001 obtained by SWISS-MODEL. Greens strips represent the 12-stranded β -barrel model for MC001 based on LpxR from *Salmonella* serovar Typhumurim (PDB: 3FID) model on blue strip (B) Magnification of the catalytic site region showing conserved residues for Ca^{+2} binding and LpxR catalytic activity: Asn (9/31), Asp (10/32), Thr/Ser (34/56), His (122/144), Gln (118/140) and Glu (128/150). (C) Sequence alignment of MC001 and LpxR shows an identity of 74% and a sequence similarity of 93% (black highlighted amino acids). The residues of the active site are marked in red squares.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we used the reverse vaccinology approach for the identification of new vaccine candidates in intestinal pathogenic *E. coli*, focusing on EHEC. In recent years, the reverse vaccinology has been exploited as an *in silico* tool to discover new protein antigens for several pathogens such as Serogroup B Meningococcus (MenB) (Pizza et al., 2000), Group B Streptococcus (Maione et al., 2005), extraintestinal *E. coli* (ExPECs) (Moriel et al., 2010) and for DNA vaccines against EHEC infections (Garcia-Angulo et al., 2014; Tapia et al., 2016). This approach allows the analysis of the whole annotated sequenced genome that includes all potential antigens (Rappuoli, 2000; Mora et al., 2003). In our study, we focus on chromosome encoded proteins predicted to be exported, surface associated, outer membrane associated and with an unknown localization. In fact, proteins which associate with bacterial membranes are more easily accessible to antibodies and therefore represent ideal vaccine candidates (Mora et al., 2006). As a result of the first step of this analysis, we identified 329 potential vaccine candidates starting from the 5675 CDS of the EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 annotated genome. Further, to determine whether these candidates are effectively expressed *in vitro* or *in vivo* during infection, with higher probability to be immunogenic, we took into account the expression at the RNA level. Exploiting previously generated RNA-Seq dataset (Landstorfer et al., 2014) we identified antigens expressed in at least one out of the four analyzed conditions, downselecting the potential candidates to a group of 68 putative antigens. An important characteristic for vaccine candidate is based on its ability to confer a broad-spectrum protection against the majority of circulating strains. However, given the high genetic variability among and within different *E. coli* pathotypes a universal vaccine candidate has not yet been identified. For instance, SsIE a conserved and protective antigen identified in ExPEC is not present in EHEC pathotype (Moriel et al., 2010). Similarly, other proposed vaccine candidates, such as LEE and Stx, are not present in all the InPEC strains, nor even in some non-O157 EHEC strains, therefore limiting the vaccine use of these important virulence factors (Rojas-Lopez, submitted). For this reason, we searched for potential antigens possibly present and conserved in more than one single intestinal pathotype. Following these criteria, we selected 24 potential antigens. Moreover, 17 out of these 24 were also found to be expressed at the protein level in standard laboratory growth condition. Within this antigen panel, 12 proteins were predicted to be outer membrane associated proteins, three with extracellular localization and nine with unknown localization. On the basis of these observations we exploited the use of GMMA to express and deliver heterologous antigens in order to improve our chance to express properly folded membrane associated recombinant antigens and to induce functional immune responses,

as previously published (Berlanda Scorza et al., 2012; Bartolini et al., 2013; Daleke-Schermerhorn et al., 2014; Fantappie et al., 2014). GMMA can be also an ideal delivery system because of the presence of native proteins on the membrane surface that can act as potential self-adjuvants, helping to elicit immune responses (Kaparakis-Liaskos and Ferrero, 2015). However, in native conditions blebs are recovered in small quantity and, as consequence, *E. coli* strains need to be genetically modified by deleting the *tolR* gene to enhance the level of vesicles production (Bernadac et al., 1998; Berlanda Scorza et al., 2012). In a first attempt, we introduced the *tolR* mutation in a EHEC strain lacking also Stx to avoid possible release of toxins into the vesicles. However, once these overproduced blebs were used to immunize mice we observed sick animals, showing bristled hair, lethargic behavior and lose of weight (data not shown). For this reason, we constructed a *tolR* mutant in an avirulent *E. coli* K12 which was able to release higher amounts of blebs in comparison to the wild-type K12. In the present study, we used these GMMA-K12 for antigen expression and delivery. As proof of concept we selected three out of the 24 new promising antigens including an outer membrane protein (MC001), a putative aminopeptidase (MC007) and an autotransporter (MC020), that could have the potential to be expressed in GMMA. Two out of the three selected vaccine candidates (MC001 and MC020) showed typical features of membrane associated proteins, although the MC007 cellular localization was unknown, its signal sequence was predicted to direct the protein as a putative secreted protein. In addition, the MC001 candidate when purified as recombinant protein was obtained as insoluble form. From all these observations, the expression and delivery of these vaccine candidates in GMMA would increase their antigenic potential, with higher chance to be presented in their native conformation. Our data showed that all the three candidates were heterologous expressed into GMMA-K12 being specifically recognized by the anti-Flag antibody. For testing the possible ability of the selected candidates to prevent or reduce bacterial infection, an intestinal colonization model was setup using BALB/c mice. This animal model was adapted from the previous animal models of infection for EHEC and the one setup by Garcia-Angulo and colleagues (Mohawk and O'Brien, 2011; Garcia-Angulo et al., 2013). Although mice did not develop the symptoms associated with diarrheal disease as observed in humans, these murine models of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection, based on streptomycin-treated BALB/c mice, have been promising for EHEC colonization and candidate vaccine testing (Mohawk and O'Brien, 2011; Garcia-Angulo et al., 2013). Our data indicated that a stable EHEC intestinal bacterial colonization for 7-days post-infection using 5×10^9 CFU was maintained and immunization with GMMA-K12 did not result toxic, as it was the case for GMMA-EHEC. We showed that intraperitoneal immunization of MC001 was able

to significantly reduce EHEC colonization in mice feces (day 6 and 7), colon and caecum tissues (day 7) in comparison to empty GMMA-K12. While for MC007 a less significant reduction was observed only in colon and caecum tissues. By contrast, we did not observe any EHEC colonization reduction for MC020 immunization.

Moreover, by assessing humoral response, higher specific titers of total IgG in GMMA-MC001 against the respective recombinant protein in the vaccinated group were observed. In support of these results western blot analysis showed that MC001 recombinant protein was recognized by the GMMA-MC001 serum indicating this vaccine candidate was associated with membrane vesicles and also easily accessible to the recognition by the immune system.

While MC020 recombinant protein was detected by its respective GMMA serum in western blot and higher IgG titers were sensed by ELISA and all in comparison to GMMA-K12, nonetheless this pattern was not observed for MC007. In fact, MC007 was only detected in GMMA preparation by the anti-FLAG antibody while serum raised against the GMMA expressing this antigen did not contain specific antibodies. Taken together these data might suggest that for a functional antigen delivery into the GMMA the heterologous antigen needs to be expressed and properly presented to the immune system. As MC001 resulted in our study to be the most promising candidate, we used bioinformatic pipelines to predict a molecular model by homology. BLAST analysis showed that MC001 was homologous to the *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase (LpxR) and shared similarity also with LpxR from *Vibrio cholerae*, *Yersinia enterocolitica* and *Helicobacter pylori*. Structural MC001 model using the *Salmonella* Typhimurium LpxR as a template revealed a structure composed by a 12-stranded β -barrel in which the β -strands were arranged in an antiparallel fashion. The high homology between MC001 and *Salmonella* typhimurium LpxR was also confirmed by the presence in the active site of six conserved residues essential for Ca²⁺ binding and LpxR catalytic activity. In addition, gene variability and distribution analysis showed that MC001 was present and conserved among different EHEC strains as Sakai, O26:H11, O103:H2 and EPEC genomes.

Recently, it has been reported that LpxR can play an important role in pathogenesis by removing the 3'-acyloxyacyl group of lipid A (the hydrophobic anchor of lipopolysaccharide, LPS). This modification increases the ability of *Salmonella* Typhimurium to evade the innate immune response and promotes survival within macrophages (Kawasaki et al., 2012; Petrone et al., 2014). In this regard, targeting a specific antibody response toward LpxR could potentially avoid the LPS modification and subsequent immune evasion. However, further studies are ongoing to characterize this protein and its role in EHEC pathogenesis and immune

modulation in the host.

In conclusion, the reverse vaccinology approach applied on the EHEC O157:H7 genome combined with the GMMA antigen delivery system led us to identify new potential vaccine candidates. In particular, one of them (MC001) was able to reduce intestinal bacterial colonization and to our knowledge this study was the first report describing a lipid A deacylase enzyme (LpxR) as vaccine candidate. Given the high genetic variability among and within these pathotypes, the identification and inclusion of this conserved candidate in a vaccine might cover against major intestinal pathogenic strains. This study provided a cost-effective approach of identifying not previously described immunogenic proteins to be used as potential vaccine candidates.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MR-L, RR, MD, MS, MP conceived and designed the study. MR-L and RR performed the experiments. MR-L and MM designed constructs for recombinant protein expression and purification. MRL- and BG performed the TEM. MR-L, RR, MD, GJ, FP, MS and MP analyzed data. MR-L and RR, wrote the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

RR and MP are permanent employees of GSK. MM and MS were GSK employees at the time of the study. The authors declare that GSK provided support in the form of salaries. All the other authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. Maricarmen ROJAS-LOPEZ is a Marie Curie PhD Research Fellow granted by ITN EID DISCo performed at GSK and INRA.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found at the end of this thesis.

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Table 4 supplementary material. Primers used in this study

Primer	Sequence	Product	Notes (ID, purpose)
MCRL-34Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCTTTCAACCAATACTTAATGAT	MC001	AIG67060.1
MCRL-34Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAAAAAAGAAGGTGATTGC		
MCRL-24Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGATATCAATCTGTATGGTCC	MC002	AIG68165.1
MCRL-24Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAAGTGCCTTTCCTGGT		
MCRL-40Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGACCTTTATGGCAAGG	MC003	AIG68357.1
MCRL-40Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAGAACTGATAGGTAATGCC		
MCRL-35Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGAGTTTACGATAGACTTTTCG	MC004	AIG67577.1
MCRL-35Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTTACCCGTTGTATATAAAAAC		
MCRL-32Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCACGTATGTAGATTCGCTG	MC005	AIG69411.1
MCRL-32Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAACTGCTAATAGTTCTGCG		
MCRL-41Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGAAGATAAGCTCTACT	MC006	AIG66347.1
MCRL-41Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTCGTAGGTAAAGGA		
MCRL-28Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCCAGCAACTGACAGACAA	MC007	AIG66424.1
MCRL-28Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTACTGGAATCGACTCACC		
MCRL-36Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCAACTGCTATTTTGGTACC	MC008	AIG66984.1
MCRL-36Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAGTTGTAGTTAATTTGAAAAG		
MCRL-38Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGTGGGAATGTGATG	MC009	AIG67652.1
MCRL-	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTGCATTTTCACCAA		

38Rv			
MCRL- 26Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCACGCTGACGGTAACGG		
MCRL- 26Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTTTCGCACCTCGCTG	MC010	AIG67671.1
MCRL- 43Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCACGCTTTACGAGCAG		
MCRL- 43Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATAGATAGTATTTAAAGCCGT	MC011	AIG67672.1
MCRL- 22Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGTGGGGATCGACAGC		
MCRL- 22Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAGAACGACCAGTTCACAC	MC012	AIG68053.1
MCRL- 42Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGAAATTCCTTCA		
MCRL- 42Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAGTGATAAAAAGGCCA	MC013	AIG68360.1
MCRL- 23Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGGTTATTTTGTGGCG		
MCRL- 23Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAATCCTGCAACGCATA	MC014	AIG68899.1
MCRL- 29Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATTATTATGCGATGAAA		
MCRL- 29Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTACAGTTCATTCAGTACATACTG	MC015	AIG69664.1
MCRL- 30Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGGGTACAGCAGCTATA		
MCRL- 30Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTGTATTCCTGCACCA	MC016	AIG70798.1
MCRL- 37Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGATGTCCGGCGTAGC		
MCRL- 37Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTACTGCTTTTTTACAACCATTC	MC017	AIG67308.1
MCRL- 48Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGAGCGGAAAACCG		
MCRL- 48Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATTTTCTTATTCCTCTCGATG	MC018	AIG66972.1
MCRL- 52Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGGCTGCGGCAGCA		
MCRL- 52Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTACGCAATATTGACGAT	MC019	AIG69216.1

52Rv			
MCRL-49Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGTGGGGCAGTCTAAT	MC020	AIG69974.1
MCRL-49Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAACTCGCTTTCATTATGTT		
MCRL-51Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCGTGCCTTACACGCTTGGT	MC021	AIG71811.1
MCRL-51Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAAAGTGATTTACGGCAGGC		
MCRL-45Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGGTCGCTAAATTA AAAAC	MC022	AIG71181.1
MCRL-45Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAAGCCTGGGTTATATTAAC		
MCRL-45Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCATGGTCGCTAAATTA AAAAC	MC023	AIG66227.1
MCRL-45Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTAAGCCTGGGTTATATTAAC		
MCRL-46Fw	CTGTACTTCCAGGGCAGTTATGGCCGATTT	MC024	AIG66656.1
MCRL-46Rv	AATTAAGTCGCGTTATGTAAACTGCACATAAGA		
pET-TEV-Fw	TAACGCGACTTAATTCTAGCATAACC	pET15	pET-15 expression vector
pET-TEV-Rv	GCCCTGGAAGTACAGGTTTTTC		
TolR-Cat-Fw	TGGAGGTCGATTTGCCAGACGCTACTGAATCACAGGCGGTG AGCAGTAACGATA ATCCGCCAGTGATTGTTGACATATGAATATCCTCCTTAGTTCC TATTCC	Cat-TolR	<i>tolR</i> mutant construction
TolR-Cat-Rv	CCTTGAAACGGCTGGACACTTCCGCCACCACCTGCTCTGGT GGTAAACGCTCCA GGCGATCTTTCTCAACCAGTGTAGGCTGGAGCTGCTTCGAA G		
GMMA-MC001Fw	CAGGAGGAATTAACCATGAAAAAAGTGTCATCGCTGGC	MC001 with signal sequence	Antigen expression on GMMA
GMMA-MC001Rv	ATGATGATGATGATGATGAAAAAGAAGGTGATTGCTCC		
-NONhis			
GMMA-MC007Fw	CAGGAGGAATTAACCATGGGGCAGTCTAATAATACCAC	MC007 with signal	Antigen expression

GMMA- MC007Rv -NONhis	ATGATGATGATGATGATGGAACGACCAGTTCACACCAGC	sequence	on GMMA
GMMA- MC020Fw	CAGGAGGAATTAACCATGGGGCAGTCTAATAATACCACC	MC020 with signal	Antigen expression
GMMA- MC020Rv -NONhis	ATGATGATGATGATGATGGAACGACCAGTTCACACCAG	sequence	on GMMA
MC001tag Fw	GATTACAAAGACGATGATGACAAGGATTACAAAGACGATGA TGACAAGAACAGCCTTGCATTATCATT	MC001 with signal	Antigen expression on GMMA
MC001tag Rv	CTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTGTAATCCTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTG TAATCCGCGATAGCTGAACACGTGG	sequence and Flag Tag	with Flag Tag
MC007tag Fw	GATTACAAAGACGATGATGACAAGGATTACAAAGACGATGA TGACAAGTCTGAATCTTCTATTGATGA	MC007 with signal	Antigen expression on GMMA
MC007tag Rv	CTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTGTAATCCTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTG TAATCGGCACATCCTGCAAGCAGCG	sequence and Flag Tag	with Flag Tag
MC020tag Fw	GATTACAAAGACGATGATGACAAGGATTACAAAGACGATGA TGACAAGGCCTTCACTCCTGATGTTAT	MC020 with signal	Antigen expression on GMMA
MC020tag Rv	CTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTGTAATCCTTGTCATCATCGTCTTTG TAATCAGCCATCCCGGGCGGGGCAT	sequence and Flag Tag	with Flag Tag
pBADRv	CATGGTTAATTCCTCCTGTTAGCCC	pBAD Vector	Expression of Ag in GMMA
pBADFw NonHIS	TGAGTTTAAACGGTCTCCAGCTTGG	without His- Tag	

Vaccine candidate name	Intestinal <i>Escherichia coli</i>										Extraintestinal <i>Escherichia coli</i>																							
	EHEC					EPEC	ETEC	AIEC		EAEC	NMEC	UPEC						AREC	APEC	ABU														
	EHEC O157:H7 TW14359	Sakai	EC4115	EDL933	O26:H11 Str. 11368	O103:H2 Str. 12009	O111:H- Str 11128	EPEC O55:H7 CB9615	O127:H6 Str E2348/69	ETEC HI0407	E24377A	UMNK88	AIEC LP82	O83:H1 NR G857C	UM146	EAEC 042	55989	NMEC O7:K1 CE10	S88	IH E3034	UPEC UMN026	CLONE DI14	CLONE DI2	CFT073	IAI39	536	NA114	UTI89	AREC SMS-3-5	APEC01	ABU 83972			
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Figure 1S. The selected candidates are mainly present and conserved among EHEC strains. Gene variability and distribution analysis (by BLASTP) shows the presence/absence of the antigens in a panel of 31 *E. coli* InPEC and ExPEC complete genomes. Hits are represented by Black cells (sequence identity $\geq 80\%$, query coverage $\geq 90\%$) white cells represent gene absence or presence with a sequence identity $<80\%$ and query coverage $<90\%$. EHEC: enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*; EPEC: enteropathogenic *E. coli*; ETEC: enterotoxigenic *E. coli*; EIEC: enteroinvasive *E. coli*; EAEC: enteroaggregative *E. coli* (EAEC); NMEC: neonatal meningitis *E. coli*; UPEC: uropathogenic *E. coli*; AREC: antibiotic resistant *E. coli*; APEC avian pathogenic *E. coli*; ABU: Asymptomatic *E. coli*.

Chapter 2

As explained previously, the secretion of specific virulence factors is one of the main differences between non-pathogenic bacteria and those responsible for diseases. Such secreted virulence factors can be released in the extracellular milieu or on the cell surface and be involved in adhesion, biofilm formation and/or persistence of the bacteria in the host. Secretion systems encoded in the LEE locus and involved in pathogenicity are best characterized in EHEC and EPEC. However, regarding the secretome concept, other entities, such as the autotransporters, can participate in pathogenesis and colonization in animals, humans and food. As some autotransporters are exposed on the surface of cells, they can be good antigen candidates for immunological recognition and thus vaccine development. Immunoproteomic analysis has also been employed as a strategy for the identification of antigens able to generate an immune response in the host during the process of infection. During this analysis, autotransporters (AT) such as EtpA, Antigen 43 and TibA, were found to be reactive during the infection process. *In silico* tools have identified autotransporters in biofilm formation, such as pAT, antigen 43 and EatA, which are more exclusively found in ETEC or other pathotypes but are absent in commensal strains. Our own reverse vaccinology approach identified MC021 as a potent antigen. It has been further shown that recombinant Ag43 and pAT autotransporters increase fecal IgA and provide relative protection against ETEC intestinal colonization in immunized mice. Interestingly, these autotransporters are also recognized by sera from patients with ETEC diarrhea, confirming their expression during ETEC infections. For these reasons, the study and description of autotransporters has gained importance. Autotransporters correspond to T5aSS. They are modular proteins composed of (i) an N-terminal signal peptide, which is cleaved off after crossing of the inner membrane, (ii) a C-terminal translocation unit called translocator composed of a C-terminal β -barrel forming a pore through the outer membrane and an α -helix linker region, which (iii) links the β -barrel to the passenger domain. The passenger domain, corresponding to the functional domain of an autotransporter, can be cell surface-exposed or released in the extracellular milieu. Some passengers also exhibit an autochaperone (AC) domain, which is required for proper folding and secretion of the passenger through the outer membrane. However, the commonality of this domain among all autotransporters remains controversial. The aim of this second study carried out during this thesis was to explore the prevalence of ACs in autotransporters, using the unique model structure of an AC domain as revealed in IcsA, following structural alignment and phylogenetic analyses. By clarifying the prevalence of the AC in T5aSS, where it appeared to be solely associated with passengers with a β -helix structure, this study will provide information

supporting the idea that the AC structure could be used as a potential epitope target and/or for the development of new treatments.

Identification of the autochaperone domain in the Type Va secretion system (T5aSS): A prevalent feature of autotransporters with a β -helical passenger

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Identification of the Autochaperone Domain in the Type Va Secretion System (T5aSS): Prevalent Feature of Autotransporters with a β -Helical Passenger

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Autotransporters (ATs) belong to a family of modular proteins secreted by the Type V, subtype a, secretion system (T5aSS) and considered as an important source of virulence factors in lipopolysaccharidic diderm bacteria (archetypical Gram-negative bacteria). While exported by the Sec pathway, the ATs are further secreted across the outer membrane via their own C-terminal translocator forming a β -barrel, through which the rest of the protein, namely the passenger, can pass. In several ATs, an autochaperone domain (AC) present at the C-terminal region of the passenger and upstream of the translocator was demonstrated as strictly required for proper secretion and folding. However, considering it was functionally characterised and identified only in a handful of ATs, wariness recently falls on the commonality and conservation of this structural element in the T5aSS. To circumvent the issue of sequence divergence and taking advantage of the resolved three-dimensional structure of some ACs, identification of this domain was performed following structural alignment among all AT passengers experimentally resolved by crystallography before searching in a dataset of 1523 ATs. While demonstrating that the AC is indeed a conserved structure found in numerous ATs, phylogenetic analysis further revealed a distribution into deeply rooted branches, from which emerge 20 main clusters. Sequence analysis revealed that an AC could be identified in the large majority of SAATs (self-associating ATs) but not in any LEATs (lipase/esterase ATs) nor in some PATs (protease autotransporters) and PHATs (phosphatase/hydrolase ATs). Structural analysis indicated that an AC was present in passengers exhibiting single-stranded right-handed parallel β -helix, whatever the type of

β -solenoid, but not with α -helical globular fold. From this investigation, the AC of type 1 appears as a prevalent and conserved structural element exclusively associated to β -helical AT passenger and should promote further studies about the protein secretion and folding via the T5aSS, especially toward α -helical AT passengers.

Keywords: protein secretion system, Autotransporters, Type V secretion system, Outer membrane proteins, Protein translocation, Autochaperone domain, diderm-LPS Gram-negative bacteria

INTRODUCTION

Bacteria can secrete proteins by numerous molecular machineries. In this field, it is of key importance to differentiate export (protein transport across the cytoplasmic membrane) from secretion (protein transport from inside to outside the cell) systems (Desvaux et al., 2004b; Economou et al., 2006), especially in lipopolysaccharidic diderm (LPS-diderm) bacteria (archetypical Gram-negative bacteria) (Desvaux et al., 2009; Sutcliffe, 2010; Chagnot et al., 2013). While Sec (Secretion) and Tat (Twin-arginine translocation) systems constitute the two major export pathways, nine protein secretion systems numbered from Type I to Type IX (T1SS-T9SS) are currently recognised in the LPS-diderm bacteria, which enable protein transport across the outer most biological membrane. Among them, the T5SS most certainly secrete the most diverse range of effectors, thus constituting a premium source of virulence factors (Henderson and Desvaux, 2004; Henderson et al., 2004). The T5SS is currently subdivided into the (i) autotransporters (T5aSS), (ii) two-partner passenger-translocators (T5bSS), (iii) trimeric autotransporters (T5cSS), (iv) hybrid autotransporters (T5dSS), and (v) inverted autotransporters (T5eSS) (Desvaux et al., 2003; Leo et al., 2012).

The T5SS can be broadly defined as protein transport across the asymmetric LPS-containing outer membrane (OM) *via* a β -barrel to complete the secretion, which is first initiated by protein export *via* the Sec machinery for cytoplasmic inner membrane (IM) transit (Henderson et al., 2004; Leo et al., 2012). Nonetheless, several periplasmic chaperones, the BAM (β -barrel assembly machinery) and TAM (translocation and assembly module) complexes take part to the OM secretion process (Leyton et al., 2012; Selkrig et al., 2012). Regarding the T5aSS, the autotransporters (ATs) have a modular architecture constituted of three major regions, (i) a N-terminal signal peptide (SP), (ii) a central passenger, and (iii) a C-terminal translocator (Desvaux et al., 2004a; Drobnak et al., 2015). The SP targets the proteins to the IM before being cleaved off after export *via* Sec. Some autotransporter SPs exhibit a highly conserved domain called ESPR (Extended Signal Peptide Region) (Desvaux et al., 2006), which influence IM and OM translocation but whose exact function remains unclear (Desvaux et al., 2007; Jong and Luirink, 2008). The passenger is secreted across the OM and corresponds to the effector, which is either displayed at the bacterial cell surface or further released into the extracellular milieu. The passengers are generally believed to exhibit a β -helical structure (Jenkins et al., 1998; Kajava and Steven, 2006) but this is not systematic, e.g. EstA (Esterase Autotransporter)

has a globular fold dominated by α -helices and loops, which is regarded as a general feature in the lipase/esterase ATs (LEATs) (Van Den Berg, 2010; Celik et al., 2012). In the β -helical passenger of ATs, different types of a β -solenoid motif are currently recognised as either displaying a triangular or L-shape coil cross-sections (Kajava and Steven, 2006). The translocator forms the translocation unit (TU) composed of an α -helical linker and a β -barrel domain, through which the passenger is transported across the OM (Oomen et al., 2004).

The investigation of secretion and folding of BrkA (*Bordetella* resistance to killing) evidenced the importance of an autochaperone (AC) domain localised at the C-terminal region of the passenger was evidenced (Oliver et al., 2003). Besides BrkA, requirement of the AC for proper passenger secretion and cell-surface folding was supported by several investigations in AIDA-I (*Escherichia coli* Adhesin Involved in Diffuse Adherence I) (Berthiaume et al., 2007), EspP (Extracellular serine protease precursor) (Velarde and Nataro, 2004), Hbp (Hemoglobin-binding protease) (Soprová et al., 2010), IcsA (Intra-cellular spread protein A) (May and Morona, 2008), Pet (Plamid-encoded toxin) (Dutta et al., 2003) and Ssp (*Serratia marcescens* serine protease) (Ohnishi et al., 1994). When mutated, secretion of BrkA could be rescued with the AC supplied in *trans* (Oliver et al., 2003), which was also demonstrated in Ssp (Ohnishi et al., 1994), EspP and Pet (Dutta et al., 2003). This suggested that the AC provides a template-induced folding mechanism for the passenger. More recently, the crystal structure of the AC of IcsA was resolved and this clearly appeared to exhibit a characteristic β -sandwich fold (Kuhnel and Diezmann, 2011). However, considering it was functionally characterised and identified only in a handful of autotransporters, suspicion recently fell on the commonality and conserved nature of the AC as a sequence element (Drobnak et al., 2015). Still, the identification of this domain could be limited by classical BLAST search due to sequence divergence (Altschul and Koonin, 1998).

This prompted us to investigate the prevalence of the AC in the T5aSS. Taking advantage of the resolved three-dimensional structure of the AC from IcsA, this domain was searched by structural alignment, first, among all passengers experimentally resolved by crystallography, before searching against a database of well-defined and genuine ATs. From there, phylogenetic analysis revealed the organisation of the AC family, whereas proteogenomic analysis pinpointed that the AC was systemically associated with passengers exhibiting a β -helix fold but not a globular fold like EstA. Taken together, the AC appears as a conserved domain exclusively present in ATs with a β -helical passenger.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Structural Alignment

Superimposition of one structure against another was performed using PyMOL v1.7.4. The atomic coordinates and structure information of the proteins of interest were recovered from the Protein Data Bank (PDB) (Berman et al., 2000a,b). The structures were aligned to minimize the RMSD (Root Mean Square Deviation) between the aligned atoms (C-alfas). For multiple sequence alignment, a special mode of T-Coffee (Notredame et al., 2000; Di Tommaso et al., 2011; Magis et al., 2014) was used to incorporate structural information, i.e. Expresso (Armougom et al., 2006), which is an extension of 3D-Coffee where structure based alignment is used as a template for realigning the original sequences, which results in a structure-based multiple sequence alignment (O'sullivan et al., 2004). The alignment was then visualised with ENDscript, which combines both primary sequence and secondary structure alignment (Gouet et al., 2003; Robert and Gouet, 2014).

Search for Domain Homologs

The AC domains were also identified in autotransporters by submitting passenger sequences to Phyre v2.0 for automated modeling. The dataset included the 1523 well-defined and genuine autotransporters identified by the twin-HMM autotransporter procedure designed by Celik et al. (2012). In parallel, using the refined AC structures here defined from structural alignments of IcsA, EspP, Hbp, Pet, pertactin P69, Hap, and IgA1 (PDB files provided as Supplementary Materials), the presence of the AC in other autotransporters was searched using Phyre in reverse, i.e., BackPhyre (Kelley and Sternberg, 2009; Kelley et al., 2015). To achieve a high degree of reliability with respect to the predicted domain fold and modeling of the protein core at high accuracy ($<4 \text{ \AA}$ RMSD from native, true structure), only structural matches with a high level of confidence ($>90\%$) were considered.

Phylogenetic Analysis of Protein Sequences

The ACs identified by structural alignment with Phyre/BackPhyre were aligned with T-Coffee in the expresso mode, using PDB files restricted to the AC domains of IcsA (PDB: 3ML3; D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀), EspP (PDB: 3SZE; D₈₆₉-I₉₇₉), Hbp (PDB: 1WXR; N₉₄₈-L₁₀₅₆), Pet (PDB: 4OM9; N₈₆₅-I₉₇₄), P69 (PDB: 1DAB; D₄₄₄-L₅₅₆), Hap (PDB: 3SYJ; D₈₃₀-L₉₆₄), and IgA1 (PDB: 3H09; D₈₆₅-L₉₇₇) to seed the alignment. A BioNJ tree (Gascuel, 1997) based on observed divergences between pairs of sequences was obtained using SplitsTree (Klopper and Huson, 2008). The most relevant clusters, i.e., monophyletic groups or clades, were identified and selected based on splits showing bootstrap values above 80% over 1,000 pseudo-replicates.

Identification of Functional Motifs and Secondary Structures

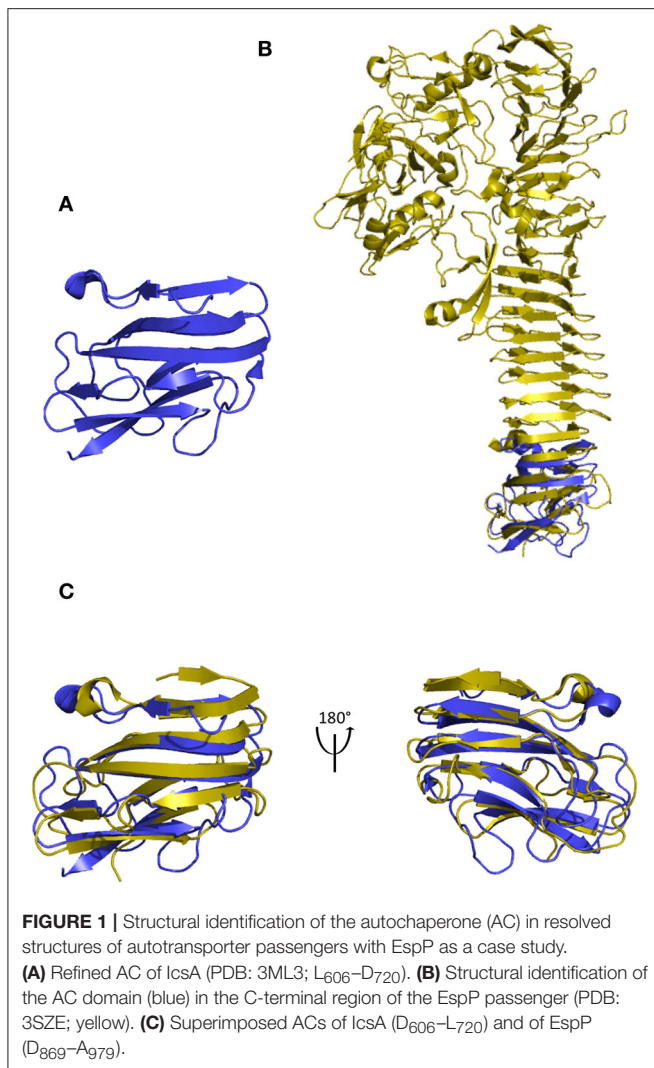
Functional motifs were searched using InterProScan v5.22 (Jones et al., 2014) and interrogating InterPro (IPR) v61.0 database (Finn et al., 2017), which includes CATH-Gene3D v4.1 (Sillitoe

et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2016), CDD (Marchler-Bauer et al., 2017), MobiDB v2.3.2014.07 (Potenza et al., 2015), HAMAP (Pedruzzi et al., 2015), PANTHER v11.1 (Mi et al., 2017), Pfam v30.0 (Finn et al., 2016), PIRSF (Wu et al., 2004), PRINTS (Attwood et al., 2003), ProDom v2012.1 (Servant et al., 2002), PROSITE v2017.01 (Sigrist et al., 2013), SFLD (Akiva et al., 2014), SMART v7.0 (Schultz et al., 1998), SUPERFAMILY v1.75 (Wilson et al., 2009), TIGRFAMs v15.0 (Haft et al., 2003). Besides structure modeling using Phyre v2, β -helix folds were predicted with BetaWrap, using rung profile (3–7 rungs) (Bradley et al., 2001), as well as PfScan to identify the types of β -solenoid motif (Kajava and Steven, 2006).

RESULTS

Identification of the Autochaperone Domain in Autotransporter Passengers with a Resolved Three-Dimensional Structure

While the autochaperone (AC) was experimentally identified in BrkA, AIDA-I, EspP, Hbp, Pet, and Ssp, neither the structure of the passenger of BrkA, AIDA-I nor Ssp has been experimentally resolved by crystallography, or by any other mean, contrary to EspP (PDB: 3SZE) (Khan et al., 2011), Hbp (PDB: 1WXR) (Otto et al., 2005), and Pet (PDB: 4OM9) (Domingo Meza-Aguilar et al., 2014) passengers. Using the structure of the AC of IcsA as reference (AC^{IcsA}; PDB: 3ML3) (Kuhnel and Diezmann, 2011), identification of the AC in the C-terminal part of EspP, Hbp, and Pet was first attempted. While the resolution of the secondary structure of Pet was low in the C-terminal region of the passenger (PDB: 4OM9) and the RMSD was slightly high for Hbp when superimposed to AC^{IcsA} (RMSD $>4 \text{ \AA}$ over 54 atoms), the 3D-structure of the C-terminal part of EspP (D₈₆₉-I₉₇₉) superimposed onto residues D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀ of IcsA (**Figure 1**) with RMSD of 2.51 \AA over 43 atoms (**Table 1**). The structural region here identified as the AC^{EspP} completely agrees with previous experimental investigations by functional mutagenesis where the AC was identified within the 821–997 region of EspP (Dutta et al., 2003; Velarde and Nataro, 2004; Skillman et al., 2005; Brockmeyer et al., 2009). Similarly, AC^{Pet} (N₈₆₅-I₉₇₄) was here identified within the 819–992 region of Pet, functionally characterised as an autochaperone (Dutta et al., 2003) and within the 950–1,048 region for the AC^{Hbp} (N₉₄₈-L₁₀₅₆) (Sopova et al., 2010). Using the AC^{IcsA} structure (D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀), this domain was structurally aligned within the C-terminal region of all other crystallised autotransporter passengers, namely pertactin P69 (PDB: 1DAB), Hap (PDB: 3SYJ), IgA1 (PDB: 3H09), EstA (PDB: 3KVN), Ag43 (PDB: 4KH3), and VacA (PDB: 2QV3). Except for EstA, Ag43, and VacA, an AC could be identified in all other resolved AT passengers. Following structure alignment, the RMSD varied between 1.51 \AA for AC^{IcsA} vs. AC^{P69} and 3.40 \AA for AC^{IcsA} vs. AC^{IgA1} (**Table 1**). Once identified in each passenger, these AC domains were further structurally aligned one with another and appeared to superimpose with RMSD ranging from 0.44 to 2.97 \AA for AC^{Hbp} vs. AC^{EspP} and for AC^{P69} vs. AC^{Pet} respectively (**Table 1**). Of note, the AC^{Hbp} superimposed to the



AC of these other ATs with RMSD systematically lower than 2 Å (**Table 1**). With a size ranging from 109 to 135 amino acid (a.a.) residues, the AC domains displayed a conserved structure forming coils of parallel and anti-parallel β -sheets and a couple of short α -helices (**Figure 2A**). For IgA1 and Pet, however, the resolution of the structure in this region was not high enough to provide information on the secondary structures. Sequence similarities of the identified AC were further confirmed following multiple sequence alignment incorporating structural information, where regions with β -strands or α -helices aligned one another in the different ACs (**Figure 2B**).

Distribution of the Autochaperone among the T5aSS

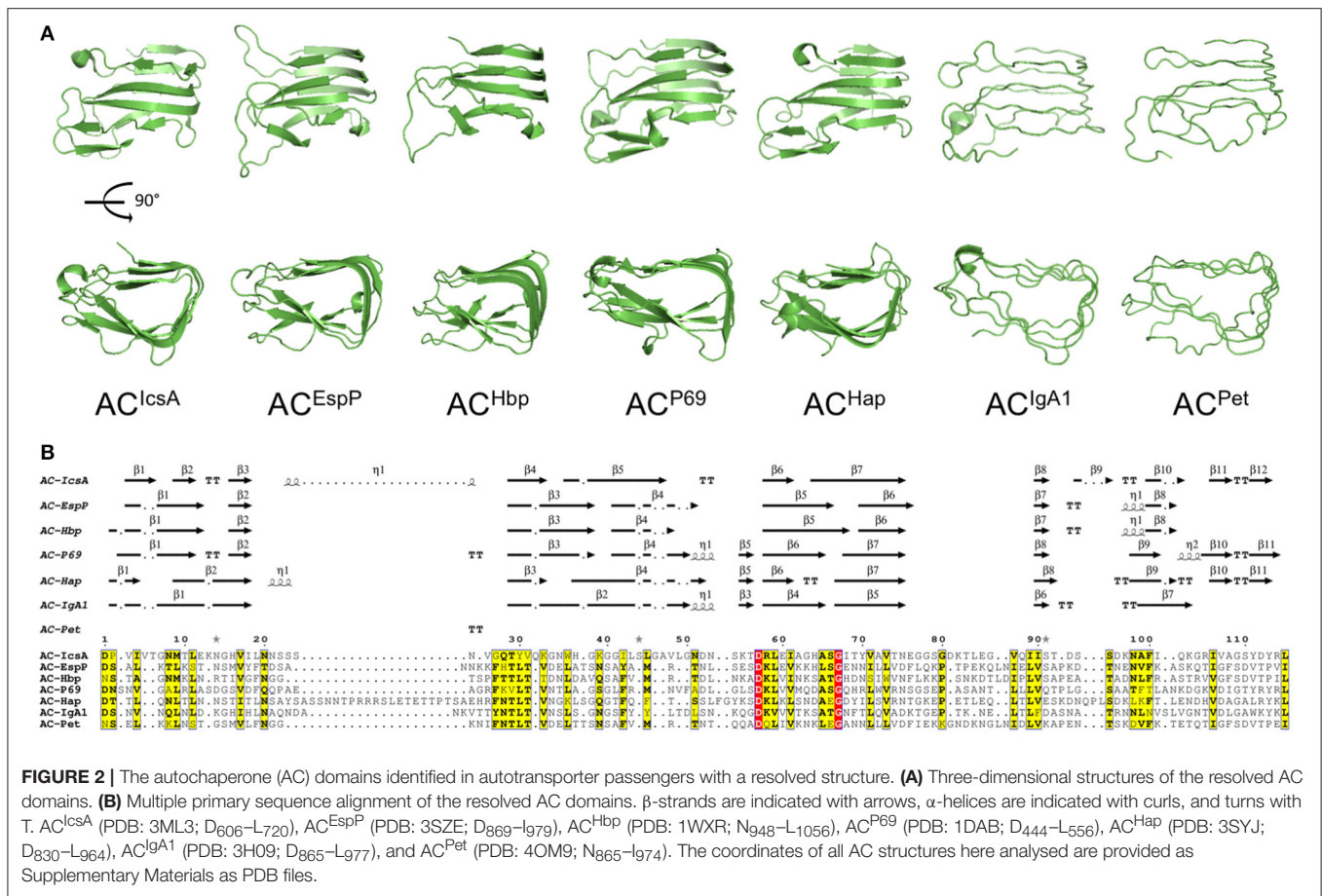
To determine whether similar AC structures are present in other autotransporters, the well-defined ACs here identified from solved tertiary structures of passengers, namely AC^{IcsA} (D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀), AC^{EspP} (D₈₆₉-I₉₇₉), AC^{Hbp} (N₉₄₈-L₁₀₅₆), AC^{P69} (D₄₄₄-L₅₅₆), and AC^{Hap} (D₈₃₀-L₉₆₄), were used as queries to search for similar structures using BackPhyre. In parallel, the

TABLE 1 | RMSD values of superimposed AC domains present in the experimentally resolved autotransporters three-dimensional structures.

RMSD ^a	AC ^{EspP}	AC ^{Hbp}	AC ^{P69}	AC ^{Hap}	AC ^{IgA1}	AC ^{Pet}
AC ^{IcsA}	2.51 (43)	6.10 (67)	2.69 (59)	1.88 (81)	3.39 (74)	3.97 (97)
AC ^{Pet}	1.14 (83)	1.42 (70)	2.97 (33)	1.71 (54)	2.05 (54)	–
AC ^{IgA1}	2.48 (72)	1.11 (48)	2.02 (74)	0.54 (66)	–	–
AC ^{Hap}	2.18 (62)	1.27 (55)	0.89 (69)	–	–	–
AC ^{P69}	2.84 (69)	1.31 (54)	–	–	–	–
AC ^{Hbp}	0.44 (94)	–	–	–	–	–

^aRMSD (Root Mean Square Deviation) values (Å) with the number of superimposed atoms (in brackets) for each AC domains superimposed one with another and identified from the known three-dimensional structures of autotransporters IcsA (PDB: 3ML3; AC: D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀), EspP (PDB: 3SZE; AC: D₈₆₉-I₉₇₉), Hbp (PDB: 1WXR; AC: N₉₄₈-L₁₀₅₆), Pet (PDB: 4OM9; AC: N₈₆₅-I₉₇₄), pertactin P69 (PDB: 1DAB; AC: D₄₄₄-L₅₅₆), Hap (PDB: 3SYJ; AC: D₈₃₀-L₉₆₄), and IgA1 (PDB: 3H09; AC: D₈₆₅-L₉₇₇).

AC domains were also identified by submitting the sequences corresponding to the passenger domain to Phyre for automated modeling. For data mining, the dataset was constituted of the well-defined and genuine ATs identified by Celik et al. (2012). Out of these 1523 sequences of autotransporters, an AC could be identified in 708 of them with confidence levels higher than 90.0%, which corresponded to 429 non-redundant and distinct sequences (Supplementary Material Table 1S). These AC domains have an average size of about 110 a.a. residues (median = 112 and mode = 115 a.a.) and were essentially present toward the C-terminal region of the passengers, adjacent to the translocator region at an average distance of about 100 a.a. residues upstream (median = 84 and mode = 67 a.a.). With respect to the ATs for which an AC was experimental identified but no structural information was available, an AC could indeed be identified in the C-terminal region of the BrkA and AIDA-I passengers but not Ssp. Regarding ATs for which the passenger structure was resolved but an AC domain could not be identified in the first instance, an AC was finally identified in the C-terminal part of the Ag43 passenger (position 525-638), i.e., a region that has not been crystallised (Heras et al., 2014), but this was not the case either for EstA or for VacA. Following multiple sequence alignment incorporating structural information, phylogenetic analysis revealed that the AC domains distribute into deeply rooted branches, from which 20 main clusters emerged (named according to cyrillic alphabet with phonetics in brackets), namely A [a], B [b], B [v], Γ [g], Δ [d], E [je], \mathcal{K} [z], \mathcal{Z} [z], \mathcal{I} [i], \mathcal{Y} [j], K [k], \mathcal{L} [l], M [m], H [n], O [o], \mathcal{P} [p], P [r], C [s], T [t], and \mathcal{Y} [u] (**Figure 3**), where clusters A and B form the largest groups hosting some autotransporter members of Iba (Inducible *Bartonella* autotransporter) (Eicher and Dehio, 2012) and AutA (Auto-transporter A) groups respectively (Ait-Tahar et al., 2000). Clusters Γ , Δ , \mathcal{Z} , \mathcal{I} , \mathcal{Y} , K, \mathcal{L} , O, C, and \mathcal{Y} harbor ACs from autotransporters that have not been characterised yet. The resolved AC domains from IcsA, EspP, Pet, or pertactin P69 were not found in clusters but in deeply rooted branches, whereas the ACs from Hbp, IgA1, and Hap were part of clusters M, P, and T respectively (**Figure 3**). Considering other characterised autotransporters, clusters B, E, \mathcal{K} , H, and \mathcal{P} harbor ACs from EhaC, Ag43, AIDA-I, EhaD, and YcgV autotransporter members



(Vo et al., 2017), whereas the ACs from BrkA and Pet were found in deeply rooted branches.

The AC Is Exclusively Associated with Autotransporters Exhibiting β -Helical Passengers

Looking for a correlation with the presence of the AC, functional genomic analysis of the ATs was performed (Supplementary Material Table 1S). First, an ESPR (IPR024973) could be predicted in the SP region of 134 ATs; in 84% of these an AC was also identified. Based on the functional motifs identified in the passengers, the ATs could be further classified into 6 main and distinct functional categories, *i.e.* the (i) protease autotransporters (PATs), (ii) self-associating autotransporters (SAATs), (iii) phosphatase/hydrolase autotransporters (PHATs), (iv) lipase/esterase autotransporters (LEATs), (v) vacuolating autotransporters (VATs), and (vi) autotransporters of unknown function. The PATs, like Pet, Ssp, or EspP, could belong to different peptidase families, essentially the (i) serine peptidases S1 (IPR001314), S6 (IPR000710) or S8/S53 (IPR000209), (ii) cysteine peptidase C1 (IPR025660), or (iv) metallopeptidases M10 (IPR011049) or M28 (IPR007484). SAATs systematically feature an adhesion domain of ATs (IPR030930) like AIDA or Ag43. PHATs mainly belong

to either the (i) phosphatidic phosphatase (IPR000326), (ii) tyrosine phosphatase (IPR029021), or (iii) glycoside hydrolase (IPR002772) family. LEATs, like EstA, possess GSDL lipase/esterase (IPR001087) and/or SGNH esterase (IPR013830) domains. Like VacA, the VATs systematically exhibit a vacuolating cytotoxin domain (IPR004311). The most striking observation was that no AC could be identified in any of the LEATs or VATs, whereas it was identified in the large majority of the SAATs (83%). Among the PATs and PHATs, an AC was present or absent from some functional subcategories, *e.g.* the M28 metalloproteases or the tyrosine phosphatases. Regarding the ATs for which no function could be inferred, homology to pectin lyase fold (IPR011050), pertactin P69 (IPR004899; IPR003991) and/or P22 tailspike protein (IPR012332) was predicted in the passengers. These regions correspond to β -helix topologies as encountered in most ATs (Jenkins et al., 1998), including the SAATs. Interestingly, all passengers belonging to the LEATs, as well as to the M28 metalloprotease or the tyrosine phosphatase ATs, exhibit α -helical folds for which no AC could be identified. Of note, the passenger of Ssp was predicted to essentially display only α -helices, like EstA, for which no AC structure could be identified either (Figure 4). Following structural modeling of the passengers, it appeared that the AC is systematically associated with passenger exhibiting β -helix folds, *e.g.* as observed in the passengers with a resolved structure, namely Ag43, EspP,

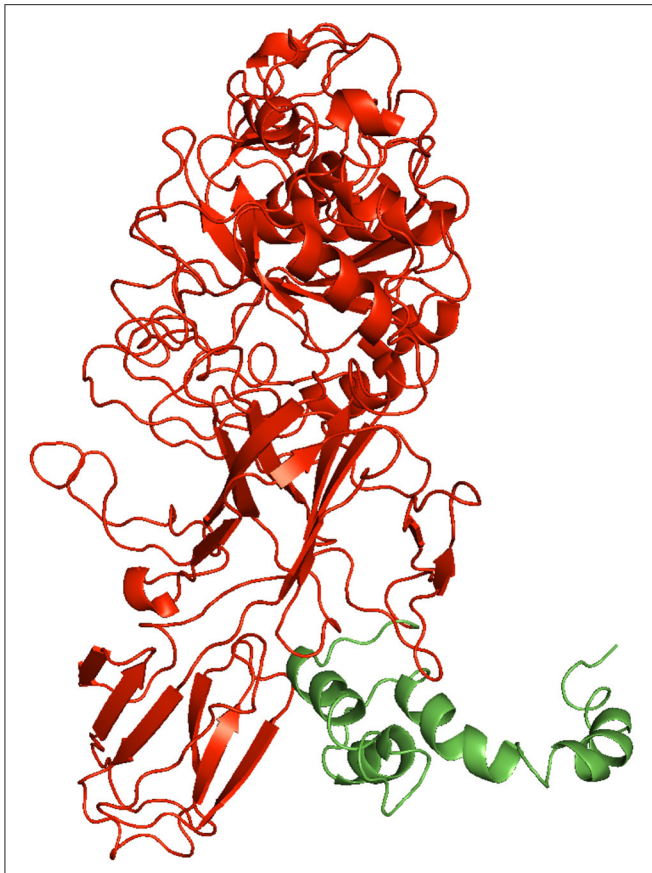


FIGURE 4 | Three-dimensional structure modeling of the passenger of Ssp. The passenger sequence of Ssp (A₂₈–G₇₁₆) was submitted as query to Phyre using intensive mode. The structure model covers the 37–601 region (72% coverage of the query sequence) with a confidence level of 100.0% with the single highest scoring template (Subtilase family, PDB: 1R6V). The green and red colors depict the regions corresponding to the AC domain and functional domain of the passenger respectively. The structure of the AC domain was essentially modeled *ab initio* and must be regarded as unreliable. The coordinates of the Ssp passenger model are provided as Supplementary Material as a PDB file.

β -solenoids previously reported as specific to AT passengers, some coils originally considered as specific to the T5bSS, i.e., the TPS (two-partner system), were also identified and encountered in association with an AC, namely the L2, T1, and T8 coils. Rather than being associated to some specific functions, the AC thus appears exclusively associated with β -helical passengers.

DISCUSSION

While the function of the AC for proper passenger secretion and folding on the cell-surface has been well demonstrated in several ATs, its commonality in the T5aSS was recently questioned. This ambiguity partly results from the difficulty in identifying the AC in uncharacterised ATs following similarity search by sequence alignment. Following a structural approach, the AC domain was here identified, first in other ATs whose passenger structure was

resolved and subsequently in ATs from a recognised reference dataset (Celik et al., 2012). It must be stressed that the prediction was based on similarity of the ACs, including functionally characterised ACs, namely EspP (Velarde and Nataro, 2004), Hbp (Soprová et al., 2010), IcsA (May and Morona, 2008), and Pet (Dutta et al., 2003). It further provides the proof-of-principle that a predicted AC can indeed be functional since the AC structure was here identified in BrkA and AIDA-I, which AC domains were functionally demonstrated but not structurally resolved (Oliver et al., 2003; Berthiaume et al., 2007). It is worth mentioning that some other regions in the C-terminal half of the β -helical passengers could contribute to folding and secretion (Drobnak et al., 2015); They might function in conjunction with the AC of ATs that have them. Nevertheless and contrary to what previously believed (Drobnak et al., 2015), this investigation clearly demonstrates that the AC corresponds to a conserved structural element present in the passenger of numerous, but not all, ATs. Besides, the AC appeared to be systematically and exclusively associated to passengers exhibiting single-stranded right-handed parallel β -helix, whenever the coils belong to the L1, L2, L3, T1, T4, T5, T6, or T8-type β -solenoids. The C-terminal region of the passenger, encompassing the AC, is involved in the initiation of folding of the passenger and prevent its unfolding once formed (Junker et al., 2006; Soprová et al., 2010; Renn et al., 2012; Baclayon et al., 2016). In Hbp, the stacking of aromatic residues was found to be important for its folding and stability (Baclayon et al., 2016). Considering the current proposed model mechanism, where the AC provides the first β -helical rung to promote folding of the passenger at the cell surface after emerging from the translocator, it makes sense that the AC is prevalent and even restricted to passenger with a β -helical architecture. A priori, it is almost impossible to predict the chirality of a β -helical structure since both right- and left-handed β -helices can be expected (Kajava et al., 2001). Because it triggers the right-handed arrangement, the presence of an AC domain unambiguously indicates that the upstream region has a right-handed β -helix. While the AC is generally located at the vicinity of the translocator, it is not always the case as already reported in IgA1, where it is present at another C-terminus part of the passenger that results from post-secretory processing (Oliver et al., 2003). This observation applies to all ACs identified in cluster P, which regroup members of the IgA1 AT family. While we found additional ACs at a significant distance from the translocator (Table 1S), more thorough investigations are needed to demonstrate whether they are subjected to similar processing.

While all ACs were found exclusively associated to β -helical passengers, not all passengers with a β -helix fold seem to possess an AC. Unexpectedly, an AC domain was not identified in any of the VATs, which are still predicted to have a single-stranded right-handed parallel β -helix just like in VacA (Gangwer et al., 2007). This suggests that either an AC with a different fold is present in the VATs and could not be identified by our approach or the secretion and folding of VacA-like ATs do not require any kind of AC. Thus, although the co-existence of β -helical domain and AC has generally been assumed in ATs, this work provides for the first time evidence that this relationship is not always straightforward.

Interestingly, no AC could be identified in the AT passengers predicted to have an EstA like globular fold, dominated by α -helices and loops (Van Den Berg, 2010). Unexpectedly, the Ssp passenger was predicted with a high confidence level (100.0%) to display some α -helical folds where no AC structure could be identified (Figure 4). Actually, it is in this AT that a region with an intramolecular chaperone function was for the first time reported (Ohnishi et al., 1994). Interestingly, the region corresponding to the AC domain displayed an α -fold and not a β -fold like for the AC presently identified. While the secondary structures in α -helices are predicted with a high confidence level in the S₆₄₆–G₇₁₆ region reported as a functional AC (Ohnishi and Horinouchi, 1996), it must be stressed the tertiary structure of this region is essentially modeled *ab initio* and is unreliable; Intensive structural modeling was undertaken but failed to provide any significant tertiary structure prediction for this AC domain in Ssp. With no crystallographic data available, the structural nature of this region remains unknown but clearly differs from that of the ACs here reported. Besides stressing the need to experimentally resolve the three-dimensional structure of the AC^{Ssp}, this result pinpoints the need to experimentally determine the fold of passengers with architectures alternative to the single-stranded right-handed parallel β -helix. So far, EstA is the only AT with an α -helical passenger, which structure has been experimentally resolved (Van Den Berg, 2010). Besides the LEATs, however, such α -helical fold would occur in some PHATs and PATs (e.g. Ssp) as well. With such a gap of knowledge, we can only hypothesize on the possibility to have an alternative AC of type 2 (AC-2) with an α -fold associated to α -helical passenger as suggested by the investigation in Ssp; this would make the pair with the AC of type 1 (AC-1) presently investigated, which has a β -fold and is associated to β -helical passenger. Beyond the mechanistic aspects of the T5aSS, such information about the importance of these AC-1 and AC-2 in secretion and folding of the passenger is of great importance for biotechnological applications, e.g. aiming at efficiently expressing heterologous

proteins for cell-surface display via the T5aSS (Van Ulsen et al., 2014; Nicolay et al., 2015), or for biomedical applications, e.g. aiming at blocking the AT secretion or folding to mitigate the virulence levels of pathogenic bacteria (Bondarenko et al., 2002; Wells et al., 2007).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MR-L, MZ, and MD conceived and designed the experiments. MR-L, MZ, LK, XB, and AK performed the experiments and data acquisition. MR-L, MZ, LK, XB, AK, IH, FP, MP, RR, and MD analysed and interpreted the data. MR-L, LK, XB, AK, FP, MP, RR, and MD contributed to materials and analysis tools. MR-L, MZ, LK, XB, AK, IH, FP, MP, RR, and MD wrote the article, including drafting and revising critically the manuscript for important intellectual content.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmicb.2017.02607/full#supplementary-material>

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Conclusions and Perspectives

Conclusions and Perspectives

By implementing the reverse vaccinology approach to the EHEC O157:H7 genome, combined with the GMMA delivery system, we have identified new potential vaccine candidates. *In silico* analysis of an EHEC genome prototype allowed us to go beyond known antigens, as LEE genes, hitherto employed in vaccine development for EHEC. What is more, gene variability and distribution analysis allow us to select prevalent vaccine candidates not only in EHEC, but also in other pathotypes as EPEC. In particular, immunization with MC001 using the GMMA delivery system reduced intestinal EHEC O157:H7 colonization and lowered bacterial count in feces, colon and cecum in mice. MC001 was found to be homologous to the *Salmonella* Typhimurium lipid A deacylase enzyme (LpxR) and to our knowledge this study is the first to describe it as vaccine candidate.

Reverse vaccinology has become a useful tool in vaccine discovery and development by reducing the time needed to find new antigens. Whole genome analysis, like the prediction of the functions and subcellular localizations of coding DNA sequences, is the core of reverse vaccinology. During this work, we performed in-depth bioinformatic analysis of protein features and domains. However, for some of them we were not able to predict specific features that would let us classify them as potential antigens (*i.e.* exporter or secreted proteins). Furthermore, errors in the genome annotations lead to the exclusion of other potential antigens. Following on from this study, it will be of great interest to analyze further the properties of the 24 selected antigens. In our findings, we selected some proteins that are still unknown or whose properties are not fully elucidated, so there is a need for extensive functional characterization and elucidation of their role in pathogenesis. In addition to all the above considerations, the inclusion of RNA-seq data provided supplementary information about the expression of antigens in certain conditions. Recently, with reverse vaccinology 2.0 (Rappuoli et al., 2016), the new findings of protective human antibody features, such as structure and epitopes, are refining the discovery of new vaccines. Furthermore, the inclusion of other data from omics approaches such as proteomics, and transcriptomics data, will help to target new antigens at the right moment of protein expression. Likewise, for vaccine development, the immune properties of the 21 prospective antigens identified in this work remain to be studied, using *in vitro* and *in vivo* models.

Further studies are required to improve antigen production and expression and more specifically for vaccine development purposes. It is well known that a protein used as a vaccine

must be presented as in its native form showing suitable epitopes in order to trigger a specific immune response against these antigens. Antigens purified as soluble recombinant proteins will help production of native forms of the antigens in question. During this work, some of the antigens selected, including MC001, were purified as insoluble proteins, even after standardizing expression and purification. Moreover, it has been shown that additional technologies can facilitate appropriate delivery of antigens. For this reason, and as shown in previous studies, combining insoluble antigens with the GMMA system (as MC001) is one of the main goals in improving epitope presentation.

Specific questions about MC001 need to be resolved, as, for example, whether the effect of GMMA-MC001 is directly attributed to the MC001/LpxR protein or whether it is attributed to the possible changes this protein can make to LPS, because of its deacylase properties. Moreover, the characterization of MC001/LpxR in EHEC will be required to elucidate its role in the pathogenesis of these bacteria. Such analyses can include deacylation studies of LPS, to uncover how it affects EHEC virulence or symbiosis in the host and whether it is capable of regulating the immune response like their homologues in *H. pylori*. Furthermore, it will be necessary to gain more insight into how the immune response can be triggered by a vaccine, by testing different routes of immunization that could enhance the immune response and protection. Vaccine preparation will also require studies of large-scale production and formulation, including different adjuvants to identify the best for further vaccine testing in human subjects. We have tested standard laboratory conditions of expression that can be the basis for further process development and also for standard formulation procedures currently used for human vaccination.

We found that MC001 afforded protection when delivered by GMMA, and more studies are needed to characterize in detail the other promising antigens tested in this study (MC007 and MC020). It is known that autotransporters, like MC020, are able to trigger the immune response and work well as vaccine candidates. Our results showed that MC020 raised specific IgG antibodies, but did not confer immune protection after challenge with EHEC. For these reasons, new studies on this antigen, such as modifying its expression or engineering its different forms, could lead to increased protection against EHEC colonization.

Reverse vaccinology targets exposed antigens, such as outer membrane or exported proteins. A clear example of such proteins are the autotransporters, which are widely employed in vaccine development for other InPEC, as ETEC. The aim of the second part of this thesis was to analyze these structures, mainly to reveal the conformation and exposure of prospective epitopes, so as to shed light on the immunological trigger response and protection against the

pathogens expressing these structures. Autochaperones, associated with numerous β -helical passengers, are important for the folding and secretion of autotransporters, and so are a good target for different applications. For the biotechnological applications, AC can be used for the efficient expression of heterologous proteins for cell surface display via T5aSS. For biomedical applications, AC can be used to block AT secretion, therefore reducing the virulence of pathogenic bacteria. AC could be used as prospective target epitopes for vaccine development. Moreover, the GMMA system has also proven suitable for delivery of outer membrane antigens and if, for instance, autochaperones play an important role in the assembly of autotransporters, it will be very interesting to target the autochaperones combined with the GMMA system, so they can be presented in natural conditions that mimic those present in the bacteria during infection, thereby improving protection.

This thesis has gone into some detail about the use of the GMMA system to improve vaccines. Forthcoming tasks include characterization of the GMMA system for InPEC vaccines. There is a need to characterize the proteome of outer membrane vesicles from both GMMA and NOMV, and particularly to investigate NOMV from EHEC, work that has already been initiated by other research groups. For instance, information on the role of NOMV in biofilm formation, attachment, or evasion of the immune response, among other features of bacterial pathogenesis (Kulp *et al.*, 2010; Schwechheimer *et al.*, 2015), and on the proteins involved in these processes might also be used in the search for new vaccines.

As a corollary, the highly genomic plasticity of *E. coli* is also one of the hurdles to be overcome in developing an effective treatment against the diseases caused by this bacterium. *E. coli* strains share a highly conserved common core genome, while the encoding genes related to diverse pathogenic functions involved in infection, disease development, and host-pathogen interaction vary among pathotypes. So, a universal vaccine candidate has not yet been identified. The inclusion of a combination of antigens might cover infections caused not only by EHEC, but by other InPEC too.

Efforts to prevent diarrheagenic diseases produced by intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* should be strengthened, not only for the most common InPEC, as EHEC or ETEC, but also for other pathotypes that are becoming relevant to public health. Treatments and preventive interventions should target non-O157 EHEC serotypes, and other InPEC pathotypes, as EPEC, DAEC, EIEC, and EAEC, for which vaccine development and discovery studies are scarce or nonexistent (Bouzari *et al.*, 2010). Besides the canonical serotype O157:H7, EHEC infections and associated diseases can be related to 6 other STEC serotypes, O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H11, O111, O121:H19, O145. Nowadays, it has been proposed that multidisciplinary research,

collaborations, and partnerships should integrate the One Health concept, as done in Latin America in recent years (Torres, 2017). In particular, this concept states that human health is connected to the relationship between the environment, animals, and human beings. For this reason, research should be extended to animal pathogenic strains. Examples of this are *E. coli* research studies in animal reservoirs (Etcheverría *et al.*, 2016). Overall, the battle against InPEC infections is ongoing and the perspectives for vaccine development need a multidisciplinary approach to make advances in treatment and prevention. Additional efforts, not only in biomedical or basic research, but also in the clinical, veterinarian, and public health fields, will be required to shed light on disease proliferation in different settings and to design new preventive strategies (CDC). The data generated by such studies will be important for the development of new preventive leads as vaccines against this relevant human and animal pathogen.

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First Part

Chapter 1

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Chapter 2

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Annexes

Annexe 1

Intestinal pathogenic *Escherichia coli*: insights for vaccines development

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ABSTRACT

Diarrheal diseases are one of the major causes of mortality among under-five year old children and the intestinal pathogenic *Escherichia coli* (InPEC) are one of the large causative groups of these diarrheal diseases worldwide. In this matter, InPECs contribute significantly to the burden of intestinal diseases, which are a critical issue in Low-Mid income countries (in Asia, Africa and Latin America). Intestinal pathotypes such as Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC) and enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC) are mainly endemic in developing countries, while ETEC strains are the major cause of diarrhoea in travelers to these countries. On the other hand, enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) are the cause of large outbreaks around the world mainly affecting developed countries and responsible not only of diarrheal disease but also of severe clinical complications like hemorrhagic colitis and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Overall, the emergence antibiotic resistance strains, the annual cost increase in the health care system, the high incidence in traveler diarrhea and increased number of HUS episodes, has arisen the need of effective preventive treatments. Although the use of antibiotic is still an important factor

to treat such infections, non-antibiotic strategies are either a crucial option to limit the increase in antibiotic resistant strains or absolutely necessary for diseases, such as those caused by EHEC infections, for which antibiotic therapies are not recommended. Among non-antibiotic therapies, vaccine development is a strategy of choice but, to date, there is no licensed vaccine effective against InPEC infections. During several years, there has been an important effort to identify efficacious vaccine candidates able to assuage the diarrheal disease burden. The aim of this review is to summarize recent milestones and insights for vaccine development against InPECs.

KEY WORDS: Vaccines; InPEC: intestinal pathogenic *E. coli*; EHEC Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*; Enterotoxigenic *E. coli*; Enteropathogenic *E. coli*.

INTRODUCTION

Escherichia coli is a Gram-negative commonly found as a commensal in the human microbiota. However, the plasticity of its genome has led to the evolution of this organism into pathogenic strains able to cause disease and syndromes of health importance in humans and animals. Pathogenic *E. coli* are mainly gathered into two groups depending of the disease localization: extraintestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (ExPEC) and intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (InPEC). While ExPEC strains are associated mainly to neonatal meningitis (NMEC) and urinary tract infections (UPEC) in adults, InPEC strains, related to diarrheal disease, are subdivided in at least 6 well-known pathotypes: enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC), enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC), enteroinvasive *E. coli* (EIEC), enteroaggregative *E. coli* (EAEC), diffusely adherent *E. coli* (DAEC), and enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC). These *E. coli* enteropathotypes are classified according to their virulence factors, mechanisms of infection, interaction with the enterocyte, tissue tropism, symptoms and syndromes (Kaper *et al.*, 2004; Croxen and Finlay, 2010). Most recently, adherent-invasive *E. coli* (AIEC) have also been described as a disease-associated *E. coli* related to Crohn's disease but they cannot be *stricto sensu* considered as a diarrheagenic *E. coli* and thus classified as a new InPEC pathotype.

Nowadays, the burden of diarrheal diseases is one of the major problems in public health around the world caused by several etiological agents without the availability of preventive strategies such as vaccines to block infections. Besides InPEC, these diarrheagenic agents include *Cryptosporidium*, *Campylobacter*, *Shigella* and *Salmonella*, responsible for the vast majority of diarrheal diseases worldwide (MacLennan and Saul, 2014). Furthermore, in order to standardize the real estimation of the burden of diarrheal disease, the etiology and the real

number of the most affected populations, mathematical approaches were developed. Specifically, to calculate numbers in the burden of diarrheal disease in children under 5-years old (U5), focused not only on diarrheal diseases but also on other diseases as pneumonia the Global Burden of Disease (GBD by Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2010) and Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group (CHERG by World Health Organization) (Kovacs *et al.*, 2015) indexes were implemented. The main goal of these approaches is the estimation of the cause-specific disease and morbidity-mortality, but still the output brings to different numbers due the diverse inclusion data included into these methods. In addition, the Global Enteric Multicenter Study (GEMS), a case-control study still ongoing in Africa and Asia, is aimed to identify the etiology and population based burden of pediatric diarrheal disease (Kotloff *et al.*, 2013).

Overall, the use of these approaches will allowed to refine the regulations, therapies, control strategies and to estimate the real numbers of the infectious diseases depending on the specific target (Pires *et al.*, 2015).

In this matter, InPECs contribute significantly to the burden of diarrheal diseases, which represent a critical issue in Low-Mid income countries (in Asia, Africa and Latin America). For instance, EPEC and ETEC are mainly endemic in developing countries and the last in travelers to these countries (Kaper *et al.*, 2004; Torres, 2017a), whereas EHEC are responsible for large outbreaks around the world. This pathotype, mainly affecting developed countries, causes not only diarrheal disease but is responsible for clinical complications like hemorrhagic colitis and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a rising issue in Latin-American countries like Argentina (Kaper *et al.*, 2004; Pianciola *et al.*, 2016; Torres, 2017a). Similarly, EAEC has also been involved occasionally in diarrheal diseases in developing and industrialized countries (Foster *et al.*, 2015) and in 2011 an EHEC-EAEC hybrid has emerged causing a large outbreak in Europe, with 3816 reported cases, leading to 845 HUS cases and 54 deaths (Brzuszkiewicz *et al.*, 2011; Frank *et al.*, 2011).

Overall, (i) the increase in the burden of the disease as a high incidence in traveler diarrhea (ETEC, EAEC), (ii) endemic ETEC and EPEC cases in developing countries, (iii) infections with EHEC and increased number of HUS episodes, (iv) the annual cost for the healthcare system, (v) the emerging of antibiotic resistance strains, arises the need of an effective preventive treatment to assuage the burden of the diarrheal disease. Although the use of antibiotic is still key to treat such infections, non-antibiotic strategies are either a crucial option to limit the increase in antibiotic resistant strains, (Torres, 2017a) or the unique option for diseases where antibiotic therapies are not recommended, e.g. EHEC infection (Goldwater and Bettelheim, 2012; Rivas *et al.*, 2016) . Among non-antibiotic therapies, vaccine development

is a strategy of choice but, to date, there is no universal or specific licensed vaccine against InPEC.

For years the vaccine development has included different platforms and approaches as (i) pathogens attenuated by different environmental conditions exposure (heat or oxygen) or by multiple passages in media culture (*in vitro*) a method considered as the most ancient and empirical form of vaccine production ; (ii) detoxified toxins forms, like the detoxified version of the diphtheria and tetanus toxin; (iii) the use of protein based vaccines, as the hemagglutinin from influenza virus or the vaccine for *Bordetella pertussis*; (iv) genetic engineered vaccines, that have been the most exploited alternative to vaccine development, in which antigens can be produced in different vectors that would reduce the toxicity or collateral immunoreactions (Mora *et al.*, 2003; Plotkin, 2014).

However, there are several infectious diseases for which these traditional approaches have failed and for which vaccines have not yet been developed. With the advent of whole-genome sequencing and advances in bioinformatics, the vaccinology field has changed. Approaches like reverse vaccinology, based on the scanning of the annotated complete pathogen genome by bioinformatic prediction of the most likely vaccine candidates, have let the identification of promising antigens and development of a safe broad protective vaccine against the *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B pathogen (Pizza *et al.*, 2000; Giuliani *et al.*, 2006; Feavers and Maiden, 2017). For other pathogens such as *Streptococcus ssp.*, and for extra intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* (ExPEC) a number of promising antigens have also been identified (De Gregorio and Rappuoli, 2012; Sjoling *et al.*, 2015). In particular, for ExPEC the genome sequence analysis of a neonatal meningitis isolate (NMEC) let the identification of 230 potential antigens. The most protective antigens uncovered from that analysis, were a broadly conserved adhesin (FdeC,) and a conserved secreted zinc metallopeptidase (SslE,), which conferred cross protection in three different murine models including intestinal, ascending urinary tract infection and sepsis model (Moriel *et al.*, 2010; Nesta *et al.*, 2012; Nesta *et al.*, 2014).

During several years, there has been significant efforts to identify effective vaccines against InPEC by different research groups worldwide. Up to date the major pathotypes considered for the vaccine development are EHEC and ETEC for their main impact in the burden in the public health (Table 1); even though EPEC is a major issue in developing countries there are not considerable advances on it. The aim of this review is to summarize the advances made in the development of vaccines against these different InPEC pathotypes and the perspectives they offer (Figure 1).

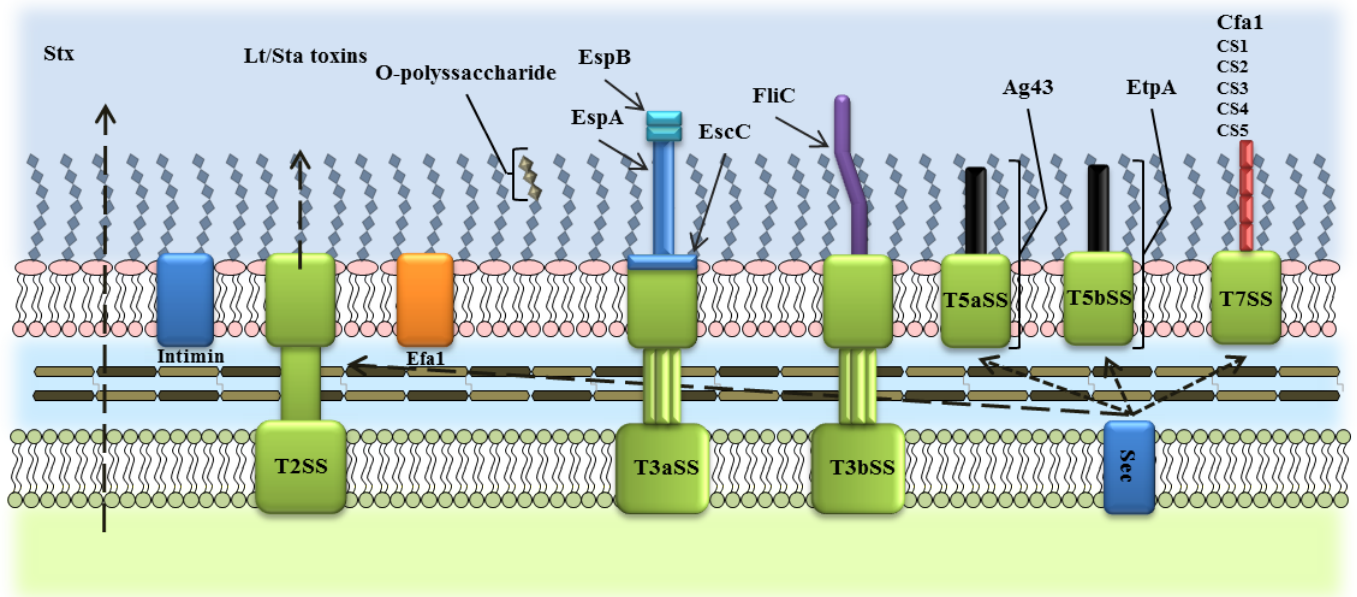


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the virulence factors used as vaccine candidates.

Several of the InPECs virulence factors have been employed as vaccine candidates, including outer membrane proteins, toxins, O-polysaccharides, exported and secreted proteins. T2SS: Type two secretion system; T3aSS: Type three A secretion system; T3bSS: Type three B secretion system; T5aSS: Type five A secretion system; T5bSS: Type five B secretion system; T7SS: Type seven secretion system.

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT AGAINST EHEC

As for each of the characterized InPEC, EHEC are primarily defined on an array of evidences based on clinical manifestations, i.e. clinical symptoms, histological and molecular features (Nataro and Kaper, 1998; Kaper *et al.*, 2004). One of its primary feature is the presence of Shiga-toxin (Stx) genes; EHEC thus belong to the genotypic group of Shiga-toxin encoding *E. coli* (STEC). While there are over 380 distinct serotypes of STEC (Karmali *et al.*, 2003; Karmali *et al.*, 2010), only EHEC of serotypes O157:H7, as well as the big six non-O157 serotypes O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H2, O111:H8, O121:H19 and O145:H28 are the most frequently associated with human disease and large outbreaks around the world (Karmali *et al.*, 2003; Karmali *et al.*, 2010). Based on their incidence, involvement in outbreaks and association with severe disease, STEC can be classified into 4 classes, namely (i) class A corresponding to the O157 serogroup with a high virulence, (ii) class B to the big six non-O157 serotypes mentioned above with a moderate virulence, (iii) class C to serotypes mainly involved in some sporadic cases with a moderate virulence, and (iv) class D to serotypes never reported in human infection

and thus avirulent (Karmali *et al.*, 2003). In this regard, EHEC clearly defined a subset of InPEC clinically isolated but STEC do not systematically and cannot definitely refer to a specific intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* pathotype (Nataro and Kaper, 1998). Currently, the question if a STEC strain isolated from the environment or food for instance is truly an EHEC, if it is virulent (and at which level) and a risk for human health, cannot be simply answered (Messens *et al.*, 2015). In the United States by 2014 the number of cases per 100,000 population were 690 for EHEC O157 and 445 for EHEC non-O157 while percentage of infections associated with outbreaks accounted for 16% for EHEC O157 and 7% for EHEC non-O157 (Stacy M. Crim and Matthew Cartter, 2015). Regarding EHEC non-O157:H7, their incidence is on the increase and became important human pathogens as important as EHEC O157:H7 (Croxen *et al.*, 2013). More recently the infection with EHEC strains is rising in Latin American countries, becoming an endemic phenomenon, as Argentina (Mejias *et al.*, 2016).

As asymptomatic carrier, cattle are the natural reservoir of EHEC and as an anthroozoonose, infection can occur from direct (meat, milk) or indirect (vegetables, water) contamination of food products from animal feces (Rivas *et al.*, 2016). The adhesion and persistence of the bacteria is an important key feature in the bacterial pathogenesis. In fact, EHEC O157:H7 colonize mainly human colon and carry a pathogenic island (PAI) known as Locus of Enterocyte Effacement (LEE) (like EPEC) that encodes the type three secretion system (T3SS) and it would give the capability to produce the A/E lesion in humans, but this phenomenon is mainly observed in *in vitro* assays than *in vivo*. However, the PAI LEE is still a determinant factor for colonization and persistence in other reservoirs (eg. Cattle) and its presence is more associated with pathogenic strains (Nataro and Kaper, 1998; Coombes *et al.*, 2011; Lewis *et al.*, 2015). Interestingly, the EHEC non-O157:H7 strains do not necessarily carry the LEE PAI. However, other colonization factors involved in the attachment, persistence and tissue tropism, from EHEC O157 and non-O157 have been well described, including Lpf, Ecp, Hcp, F9, curli, Type 1 fimbriae, Autotransporters (EhaA, EhaB), EspP, Saa, Cah (McWilliams and Torres, 2014; Monteiro *et al.*, 2016).

Besides the adhesion factors, toxins play a key role in EHEC pathogenesis and as mentioned above the Stx is one of the important virulence factors. This family of AB toxin is divided into Stx1 and Stx2 (with allelic variants); although both toxins or just one can be produced by the strain, Stx2 is considered one of the more potent toxins, thus more related to O157 infections. It has been shown that the use of antibiotics in the treatment against EHEC infections could lead to cellular damage by increasing the production of this toxin activating the SOS system and by disrupting the bacterial membrane, causing release of the toxin (Kimmit *et al.*, 2000).

The resulting secretion of the toxin into the blood stream, could lead to an even worsening of the disease (Pacheco and Sperandio, 2012). The Stx toxin is one of the factors involved in the hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) development, characterized by a triad of microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, and acute renal failure, with the further chances of HUS development of 10% in children less than 10 years. Besides to trigger the HUS, and later renal failure, it is also responsible for strokes (Tarr *et al.*, 2005).

Due the implications of the Stx toxin during the course of the infection and restrictions in the treatment, different preventive strategies, as vaccines, have been implemented and are exemplified in the follow paragraphs.

Development of Stx-based treatments

Neutralizing the effect of the toxin has been one of the strategies to assuage its effect. Antibodies α Stx1 and α Stx2 have been directly engineered against the B subunit of Stx1 and A subunit of Stx2 respectively (Bitzan *et al.*, 2009). Evaluation of the tolerability and pharmacokinetic profile has been investigated using chimeric anti-Stx1 and anti-Stx2 antibodies. This combination comprises the variable regions of the murine Stx1-neutralizing or Stx2-neutralizing monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) 13C4 or 11E10 respectively fused to human kappa light chain constant domain sequence and human immunoglobulin G1 (IgG1) heavy chain constant-domain sequence. These antibodies showed to be well tolerated and safe as antitoxins in healthy human volunteers in a clinical trial single dose study. Although, it has been showed that these mAbs are able to neutralizing the effect of the Stx toxins in mice experiments, it remains to elucidate whether they are able to avoid the development of HUS after diarrhea by EHEC (Bitzan *et al.*, 2009).

More recently, camelid single antibodies against Stx2 have been tested for their protective characteristics in against Stx2 (Mejias *et al.*, 2016). The anti-single chain antibodies (VHH) were obtained with two copies of anti-Stx2B VHH and one anti-sero albumin VHH. This trivalent molecule, administrated to mice, was able to decrease the toxicity in Stx2 lethal mouse model. Because the antitoxin effect of VHH, it is proposed as an alternative for treatment of assuage the HUS consequences (Mejias *et al.*, 2016).

Attenuated and Ghosts bacteria platforms

The gene regulators (global or specific) are important key players for the expression –or silencing - of virulence factors in pathogens. In fact, deleting those that promotes the expression

of specific virulence factors could be useful strategy to attenuate a pathogen. This approach has been applied to EHEC by deleting the LEE-encoded regulator (Ler). Ler is an important specific regulator that positively controls the expression of LEE genes involved in the A/E phenotype, as well as genes outside of the PAI, including adhesins and genes in the plasmid pO157. An EHEC O157:H7 86-24 strain deleted in *ler* and *stx2* genes (*ler/Stx2*) but carrying a plasmid that expresses a detoxified version of Stx1A subunit and Stx2 A subunit was used as an attenuated vaccine candidate. These bacteria with a reduced toxicity and safe for animal administration were used to immunize mice via IP. Animals were challenged using EHEC O157:H7 wild type strain and after 6 days the wild type strain was not detected in faces, indicating a capability of the attenuated strain to reduce the wild type colonization. Also, a passive immunization was performed with suckling offspring born to mothers previously immunized with this vaccine; the results showed a 70% of surviving rate in passive immunized mice after being challenged with the wild-type EHEC bacteria (Liu *et al.*, 2009).

Further, EPEC is the closest pathotype to EHEC and both express the T3SS elements as EPEC-secreted proteins (Esp) proteins and intimin (important for the A/E phenotype). Using an EPEC, as live attenuated vaccine to assess the cross protection among the two pathotypes only partial protection against EHEC was shown. In fact, intragastric immunization with a clinical isolate EPEC O126:H6 and challenge using the EHEC O157:H7 wild-type strain, yielded sick mice but without dead reported. Interestingly, it was also shown that the EspB and intimin antibodies produced after the EPEC vaccination were cross-reactive against EspB (translocated protein and effector that prevents phagocytosis) and intimin from EHEC (Calderon Toledo *et al.*, 2011). Using a different delivery system such as *Salmonella* attenuated strain, recombinant EspA (300 amino acids of carboxyl-terminal), Intimin and the B subunit of Stx2 proteins have been expressed. Mice either only orally immunized or orally immunized and subcutaneous boosted were able to raise IgG and IgA specific antibodies against these three antigens at similar level. However, intimin specific antibodies levels, were higher in mice orally immunized and subcutaneous boosted than mice only orally immunized. Yet, specific IgG antibodies for Stx increased a week after the booster vaccination; IgA specific for Stx2B antibodies were only detected in feces and increased even more when boosted (Gu *et al.*, 2011).

Similarly, an attenuated bacteria *Salmonella* enterica serovar Typhimurium χ 3987 (Δ *cydA*, Δ *crp*, Δ *asd* and H683 Δ *aro* Δ *asd*) expressing heterologous proteins for EHEC as γ -intimin variant, encoded by the *eae* gene. The vaccination using these attenuated bacteria expressing the intimin was able to increase titers of IgG in serum and IgA in feces, indicating immune response from systemic and humoral immunity. The attenuated bacteria expressing the intimin was still

detectable in Peyer's patches and spleen while in feces the amount of CFU decreased from day 2 to 10 and later was kept it constant. Animal immunized with the attenuated *Salmonella* reduced the EHEC O157:H7 shedding post challenge and increasing the production of IgA and IgG (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012).

Also, a delivery antigen mucosal system used for the EHEC vaccine development was based on Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) (a live attenuated strain of *Mycobacterium bovis*), because its mucosal humoral immunoreactivity. A recombinant rBCG-Stx2B, expressing the Stx2 subunit B, was generated and then used to immunize mice. This recombinant bacillus was able to increase the levels of Stx2 IgG in serum that were directly proportional to concentrations of CFU. The protection was confirmed when after challenge using a wild-type EHEC strain, there was a higher survival rate (63%) in immunized mice with higher CFU concentration than in immunized mice with a less CFU of rBCG-Stx2 or null rBCG (Fujii *et al.*, 2012).

Along attenuated bacteria strategies, a delivery system based on bacterial ghost (BG) platform for vaccine development against EHEC has been proposed. Bacterial ghosts of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been generated by the controlled expression of X174 lysis gene. This gene produces empty bacteria cell envelopes having the composition of cell surface as a living cell, such LPS, lipids, peptidoglycans (acting as adjuvants), lacking the capability of produce infection. These bacteria showed an antitoxicity effect on Vero cells culture and were safe for the administration in mice (Mayr *et al.*, 2005; Cai *et al.*, 2010). Animals orally immunized twice (days 0 and 28) with BG and then challenged (at day 55) stopped the shedding of the bacteria after day 3 post-EHEC and showed a rate survival of 93% (Cai *et al.*, 2010). In addition, rectal immunization showed a 100% of survival rate protecting mice against EHEC O157:H7 after challenge with bacterial shedding until 3 to 5 days after (Mayr *et al.*, 2012).

However, mice that were orally or intragastric immunized still showed disease symptoms from day 2 to 7 post-challenge including anorexia, slowing of activity, no stimulus reaction, and convulsions before death (Cai *et al.*, 2010). Data also showed that survived mice recovered after 7 days and dead mice developed glomerulus necrosis and enterocyte effacing. Interestingly, specific IgA and IgG antibodies titers were raised in sera and colon from mice immunized twice via oral with the BG (Cai *et al.*, 2010). In fact, the vaccination of mice with GB is, per se, able to trigger the immune response as it is observed in Th1/Th2 cell proliferation, higher INF levels in spleen cells, leading to increase titers of IgG and IgA, in both serum and colon samples (Mayr *et al.*, 2005; Cai *et al.*, 2010; Mayr *et al.*, 2012).

Most recently a BG (rSOBG), expressing a Stx chimerical protein composed by the Stx2A and Stx1B subunits (Stx2Am-Stx1B has been engineered. This rSOBG showed specific IgG and

IgA antibodies titer to StxA1 and StxB2, and the rate of animal survival was higher (52%) than native bacterial ghost-OBGs (12%) when challenged intragastrically with high dose of viable *E. coli* O157:H7. Also, the tissue damage on liver kidney and intestine from rSOBG immunized mice was not observed (Cai *et al.*, 2015).

Protein-based vaccines

Among several strategies applied for vaccine development against EHEC chimerical protein construction resulted attractive in the last years.

In this regard, a fusion protein between Stx2A and the N-terminus of EspA has been tested for its immunoreactivity. Mice subcutaneously immunized with EspA-StxA1 fusion protein showed high titers of specific IgG antibodies to EspA-StxA1. This humoral immuno-response, resulted in > 95% of mice survival after a challenge with crude toxin Stx2. Although *in-vitro* assays on HeLa cells showed that the anti-EspA-Stx2A1 serum was able to neutralize the action for Stx2, it did not prevent the adherence of bacteria to HeLa cells (Cheng *et al.*, 2009).

Another protein fusion constructed with the subunit B from two Shiga-toxins Stx1/Stx2 and a truncated intimin protein (SSI) was able to increase specific IgG antibody titers in mice. The immunized mice and orally challenged with EHEC O157:H7 88321 showed a 100% of survival rate. However, the protection using the chimerical vaccines is dependable of number of immunizations and the bacterial challenge dose (Cai *et al.*, 2011). The immunization with this SSI chimerical protein showed to avoid the pathological damage in colon and kidney tissues generating antibodies with anti-toxin and anti-adhesion effect, which was absent in the vaccines using the single proteins (Gansheroff *et al.*, 1999) (Gao *et al.*, 2009). Even though the toxins could have contributed with an adjuvant and neutralization effect, the fusion protein was not capable to avoid the wild-type adhesion in *in vitro* assays as in other subunits vaccines (Gansheroff *et al.*, 1999). Further, a vaccine composed by a Stx1B subunit and enzyme-inactive Stx2A subunit (Stx2Am-Stx1B, SAmB) induced Th2-mediated humoral immune response and its typical cytokines, IL4 and IL 10, but low level of INF- γ . Mice immunized with this chimerical protein and challenged with a lysed EHEC 88321 preparation showed 93% of survival, and even higher rates of survival were obtained challenging mice with the Stx1, Stx2 or Stx1/Stx2. However, disease manifestations were still evident (Gao *et al.*, 2011).

Also, specific peptides have been designed for the protection against EHEC. An example is the C terminal region of intimin associated with the AE. Antibodies obtained from vaccination with this fragment were able to reduce the bacterial attachment to Hep-2 cells cultures *in vitro* and

was also associated with protection in mice infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 (Wan *et al.*, 2011). B-cell epitopes of this protein were predicted by structural and antigenicity analysis, and proposed as synthetic vaccine candidates for EHEC (Wan *et al.*, 2011). A promising peptide, KT-12 (KASITEIKADKT) conjugated with KLH, was used to immunized mice either subcutanea (SC) or intranasal (IN) via. Both routes of immunization were able to induce high concentrations of IgG but higher in SC. By contrast, IgA titer was higher in IN immunization. Although this peptide did not show full protection to mice infected with the bacteria, it triggered the immune response in the animals (Zhang *et al.*, 2011).

Plant based vaccines

The safety aspect in vaccine development is one the important issues to take into consideration. An approach to reduce the risk of undesired side effect is the use plant-based vaccines targeting the mucosal immunity. The rationale for using the plant cells is based on the idea of protecting the antigens from the protease degradation in the gastrointestinal tract by plants microencapsulation system, safe oral delivery and with a low production cost (Wen *et al.*, 2006; Amani *et al.*, 2009). An example was provided by a Stx toxoid generated by inactivating the toxin subunit A and expressed in *Nicotiana tabacum* (tobacco) NT-1 cell line. Mice immunized either, orally by feeding them with these cells expressing the toxoid, or by parenteral immunization and boosted orally, showed elevated specific Stx2 anti-IgA in fecal samples but higher in the oral immunized mice. Furthermore, sera of immunized mice were able to neutralize the Stx2 toxicity in Vero cells culture, but with higher neutralization titer using the sera from oral immunized mice (Wen *et al.*, 2006).

Another example of synthetic genes from EHEC was the chimerical gene composed by, *espA*, *eae*, and *tir* antigens (EIT). This gene, was codon optimized for expression in plant cells and cloned into a plant-expression vector, using CaMV35S (Cauliflower Mosaic Virus 35S) under the control of FAE promoters for tobacco and canola plants. Besides that, the solubility of the expressed protein was low but still, although a portion of the protein was expressed as soluble. The EIT protein was used to immunize mice either subcutaneously or orally, and later challenged with *E. coli* O157:H7, resulting in a significant reduction of the bacterial shedding. These immunized mice rose the levels of anti-EIT IgG and IgA and with a reduction of the bacterial colonization and histological damage (Amani *et al.*, 2009; Amani *et al.*, 2010; Amani *et al.*, 2011).

DNA vaccines

DNA vaccines have been used to avoid the use pathogens or bacterial traces that could yield in the development of disease in vaccine receiver. A DNA vaccine construct encoding the entire StxB2 subunit plus the last 32 amino acid residues of StxA2 was generated and cloned into the pGMS-CSF plasmid encoding the gene for murine granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GMS-CSF). The Stx2A Δ AB DNA vaccine expressing the nontoxic Stx2 mutated form was able to increase IgG antibody titers and also conferred protection to immunized mice challenged with native Stx2. In addition, antibodies raised in mice conferred toxin neutralization in Vero culture cells (Bentancor *et al.*, 2009).

More recently, a selection of prospective DNA vaccine candidates was performed by bioinformatics analysis of EHEC O157:H7: EDL933 and Sakai strain genomes. The vaccine selection included, among others a putative pilin subunit gene (Z1538), the gene of a T3SS structural protein (*escC*), the C-terminal side of *escC*, and the gene encoding for an outer membrane protein (*iomW*) (Garcia-Angulo *et al.*, 2014; Tapia *et al.*, 2016). Mice were immunized via intranasal, and then challenged with the wild-type bacteria. In comparison to the entire *escC* gene, only its C-terminal portion resulted in a higher reduction of bacterial counts in feces, colon and caecum and also by triggering IgGs in sera and IgA in feces. The most interesting finding of this study was that the efficacy and immunoprotection of a vaccine candidate depends on its length and how it is presented to the immune system. In fact, the immunoprotection against EHEC was improved when only the C-terminal domain of EscC was used (Garcia-Angulo *et al.*, 2014; Tapia *et al.*, 2016).

Another DNA vaccine candidate used was the lymphocyte inhibitory factor A-/EHEC factor for adherence-1 gene (*lifA/efaA*). This gene encodes a toxin of 360kDa, mainly found in non-O157 EHEC strains and associated to LEE strains. It has been showed to be exposed on the surface of the EPEC bacteria, and possibly having a role in the colonization and adhesion by mucosal immunity regulation. This gene was originally found as a truncated form in EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 and annotated as *efa-1'*. EHEC carrying the truncated form showed a reduced adhesion to human colon cells, pointing out that Efa-1' protein has still a role in adhesion. Furthermore, mice vaccinated with this *efa-1'* showed IgM, IgG and IgA antibody titers. Intranasal immunization using pVAX-efa1 showed higher levels of antigen specific mucosal IgA in nasal and bronchoalveolar lavages and in animal challenge pVAXefa-1 was also able to reduce the EHEC colonization in mice. (Riquelme-Neira *et al.*, 2015).

Polysaccharide-based vaccines

Polysaccharides in conjugate vaccine against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, pneumococcal and meningococcal bacteraemia, and meningitis have been successfully used for vaccine development. *E. coli* isolates produce two serotype-specific surface polysaccharides namely the lipopolysaccharide (LPS) O antigen and the capsular polysaccharide K antigen. Variations in structures of these polysaccharides give rise to ~170 different O antigens and ~80 K antigens (Whitfield, 2006). Immunization with an O-specific polysaccharide of *E. coli* O157:H7, showed a significant increase of IgG against LPS. *E. coli* O157:H7 O-specific polysaccharide conjugated to recombinant exotoxin A of *P. aeruginosa* (O157-rEPA) administered to 2-5-year-old children showed that there was an increase of >4 fold of IgG in serum after first week of immunization. At week 6, IgG anti-LPS increased in serum of >8 fold until the 20-folds higher at week 26, when actually there was not a difference among the groups receiving one dose or two doses, but >4-fold higher than the pre-immune sera. The serum samples had an antibacterial activity correlated to the IgG anti-LPS antibodies titers. More importantly, vaccinated children showed from mild to non-collateral reactions to the vaccine. This prospective vaccine showed to be a good candidate for its safeness and immunoreactivity (Konadu *et al.*, 1994; Konadu *et al.*, 1998; Konadu *et al.*, 1999; Ahmed *et al.*, 2006).

Improving adjuvant effect

The suitability of an adjuvant is an important key in the vaccine development to enhance the immunogenicity and reactivity of the antigens on the host immune system. The vaccination with EspB or the C-terminal of γ -Intimin (280 amino acids) co-administrated with the MALP-2 adjuvant (TLR6 agonist) has showed to enhance the IgG specific antibodies after first intranasal immunization, in contrast the vaccination without MALP-2 increased the IgG titers after the second boost (Cataldi *et al.*, 2008).

The adjuvant effect has been also implemented by the combined expression of toxins and antigens at the same time, as a specific antigen combination. An example of this method was provided by the generation of a chimerical protein fusing Tir, Stx1B, Stx2B and the Zonula Occludens Toxin (Zot). Intranasal immunized mice showed higher IgA and IgG response against the chimerical protein than subcutaneous immunized mice and a reduced bacterial shedding in faces post EHEC challenge. The comparison of the adjuvant effect of chimerical protein with or without Zot has showed a higher protection level in Zot presence even though there were not IgG specific titer against it (Zhang *et al.*, 2011).

Future of the EHEC vaccine development

EHEC infections and associated diseases are also related to other 6 STEC serotypes, O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H11, O11, O121:H19, O145, other than the canonical serotypes O113:H21 and O157:H7. The treatments and infection preventions, like the vaccine development, should also target these strains. More recently new approaches have been implemented to find new antigens; for example, an immunoproteomics analysis developed by a Chilean group, let them to detect antigens with immune reactive effect in patients infected with any of these STEC serotypes. They identified mainly outer membrane proteins, like OmpT and Cah that were immune reactive with sera from HUS patients. The genes encoding for these proteins are wide represented among *E. coli* pathotypes but also in commensal strains. Other detected proteins included FliC, Ag43 (ETEC), NmpC, OmpF, OmpC, OmpA, Hek, EF-Tu, and L-Asparaginase II. (Montero *et al.*, 2014).

ETEC THE MOST STUDIED INPEC FOR VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

Enterotoxigenic *E. coli*, is responsible for infection for traveler's diarrhea around the world, up to date it is been one of the most studied InPEC for vaccine targets. Developing countries are the most affected by ETEC infections and diarrheal diseases, being children the most concerned population. It was estimated that 200 million diarrheal cases and between 170,000 to 380,000 deaths occur annually (Isidean *et al.*, 2011; Chakraborty *et al.*, 2015).

The symptoms of an ETEC infection include dysentery, headache, fever and vomiting. The infection can last up to 5 days, without specific treatment or antibiotics, but the lethal cases are associated to kids because lack of immune protection and dehydration (Vidal *et al.*, 2016). ETEC is transmitted by consuming contaminated water, food, and person to person, being the poor sanitation one of the main factors in the pervasiveness of this pathogen in developing countries.

The main virulence factors associated to the pathogenesis of the infection are the colonization factors antigens (CFA) required for the ETEC colonization and establishment in the gut and the heat-labile (LT) and a heat-stable (ST) toxins that are responsible of water and electrolyte discharge during the infection (Vidal *et al.*, 2016). Regarding the CF, they are mainly referred as *E. coli* surface antigens (CS) composed by 26 characterized factors (CFA/I, CFA/III, CS2-

CS26). These factors are not present at the same time in the ETEC strains, but can be carried in different combinations. Nonetheless, the presence of other non-fimbrial adhesins as EtpA, Tia, TibA, TleA, and EaeH, expressed in the prototypic strain H10407, has been described (Vidal *et al.*, 2016). Concerning ETEC classification, the most common serotypes associated to ETEC are O6:H16 (LT/ST), O8:H9 (ST only), O25:NM (LT only), O78:H12 (ST only), O148:H28 (ST only), O153:H45 (ST only) and O169:H41 (ST only). However, serotypes isolated from different outbreaks do not necessarily belong to these serotypes or can also differ in their prevalence. Up to date, ETEC isolated can be gathered in 42 different clonal groups with a singular combination of CF and toxins (Croxen *et al.*, 2013). Because ETEC is still a public health problem in developing countries, there is a big effort to develop a vaccine to prevent and reduce the incidence of infections caused by this pathotype.

Toxin Based vaccines

The transcutaneous route has been used to immunize human volunteers with LT toxin delivered in skin patch, a strategy aimed to avoid toxic effect of the LT allowing antigen transfer from skin to Langerhans cells to lymph nodes. In these studies, designed as a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, human volunteers were immunized by applying the patches on the skin arms then challenged with a LT/ETEC strain (McKenzie *et al.*, 2007; Frech *et al.*, 2008; Frerichs *et al.*, 2008). As in previous reports, in 100-97% of cases, there was an increased amount of anti-LT IgG and IgA (4-fold increase). Although, there was a delay in the onset of disease but also the need of intravenous fluids for volunteers, this strategy did not prevent the illness after challenge (McKenzie *et al.*, 2007; Frech *et al.*, 2008). The later refinement of the scale of disease parameters and correlation between symptoms and signs after human challenge let classify these specific patches vaccines with not efficacy (Porter *et al.*, 2016).

The STa is known to be poor immunogenic as antigen for vaccine use, however, its immunogenicity could be enhanced by being combined to stronger antigens, like LT or other adjuvants, and reducing its toxicity by changing essential amino acids. Mice immunized with a STaP13F-LTR192G toxoid fusion protein were able to develop IgG specific antibodies for LT and STa proteins in serum and feces and only IgA in feces. In addition, the STa and LT antibodies from fecal samples could reduce the cGMP and cAMP, respectively, in T-84 culture cells. This study indicates that the STaP13F toxoid is immunogenic when fused to LT toxoid and elicited neutralizing antitoxin antibodies. These findings will be useful for developing safe and effective toxoid vaccines linked to ETEC-STa-producing strains (Liu *et al.*, 2011).

Autotransporters

Immunoproteomic analysis has been also employed as strategy for the identification of antigens able to generate an immune response in the host during the process of infection. For this type of approach, reacting human or mice sera obtained after ETEC infections let the identification of immune reactive molecules in culture supernatant, outer membrane, and outer membrane vesicle preparations by matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization–time of flight mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS). In this analysis, hypothetical proteins homologous to other pathovars (UPEC, APEC, Crohn's disease associated isolates) and pathogens (*Vibrio cholera* and group A *streptococci*) were identified, suggesting their role in the pathogenesis. In addition, autotransporters (AT) such as EtpA, Antigen 43 and TibA, were also detected to be reactive during the infection process (Roy *et al.*, 2010).

In silico tools, have been used to the identification of other remarkable virulence factors as immunogenic molecules. From those studies, autotrasporters, important in biofilm formation, such as Autotransporter (pAT), Antigen 43 and EatA have been identified exclusively in ETEC or other pathotypes, but absent in commensal strains. Recombinant Ag43 and pAT autotransporters, were found capable of increasing fecal IgA and provide relative protection against ETEC intestinal colonization in immunized mice. Interestingly, these autotrasporters are also recognized by sera from patients with ETEC diarrhea, confirming their expression during ETEC infections (Harris *et al.*, 2011).

Adhesins

Adhesins have been wide employed as targets vaccines as several of them are considered virulence factors having an important role in colonization and bacterial pathogenesis.

The ETEC two-partner secretion protein A (EtpA) is an encoded plasmid protein and secreted non-fimbrial adhesin. When mice were immunized with the recombinant fully glycosylated form of this protein, EtpA inhibited the colonization of ETEC wild-type strains. Also, the EtpA antibodies present in the sera, from mice immunized with the glycoprotein and enhanced by flagellin, were able to inhibit the colonization in *in vitro* assays (Roy *et al.*, 2009). In addition, a study of EtpA and CexE in OMV-flagellin free showed that these antigens were able to reduce the ETEC wild-type colonization in mice without the flagellin contribution (Roy *et al.*, 2011).

Attenuated bacteria platforms

Some studies have shown that strain ETEC E1392/75-2A is able to confer protection in 75% of human volunteers whom were immunized and challenged with ETEC wild-type strains. However, this strain induced mild diarrhea in 15% of volunteers. By deleting different genes onto the chromosomes, was possible to attenuate the strain and also to reduce its reactivity. Two different mutant strains were generated and attenuated by mutating *aroC*, *ompR* genes (PTL-002 mutant) and *aroC*, *ompC* and *ompF* genes (PTL-003 mutant). To be notice, both of these mutants express CFA/II: CS1, CS3 and are ST/LT spontaneously mutated. At first, these mutants were tested in a mouse model, and further tested in human volunteers, in who the reduction of adverse effects was observed. Interestingly, the strain PTL-003 showed higher immunogenicity level provided by increased IgA and IgG level and antibody response to CS1 and CS3. However, a poor protection in subjects orally immunized was obtained and only able to assuage diarrhea manifestations after the challenge with wild-type ETEC E24377A (Turner *et al.*, 2001; McKenzie *et al.*, 2006; McKenzie *et al.*, 2008).

Yet, the MEV or Etvax vaccine is another cocktail of four inactivated recombinant bacteria expressing separately different CFs in which CS6 expressed in a K12 strain and CFA/I, CS3, CS5 in ETEC O78 toxin-negative strain. The formalin or phenol attenuated bacteria were used in preclinical and clinical phase I studies (Lundgren *et al.*, 2014) and immunized altogether with a LCTBA hybrid protein (which has seven amino acids in CTB replaced by corresponding amino acids of LTB) and a double mutant LT (dmLT, that has two replacements in the A subunit, LTR192G/L211A (Norton *et al.*, 2011), (eliminating the toxic effect and leaving the adjuvant effect of the LT) (Lundgren *et al.*, 2014). In pre-clinical studies, they showed immunoreactivity in mice, resulting in high titers of fecal, jejunal tissue extracts and serum IgA and IgG enhanced the by the presence of the dmLT (Holmgren *et al.*, 2013) . Furthermore, a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled phase I, confirmed increasing titers of IgA and IgG in sera and fecal samples in humans. Volunteers orally immunized with the same vaccine but different amount of dmLT (10 µg or 25 µg) showed significant increase of intestinal, fecal and serum IgAs. Also, humans immunized with the formulation using 10 µg of dmLT showed significant response to all the antigens but even higher response to the CS6. What is more the vaccine combination was well tolerated and evaluated safe for human use. (Holmgren *et al.*, 2013; Lundgren *et al.*, 2014).

The attenuated bacterial strategies for vaccine development have also included the use of different bacterial species. In this matter, non-pathogenic and *Vibrio cholerae* strains were

engineered to express of CFA/I operon (*cfaA-B-C-E*), and killed by formalin to immunize mice via oral with CT as adjuvant. The results showed increased IgA and IgG titers in serum. The antigen delivery was thought to be favored by the fact that *V. cholerae* can attach to M cells, probably enhancing the bacterial attachment on the intestinal mucosal by the over expression of CFA/I. Increasing titers of IgA and IgG+M were showed against *V. cholerae* O1 LPS after immunization (Tobias *et al.*, 2008). In the same way, when CS2 was added to the formalin-killed *E. coli* K12 over-expressing CFA/I and orally administrated a similar immuneresponse (IgG+M increase in sera and IgA in fecal sample) against *cfaB* from CFA/I and *cotA* from CS2 was observed. (Tobias *et al.*, 2010).

Following the same strategy as the PTL attenuated vaccines, mentioned above, three different others ETEC strains were attenuated by the same gene mutations and used as prospective vaccines. These strains expressed diverse CFAs elements including CFA/I (ACAM2010 strain), CS2 and CS3 (ACAM2007 strain) and CS1, CS2, and CS3 (ACAM2017 strtrain). As showed by PTL-003, mentioned above, there was an immuneresponse against those CFAs elements increasing the IgA level in human volunteers orally immunized. However, neither IL-6 nor IL-8, inflammatory interleukins were detected (Daley *et al.*, 2007).

Further, the CS21, an adhesion factor belonging to the Class-B Type 4 pili as BFP and TCP, was tested as a potential vaccine candidate. The CS21 including its major subunit LngA was able to confer certain immunoreactivity in mice model. The immunogenicity of CS21 and LngA in different adjuvants formulations showed that CS21/LngA combined with cholera Toxin and administrated via intraperitoneal, increased specific IgG antibodies in serum and IgA antibody levels in fecal and intestinal lavages. Interestingly, anti-LngA antibodies were also raised in an intraperitoneal administration of CS21 formulated with incomplete Freund's adjuvant and after mice challenge, this formulation was also able to stop the bacteria shedding. By contrast, CS21 plus CT as adjuvant was more effective when was intranasal administrated. The most relevant aspect from this study was that supports the idea of using CF as promising antigens and showing that the administration routes play an important role to elicit an effective immuneresponse and protection (Zhang *et al.*, 2016).

Other colonization factors from different ETEC strains have been studied as vaccine candidates, mainly because there is a usual combination of co-expression of these factors in ETEC strains, making it as a hallmark to distinguish the different strains. To cover a wide range of the ETEC strains variability involved in diarrheal infections, a non-toxigenic *E. coli* was modified to express every CS2, CS4, CS5, or CS6 independently or co-expressed with CFA/I. Mice immunization with the recombinant bacteria, co-expressing CFA/I and CS2 induced the

IgG+IgM antibodies in sera and IgA in fecal samples. The antibodies titers for the recombinant bacteria were higher than wild-type stains. The CS6 overexpressed in a non-toxigenic strain, and used as killed vaccine, increased the IgG+IgM antibodies in sera and fecal IgA antibodies like the other strains (Tobias *et al.*, 2010; Tobias *et al.*, 2011). Although CS6 was previously reported as a weak antigen to induce the immune response, this study was capable to improve CS6 properties as a vaccine candidate.

More recently, the generation of three strains comprised in the ACE527 ETEC complex, has been the most promising vaccine in phase II studies. The strains in the ACE527 have been attenuated, converted to antibiotic sensible, and genetically engineered to overexpressing different colonization factors. All of them have been attenuated by mutation on *aroC*, *ompC* and *ompF*, showing safeness and being immunogenic in humans as PTL-003 attenuated strain (Turner *et al.*, 2001). These three strains ACAM2022 (O141:H5, expressing CS5 and CS6), ACAM2025 (O39:H12, expressing CFA/I) and ACAM2027 (O71:H-, expressing CS2, CS3, and CS1) express also the heat labile toxin pentamer B subunits. In particular, the LTB gene encoding for heat labile toxin pentamer B was inserted into ACAM2022 genome to assure its stability and avoid their lost during the vaccination. In addition, the gene encoding for CS1 was inserted into ACAM2027 genome by replacing *ompC*. Although other CFs as CS3, CS5m CS6 and CFA/I were maintained into their native plasmid, those were showed to be stable (Turner *et al.*, 2011).

The human clinical trials, testing two different oral doses 3 weeks apart of ACE527 (doses of 10^{11} or 3×10^{10} CFU each strain) in a CeraVax buffer, showed that IgA and IgG increased in serum, for LTB, CFA/I, CS3, CS5, and CS6. After the immunization, subjects were challenged with the ETEC H10407 wild-type strain. As a result, the vaccination helped to shortened the duration of the diarrhea and reducing the shedding of the wild-type strain, up to 20-fold less than control groups, 2 days after challenge, and conferring a protection level ranging between 33% to 98% against the wild type strain. Re-challenged subjects decreased even more the bacterial shedding (Harro *et al.*, 2011a; Harro *et al.*, 2011b). Overall, this ACE527 formulated in CeraVax showed to have a reduction of 29% of diarrhea and 26.5% of efficacy (Harro *et al.*, 2011a; Darsley *et al.*, 2012; Porter *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, when ACE527 vaccine combination was formulated with LTR192GL211A adjuvant, the efficacy raised up to 50% (Porter *et al.*, 2016).

Outer Membrane Vesicles

The outer membrane vesicles as antigen delivery system, have been largely employed. The expression of heterologous surface antigens has been applied not only to amplify the protection against different pathogens but also to increase the antigenicity of such antigens. Recently, this system was used in two different ways. The first one used an ETEC mutated in the lipid A acyltransferase (*msbB*) and Labile toxin subunit A (*eltA*), (*EΔmsbBΔeltA*) to decrease the OMV toxicity level. The OMV generated from this mutant were used to immunize adult mice and test the immunoreactivity. It was shown that the detoxified OMV yielded higher titers of IgG1, IgM, and IgA, in comparison to the OMV from a wild-type strain. Later, offspring, born to immunized mothers with the OMV- *EΔmsbBΔeltA*, passively immunized by breast feeding and challenged with ETEC, displayed low colonization level. In the second part of this approach, ETEC antigens including the adhesins FliC and CFA/I, were expressed as heterologous proteins in *Vibrio cholera* OMV. This strain was engineered by deletion of *msbB*, cholera toxin subunits A and B (*ctxAB*) and the major flagelling FlaA (*flaA*) (*VΔmsbBΔctxABΔflaA*). As in the previous test with the OMV from ETEC *EΔmsbBΔeltA*, the immuneresponse against *VΔmsbBΔctxABΔflaA* expressing FliC-CFA/I, displayed the same pattern in adult mice and a similar colonization level in the neonatal mice model. While an immuneresponse against both heterologous expressed ETEC antigens in *Vibrio cholerae* was induced, none of these approaches resulted in an improved protection level (Leitner *et al.*, 2015).

IMMUNOPROTECTION FOR EPEC INFECTIONS

Enteropathogenic *E. coli*, non-invasive bacteria, are able to colonize small intestine, causing moderate to acute diarrhea mainly in less than 2 years old children in developing countries. The peculiar characteristic of this pathogen and pathotype is the presence of the LEE pathogenic genomic island that encodes virulence factors, such as intimin and the translocated intimin receptor (Tir), associated with the T3SS necessary to produce attaching and effacing (A/E) lesions on the intestinal microvilli. The A/E lesion consists in the rearrangement of the actin and tight attachment of the bacteria to the host cells by the translocation of effectors. Tir, that serves as receptor for intimin and promotes the actin rearrangement, is one of the main protein translocated from the bacterium to the eukaryotic cell through the T3SS. In contrast to EHEC LEE-positive, intimin and Tir are important for the adhesion and establishment of EPEC to the eukaryotic cells. Also, it is well known the EPEC's capability of a localized adherence (LA) produced by a bundle-forming pili (BFP, being BfpA its major subunit); this pili is encoded by the plasmid *E. coli* adherence factor (pEAE) (Ochoa *et al.*, 2008). Nonetheless, this pathotype

has been subcategorized in: i) Typical EPEC (tEPEC) carrying the EPEC adherence factor plasmid (pEAF) and LEE island and ii) Atypical EPEC (aEPEC) which lack the pEAF (Croxen *et al.*, 2013; Gomes *et al.*, 2016; Scaletsky and Fagundes-Neto, 2016). In the case of the aEPEC, that lacks the BFP, it has been showed that they can produce a LA-like pattern promoted by the intimin (subtype omicron), and in some cases the aggregative or diffuse patters (Hernandes *et al.*, 2008; Gomes *et al.*, 2016).

The most common O serogroups for the classical EPEC are: O26, O39, O55, O86, O88, O103, O111, O114, O119, O125ac, O126, O127, O128ab, O142, O145, O157 and O158. In the other hand, even that the most recurrent aEPEC serogroups are O51, O145, O26, O55, and O111, many others of the aEPECs do not belong to the tEPEC same serogroups and some are neither O nor H typeable (Hernandes *et al.*, 2009; Hu and Torres, 2015). The tEPEC is most commonly recovered from humans while aEPECs are recovery from different farmer and domestic animals considered as a zoonotic pathogen (Hernandes *et al.*, 2009; Gomes *et al.*, 2016). However, latest reports have showed an increased emergence of aEPEC in developed and developing countries (Ochoa and Contreras, 2011; Ingle *et al.*, 2016).

The incidence and prevalence numbers of EPEC infections are variable according to the diagnosis methods, in fact the molecular methods targeting specific genes (as intimin) seems to show an incidence of 5-10% of pediatric diarrheal cases in developing countries whereas diagnosis made on Hep-2 adherence-pattern and serotyping has shown an average prevalence rates from 10 to 20% (Ochoa *et al.*, 2008). More recently it has been shown that aEPEC have a major prevalence in both developing and developed countries than tEPEC (Ochoa *et al.*, 2008).

Passive immunization against EPEC

A natural immune protection after an initial EPEC infection has been shown and antibodies can protect against future infections. Breast feeding has an important role in the natural immune protection against EPEC infections. Studies of colostrum from mothers in developing countries have shown that IgA antibodies, mainly against intimin, EspA, EspB, EspD, EspC and BFP, can be transmitted by colostrum. These antibodies can prime and protect the neonates in the first hours of birth against EPEC. (Parissi-Crivelli *et al.*, 2000; Noguera-Obenza *et al.*, 2003; Durand *et al.*, 2013). In addition, EspA, B, C, and D, immuneresponse might confer cross protection against EHEC strains that carry the LEE locus. The prevalence of IgA antibodies against BfpA and EspB has been detected also in stool specimens from breastfed-pediatric patients with acute diarrhea, but absent in healthy children and non-breastfed (Quintana Flores *et al.*, 2002). The

main prevalence of anti-BfpA fecal antibodies has shown the immogenicity of BfpA, however their functionality as blocking or neutralizing antibodies have not fully elucidated. (de Souza Campos Fernandes *et al.*, 2003).

For EPEC vaccine development a number of candidates have been considered. Among these, EspB is one of the most important proteins for the EPEC pathogenesis which contributes to the attaching and effacing lesion in epithelial cells, it helps the Tir phosphorylation, the entrance into the host cells and mediates anti-phagocytosis by inhibiting myosin function (Taylor *et al.*, 1998; Iizumi *et al.*, 2007). Thus, an EspB-EPEC mutant has been used in human immunization, showing that it was able to confer protection to 9 out of 10 human volunteers, from whom Diarrhea was absent. The mutant strain was present in the stools in fewer rates than the wild-type strains and for the same period of time. In addition, a biopsy performed to two volunteers showed not destruction of microvillus brush border (Tacket *et al.*, 2000).

Besides all mention above, up to date there is still not any vaccine available to prevent the infections against EPEC, which occurs mainly in developing countries and where acute diarrhea due the infection of this pathogen is still a public health concern. The most recent information obtained both from the genome sequencing and the maternal/passive immunization will allow the scrutiny for novel antigens that will be used for vaccine development (Torres, 2017b).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The highly genomic plasticity of *E. coli* is one of the issues to develop an effective treatment against the disease assortment caused by this bacterium. *E. coli* strains share a common core genome which is highly conserved among all the strains while the encoding genes related to diverse pathogenic functions, involved in infection, disease development and host-pathogen interaction varies among phatotypes. The whole genome sequencing (WGS) has unraveled the variations of the bacterial clonal population, and opened new lights on the evolution of the pathogenic strains, respective to a non-pathogenic strain, to a pathotype prototype or to a specific serotype (Sahl *et al.*, 2015 Moriel *et al.*, 2012; Ingle *et al.*, 2016). In addition, the comparison of virulence factors presence among different *E. coli* phylogenetic groups and clinical outcomes (severe, lethal, non-lethal or asymptomatic diarrheal cases) suggest that the associated genes can be lost and reacquired many times. Moreover, the severity of the disease and the closes relationship among the isolates from the same and similar clinical outcomes might suggest that also the host has an important influence in the severity of the disease in addition to the genomic background of the bacteria. In the same way, infections can be

generated by clonal populations, hypervirulent clones and in some cases by multiple pathogenic strains in one individual, each one with specific and unique genomic and virulent characteristics (Sahl *et al.*, 2015; Hazen *et al.*, 2016).

Nonetheless, as illustrated in this review, different studies have led to the discovery of potential vaccine candidates related at least to certain or most common InPEC infections. A number of different approaches have been used for vaccine candidate identification. Nowadays, interpreting the data from “omics” approaches such as WGS, transcriptomic and proteomics, will empowered the new antigen discovery and improvement of existing prospective vaccines. The efforts to prevent diarragenic diseases produced by intestinal pathogenic *E. coli* should be strength, not only for the ETEC or EHEC infections but to the other pathotypes that are becoming relevant agents in the public health. Importantly, treatments and preventive intervention, should also target non-O157 EHECs serotypes, and other pathotypes as DAEC, EIEC, EAEC for which vaccines development and discovery studies are scarce or nulls (Bouzari *et al.*, 2010). Recently has been proposed that multidisciplinary research, collaboration and partnerships should integrate the One Health concept, as done in Latin America in recent years (Torres, 2017a). In particular, this concept states that the human health is connected to the relationship between environment, animals and human beings. For this matter, extending research to the animal pathogenic strains should be necessary. Examples or this are *E. coli* research studies in animal reservoirs (Etcheverría *et al.*, 2016).

The battle against InPEC infections is still ongoing and the perspectives for the vaccine development need a multidisciplinary research to get advances in the treatments and vaccine development. Additional efforts, not only from biomedical or basic research but also from clinical, veterinarian, and public health fields, will be required to better understand the disease proliferation in different settings and design new preventive strategies (CDC).

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MR-L and RR, wrote the manuscript. All authors contributed to the preparation of the manuscript, to the ideas and concepts contained in it. All authors reviewed and approved the manuscript.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

RR and MP are permanent employees of GSK. The authors declare that GSK provided support in the form of salaries. All the other authors declare that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Table 1. Summary of the most prospective vaccine candidates against EHEC and ETEC.

EHEC			
Type	Key component	Efficacy outcome	Reference
Shiga toxin-based vaccines	Antibodies α Stx1B and α Stx2A	Good tolerance and safety in a human trial single dose study.	Bitzan <i>et al.</i> , 2009
	Two copies of anti-Stx2B VHH and one anti-sero albumin VHH	Decrease the toxicity in Stx2 lethal mouse model.	Mejias <i>et al.</i> , 2016
Attenuated bacteria-based vaccines	EHEC O157:H7 86-24 strain Δ ler Δ stx2 expressing Stx1A Stx2A detoxified	Reduce EHEC O157:H7 wild type strain colonization.	Liu <i>et al.</i> , 2009
	Attenuated EPEC O126:H6	Reduce mortality in mice model and shown cross-reaction of produced EspB and intimin EPEC antibodies with EspB and intimin from EHEC.	Calderon Toledo <i>et al.</i> , 2011
	Attenuated <i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium expressing recombinant EspA, Intimin and Stx2B	Higher titer of specific antibodies, and specific lymphocyte proliferation.	Oliveira <i>et al.</i> , 2012
	Attenuated <i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium χ 3987 (Δ cya, Δ crp, Δ asd and H683 Δ aro Δ asd) expressing γ -intimin variant	Induce systemic and humoral immunity by increase titers of IgG in serum and IgA in feces. Reduced the EHEC O157:H7 shedding post challenge.	Oliveira <i>et al.</i> , 2012
	Recombinant Bacillus Calmette-Guérin expressing Stx2B (rBCG-Stx2B)	Increase the levels of Stx2 IgG in mice. Higher survival rate (63%) in immunized mice after EHEC challenge.	Fujii <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Bacterial Ghost-based vaccines	Bacterial Ghosts of O157:H7 unable to cause infection	Antitoxicity effect on Vero cells culture. Stop the shedding of EHEC O157:H7 wild type strain and rate survival of 93% in orally immunized mice and 100% in rectal immunized mice.	Mayr <i>et al.</i> , 2012
	Bacterial Ghosts of O157:H7 exposing Stx chimerical protein (Stx2Am-Stx1B)	High specific IgG and IgA antibodies titer to Stx1A and Stx2B. Survival rate of 52% in immunized mice.	Cai <i>et al.</i> , 2015
Protein-based vaccines	EspA-Stx1A fusion protein	High titers of specific IgG antibodies to EspA-Stx1A and 95% of mice survival after a challenge with crude toxin Stx2.	Cheng <i>et al.</i> , 2009
	Stx1B-Stx2-truncated intimin fusion protein	100% of survival rate of orally immunized mice challenged with EHEC O157:H7 88321 and anti-toxin and anti-adhesion	Gansheroff <i>et al.</i> , 1999

		effect.	
	Stx2Am-Stx1B, SAmB fusion protein	93% survival rate of orally immunized mice challenged with EHEC O157:H7 88321.	Gao <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Peptide-based vaccines	C terminal region of intimin	Reduce the bacterial attachment to Hep-2 cells and confers protection to immunized mice.	Wan <i>et al.</i> , 2011
	Peptide KT-12 (KASITEIKADKT) conjugated with KLH	High concentrations of IgG in subcutaneous immunized mice and high titer of IgA in intranasal immunized mice.	Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Plant based vaccines	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> (tobacco) NT-1 cell line expression inactivated Stx1A	High specific IgA anti Stx2 in fecal samples from orally immunized mice, conferring high protection against STEC strain B2F1 (75% survival rate).	Wen <i>et al.</i> , 2006
	Chimerical gene <i>espA-eae-tir</i>	Reduction of EHEC O157:H7 shedding, colonization and histological damage in subcutaneously or orally immunized mice.	Amani <i>et al.</i> , 2009
DNA-based vaccines	Stx2AΔAB DNA vaccine	Protection to immunized mice challenged with native Stx2 and toxin neutralization in Vero culture cells.	Bentancor <i>et al.</i> , 2009
	C-terminal domain of <i>EscC</i>	Reduction bacterial counts in feces, colon and caecum and increment of IgGs in sera and IgA in feces from intranasal immunized mice.	Garcia-Angulo <i>et al.</i> , 2014 Tapia <i>et al.</i> , 2016
	pVAX-efal (<i>efa-1'</i>)	High levels of specific mucosal IgA and reduction of EHEC colonization.	(Riquelme-Neira <i>et al.</i> , 2015)
Polysaccharide-based vaccines	O-specific polysaccharide of EHEC O157:H7 conjugated with recombinant exotoxin A of <i>P. aeruginosa</i> (O157-rEPA)	High levels of IgG against LPS in vaccinated children with non-collateral reactions to the vaccine.	Konadu <i>et al.</i> , 1994 Ahmed <i>et al.</i> , 2006
Adjuvant enhanced vaccines	EspB and/or C-terminal of γ -Intimin proteins + MALP-2 adjuvant	Higher titers of IgA at broncheo-alveolar level.	Cataldi <i>et al.</i> , 2008
	Chimerical protein Tir-Stx1B-Stx2B + Zot adjuvant	Protection against EHEC. High IgA and IgG response and reduction of bacterial shedding in faces post EHEC wild-type challenge in subcutaneous immunized mice.	Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2011
ETEC			
Toxin-based vaccines	LT toxin using skin patch	Increase amount of anti-LT IgG and IgA in 97-100% of human volunteers.	McKenzie <i>et al.</i> , 2007
	STaP13F-LTR192G toxoid	Development of IgG specific	Liu <i>et al.</i> ,

	fusion protein	antibodies for LT and STa proteins in serum and feces and only IgA in feces in immunized mice.	2011
Autotransporters-based vaccines	Recombinant Ag43 and pAT autotransporters	Increase of fecal IgA and relative protection against intestinal colonization in immunized mice.	Harris <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Adhesins-base vaccines	Recombinant ETEC two-partner secretion protein A (EtpA)	Inhibition of ETEC colonization in immunized mice.	Roy <i>et al.</i> , 2009
	CS21/LngA formulated with cholera toxin	Increase specific IgG antibodies in serum and IgA antibodies in fecal and intestinal lavages and stop the bacteria shedding in immunized mice.	Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2016
Attenuated bacteria-based vaccines	ETEC E1392/75-2A Δ aroC Δ ompR and ETEC E1392/75-2A Δ aroC Δ ompR Δ ompC	IgA and IgG response and specific antibodies against CS1 and CS3.	Turner <i>et al.</i> , 2001 McKenzie <i>et al.</i> , 2006
	Etvax (attenuated bacteria expressing CS6 in K12 and CFA/I, CS3, CS5 in ETEC O78 toxin-negative) + LCTBA hybrid protein + double mutant LT	High titers of fecal, jejunal and serum IgA and IgG in orally immunized human.	Norton <i>et al.</i> , 2011
	<i>Vibrio cholerae</i> strains expressing CFA/I operon (cfaA-B-C-E)	Increase IgA and IgG titers in serum of immunized mice.	Tobias <i>et al.</i> , 2008
	ETEC strains expressing CFA/I (ACAM2010 str.), CS2 and CS3 (ACAM2007 str.) and CS1, CS2, and CS3 (ACAM2017 str.)	Increase the IgA against CFAs level in human volunteers orally immunized.	Daley <i>et al.</i> , 2007
	Non-toxigenic <i>E. coli</i> expressing CS2, CS4, CS5, or CS6 and CFA/I	Induce IgG+IgM antibodies against CS6 in sera and IgA in fecal samples of immunized mice.	Tobias <i>et al.</i> , 2010
	ACE527 ETEC complex (ACAM2022 (O141:H5, expressing CS5 and CS6), ACAM2025 (O39:H12, expressing CFA/I) and ACAM2027 (O71:H-, expressing CS2, CS3, and CS1)	Help to short the duration of the diarrhea and reduce the shedding of the wild-type strain, conferring a protection level ranging between 33% to 98% in human clinical trials.	Harro <i>et al.</i> , 2011 Harro <i>et al.</i> , 2011b
	ETEC OMVs Δ msbB Δ elta	Detoxified OMV yielded higher titers of IgG1, IgM, and IgA and reduce wild type colonization in immunized mice.	Leitner <i>et al.</i> , 2015
OMVs-based vaccines	<i>Vibrio cholerae</i> OMV Δ msbB Δ ctxAB Δ flaA expressing ETEC FliC and CFA/I	OMV yielded higher titers of IgG1, IgM, and IgA and reduce wild type colonization in immunized mice.	Leitner <i>et al.</i> , 2015

Résumé long français

Cette thèse de doctorat s'est déroulée dans le cadre d'un projet européen FP7 (7th Framework Program) MSCA (Marie Skłodowska-Curie action) ITN (Initiale Training Network) EID (European Industrial Doctorates) appelé DISCo (a multidisciplinary Doctoral Industrial School on novel preventive strategies against *Escherichia coli* infections) coordonné par Mariagrazia Pizza et co-coordonné par Mickaël Desvaux. Ainsi, ce doctorat s'est déroulé pour moitié en Italie au centre de recherche GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) sur le site de Sienne sous la supervision de Roberto Rosini et la direction de Fabio Polticelli de Università degli Studi Roma Tre. L'autre moitié de la thèse s'est déroulée en France à l'INRA, centre Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes sur le site de Theix sous la direction de Mickaël Desvaux et Grégory Jubelin comme co-encadrant. Cette thèse de doctorat participe au développement de nouvelles stratégies préventives aux infections aux *E. coli* pathogènes intestinaux (InPEC), en particulier *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC), par une stratégie vaccinale. Dans ce contexte, une approche de vaccinologie inverse a été mise en œuvre pour identifier de nouveaux antigènes candidats qui ont ensuite été délivrés par la technologie GMMA (Generalized Modules for Membrane Antigens). Par ailleurs, un domaine épitope potentiel chez les autotransporteurs, *i.e.* l'autochaperon, a été caractérisé par analyse des séquences protéiques et modélisation structurale.

INTRODUCTION

Escherichia coli est l'un des microorganismes les plus communs du microbiote intestinal. La colonisation bactérienne par *E. coli* commence depuis la naissance et développe une relation symbiotique (Nataro et Kaper, 1998, Kaper et al., 2004). Cependant, certaines souches d'*E. coli* ont évolué en bactéries pathogènes. Selon le site d'infection, ces *E. coli* pathogènes sont classés parmi les *E. coli* pathogènes intestinaux (InPEC) ou parmi les *E. coli* pathogènes extra-intestinaux (ExPEC). Tandis que les ExPEC comprennent les *E. coli* uropathogènes (UPEC) et les *E. coli* responsables de méningites néonatales (NMEC) (Nataro et Kaper, 1998b, Kaper et al., 2004), les InPECs sont subdivisés en six pathotypes : les *E. coli* entérotoxigènes (ETEC), les *E. coli* entérotoxigènes (EPEC), les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC), les *E. coli* entéroaggrégatifs (EAEC), les *E. coli* entéroinvasifs (EIEC), et les *E. coli* diffusifs adhérents (DAEC). Cette classification est basée sur des différences de caractéristiques génétiques et phénotypiques des souches, du tableau clinique de l'infection qu'elles provoquent, du

mécanisme de pathogénèse et de leur interaction avec l'entérocytes (Figure 1). De par l'expression de Shiga-toxines (Stx), les EHEC appartiennent au plus large groupe des *E. coli* codants/producteurs des Stx (STEC).

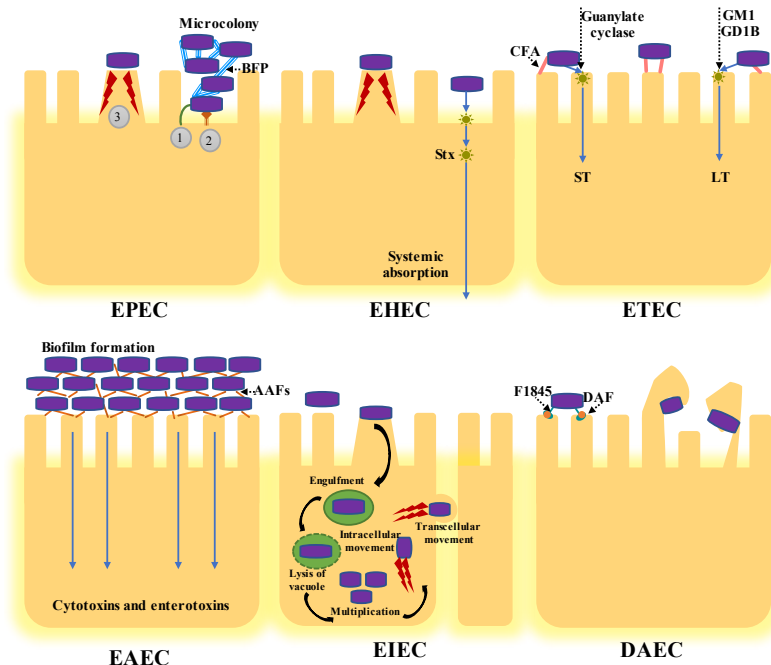


Figure 1 : **Représentation schématique des six pathotypes InPEC, selon leurs principaux facteurs de virulence et leur interaction avec les entérocytes** (Figure basée sur Kaper et al., 2004). Les EPEC colonisent les entérocytes de l'intestin grêle, détruisent l'architecture microvillaire et induisent des lésions d'attachement et d'effacement (A/E). Le remodelage cytosquelettique se produit au cours de la réponse inflammatoire et de l'apparition de diarrhée. 1 : Adhésion initiale, 2 : Translocation des protéines par le système de sécrétion de Type III, 3 : Formation d'une structure en piédestal. Les EHEC colonisent le côlon et induisent également des lésions A/E avec la caractéristique principale d'exprimer des Shiga-toxines (Stx). Les ETEC adhèrent aux entérocytes de l'intestin grêle provoquant une diarrhée aqueuse due à la sécrétion d'entérotoxines thermostables (LT) et/ou thermostables (ST). Les EAEC adhèrent à l'épithélium de l'intestin grêle et forme un biofilm épais avec l'expression de cytotoxines et d'entérotoxines sécrétées. Les EIEC pénètrent dans les cellules épithéliales du côlon, lysent le phagosome et se déplacent à l'intérieur des cellules infectées en restructurant les microfilaments d'actine. Les EIEC peuvent se déplacer latéralement à travers l'épithélium par propagation directe de cellule à cellule ou peuvent sortir et réintégrer la membrane plasmique baso-latérale. Les DAEC induisent une transduction de signal caractéristique dans les entérocytes de l'intestin grêle et le développement de longues projections cellulaires s'enroulant autour de la bactérie. AAF, fimbriae adhérent agrégative ; BFP, pilus formant des faisceaux ; CFA, facteur de colonisation antigénique ; DAF, facteur d'accélération de la décroissance ; ST, entérotoxine thermostable ; LT, entérotoxine thermostable ; EAST1, entérotoxines thermostables d'*E. coli* entéroaggrégatifs ; ShET1, entérotoxine 1 de *Shigella*.

Les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) sont des pathogènes importants associés à plusieurs

épidémies diarrhéiques, principalement dues à la consommation de nourritures ou de boissons contaminées par ces bactéries, notamment de la viande hachée, des végétaux, jus de pomme ou encore des produits laitiers non pasteurisés. Les bovins sont considérés comme le principal réservoir naturel des EHEC où le portage est asymptomatique. En tant qu'anthropozoonose, les infections à EHEC peuvent provenir d'une contamination fécale directe (viande, lait) ou indirecte (légumes, eau) des produits alimentaires (Rivas et al., 2016). Les populations à risque comprennent les enfants et les personnes âgées. Aux États-Unis, en 2014, l'incidence pour 100 000 habitants était de 690 cas pour les EHEC O157 et de 445 pour les EHEC non O157. En ce qui concerne les EHEC non-O157:H7, leur incidence est en augmentation (Stacy M. Crim et Matthew Cartter, 2015). L'une des complications majeures suite aux infections aux EHEC est le syndrome hémolytique et urémique (SHU). Ce syndrome résulte principalement de l'expression et de l'action de Shiga-toxines (Stx), il est caractérisé par une triade d'anémie hémolytique microangiopathique, de thrombocytopénie et d'insuffisance rénale aiguë, avec le risque de développement de SHU (syndrome hémolytique et urémique) dans 10 % des cas chez les enfants de moins de 10 ans. Les principales épidémies recensées se sont produites dans les pays développés, comme les États-Unis d'Amérique, le Canada, l'Australie, le Japon, la France et d'autres en Europe. Néanmoins, les pays d'Amérique latine ont aussi connu des épisodes épidémiques où les EHEC posent ainsi un problème de santé publique, notamment en Argentine, au Brésil et au Chili (Nataro et Kaper, 1998b, Kaper et al., 2004, Caprioli et al., 2005, Mejias et al., 2016).

Entre EHEC O157 et non-O157, les manifestations cliniques sont très similaires et peuvent commencer par des diarrhées aqueuses légères avant d'évoluer en diarrhées sanglantes appelées colites hémorragiques. La période d'incubation avant l'apparition des premiers symptômes est d'environ 3 jours pour les EHEC O157:H7 (Bell et al., 1994). En plus des épisodes diarrhéiques, les principaux symptômes pouvant se manifester au début de l'infection sont de la fièvre, des crampes abdominales et/ou des vomissements (Tarr et al., 2005). Suite à l'apparition des colites hémorragiques, les patients sont généralement hospitalisés et peuvent guérir de l'infection après une semaine (Tarr et al., 2005). Cependant, il n'existe à ce jour aucun moyen de prévenir l'infection ni le développement vers des complications comme le SHU. Les traitements restent symptomatiques pour les infections à EHEC avec des perfusions intraveineuses d'électrolytes, le contrôle de la fonction rénale et des plaquettes, et où l'utilisation de médicaments antidiarrhéiques, antidouleurs et/ou antibiotiques est déconseillée (Holtz et al., 2009).

Comme pour tous les InPEC, les EHEC sont définis par un ensemble de preuves basées sur des

manifestations cliniques, notamment des symptômes, ainsi que des caractéristiques histologiques et moléculaires (Nataro et Kaper, 1998a, Kaper et al., 2004). Selon leur incidence, leur implication dans des épidémies ou leur association avec des formes plus ou moins sévères de la maladie, les STEC peuvent être classés en 4 classes, à savoir (i) la classe A correspondant au sérotype O157:H7 avec une virulence élevée, (ii) la classe B comprenant les six sérotypes non O157:H7, *i.e.* O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H2, O111:H8, O121:H19 et O145:H28, avec une virulence modérée, (iii) la classe C pour les sérotypes principalement impliqués dans certains cas sporadiques avec une virulence modérée, et (iv) classe D pour les sérotypes jamais rapportés dans l'infection humaine et donc avirulent (Karmali et al., 2003). Cette classification met aussi en exergue la différence entre EHEC et STEC, puisque les EHEC étant isolés de cas cliniques sont nécessairement pathogènes alors que les STEC ne le sont pas forcément ; tandis que les EHEC répondent à des critères phénotypiques, les STEC ne font références qu'à une caractéristique génotypique, c'est-à-dire la présence de gènes codant pour des Stx.

L'adhésion et la persistance de la bactérie est une caractéristique clé dans la pathogénèse bactérienne. Les EHEC O157:H7 colonisent principalement le côlon humain et portent un îlot de pathogénicité (PAI) connu sous le nom de locus d'effacement des entérocytes (LEE), aussi présent chez les EPEC où il est responsable des lésions A/E. Cependant, ces lésions ne sont jamais observées sur des biopsies de patients infectés par des EHEC mais ont seulement pu être observées lors d'essais *in vitro*. Par ailleurs, les souches d'EHEC non-O157:H7 ne portent pas nécessairement le LEE (McWilliams et Torres, 2014, Monteiro et al., 2016).

Les Stx correspondent aux facteurs de virulence caractéristiques des souches d'EHEC impliqués dans la pathogénèse et le développement du SHU. Les Stx sont codées à partir d'un prophage intégré dans le chromosome bactérien. Les Stx appartiennent à la famille AB et sont classées en deux types principaux, les Stx1 et Stx2. Les Stx1 se déclinent encore en 3 sous-types (a, c et d) et les Stx2 en 7 sous-types (de a à g) (Scheutz et al., 2012). Une souche d'EHEC peut coder pour un ou deux types de Stx, et certaines souches peuvent combiner différents types et sous-types de Stx. Néanmoins, Stx2 s'avère être la toxine associée aux formes les plus sévères d'infection aux EHEC (Boerlin et al., 1999). Globalement, les Stx provoquent des lésions cellulaires après leur internalisation en interagissant avec le récepteur Gb3 dans les cellules de Paneth et rénales provoquant la dépurination (adénine) de la sous-unité 28S du ribosome (ARNr 28S), qui entraîne alors l'arrêt de la synthèse des protéines. Ces toxines peuvent activer la cascade de coagulation, ainsi que l'hémolyse intravasculaire et ischémique (Nataro et Kaper,

1998b, Donnenberg et Whittam, 2001, Thorpe, 2004). La présence de la toxine dans la circulation sanguine entraînerait une aggravation de la maladie (Pacheco et Sperandio, 2012). Par ailleurs, il a été montré que l'utilisation d'antibiotiques entraînait la production de Stx (Zhang et al., 2000). Notamment, des concentrations sub-inhibitrices de fluoroquinolones ou de triméthoprime peuvent activer le système SOS induisant le cycle lytique du prophage conduisant à la lyse bactérienne et à la libération des Stx (Kimmitt et al., 2000, McGannon et al., 2010). Pour ces raisons, les traitements antibiotiques lors d'infections à EHEC ne sont pas recommandés et même proscrits.

Le plasmide pO157 est un méga-plasmide de 92 kb très commun parmi les souches de STEC/EHEC O157:H7. Il s'agit d'un plasmide de type F qui porte des gènes codant pour des facteurs de virulence importants, parmi lesquels (i) StcE, une métalloprotéase à zinc sécrétée par le système de sécrétion de type II (T2SS) lui-même codé par les gènes *etp*, (ii) l'hémolysine HlyA, (iii) la catalase peroxydase KatP, (iv) la sérine protéase EspP impliquée dans le clivage du facteur de coagulation V, ou encore (v) l'inhibiteur des stéroïdes C1 du complément (C1-INH) aussi impliqué dans la colonisation et la formation de lésions tissulaires par son activité mucinase (Burland et al., 1998; Donnenberg et Whittam, 2001; Torres, 2008).

L'adhésion d'*E. coli* O157:H7 et d'autres sérotypes EHEC aux cellules épithéliales de l'intestin est l'une des étapes cruciales de la pathogénèse. Le facteur d'adhésion le mieux étudié est le locus d'entérocyte et d'effacement (LEE). Cet îlot de pathogénicité de 35 Kb organisé en 5 opérons (du LEE-1 au LEE-5) confère le phénotype de lésion A/E essentiellement observé dans des modèles cellulaires *in vitro* ou des explants pour les EHEC/STEC (Nataro et Kaper, 1998). Ce phénotype est lié à la reconnaissance étroite entre les protéines Tir et intimin, codées par les gènes *tir* et *eae* respectivement. Néanmoins, ces protéines sont nécessaires mais pas suffisantes pour produire des lésions A/E typiques, ce qui suggère l'implication d'autres facteurs d'adhésion pour l'interaction initiale avec l'entérocyte (Torres et al., 2002; et al., 2005). Les séquençages complets de génomes de souches d'EHEC O157:H7 indiquent l'existence d'au moins une douzaine d'adhésines, dont (i) EspA, formant un filament sécrété et assemblé par un T3SS codé par le LEE, notamment régulé par ToxB (Tatsuno, I. et al, 2001, Stevens M.P. et al 2004), (ii) Iha (IrgA homologue adhesin) (Stevens, 2005) ou encore (iii) Cah (calcium binding antigen 43 homologue) (Torres et al., 2005). Concernant les pili (ou fimbriae), au moins seize opérons ont pu être identifiés (Perna et al., 2001) et certains caractérisés dont les (i) fimbriae de type 1 (McWilliams and Torres, 2014), (ii) curli (McWilliams et al, 2014), (iii) F9 fimbriae

(McWilliams and Torres, 2014), (iv) Ecp (*E. coli* common pili) (Rendon et al., 2007), (v) pili de type 4 HCP (haemorrhagic *E. coli* pili) (Xicohtencatl-Cortes et al., 2007 and 2009), (vi) ELF (*E. coli* laminin-binding fimbriae) (Samadder et al., 2009), ou encore (vii) Lpf1 et Lpf2 (long polar fimbriae) (Torres et al., 2002, 2004). Chez les EHEC LEE-négatif, les adhésines les plus souvent retrouvées incluent (i) Lpf2 (LpfO113) (Doughty et al., 2002), (ii) Saa (STEC autoagglutinating adhesin) (Paton et al., 2001), (iii) Sab (STEC autotransporter contributing to biofilm formation) (Herold et al., 2009) ou encore Eib (*E. coli* immunoglobulin-binding protein) (Lu et al., 2006, Merkel et al., 2010).

Les facteurs de colonisation chez les *Escherichia coli* codant des Shiga toxines (STEC) : Depuis les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) jusqu'aux entéropathotypes associés (A secretome view of colonisation factors in Shiga toxin-encoding *Escherichia coli* (STEC): from enterohaemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) to related enteropathotypes)

Article de revue (accepté dans FEMS Microbiology Letters)

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La définition du groupe des *Escherichia coli* produisant des Shiga toxines (STEC), qui ne sont pas nécessairement pathogènes, est en fait essentiellement basée sur la présence de gènes codant pour des Shiga toxines (Stx). Parmi les *E. coli* pathogènes intestinaux (InPEC), les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) constituent le sous-groupe majeur des STEC virulents. Les EHEC causent des maladies humaines graves telles que la colite hémorragique et le syndrome

hémolytique et urémique (SHU). Alors que les EHEC ont évolué à partir d'*E. coli* entérotoxigènes (EPEC), des hybrides avec les *E. coli* entéroagrégatifs (EAEC) sont récemment apparus. Il est à noter que certains *E. coli* entéroinvasifs (EIEC) appartiennent également au groupe STEC. Alors que le LEE (locus de l'effacement des entérocytes) est un déterminant moléculaire important dans la pathogénicité, ni tous les EHEC ni tous les STEC ne contiennent le LEE, suggérant qu'ils possèdent des facteurs de virulence et de colonisation supplémentaires. Actuellement, neuf systèmes de sécrétion protéique ont été décrits chez des bactéries lipopolysaccharidiques didermes (LPS) (archétype Gram négatif) et peuvent être impliqués dans la sécrétion d'effecteurs extracellulaires, de protéines de surface ou d'assemblage d'organelles, comme le flagelle ou pili. Certains composants du sécrétome des STEC et des entérotoxotypes apparentés sont impliqués dans la colonisation des surfaces biotiques et abiotiques (Figure 2). La richesse des mécanismes impliqués dans le trafic protéique, la combinaison des facteurs de colonisation ainsi que la modulation de leur expression soulignent l'importance du sécrétome dans l'écophysiologie des STEC. Il s'avère pertinent de considérer la diversité des facteurs de colonisation dans les différents sous-groupes de STEC et des entérotoxotypes d'*E. coli* apparentés par rapport aux voies et systèmes de sécrétion des protéines chez les bactéries lipopolysaccharidiques didermes (bactéries à Gram négatif).

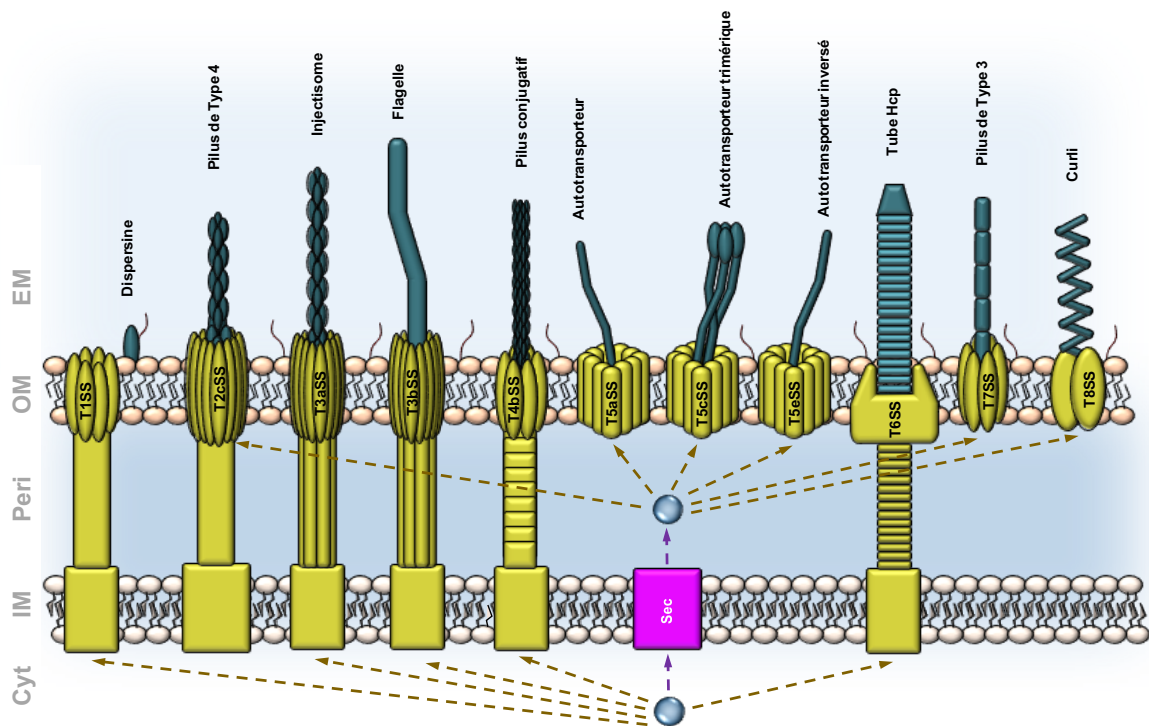


Figure 2 : **Vue d'ensemble des composants du sécrétome des STEC associés à la colonisation de surface.** Les systèmes d'exportation des protéines sont colorés en violet, les systèmes de sécrétion de protéines sont colorés en vert. Les effecteurs associés à chaque système de sécrétion et jouant le rôle de facteurs de colonisation sont colorés en bleu. T1SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type I ou système hétérotrimérique ABC-MFP-TolC. T2SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type II ou voie sécrétion-dépendante (SDP), en particulier le système T4P (pili de type 4) correspondant au T2SS sous-type c (T2cSS). T3SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type III, incluant l'injectisome (T3aSS) et le flagelle (T3bSS). T4SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type IV, en particulier le système de conjugaison Tra (T4bSS). T5SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type V, comprenant notamment les autotransporteurs (T5aSS), les autotransporteurs trimériques (T5cSS) et les autotransporteurs inversés (T5eSS). T6SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type VI. T7SS : Système de sécrétion protéique de Type VII ou voie chaperon-escorteur (CU). T8SS : système de sécrétion protéique de Type VIII ou voie de nucléation-précipitation extracellulaire (ENP). Cyt : cytoplasme. IM : membrane interne. Peri : périplasme. OM : membrane externe. EM : milieu extracellulaire.

Les *Escherichia coli* pathogènes intestinaux : Perspectives pour le développement de vaccins (Intestinal pathogenic *Escherichia coli*: insights for vaccines development)

Article de revue (soumis à *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*)

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Les maladies diarrhéiques sont l'une des principales causes de mortalité chez les enfants de moins de cinq ans et les *Escherichia coli* pathogènes intestinaux (InPEC) sont l'un des grands groupes responsables de ces infections dans le monde entier. À cet égard, les InPEC contribuent de manière significative aux maladies intestinales qui constituent un problème majeur dans les pays en voie de développement. Les pathotypes intestinaux tels que les *E. coli* entéropathogènes (EPEC) et les *E. coli* entérotoxigènes (ETEC) sont principalement endémiques dans les pays en voie de développement, alors que les souches ETEC sont la principale cause de diarrhée (tourista) chez les voyageurs en visite dans ces pays. D'autre part, les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) sont à l'origine de grandes épidémies dans le monde, affectant principalement les pays développés et responsables non seulement de maladies diarrhéiques pouvant évoluer en colite hémorragique, mais aussi de complications cliniques sévères comme le syndrome hémolytique et urémique (SHU). Si on considère l'émergence de souches résistantes aux antibiotiques, l'augmentation annuelle des coûts du système de santé, l'incidence

élevée de la diarrhée des voyageurs et l'augmentation du nombre d'épisodes de SHU, la nécessité de développer des traitements préventifs efficaces s'avère cruciale.

Bien que l'utilisation d'antibiotiques soit toujours un facteur clé pour le traitement de ces infections, les stratégies non antibiotiques sont déterminantes pour limiter l'augmentation des résistances aux antibiotiques mais aussi absolument nécessaires dans le cas des infections à EHEC, pour lesquelles aucun traitement prophylactique n'est disponible et où l'utilisation d'antibiotiques n'est absolument pas recommandée. Dans ce contexte, le développement de vaccins se focalisant sur plusieurs déterminants moléculaires antigéniques extracellulaires et/ou de surface, dont des facteurs de virulence, apparaît comme une stratégie de choix (Figure 3). Cependant, à ce jour, aucun vaccin homologué n'est efficace contre les infections à InPEC. Ces dernières années, un effort important a été fourni pour développer des vaccins efficaces capables de prévenir les maladies diarrhéiques dues aux InPEC. Un certain nombre de jalons a déjà été posé qui offrent des perspectives prometteuses pour le développement de vaccins contre les InPEC.

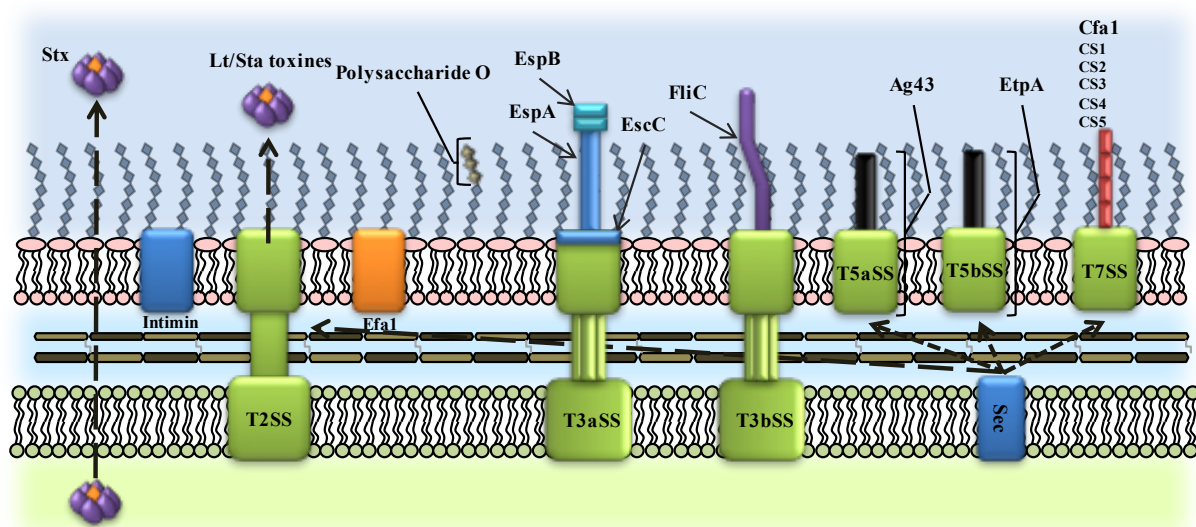


Figure 3 : Représentation schématique des facteurs de virulence utilisés comme antigènes candidats pour le développement de vaccins chez les InPEC. Différents facteurs de virulence ont été identifiés chez les InPECs comme des antigènes potentiels à des fins vaccinales, notamment des protéines de la membrane externe, des toxines, des polysaccharides O, des protéines exportés et sécrétés. T2SS : Système de sécrétion de Type II, T3aSS : Système de sécrétion de Type III sous-type a, T3bSS : Système de sécrétion de Type III sous-type b, T5aSS : Système de sécrétion de Type V sous-type a, T5bSS : Système de sécrétion de Type V sous-type b, T7SS : Système de sécrétion de Type VII.

RESULTATS DE LA THESE

L'augmentation de l'incidence des infections à EHEC ainsi que d'autres maladies diarrhéiques causées par différents agents étiologiques, est l'une des raisons pour poursuivre le développement et la découverte de nouveaux traitements contre ces pathogènes. De plus, l'utilisation d'antibiotiques n'est pas recommandée dans le cas d'infections à EHEC puisqu'elle peut aggraver la pathologie qui peut notamment évoluer vers des complications sévères, telle que le syndrome hémolytique et urémique (SHU). L'augmentation du nombre de SHU est devenue un problème majeur de santé publique, non seulement dans les pays occidentaux mais aussi en Amérique latine, comme en Argentine et au Brésil. À ce jour, il n'existe aucun vaccin homologué capable de protéger contre les *E. coli* pathogènes, que ce soit les ExPEC ou les InPEC, dont les EHEC. Les approches traditionnelles pour le développement de vaccins, en particulier l'atténuation de souches bactériennes pathogènes, nécessitent des années de travail qui n'aboutissent pas toujours à un vaccin efficace. Afin de tirer avantage des données « omiques », en particulier génomiques, transcriptomiques, ou encore protéomiques, de nouveaux concepts pour un développement plus rationnel et plus rapide de vaccins ont émergés. Ainsi, le concept de vaccinologie inverse a été formulé comme l'une des voies les plus prometteuses pour le développement des futurs vaccins. Cette approche s'appuie sur l'examen minutieux de toutes les CDS d'un génome, de prédire leur fonction et leur localisation subcellulaire. Selon les stratégies mises en œuvres, des données pan-génomiques, structurales pour la prédiction d'épitopes, transcriptomiques et/ou protéomiques peuvent être combinées selon différents pipelines d'analyse pour au final identifier des antigènes potentiels qui sont ensuite testés comme candidats au développement de nouveaux vaccins.

La sécrétion de facteurs de virulence spécifiques est l'une des principales différences entre les bactéries commensales et pathogènes. De tels facteurs de virulence sécrétés peuvent être libérés dans le milieu extracellulaire ou exposés à la surface cellulaire et être impliqués dans l'adhésion, la formation de biofilm et/ou la persistance des bactéries dans l'hôte. Le locus LEE code pour des déterminants impliqués dans la pathogénicité qui sont parmi les mieux caractérisés chez les EPEC et EHEC. Néanmoins, d'autres déterminants moléculaires peuvent participer à la pathogénèse et/ou au processus de colonisation depuis le portage animal, l'aliment comme vecteur de contamination jusqu'à l'infection chez les humains. Les autotransporteurs étant des

protéines pouvant se retrouver exposées à la surface bactérienne, ils peuvent être impliqués dans la reconnaissance immunologique et donc être de potentiels antigènes candidats pour le développement de vaccins. Au cours d'analyses immunoprotéomiques et dans une stratégie d'identification d'antigènes capables de générer une réponse immunitaire chez l'hôte au cours du processus d'infection, des autotransporteurs tels que EtpA, Ag43 et TibA ont pu être détectés. Ces autotransporteurs sont reconnus par les sérums de patients atteints de diarrhée à ETEC, confirmant leur expression au cours de l'infection. Ag43 et pAT sont capables d'augmenter le niveau IgA fécal et de fournir une protection relative contre la colonisation intestinale par les ETEC chez des souris immunisées. Par ailleurs, ils peuvent être impliqués dans différents processus de colonisation, tels que l'adhésion et la formation de biofilm.

Identification de nouveaux antigènes candidats chez *E. coli* O157:H7 par une stratégie de vaccinologie inverse

L'objectif de la première partie de cette thèse consiste à identifier de nouveaux antigènes candidats pour le développement de vaccins contre les EHEC O157:H7 par une approche de vaccinologie inverse. Au cours de ce travail, une approche bioinformatique d'analyse du génome de la souche EHEC O157: H7 EDL933 a été effectuée afin d'identifier de nouveaux antigènes candidats en considérant la prédiction de leur fonction et localisation subcellulaire. Parallèlement à l'analyse de distribution de ces gènes, la prévalence et la variabilité des séquences des antigènes ont été analysées par rapport à d'autres souches et sérotypes d'EHEC, mais également d'autres *E. coli* pathogènes. Les antigènes sélectionnés ont ensuite été exprimés et délivrés selon la technologie GMMA afin d'évaluer leur capacité à conférer une immunoprotection et une réduction de la colonisation intestinale dans un modèle murin.

Identification d'un nouvel antigène candidat pour le développement de vaccins contre les *Escherichia coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) O157:H7 par une approche de vaccinologie inverse (Identification of a novel vaccine candidate against enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) O157:H7 by reverse vaccinology approach).

Article de recherche (prochainement soumis)

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Les *E. coli* entérohémorragiques (EHEC) sont une cause majeure de grandes épidémies affectant principalement les pays développés. De 1982 à 2002, un total de 350 épidémies impliquant des *E. coli* O157 ont été signalées aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Les infections par les EHEC provoquent des maladies diarrhéiques comme la colite hémorragique pouvant évoluer vers des complications cliniques sévères, comme le syndrome hémolytique et urémique (SHU). Bien que des efforts axés sur l'hygiène aient été mis en œuvre dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire afin de réduire le risque d'infection par les *E. coli* O157 d'origine alimentaire, les épidémies causées par ce pathogène sont encore courantes et ce sans compter les cas sporadiques qui sont encore plus nombreux. Concernant le traitement des infections à EHEC, il faut noter que les thérapies à base d'antibiotiques sont généralement proscrites en raison du risque accru de libération de Shiga toxines (Stx), l'un des principaux facteurs de virulence de ces bactéries pathogènes. Parmi les stratégies de prévention non antibiotiques, le développement d'un vaccin est une approche pertinente pour les populations à risque mais à ce jour aucun vaccin homologué et spécifique contre les EHEC n'est disponible chez l'Homme. L'application d'une approche de vaccinologie inverse à partir du génome de la souche d'EHEC O157:H7 EDL933 a permis au final de sélectionner 3 antigènes protéiques potentiels (Figure 4). Ces antigènes ont été exprimés et délivrés par la technologie GMMA (modules généralisés pour les antigènes membranaires). Ces vaccins candidats se sont avérés immunogènes, et une réponse d'anticorps spécifique a pu être démontrée pour deux d'entre eux. De plus, l'immunisation avec l'antigène MC001 a permis de réduire significativement la colonisation intestinale par EHEC O157:H7 comme démontré par numération bactérienne dans les contenus fécaux, caecaux et au niveau du côlon chez la souris. Cet homologue de l'enzyme lipidase A de *Salmonella* Typhimurium (LpxR) est pour la première fois décrit comme un antigène candidat pour le développement de vaccins. La distribution des gènes et l'analyse de la variabilité des séquences ont montré que MC001 était principalement présent et conservé chez les EHEC O157:H7 et certains *E. coli* entéropathogènes (EPEC). Compte tenu de la forte variabilité génétique entre et au sein de ces entéropathotypes d'*E. coli*, l'utilisation d'un antigène aussi conservé que MC001 permettrait une couverture vaccinale élargie aux souches d'InPEC majeures.

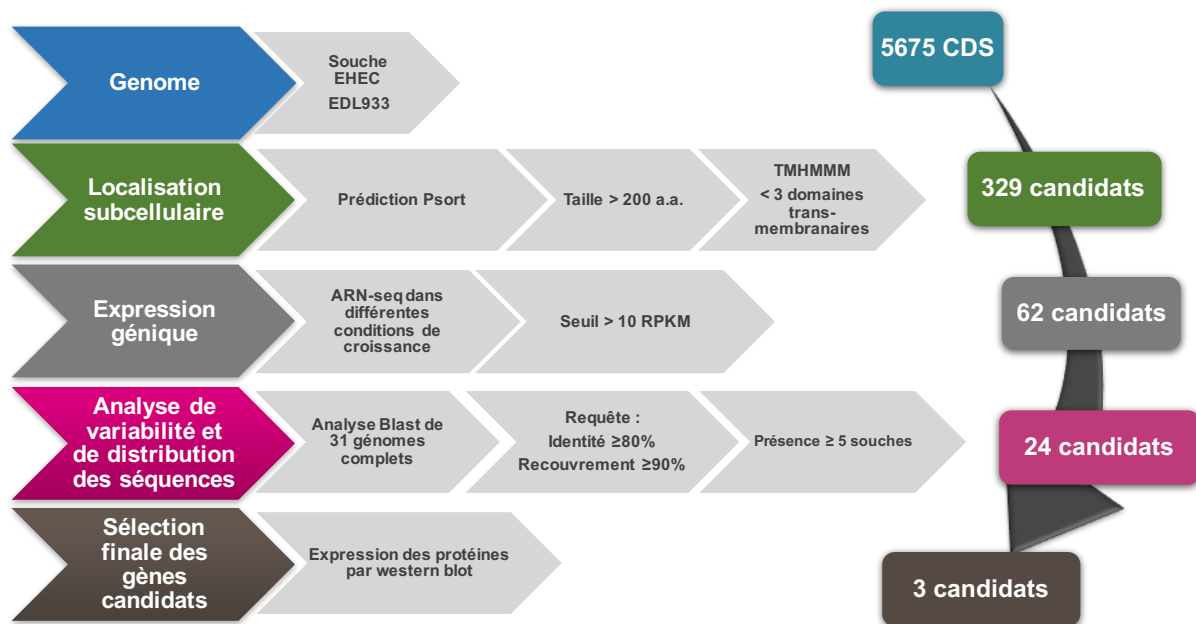


Figure 4 : **Description de la stratégie de vaccinologie inverse appliquée pour la sélection d'antigènes candidats à des fins vaccinales contre les EHEC O157:H7.** Les 5675 séquences d'ADN codant (CDS) encodées sur le chromosome de la souche *E. coli* O157:H7 EDL933 ont été analysés pour identifier des antigènes potentiels sur la base de leur localisation subcellulaire prédite par PSORT , ainsi que des critères de taille de la protéine et de nombre de domaines transmembranaires sur la base de prédiction par TMHMM. Des données sur l'expression génétique ont été intégrées au pipeline, en particulier issues d'analyses transcriptomiques par séquençage de l'ARN (ARN-seq) avec un seuil de 10 RPKM (lecture par kilobase par million de lectures cartographiées). La variabilité génétique et l'analyse de la distribution des antigènes potentiels a été effectué sur 31 génomes complets d'*E. coli* afin de sélectionner les antigènes candidats les plus conservés chez des InPEC. La sélection finale était également basée sur l'expression protéiques des antigènes candidats.

Identification du domaine autochaperon chez les protéines autotransporteurs du système de sécrétion de Type Va

L'approche de vaccinologie inverse précédemment appliquée a permis d'identifier MC021 en tant qu'antigène potentiel pour le développement de vaccins. Cet antigène appartient à la famille des autotransporteurs qui correspondent au système de sécrétion de type V sous-type a (T5aSS). Les autotransporteurs sont des protéines modulaires composées (i) d'un peptide signal N-terminal, qui est clivé après franchissement de la membrane interne, (ii) d'un domaine passager

central, souvent décrit avec un repliement en hélice β , (iii) d'une unité de translocation C-terminale, appelée translocateur, composée d'un domaine C-terminal en tonneau β , qui sert de pore pour la translocation au travers la membrane externe du domaine passager, et d'une région de liaison en hélice α qui relie le domaine passager au tonneau β . Le domaine passager, correspondant au domaine fonctionnel d'un autotransporteur, peut être exposé à la surface cellulaire ou libéré dans le milieu extracellulaire. Certains domaines passagers présentent également un domaine autochaperon impliqué dans la sécrétion du passager à travers la membrane externe et son repliement en surface. Cependant, la similitude et la distribution de ce domaine parmi les autotransporteurs restent controversées. En utilisant l'unique structure résolue d'un autochaperon chez IcsA, la prévalence de ce domaine a été explorée chez les autotransporteurs par modélisation structurale, analyses phylogénétiques et analyse des séquences protéiques. En clarifiant la prévalence de la région autochaperon au sein du T5aSS, il est apparu que ce domaine structural était uniquement associé aux domaines passagers avec une structure en hélice β soutenant l'idée que cette région pourrait être utilisée comme cible épitopique potentielle et/ou le développement de nouveaux traitements contre des autotransporteurs impliqués dans la virulence.

Identification du domaine autochaperon parmi les protéines du système de sécrétion de Type Va (T5aSS) : Caractéristique prédominante des autotransporteurs avec un domaine passager β -hélicoïdal (Identification of the autochaperone domain in the Type Va secretion system (T5aSS): A prevalent feature of autotransporters with a β -helical passenger).

Article de recherche (accepté dans *Frontiers in Microbiology*)

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Les autotransporteurs (AT) appartiennent à une famille de protéines modulaires sécrétées par le système de sécrétion de Type V sous-type a (T5aSS) et considérées comme une source importante de facteurs de virulence chez les bactéries lipopolysaccharidiques didermes (bactéries à Gram négatif archétypales). Alors qu'ils sont exportés par la voie Sec, les AT sont sécrétés au travers la membrane externe via leur propre translocateur C-terminal formant un tonneau β , à travers lequel le reste de la protéine, à savoir le domaine passager, peut passer. Dans plusieurs AT, un domaine autochaperon (AC) présent dans la région C-terminale du domaine passager et en amont du translocateur a été démontré comme strictement nécessaire pour une sécrétion et un repliement corrects de ces protéines. Cependant, considérant qu'il était fonctionnellement caractérisé et identifié seulement dans une poignée d'ATs, une suspicion s'est récemment installée concernant la similitude et la conservation de cet élément structural dans le T5aSS. Pour contourner le problème de la divergence des séquences primaires et tirer profit de la structure tridimensionnelle résolue de l'AC de l'AT IcsA, l'identification de ce domaine a été effectuée après alignement structural entre tous les domaines passagers d'AT résolus expérimentalement par cristallographie avant de rechercher ce domaine structural dans une banque de données de référence contenant 1523 ATs (Figure 5). Tout en démontrant que l'AC est en effet une structure conservée dans de nombreux ATs, l'analyse phylogénétique a révélé une distribution dans des branches profondément enracinées, d'où émergent 7 groupes principaux. L'analyse des séquences a révélé qu'un AC pouvait être identifié dans la grande majorité des ATs auto-associatifs mais pas dans les ATs lipases/estérases. L'analyse structurale a indiqué qu'un AC était présent chez les passagers présentant une hélice β , quel que soit le type d'enroulement β -solénoïde, mais pas avec les domaines passagers présentant un repliement globulaire α -hélicoïdal. Cette étude apporte un nouvel éclairage sur la biologie moléculaire de la sécrétion et du repliement des protéines via le T5aSS, où l'AC apparaît comme un élément structural prédominant et conservé exclusivement associé aux ATs présentant un domaine passager β -hélicoïdal.

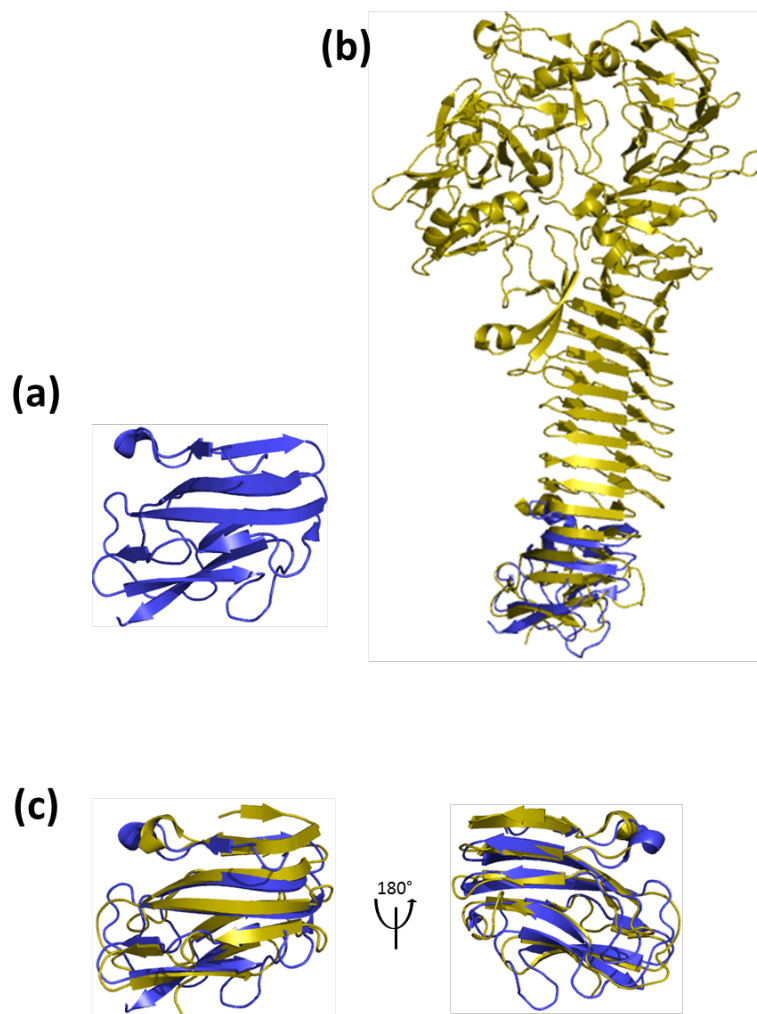


Figure 5 : **Identification structurale du domaine autochaperon (AC) dans des structures résolues de domaines passagers d'autotransporteurs.** (a) Domaine AC de IcsA raffiné (PDB: 3ML3; L606-D720). (b) Identification structurale du domaine AC (bleu) dans la région C-terminale du passager de Esp (PDB: 3SZE, jaune). (c) Domaines AC de IcsA (D606-L720) et EspP (D869-A979) superposés.

CONCLUSION ET PERSPECTIVES

Au cours de ce travail, la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie de vaccinologie inverse combinée à la technologie GMMA nous a conduit à identifier et tester de nouveaux antigènes candidats. Cette approche nous a permis d'aller au-delà des antigènes typiques jusqu'à présent décrits à des fins vaccinales contre les EHEC, comme ceux codés par le LEE. Suite à ces travaux, la déacylase LpxR a pour la première fois été décrite comme un antigène candidat pour le développement de vaccins.

Tandis que notre approche de vaccinologie inverse tenait compte de prédictions liées aux fonctions et la localisation subcellulaire des CDS, des pipelines d'analyse plus poussés pourraient être développés. Par rapport à la localisation subcellulaire des protéines, l'application du concept de sécrétome permettrait d'améliorer ce type de prédiction en prenant en compte la biologie de la sécrétion. En effet, des outils de prédictions de la localisation finale des protéines comme PSORT ne considèrent pas les voies de sécrétion et de maturation des protéines. La combinaison de plusieurs outils de prédiction décomposant la sécrétion de protéines depuis l'exportation dans le périplasma à la sécrétion au travers de la membrane externe, ainsi que les voies de maturation post-translocationnelle où les domaines d'ancrage ou de rétention aux membranes sont considérées comme une approche plus pertinente et puissante pour ce type de prédiction. Malheureusement, ce type de pipeline d'analyse n'a pas encore été développé pour des bactéries lipopolysaccharidiques didermes. Néanmoins, cette stratégie pourrait s'avérer limitée par certains mécanismes moléculaires impliqués dans l'adressage et la sécrétion qui restent encore mal connus ; par exemple, les mécanismes d'adressage des protéines exportées dans le périplasma vers le T2SS ou des protéines vers le T3SS, qui par conséquent ne peuvent pas être prédit sans a priori. De plus, l'existence d'erreurs dans les annotations de génomes peut conduire à l'exclusion d'antigènes potentiels, ce qui peut nécessiter de revoir l'identification de CDS par des approches bioinformatiques plus récentes. L'inclusion d'autres données « omiques », comme des données transcriptomiques (ARN-seq), protéomiques (sous-protéomes) ou encore métabolomiques, fournit des informations supplémentaires sur l'expression des gènes, qui est un point crucial pour l'efficacité d'un vaccin. En effet, l'étude de l'expression *in fine* protéique dans différentes conditions environnementales, en particulier par rapport à l'hôte, aide à cibler les antigènes les plus pertinents. Plus récemment, le concept de vaccinologie inverse 2.0 vise à affiner la découverte de nouveaux vaccins en intégrant la caractérisation structurale et épitopique des antigènes combinés aux nouvelles découvertes sur les anticorps humains protecteurs (Rappuoli et al., 2016).

La vaccinologie inverse cible essentiellement des antigènes exposés en surface qui sont ainsi soit localisés à la membrane externe, sécrétés dans le milieu extracellulaire ou présents dans des organelles de surface. De ce point de vue, les autotransporteurs apparaissent comme une cible de choix et ont souvent été utilisés dans le développement de vaccins contre d'autres InPEC, notamment les ETEC. Afin d'identifier des épitopes potentiels sur ces protéines, l'analyse des structures tridimensionnelles est une approche pertinente pour étudier les régions exposées et leur conformation. Les domaines autochaperons, que nous avons démontrés comme

systématiquement associés à des domaines passagers avec un repliement en hélice β , sont importants pour le repliement et la sécrétion des autotransporteurs. D'un point de vue biotechnologique, ces domaines sont donc importants pour améliorer l'expression de protéines, notamment hétérologues, via le T5aSS, comme par exemple pour l'exposition de protéines de surface sous une conformation active et fonctionnelle, ou d'un point de vue biomédical, pour bloquer la sécrétion et/ou le repliement correct d'autotransporteurs impliqués dans la pathogénicité et ainsi atténuer les niveaux de virulence de bactéries pathogènes ou pour l'exposition d'épitopes cibles dans une stratégie vaccinale. Dans ce contexte, l'utilisation combinée du système GMMA et de domaines autochaperons qui peuvent agir *in trans* est une direction de recherche qui mériterait d'être explorée et investiguée de manière approfondie.

Par rapport aux 24 gènes candidats identifiés suite à notre analyse bioinformatique certains pourraient être caractérisés afin d'élucider leurs propriétés et fonctions, notamment leur rôle dans la pathogénèse. De même, l'étude des propriétés immunitaires *in vitro* et *in vivo* serait nécessaire afin de caractériser les potentialités de ces candidats comme antigènes pour le développement du vaccin. Certains antigènes peuvent se trouver exprimés et purifiés sous une forme insoluble ; afin, d'améliorer la présentation des épitopes, l'approche classique consiste à tester d'autres conditions d'expression et de purification tandis que les dernières avancées dans le domaine tendent à privilégier l'approche GMMA. Outre le système GMMA qui est une application technologique des vésicules membranaires bactériennes pour le développement de vaccins, l'implication des OMVs (Outer Membrane Vesicles) dans la physiopathologie des EHEC et des InPEC en générale est une direction de recherche qui n'a encore été que peu explorée. Sans doute l'une des premières directions de recherche consisterait en l'analyse protéomique de ces OMVs chez les différents pathotypes d'InPEC, à partir des souches prototypiques, afin d'établir leurs répertoires protéiques sous différentes conditions environnementales. De plus, l'implication de ces OMVs dans la physiopathologie des InPEC et des EHEC en particulier est une question pertinente, par rapport à leur rôle dans la fixation ou l'évasion de la réponse immunitaire ou encore dans le processus de colonisation intestinale ainsi que l'adhésion et la formation de biofilm (Kulp et al., 2010, Schwechheimer et al., 2015).

Outre MC007, il serait nécessaire de caractériser MC020 plus avant. L'autotransporteur MC020 semble avoir déclenché une réponse immunitaire avec la production d'anticorps IgG spécifiques. Concernant MC001, des questions spécifiques restent à élucider, comme savoir si l'effet de GMMA-MC001 est directement attribué à LpxR ou s'il résulte de l'activité déacylase, comme

par exemple des modifications du LPS. De plus, des études supplémentaires seront nécessaires pour caractériser l'implication potentielle de LpxR dans la virulence et la pathogénicité des EHEC. Certaines de ces analyses peuvent inclure des études de déacylation du LPS, des tests pour définir son rôle dans la physiopathologie, sa capacité à réguler la réponse immunitaire, ou encore les interactions avec l'hôte et le microbiote. Par ailleurs et afin d'améliorer la réponse immunitaire et la protection vaccinale, d'autres voies d'immunisation pourraient être testées. La préparation du vaccin nécessitera également des études sur la formulation avec différents adjuvants afin de déterminer le plus adéquat ainsi que l'optimisation d'une production à grande échelle.

L'espèce *E. coli* est bien connue pour sa très haute plasticité génétique et génomique comme l'indique notamment la présence de souches commensales et d'une grande diversité de souches pathogènes. Cette plasticité pose également problème pour le développement de traitements efficaces face à la diversité des maladies causées par cette bactérie. Néanmoins, les souches d'*E. coli* partagent un même noyau génomique, c'est-à-dire un patrimoine génétique commun et très conservé. Les gènes codant pour des facteurs de virulence, c'est-à-dire impliqués dans les fonctions pathogènes responsables de l'infection, le développement de la maladie et l'interaction hôte-pathogène, varient selon les pathotypes et peuvent être localisés au sein de loci, appelés îlots de pathogénicité, comme le LEE. Le séquençage de génomes entiers permet de décrypter les variations clonales de populations bactériennes de manière beaucoup plus détaillée que les approches de typage moléculaire multi-locus (MLST) et ouvre la voie à de nouvelles perspectives sur l'évolution des souches pathogènes, qui devrait être à l'avenir intégré de manière plus systématique à des approches de vaccinologie inverse.

Les efforts pour prévenir les maladies liées à des infections par les *E. coli* pathogènes sont essentiellement focalisés sur les UPEC chez les ExpEC et sur les ETEC chez les InPEC. Tandis que ce travail s'est focalisé sur les EHEC O157, la prévention de maladies diarrhégeniques nécessiterait d'étendre ce type d'étude aux autres entéropathotypes d'*E. coli* qui posent eux aussi des problèmes de santé publique et qui peuvent se retrouver dans des cas de co-infections, encore trop peu considérés et envisagés dans les cas d'infections. Ces autres InPEC comprennent d'une part les sérogroupes d'EHEC non-O157 et d'autre part les EPEC et EAEC mais aussi les DAEC ou encore EIEC, dont les *Shigella*, pour lesquels les recherches menées pour le développement de traitements curatifs ou préventifs, tels que le développement de vaccins, sont rares ou inexistantes (Bouzari et al., 2010). Outre le sérotype O157: H7, les

infections à EHEC peuvent être associées à 6 autres sérotypes, nommément O26:H11, O45:H2, O103:H11, O111:H⁻, O121:H19, O145:H⁻.

Outre le développement de nouvelles approches de vaccinologie inverse pour la découverte de nouveaux antigènes (García-Angulo et al., 2014), cette démarche doit de nos jours s'insérer au concept One Health pour une recherche multidisciplinaire et intégrée à la chaîne alimentaire (Torres, 2017). En effet, ce concept stipule et rappelle que la santé humaine est directement liée aux relations entre l'environnement, les animaux et les êtres humains. Pour cette raison, les recherches ne doivent pas rester focalisées sur la seule problématique de l'infection de ces bactéries pathogènes chez l'hôte, en l'occurrence l'Homme, mais incorporer la dimension écophysiologique. Ceci nécessite d'étudier ces bactéries pathogènes aussi chez l'animal et dans d'autres environnements, qu'ils soient naturels, alimentaires ou industriels, afin de pleinement intégrer la notion de réservoir animal, de passages de pathogènes comme les InPEC entre le tractus digestif et ces environnements, ce qui est d'autant plus pertinent dans le cas de pathogènes alimentaires zoonotiques (Etcheverría et al., 2016). La lutte contre les infections à InPEC est donc toujours en cours et les perspectives de développement de nouvelles mesures de prévention ou de traitements curatifs ou préventifs nécessitent une recherche multidisciplinaire pour obtenir des avancées significatives. Des efforts supplémentaires, non seulement au niveau de la recherche biomédicale ou fondamentale mais aussi dans les domaines clinique, vétérinaire et de la santé publique, sont nécessaires pour mieux comprendre la prolifération et l'émergence de nouvelles maladies liées aux *E. coli*, comme les souches hybrides EHEC/EAEC lors des dernières épidémies en Europe ou encore les *E. coli* adhérents invasifs (AIEC) associés à la maladie de Crohn.

Supplementary Material

Second part: Results

Chapter 1

Identification of a novel vaccine candidate against Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) O157:H7 by Reverse Vaccinology approach

&

Chapter 2

Identification of the autochaperone domain in the Type Va secretion system (T5aSS): A prevalent feature of autotransporters with a β -helical passenger

- 1.- Table 1S: Identification of AC domains in the well-defined dataset of 1523 autotransporters (Celik *et al.*, 2012).
- 2.- PDB files restricted to the AC domains identified in the resolved structure of the passenger of AC^{IcsA} (PDB: 3ML3; D₆₀₆-L₇₂₀), AC^{EspP} (PDB: 3SZE; D₈₆₉-I₉₇₉), AC^{Hbp} (PDB: 1WXR; N₉₄₈-L₁₀₅₆), AC^{Pet} (PDB: 4OM9; N₈₆₅-I₉₇₄), AC^{P69} (PDB: 1DAB; D₄₄₄-L₅₅₆), AC^{Hap} (PDB: 3SYJ; D₈₃₀-L₉₆₄) and AC^{IgA1} (PDB: 3H09; D₈₆₅-L₉₇₇).

Chapter 1
Identification of a novel vaccine candidate against
Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) O157:H7 by Reverse
Vaccinology approach

Table S1. Vaccine candidates selected by Psort analysis

Protein ID	Functional annotation	Length (bp)	PSORT Localization	PSORT score	ModHMM
AIG68144.1	Ferric siderophore transport system, periplasmic binding protein TonB CDS	720	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG70214.1	Type III secretion outer membrane pore forming protein (YscC, MxiD, HrcC, InvG) CDS	1704	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG71811.1	adherence and invasion outer membrane protein (Inv, enhances Peyer's patches colonization) CDS	5037	OuterMembrane	9.95	No internal helices
AIG66227.1	Putative outer membrane protein CDS	2451	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66265.1	Outer membrane protein Imp, required for envelope biogenesis CDS	2322	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66267.1	hypothetical protein CDS	753	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66308.1	Secretion monitor precursor CDS	588	Unknown	6.49	1 internal helix
AIG66347.1	Fimbrial protein Yad like protein CDS	1110	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG66348.1	Fimbrial protein YadK CDS	591	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66349.1	Fimbrial protein YadL CDS	606	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG66351.1	Outer membrane usher protein HtrE CDS	2601	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66353.1	Fimbrial protein YadN CDS	597	Extracellular	9.65	1 internal helix
AIG66363.1	Ferric hydroxamate outer membrane receptor FhuA CDS	2244	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66390.1	Outer membrane protein assembly factor YaeT precursor CDS	2433	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG66406.1	Copper homeostasis protein CutF precursor CDS	711	OuterMembrane	9.92	No internal helices
AIG66407.1	putative lipoprotein yaeF precursor CDS	825	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG66409.1	hypothetical protein CDS	708	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66417.1	hypothetical protein CDS	801	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66424.1	putative aminopeptidase CDS	801	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG66428.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1410	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG66446.1	core protein CDS	4215	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66447.1	hypothetical protein CDS	612	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG66450.1	core protein CDS	1761	Extracellular	9.52	No internal helices
AIG66460.1	putative exported protein CDS	741	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG66464.1	putative lipoprotein yafL precursor CDS	774	Unknown	4.9	1 internal helix
AIG66480.1	Outer membrane pore protein E precursor CDS	1056	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG66490.1	putative tail fiber protein CDS	795	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66511.1	Zinc binding domain protein CDS	2334	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66518.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1137	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG66526.1	CFA/I fimbrial chaperone CDS	711	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG66527.1	CFA/I fimbrial minor adhesin CDS	1644	Extracellular	9.64	1 internal helix
AIG66528.1	CFA/I fimbrial subunit C usher protein CDS	2526	Unknown	4.69	2 internal helices
AIG66528.1	Putative adhesin CDS	4254	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66545.1	AidA-I adhesin-like protein CDS	4050	Unknown	5.87	No internal helices
AIG66568.1	hypothetical protein CDS	864	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66574.1	Putative flagellin structural protein CDS	2943	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66636.1	hypothetical protein CDS	624	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66640.1	putative lipoprotein CDS	1095	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices

AIG66656.1	Protein YkiA CDS	2166	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66683.1	Nucleoside-specific channel-forming protein Tsx precursor CDS	885	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66684.1	putative lipoprotein yajI CDS	540	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66769.1	Large repetitive protein CDS	4386	Unknown	6.04	1 internal helix
AIG66781.1	Putative stomatin/prohibitin-family membrane protease subunit YbbK	918	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG66819.1	Oligopeptide ABC transporter, periplasmic oligopeptide-binding protein OppA CDS	1701	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66819.1	Outer membrane usher protein SfmD CDS	2610	OuterMembrane	10	2 internal helices
AIG66854.1	Agglutination protein CDS	1356	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG66854.1	TonB-dependent receptor CDS	2241	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG66909.1	Rare lipoprotein A precursor CDS	1089	Extracellular	9.65	No internal helices
AIG66920.1	hypothetical protein CDS	588	Extracellular	9.71	No internal helices
AIG66922.1	hypothetical protein CDS	708	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66972.1	core protein CDS	4200	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66973.1	orf, hypothetical protein CDS	543	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG66984.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1062	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG66987.1	putative fimbrial-like protein ygiL precursor CDS	567	Extracellular	9.72	No internal helices
AIG67020.1	TolA protein CDS	1185	Unknown	2	2 internal helices
AIG67060.1	Putative outer membrane protein CDS	960	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67099.1	Biotin synthesis protein BioC CDS	756	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67129.1	Ferrichrome-iron receptor CDS	2283	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67212.1	Virulence factor VirK CDS	993	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67245.1	Urease accessory protein UreF CDS	675	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67247.1	Per-activated serine protease autotransporter enterotoxin EspC	126	Extracellular	9.71	Unknown
AIG67280.1	Colicin I receptor precursor CDS	2010	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67308.1	putative hemolysin activator protein CDS	1065	OuterMembrane	8.86	1 internal helix
AIG67367.1	Putative metalloprotease yggG	789	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG67384.1	exported protein CDS	549	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67387.1	Outer membrane protein F precursor CDS	1089	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG67397.1	type 1 fimbriae major subunit FimA CDS	540	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG67400.1	type 1 fimbriae anchoring protein FimD CDS	1893	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67407.1	hypothetical protein CDS	543	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67412.1	Paraquat-inducible protein B CDS	1641	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG67413.1	Paraquat-inducible protein B CDS	564	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67419.1	Outer membrane protein A precursor CDS	1065	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67426.1	UPF0319 protein YccT precursor CDS	663	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67448.1	hypothetical protein CDS	558	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67453.1	hypothetical protein CDS	774	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67464.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67503.1	hypothetical protein CDS	753	Extracellular	9.71	No internal helices
AIG67516.1	Putative polysaccharide export protein YccZ precursor CDS	1140	OuterMembrane	9.92	1 internal helix
AIG67517.1	Putative outer membrane lipoprotein YmcA CDS	2097	OuterMembrane	9.52	No internal helices

AIG67577.1	Shiga-like toxin II subunit A precursor CDS	960	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67607.1	hypothetical protein CDS	618	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67611.1	hypothetical protein CDS	657	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67633.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1344	Extracellular	9.64	No internal helices
AIG67644.1	Biofilm PGA synthesis deacetylase PgaB CDS	2019	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG67645.1	Biofilm PGA outer membrane secretin PgaA CDS	2424	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG67652.1	Putative exported protein precursor CDS	1086	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67653.1	outer membrane fimbrial usher protein CDS	2523	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67658.1	Hemolysin CDS	3813	OuterMembrane	9.95	No internal helices
AIG67671.1	hypothetical protein CDS	789	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67672.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1389	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67699.1	Per-activated serine protease autotransporter enterotoxin EspC	126	Extracellular	9.71	Unknown
AIG67732.1	TonB-dependent receptor CDS	2010	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67760.1	putative hemolysin activator protein CDS	1065	OuterMembrane	8.86	1 internal helix
AIG67820.1	Protein yceI precursor CDS	576	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67827.1	Putative lipoprotein yceB precursor CDS	561	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67831.1	Protein of unknown function YceH CDS	648	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67832.1	Virulence factor MviM CDS	924	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67840.1	Flagellar basal-body rod modification protein FlgD CDS	696	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG67841.1	Flagellar hook protein FlgE CDS	1206	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG67843.1	Flagellar basal-body rod protein FlgG CDS	783	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG67844.1	Flagellar L-ring protein FlgH CDS	699	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG67847.1	Flagellar hook-associated protein FlgK CDS	1644	Extracellular	9.96	No internal helices
AIG67848.1	Flagellar hook-associated protein FlgL CDS	954	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG67862.1	YceG like protein CDS	1023	Unknown	6.49	1 internal helix
AIG67867.1	Putative OMR family iron-siderophore receptor precursor CDS	2190	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG67871.1	Lipoprotein YcfM, part of a salvage pathway of unknown substrate CDS	642	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67876.1	Putative exported protein CDS	540	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG67905.1	hypothetical protein CDS	588	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67914.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1938	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67929.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1938	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG67963.1	hypothetical protein CDS	744	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68016.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1602	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68033.1	Attachment invasion locus protein precursor CDS	600	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG68048.1	Protease VII (OmpT) precursor CDS	954	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68053.1	Pertactin precursor CDS	705	Unknown	7	No internal helices
AIG68064.1	Hemolysin E, chromosomal CDS	1056	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG68081.1	Putative TonB dependent outer membrane receptor CDS	1971	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68093.1	Putative adhesion and penetration protein CDS	1644	Extracellular	9.65	No internal helices
AIG68114.1	Invasin CDS	1431	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68125.1	UPF0028 protein YchK CDS	945	Extracellular	8.89	No internal helices

AIG68148.1	Outer membrane protein W precursor CDS	639	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68163.1	hypothetical protein CDS	582	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68165.1	Putative intestinal colonization factor encoded by prophage CP-9330 CDS	747	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68173.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68183.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1938	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68190.1	putative major tail subunit CDS	786	Extracellular	9.64	No internal helices
AIG68238.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68271.1	Attachment invasion locus protein precursor CDS	600	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG68309.1	Autoinducer 2 (AI-2) aldolase LsrF CDS	876	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68316.1	hypothetical protein CDS	3894	Unknown	5.87	No internal helices
AIG68317.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1401	OuterMembrane	9.83	No internal helices
AIG68320.1	type 1 fimbriae major subunit FimA CDS	564	Extracellular	10	1 internal helix
AIG68322.1	type 1 fimbriae anchoring protein FimD CDS	2223	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68325.1	mannose-specific adhesin FimH CDS	915	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG68333.1	hypothetical protein CDS	2373	OuterMembrane	9.49	No internal helices
AIG68337.1	redicted glycoside hydrolase CDS	1320	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68357.1	Outer membrane porin protein NmpC precursor CDS	1101	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG68359.1	hypothetical protein CDS	669	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68376.1	internalin, putative CDS	1260	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68383.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1062	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG68385.1	core protein CDS	4203	Unknown	5.48	No internal helices
AIG68385.1	putative tonB-dependent receptor yncD precursor CDS	2019	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68406.1	putative membrane lipoprotein clustered with tellurite resistance proteins TehA/TehB CDS	669	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68433.1	putative BigA-like protein CDS	2460	Unknown	6.26	No internal helices
AIG68444.1	Outer membrane protein N precursor CDS	753	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68484.1	porin, autotransporter (AT) family CDS	3036	Extracellular	9.65	2 internal helices
AIG68484.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68547.1	Outer membrane protein G precursor CDS	906	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68579.1	RND efflux system, outer membrane lipoprotein CmeC CDS	1374	OuterMembrane	9.98	No internal helices
AIG68638.1	Attachment invasion locus protein precursor CDS	600	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG68679.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68688.1	hypothetical protein CDS	585	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68723.1	Putative protease ydgD	822	Unknown	2.5	Unknown
AIG68730.1	Protein ydgH precursor CDS	945	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG68784.1	Putative lipoprotein CDS	816	Unknown	6.49	No internal helices
AIG68794.1	putative enzyme CDS	1257	Unknown	7	No internal helices
AIG68797.1	hypothetical protein CDS	813	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68812.1	Iron-sulfur cluster assembly protein SufB CDS	1488	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68838.1	hypothetical protein CDS	714	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68851.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1899	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68853.1	Putative outer membrane protein CDS	759	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices

AIG68861.1	hypothetical protein CDS	768	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68883.1	Hypothetical protein YdjY CDS	678	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG68886.1	ABC transporter, periplasmic substrate-binding protein YnjB CDS	1167	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG68897.1	Protein ydjA CDS	552	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG68899.1	putative lipoprotein CDS	711	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG68918.1	MltA-interacting protein MipA CDS	747	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG68945.1	Starvation lipoprotein Slp-like protein CDS	582	OuterMembrane	9.92	1 internal helix
AIG68946.1	Inactive metal-dependent proteases like protein,putative molecular chaperone	696	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG68978.1	Paraquat-inducible protein B CDS	2640	Unknown	2	2 internal helices
AIG68989.1	Protease II	2061	Unknown	5.41	Unknown
AIG69001.1	Cell wall endopeptidase, family M23/M37 CDS	1323	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG69007.1	hypothetical protein CDS	603	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69057.1	putative membrane protein CDS	651	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG69095.1	Flagellar biosynthesis protein FliZ CDS	552	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69098.1	Flagellar biosynthesis protein FliC CDS	1758	Extracellular	9.96	No internal helices
AIG69099.1	Flagellar hook-associated protein FliD CDS	1398	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG69108.1	invasion plasmid antigen CDS	1140	Extracellular	8.89	No internal helices
AIG69110.1	invasion plasmid antigen CDS	1140	Extracellular	8.89	No internal helices
AIG69118.1	Flagellar hook-length control protein FliK CDS	1128	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG69140.1	Outer membrane protein N precursor CDS	645	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG69141.1	Outer membrane protein N precursor CDS	576	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG69149.1	putative zinc-binding lipoprotein ZinT CDS	651	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG69153.1	hypothetical protein CDS	711	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69158.1	Attachment invasion locus protein precursor CDS	600	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG69189.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69198.1	hypothetical protein CDS	564	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69216.1	adherence and invasion outermembrane protein (Inv,enhances Peyer's patches colonization) CDS	7863	OuterMembrane	9.95	No internal helices
AIG69305.1	AsmA protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG69312.1	Putative chaperonin CDS	1941	Unknown	2	2 internal helices
AIG69314.1	hypothetical protein CDS	660	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69346.1	Uncharacterized protein YehA precursor CDS	1035	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69347.1	Fimbriae usher protein StcC CDS	2481	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG69349.1	Putative fimbrial-like protein CDS	543	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG69361.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1530	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69362.1	hypothetical protein CDS	732	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69377.1	Attachment invasion locus protein precursor CDS	600	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG69390.1	Minor tail protein Z CDS	624	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69393.1	Prophage Clp protease-like protein	1041	Unknown		Unknown
AIG69411.1	Shiga toxin A-chain precursor CDS	948	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG69429.1	putative superinfection exclusion protein CDS	555	Unknown	2	2 internal helices
AIG69485.1	Colicin I receptor precursor CDS	1884	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices

AIG69508.1	Lipoprotein spr precursor CDS	567	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG69510.1	ABC transporter, periplasmic substrate-binding protein CDS	1815	Unknown	6.58	No internal helices
AIG69523.1	Putative ATP-binding component of a transport system CDS	2592	Extracellular	9.46	No internal helices
AIG69547.1	Outer membrane protein C precursor CDS	1104	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG69552.1	hypothetical protein CDS	777	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69553.1	Putative membrane protein CDS	4515	Unknown	4.69	No internal helices
AIG69558.1	Type V secretory pathway, adhesin AidA CDS	3705	OuterMembrane	9.83	No internal helices
AIG69581.1	Polymyxin resistance protein PmrG CDS	603	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG69644.1	DedD protein CDS	663	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG69664.1	Uncharacterized protein YadU in stf fimbrial cluster CDS	843	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69669.1	Fimbriae usher protein StfC CDS	2583	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG69676.1	Long-chain fatty acid transport protein CDS	1341	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG69679.1	Lipoprotein CDS	756	OuterMembrane	9.92	2 internal helices
AIG69706.1	hypothetical protein CDS	636	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG69727.1	putative virulence protein CDS	1149	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69790.1	YpfJ protein, zinc metalloprotease superfamily	864	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG69792.1	Outer membrane protein NlpB, lipoprotein component of the protein assembly complex (forms a complex with YaeT, YfiO, and YfgL) CDS	1035	OuterMembrane	9.93	No internal helices
AIG69809.1	Exported zinc metalloprotease YfgC precursor	1464	Unknown	2.5	Unknown
AIG69829.1	Outer membrane protein YfgL, lipoprotein component of the protein assembly complex (forms a complex with YaeT, YfiO, and NlpB) CDS	1179	OuterMembrane	9.92	No internal helices
AIG69833.1	putative membrane protein CDS	1014	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG69842.1	Thiosulfate sulfurtransferase, rhodanese CDS	846	Unknown	5.41	1 internal helix
AIG69880.1	putative alpha helix protein CDS	636	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69913.1	hypothetical protein CDS	564	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69916.1	hypothetical protein CDS	732	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69918.1	putative component of the lipoprotein assembly complex (forms a complex with YaeT, YfgL, and NlpB) CDS	738	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG69931.1	Signal recognition particle, subunit Ffh SRP54 CDS	1362	Unknown	5.6	No internal helices
AIG69958.1	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG69974.1	Pertactin precursor CDS	4308	Unknown	5.87	No internal helices
AIG70043.1	Coenzyme F420 hydrogenase maturation protease	471	Unknown		Unknown
AIG70069.1	Lipoprotein NlpD CDS	1140	OuterMembrane	9.93	No internal helices
AIG70199.1	Type III secretion bridge between inner and outer membrane lipoprotein (YscJ, HrcJ, EscJ, PscJ) CDS	735	OuterMembrane	9.92	1 internal helix
AIG70202.1	Type III secretion protein EprH CDS	735	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG70217.1	Uncharacterized protein YgeP CDS	1026	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70219.1	putative lipoprotein YgeR precursor CDS	756	OuterMembrane	9.93	1 internal helix
AIG70290.1	Uridine kinase family protein CDS	714	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70298.1	Putative metalloprotease yggG	759	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG70300.1	hypothetical protein CDS	732	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70312.1	UPF0301 protein YqgE CDS	564	Unknown	2	No internal helices

AIG70323.1	Uncharacterized protein YggN CDS	720	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70398.1	Modulator of drug activity B CDS	582	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70405.1	Ferrichrome-iron receptor CDS	2142	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG70411.1	Type I secretion outer membrane protein, TolC precursor CDS	1482	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG70414.1	Uncharacterized protein ygiD CDS	816	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70516.1	type 1 fimbriae anchoring protein FimD CDS	2592	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG70532.1	Putative lipid carrier protein CDS	525	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70535.1	Putative protease	879	Unknown	2	Unknown
AIG70568.1	putative ABC transporter, auxiliary component YrbC CDS	636	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70569.1	putative ABC transporter, periplasmic component YrbD CDS	552	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG70575.1	Uncharacterized protein YrbK clustered with lipopolysaccharide transporters CDS	576	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG70604.1	Outer membrane stress sensor protease DegQ, serine protease	1368	Periplasmic		Unknown
AIG70605.1	Outer membrane stress sensor protease DegS	1068	Periplasmic		Unknown
AIG70619.1	Rod shape-determining protein MreC CDS	1104	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG70742.1	Type IV pilus biogenesis protein PilM CDS	795	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70779.1	hypothetical protein CDS	993	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70798.1	hypothetical protein CDS	912	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70844.1	Putative transmembrane protein CDS	606	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70880.1	hypothetical protein CDS	753	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70893.1	TonB-dependent hemin , ferrichrome receptor CDS	1983	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG70922.1	Uncharacterized protein YhjG CDS	2061	Unknown	2	2 internal helices
AIG70925.1	Protein YhjJ, putative peptidase CDS	1497	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70935.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1560	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70950.1	Putative fimbrial protein CDS	1056	Extracellular	9.65	1 internal helix
AIG70952.1	Long polar fimbria protein A precursor CDS	525	Extracellular	9.72	No internal helices
AIG70954.1	Putative lipase CDS	699	Unknown	7	1 internal helix
AIG70958.1	Outer membrane protein A precursor CDS	660	OuterMembrane	10	3 internal helices
AIG70960.1	putative exported protein CDS	711	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG70976.1	BAX protein CDS	573	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG70983.1	Putative outer membrane protein yiaT precursor CDS	741	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG70995.1	core protein CDS	4230	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71007.1	hypothetical protein CDS	4767	OuterMembrane	9.95	2 internal helices
AIG71034.1	Lipopolysaccharide heptosyltransferase III CDS	1023	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71060.1	Putative exported protein CDS	1710	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG71083.1	Secreted protein EspB CDS	939	Extracellular	10	1 internal helix
AIG71084.1	Secreted protein EspD CDS	1125	Extracellular	10	3 internal helices
AIG71087.1	Type III secretion system EscD protein CDS	1221	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG71088.1	Intimin CDS	2805	OuterMembrane	10	2 internal helices
AIG71090.1	translocated intimin receptor Tir CDS	1677	Extracellular	10	2 internal helices
AIG71096.1	SepQ CDS	918	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71102.1	Type III secretion bridge between inner and outermembrane lipoprotein (YscJ,HrcJ,EscJ, PscJ) CDS	573	OuterMembrane	9.93	No internal helices

AIG71104.1	Type III secretion outermembrane pore forming protein (YscC,MxiD,HrcC, InvG) CDS	1539	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG71117.1	ROrf2 CDS	1146	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG71137.1	hypothetical protein CDS	624	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71158.1	Uncharacterized protein YidR CDS	1251	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71159.1	Uncharacterized protein YidS CDS	1083	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71177.1	hypothetical protein CDS	750	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71181.1	hypothetical protein CDS	2409	Unknown	5.48	No internal helices
AIG71182.1	hypothetical protein CDS	672	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71192.1	Putative fimbrial protein CDS	1083	Extracellular	10	No internal helices
AIG71193.1	Putative fimbrial protein CDS	1071	Extracellular	9.65	No internal helices
AIG71194.1	type 1 fimbriae anchoring protein FimD CDS	2535	OuterMembrane	9.93	1 internal helix
AIG71272.1	hypothetical protein CDS	903	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71273.1	hypothetical protein CDS	765	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71277.1	hypothetical protein CDS	849	OuterMembrane	9.49	No internal helices
AIG71291.1	Putative carboxymethylenebutenolidase CDS	816	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71333.1	Outer membrane sugar transport protein YshA CDS	693	OuterMembrane	9.93	1 internal helix
AIG71349.1	hypothetical protein CDS	915	Unknown	2	1 internal helix
AIG71360.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1056	Unknown	4.9	No internal helices
AIG71365.1	Putative glycoporin CDS	1395	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71378.1	hypothetical protein CDS	675	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71388.1	Putative uncharacterized protein YiiQ CDS	600	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG71408.1	core protein CDS	4185	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71411.1	hypothetical protein CDS	609	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71419.1	hypothetical protein CDS	618	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71443.1	Outer membrane vitamin B12 receptor BtuB CDS	1845	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG71471.1	hypothetical protein CDS	636	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71532.1	NMN phosphatase CDS	714	Unknown	2.5	1 internal helix
AIG71558.1	Putative exported protein CDS	690	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71638.1	Outer membrane lipoprotein Blc CDS	534	OuterMembrane	10	1 internal helix
AIG71658.1	HflK protein CDS	1260	Unknown	5.48	1 internal helix
AIG71669.1	hypothetical protein CDS	639	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71674.1	YjfP protein CDS	750	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71687.1	Uncharacterized protein yjfZ CDS	795	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71690.1	putative virulence protein CDS	1149	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71691.1	Putative cell envelope opacity-associated protein A CDS	639	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71701.1	Protein ytfJ precursor CDS	555	Unknown	4.9	No internal helices
AIG71707.1	Uncharacterized protein YtfM precursor CDS	1734	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG71708.1	Uncharacterized protein YtfN CDS	3780	Unknown	4.72	1 internal helix
AIG71752.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1503	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71763.1	hypothetical protein CDS	774	Unknown	2.5	No internal helices
AIG71781.1	hypothetical protein CDS	981	Unknown	2	No internal helices

AIG71788.1	type 1 fimbriae major subunit FimA CDS	549	Extracellular	10	1 internal helix
AIG71791.1	type 1 fimbriae anchoring protein FimD CDS	2637	OuterMembrane	10	No internal helices
AIG71794.1	mannose-specific adhesin FimH CDS	903	Unknown	4.65	2 internal helices
AIG71800.1	Uncharacterized protein YjiC CDS	831	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG71813.1	hypothetical protein CDS	843	Unknown	4.9	1 internal helix
AIG71857.1	hypothetical protein CDS	1074	Unknown	2	No internal helices
AIG68360.1	internalin,_putative_EDL933_2172	1260	Unknown	2	No internal helices

Table S2. Vaccine candidates expressed at transcriptional level (cutoff>10 RPKM)

Protein ID	Locus Tag	Functional annotation	Length (bp)	PSORT Localization	PSORT score	Expression (absolute value RPKM)			
						RPKM (LB)	RPKM (LB agar)	RPKM (LB antibiotics)	RPKM (LB Feces)
AIG66267.1	EDL933_0059	hypothetical protein CDS	753	Unknown	2	32.7	65.6	75.0	0.0
AIG66347.1	EDL933_0139	Fimbrial protein Yad like protein CDS	1110	Unknown	2	192.8	327.0	101.7	347.5
AIG66348.1	EDL933_0140	Fimbrial protein YadK CDS	591	Unknown	2	32.2	37.6	0.0	171.7
AIG66349.1	EDL933_0141	Fimbrial protein YadL CDS	606	Unknown	2.5	44.4	48.9	0.0	134.0
AIG66424.1	EDL933_0216	putative aminopeptidase CDS	801	Unknown	2.5	9.8	18.5	105.7	0.0
AIG66447.1	EDL933_0241	hypothetical protein CDS	612	Unknown	2	223.3	250.2	288.3	779.5
AIG66490.1	EDL933_0284	putative tail fiber protein CDS	795	Unknown	2	12	0.0	1305.2	51.1
AIG66511.1	EDL933_0305	Zinc binding domain protein CDS	2334	Unknown	2	11	10.6	48.4	30.4
AIG66518.1	EDL933_0312	hypothetical protein CDS	1137	Unknown	2.5	24.6	0.0	24.8	0.0
AIG66656.1	EDL933_0452	Protein YkiA CDS	2166	Unknown	2	8.3	6.8	0.0	28.1
AIG66781.1	EDL933_0577	Putative stomatin/prohibitin-family membrane protease subunit YbbK	918	Unknown	2	45.2	225.9	0.0	619.2
AIG66972.1	EDL933_0770	core protein CDS	4200	Unknown	2	6.8	12.9	6.7	4.8
AIG66984.1	EDL933_0782	hypothetical protein CDS	1062	Unknown	2.5	21.6	18.6	13.3	38.2
AIG66987.1	EDL933_0786	putative fimbrial-like protein ygiL precursor CDS	567	Extracellular	9.72	41.5	17.4	24.9	143.2
AIG67020.1	EDL933_0819	TolA protein CDS	1185	Unknown	2	454.8	283.4	405.1	325.5
AIG67060.1	EDL933_0859	Putative outer membrane protein CDS	960	Unknown	2.5	45.5	30.9	338.2	126.9
AIG67245.1	EDL933_1046	Urease accessory protein UreF CDS	675	Unknown	2	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
AIG67308.1	EDL933_1109	putative hemolysin activator protein CDS	1065	OuterMembrane	8.86	0	0.0	13.3	19.1
AIG67453.1	EDL933_1258	hypothetical protein CDS	774	Unknown	2	68	51.0	383.0	131.1
AIG67464.1	EDL933_1259	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	24.9	27.4	78.4	0.0
AIG67503.1	EDL933_1308	hypothetical protein CDS	753	Extracellular	9.71	35.7	45.9	0.0	53.9
AIG67577.1	EDL933_1383	Shiga-like toxin II subunit A precursor CDS	960	Unknown	2.5	372.9	262.4	566.2	42.3
AIG67652.1	EDL933_1458	Putative exported protein precursor CDS	1086	Unknown	2	17.5	9.1	13.0	37.4
AIG67653.1	EDL933_1459	outer membrane fimbrial usher protein CDS	2523	OuterMembrane	10	11.5	7.8	0.0	72.4
AIG67671.1	EDL933_1477	hypothetical protein CDS	789	Unknown	2	2.8	0.0	0.0	25.7
AIG67672.1	EDL933_1478	hypothetical protein CDS	1389	Unknown	2	2.4	0.0	0.0	21.9
AIG67760.1	EDL933_1570	putative hemolysin activator protein CDS	1065	OuterMembrane	8.86	3.2	4.6	13.3	76.2
AIG67905.1	EDL933_1717	hypothetical protein CDS	588	Unknown	2	32.4	8.4	144.1	138.1
AIG67914.1	EDL933_1726	Hypothetical protein CDS	1938	Unknown	2	3.5	0.0	0.0	10.5
AIG67963.1	EDL933_1775	hypothetical protein CDS	744	Unknown	2	484.9	491.2	1537.0	2182.8
AIG68016.1	EDL933_1828	hypothetical protein CDS	1602	Unknown	2	3.8	0.0	8.8	12.7
AIG68165.1	EDL933_1977	Putative intestinal colonization factor encoded by prophage CP-933O CDS	747	Unknown	2	30	171.9	0.0	135.9
AIG68173.1	EDL933_1985	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	70.7	40.0	7.6	10.9
AIG68238.1	EDL933_2050	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	53.3	26.7	45.8	0.0
AIG68357.1	EDL933_2169	Outer membrane porin protein NmpC precursor CDS	1101	OuterMembrane	10	16.3	22.4	0.0	110.6
AIG68359.1	EDL933_2171	hypothetical protein CDS	669	Unknown	2	1.7	14.8	0.0	30.3
AIG68376.1	EDL933_2189	internalin, putative CDS	1260	Unknown	2	6.3	2.3	10.1	19.3
AIG68484.1	EDL933_2297	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	8.5	8.0	30.5	10.9
AIG68679.1	EDL933_2505	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	27.2	13.3	15.3	21.9
AIG68688.1	EDL933_2514	hypothetical protein CDS	585	Unknown	2	76.6	33.8	0.0	242.9
AIG69057.1	EDL933_2888	putative membrane protein CDS	651	Unknown	2	606.7	933.1	401.2	1262.9
AIG69153.1	EDL933_2986	hypothetical protein CDS	711	Unknown	2	108.7	83.4	119.1	142.8
AIG69189.1	EDL933_3022	Hypothetical protein CDS	1851	Unknown	2	18.8	10.7	30.5	0.0
AIG69198.1	EDL933_3031	hypothetical protein CDS	564	Unknown	2	37.7	78.8	25.0	180.0

AIG69346.1	EDL933_3180	Uncharacterized protein YehA precursor CDS	1035	Unknown	2	14.1	0.0	0.0	19.6
AIG69349.1	EDL933_3183	Putative fimbrial-like protein CDS	543	Unknown	2.5	88.7	582.1	208.0	37.4
AIG69390.1	EDL933_3224	Minor tail protein Z CDS	624	Unknown	2	3.6	0.0	22.6	0.0
AIG69393.1	EDL933_3227	Prophage Clp protease-like protein	1041	Unknown		2.2	0.0	13.6	0.0
AIG69411.1	EDL933_3245	Shiga toxin A-chain precursor CDS	948	Unknown	2.5	654.7	1586.3	871.2	235.5
AIG69664.1	EDL933_3500	Uncharacterized protein YadU in stf fimbrial cluster CDS	843	Unknown	2	33.2	93.7	50.2	72.2
AIG69958.1	EDL933_3799	Hypothetical protein CDS	1854	Unknown	2	31.4	16.0	22.8	21.9
AIG70298.1	EDL933_4145	Putative metalloprotease yggG	759	Unknown	2	519.6	390.4	93.0	320.9
AIG70798.1	EDL933_4653	hypothetical protein CDS	912	Unknown	2	3.7	0.0	15.5	22.3
AIG70844.1	EDL933_4699	Putative transmembrane protein CDS	606	Unknown	2.5	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
AIG71087.1	EDL933_4946	Type III secretion system EscD protein CDS	1221	Unknown	2	55.1	44.5	46.2	83.1
AIG71096.1	EDL933_4955	SepQ CDS	918	Unknown	2	223.3	102.2	399.8	309.6
AIG71137.1	EDL933_4996	hypothetical protein CDS	624	Unknown	2	19.8	39.6	22.6	130.1
AIG71181.1	EDL933_5041	hypothetical protein CDS	2409	Unknown	5.48	5.6	0.0	111.3	16.9
AIG71182.1	EDL933_5042	hypothetical protein CDS	672	Unknown	2	0	14.7	84.0	151.0
AIG71349.1	EDL933_5210	hypothetical protein CDS	915	Unknown	2	6.1	16.2	0.0	0.0
AIG71763.1	EDL933_5624	hypothetical protein CDS	774	Unknown	2.5	34.7	82.9	145.9	26.2
AIG71811.1	EDL933_5672	adherence and invasion outermembrane protein (Inv,enhances Peyer's patches colonization) CDS	5037	OuterMembrane	9.95	17.3	23.5	11.2	64.5
AIG66227.1	EDL933_0019	Putative outer membrane protein EDL933_0019	2451	OuterMembrane	10.00	3.2	10.1	0.0	8.3
AIG68053.1	EDL933_1865	Pertactin precursor	705	Unknown	7.00	36.6	42.0	40.0	28.8
AIG68360.1	EDL933_2172	internalin, putative	1260	Unknown	2.00	8	7.8	11.2	145.0
AIG69216.1	EDL933_3049	adherence and invasion outermembrane protein (Inv,enhances Peyer's patches colonization)	7863	OuterMembrane	9.95	5.8	12.6	10.8	10.3
AIG69974.1	EDL933_3815	Pertactin precursor	4308	Unknown	5.87	12	21.8	3.3	47.1
AIG68899.1	EDL933_2727	Putative lipoprotein	711	Unknown	2	11	6.9	0	0

Table S3. Features of the the 24 vaccine candidate expressed as recombinant proteins

No.	Protein ID	Vaccine candidate designation	Functional annotation	Recombinant protein	kDa
1	AIG67060.1	MC001	Putative outer membrane protein	I	35
2	AIG68165.1	MC002	Putative intestinal colonization factor encoded by prophage CP-933O	S	27
3	AIG68357.1	MC003	Outer membrane porin protein NmpC precursor	I	41
4	AIG67577.1	MC004	Shiga-like toxin II subunit A precursor	I	36
5	AIG69411.1	MC005	Shiga toxin A-chain precursor	S	35
6	AIG66347.1	MC006	Fimbrial protein Yad like protein	S	40
7	AIG66424.1	MC007	putative aminopeptidase	S	30
8	AIG66984.1	MC008	hypothetical protein	I	40
9	AIG67652.1	MC009	Putative exported protein precursor	I	38
10	AIG67671.1	MC010	hypothetical protein	I	31
11	AIG67672.1	MC011	hypothetical protein	I	51
12	AIG68053.1	MC012	Pertactin precursor	I	25
13	AIG68360.1	MC013	internalin, putative	S	48
14	AIG68899.1	MC014	putative lipoprotein	S	25
15	AIG69664.1	MC015	Uncharacterized protein YadU in stf fimbrial cluster	I	31
16	AIG70798.1	MC016	hypothetical protein	I	34
17	AIG67308.1	MC017	putative hemolysin activator protein 100%ID	I	37
18	AIG66972.1	MC018	core protein	S	159
19	AIG69216.1	MC019	adherence and invasion outermembrane protein (Inv,enhances Peyer's patches colonization)	S	275
20	AIG69974.1	MC020	Pertactin precursor	S	148
21	AIG71811.1	MC021	adherence and invasion outermembrane protein (Inv,enhances Peyer's patches colonization)	S	181
22	AIG71181.1	MC022	hypothetical protein	S	93
23	AIG66227.1	MC023	Putative outer membrane protein	S	92
24	AIG66656.1	MC024	Protein YkiA	I	83

S = soluble; I = insoluble

		Expression (absolute value RPKM)				
Subcellular localization (Psort, PDB)	Pfam domain	LB	LB Agar	LB Antibiotics	Feces	WB detection
OM	DUF2219	45.5	30.9	338.2	126.9	++
EC	SBP bac 11	30	171.9	0	135.9	++
OM	Porin 1	16.13	22.4	0	110.6	+
EC	RIP	372	262.4	566.2	42.3	+
EC	RIP	654.7	1586.3	871.2	235.5	-
OM	Fimbrial	192.8	327	101.7	347.5	-
Unknown	unknown	9.8	18.5	105.7	0	++
Fimbrial	Fimbrial	21.6	18.6	13.3	38.2	+
OM	Fimbrial	17.5	9.1	13	37.4	++
Unknown	DUF1329	2.8	0	0	25.7	+
OM	unknown	2.4	0	0	21.9	+
OM	unknown	36.6	42	40	28.8	+
Unknown	unknown	8	7.8	11.2	145	+
OM	SIMPL	11	6.9	0	0	-
Unknown	DUF2544	33.2	93.7	50.2	72.2	-
Unknown	DUF4225	3.7	0	15.5	22.3	-
OM	Potra 2	0	0	13.3	19.1	+
Unknown	unknown	6.8	12.9	6.7	4.8	+
OM	Invasin	5.8	12.6	10.8	10.3	-
OM	AIDA/Pertectin	12	21.8	3.3	47.1	++
OM	DUF3442	17.3	23.5	11.2	64.5	-
Unknown	unknown	5.6	0	111.3	16.9	+
OM	PapC Usher	3.2	10.1	0	8.3	+
Unknown	DUF2773	8.3	6.8	0	28.1	+

OM = Outermembrane; EC = extracellular

Chapter 2

Identification of the autochaperone domain in the Type Va secretion system (T5aSS): A prevalent feature of autotransporters with a β -helical passenger

