

**IDENTIFICATION OF *Salmonella enterica*  
subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi-SPECIFIC  
GENES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
DNA-BASED AND ANTIBODY-BASED  
DIAGNOSTICS FOR TYPHOID FEVER**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

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DIAGNOSTICS FOR TYPHOID FEVER**

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>ABSTRAK</b> .....	<b>xviii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>xxi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 <i>Salmonella enterica</i> subspecies <i>enterica</i> serovar Typhi ( <i>S. Typhi</i> ) .....	1
1.1.1 Taxonomy .....	3
1.1.2 Nomenclature .....	3
1.2 Typhoid fever.....	6
1.2.1 Epidemiology .....	6
1.2.2 Pathogenesis .....	10
1.2.3 Immune Response .....	11
1.2.3(a) Innate Immune System (Non-specific Immune System) .....	12
1.2.3(b) Adaptive Immune System (Specific Immune System) .....	12
1.2.3(b)(i) Cellular Immune Response .....	13
1.2.3(b)(ii) Humoral Immune Response.....	14
1.2.3(b)(iii) Important Antibody Isotypes in Typhoid Serology.....	17
1.2.4 Clinical Features .....	18
1.2.5 Typhoid Carrier State .....	19
1.2.6 Treatment of Typhoid Fever - Antibiotic Therapy.....	20
1.2.7 Prevention of Typhoid Fever.....	23
1.2.7(a) Vaccines.....	23
1.3 Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever .....	25
1.3.1 Culture Systems.....	25
1.3.1(a) Bone Marrow Culture .....	26
1.3.1(b) Blood Culture .....	26

1.3.1(c)	Stool Culture.....	27
1.3.1(d)	Urine Culture.....	27
1.3.2	Traditional Phenotypic Tests.....	27
1.3.2(a)	Biochemical Tests.....	27
1.3.2(b)	Serotyping.....	28
1.3.3	Serological Diagnosis.....	28
1.3.3(a)	Widal Test.....	31
1.3.3(b)	TUBEX <sup>®</sup> (IDL Biotech AB, Sollentuna, Sweden).....	31
1.3.3(c)	Typhidot <sup>®</sup> (Malaysian Biodiagnostic Research, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).....	33
1.3.3(d)	Typhidot-M <sup>®</sup> (Malaysian Biodiagnostic Research, Bangi, Malaysia).....	33
1.3.4	Common Molecular Diagnostic Techniques for Detection of <i>S. Typhi</i> .....	34
1.3.4(a)	Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).....	34
1.3.4(b)	Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA).....	36
1.4	Rationale of Study.....	37
1.5	Overview of the Study.....	42
1.6	Objectives of Research.....	44
<b>CHAPTER 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS.....</b>		<b>46</b>
2.1	Methods (Phase 1).....	46
2.1.1	Bacterial Strains.....	46
2.1.2	Bacteria Confirmation Tests.....	49
2.1.3	Identification of Putative <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific Genes by Data-mining.....	50
2.1.4	Design of Oligonucleotide Primers for PCR Amplification.....	51
2.1.5	Bacterial DNA Extraction.....	53
2.1.6	Quantification of DNA.....	54
2.1.7	Primer Validation.....	54
2.1.8	PCR Product Analyses.....	55
2.1.8(a)	Agarose Gel Electrophoresis.....	55
2.1.8(b)	Purification of PCR Products.....	56
2.1.8(c)	DNA Sequencing.....	56
2.1.9	Optimisation of PCR using Taguchi Method.....	57
2.1.10	Analytical Specificities of PCR Assays.....	60
2.1.11	Analytical Sensitivities of PCR Assays.....	60

2.1.11(a)	DNA Extracted from Pure Bacteria Culture using DNeasy Blood & Tissue Kit Expressed at Pure DNA Level (ng/ $\mu$ L).....	60
2.1.11(b)	Analytical Sensitivity of DNA Extracted from Bacteria Lysate using Boiling Method Expressed at Bacteria Level (cfu/mL) .....	61
2.1.11(c)	Analytical Sensitivity of DNA Extracted from Artificially Spiked Stool Samples using Boiling Method Expressed at Bacteria Level (cfu/mL).....	62
2.1.12	Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Amplification Facilitators (AFs) to Counteract PCR Inhibitors in Spiked Stool Samples.....	63
2.1.13	Assay Reproducibility Test .....	65
2.1.14	Diagnostic Sensitivity and Specificity of the Assay using Clinical Samples from the Biobank Repository .....	65
2.1.15	Statistical Analyses.....	65
2.2	Methods (Phase 2) .....	67
2.2.1	Sera Collection .....	67
2.2.2	Sample Size Calculation.....	67
2.2.3	Grouping of Serum Samples .....	68
2.2.4	Ethical Approval.....	68
2.2.5	Selection of Antigen Candidates using Bioinformatics Analysis.....	69
2.2.6	Construction of Recombinant Expression Cassette for DNA Cloning .....	72
2.2.6(a)	Primer Design for Amplification of Genes STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020.....	74
2.2.6(b)	PCR Amplification of Target Genes Selected for Cloning Purpose .....	76
2.2.6(c)	DNA Digestion using Restriction Enzymes .....	76
2.2.6(d)	Vector Dephosphorylation.....	77
2.2.6(e)	Ligation of Restriction Enzyme-treated DNA Fragments with Linearised pET-28a (+) Expression Vectors.....	77
2.2.7	Preparation of Competent Cells for Transformation of Recombinant Expression Vectors.....	78
2.2.8	Transformation of Recombinant Vectors into <i>E. coli</i> DH5 $\alpha$ using Heat Shock Method .....	78
2.2.9	Extraction of Recombinant Vectors .....	79
2.2.10	Verification of the Extracted Recombinant Vectors .....	80
2.2.11	Agarose Gel Electrophoresis for Verification of the Extracted Recombinant Vectors .....	80

2.2.12	Transformation of Recombinant Vectors into <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21 (DE3) Expression Host using Heat Shock Method .....	81
2.2.13	Recombinant Protein Expression of Transformed <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21 (DE3) Cells.....	82
2.2.14	SDS-PAGE Analysis .....	82
2.2.15	Western Blot Analysis .....	85
2.2.16	Protein Solubility Screening of Recombinant Proteins .....	86
2.2.17	Purification of Recombinant Proteins under Denaturing Condition .....	86
2.2.18	Evaluation of Diagnostic Specificity and Sensitivity of 3 Recombinant Proteins using Indirect ELISAs.....	87
2.2.19	Statistical Analyses.....	90
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESULTS.....</b>		<b>91</b>
3.1	Phase 1 .....	91
3.1.1	Verification of <i>Salmonella</i> Strains .....	91
3.1.2	Identification of <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific Genes as Potential Diagnostic Markers using Bioinformatics Approaches .....	95
3.1.3	Primer Validation and PCR Product Sequencing.....	98
3.1.4	Optimisation of 6 Individual PCR Assays using Taguchi Method.....	100
3.1.5	Determination of the Analytical Specificities of the 6 PCR Assays.....	104
3.1.6	Determination of the Analytical Sensitivities (Detection Limit) of the 6 PCR Assays .....	113
3.1.7	Overcoming Inhibition of PCR by Addition of Amplification Facilitators .....	116
3.1.8	Determination of the Analytical Sensitivity of the PCR assay using Spiked Stool PCR Assays .....	120
3.1.9	Evaluation of the Diagnostic Specificity and Sensitivity of STY0307 PCR Assay using 130 Actual Clinical Samples Collected from Patients in HUSM.....	124
3.2	Phase 2 .....	128
3.2.1	Analysis and Selection of Potential Diagnostic Antigens for Detection of <i>S. Typhi</i> using Bioinformatics Analysis .....	128
3.2.2	Amplification of Genes STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020.....	133
3.2.3	Restriction Enzyme Digestion of Purified PCR Products and pET-28a Vector .....	135
3.2.4	Verification of the Recombinant Vectors by DNA Sequencing .....	137
3.2.5	Expression of <i>S. Typhi</i> Recombinant Proteins .....	138



3.2.6	Purification of Recombinant Proteins using Ni-NTA Affinity Chromatography .....	141
3.2.7	Confirmation of Poly-His-tagged Recombinant Protein by Western Blot Analysis .....	144
3.2.8	Evaluation of the Diagnostic Specificities and Sensitivities of the Recombinant Proteins STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020 using Indirect ELISAs .....	146
3.2.9	Diagnostic Specificity and Sensitivity of Recombinant Protein STY0307.....	150
3.2.10	Diagnostic Specificity and Sensitivity of Recombinant Protein STY0326.....	153
3.2.11	Diagnostic Specificity and Sensitivity of Recombinant Protein STY2020.....	155
<b>CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION.....</b>		<b>159</b>
4.1	Phase 1 .....	159
4.1.1	PCR-based Diagnostics .....	159
4.1.2	<i>S. Typhi</i> -specific Genes Identified in This Study.....	160
4.1.3	Primer Design .....	162
4.1.4	Incorporation of Internal Amplification Control (IAC) .....	163
4.1.5	Taguchi Method for PCR Optimisation .....	164
4.1.6	Direct Stool Detection of <i>S. Typhi</i> DNA using PCR .....	164
4.1.7	Strategies to Overcome PCR Inhibitory Effects.....	166
4.2	Phase 2.....	170
4.2.1	Effectiveness and Usefulness of Serological Diagnostics for Typhoid Fever .....	170
4.2.2	Current Deficits in Protein Markers for Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever.....	171
4.2.3	Recent Technologies for Discovery of Protein Diagnostic Markers.....	172
4.2.4	Genomic Translation Approach for Protein Marker Discovery.....	173
4.2.5	Usefulness of Recombinant Antigens as Diagnostic Markers .....	174
4.2.6	Host Immune Response.....	175
4.2.7	Antigenicity Studies of <i>S. Typhi</i> Recombinant Proteins using Indirect ELISAs.....	176
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>180</b>
5.1	Conclusion of the Study .....	180
5.2	Suggestions for Future Studies .....	181

**REFERENCES..... 185**

**APPENDICES**

## LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1.1	Taxonomy and Nomenclature of <i>Salmonella</i> (Issenhuth-Jeanjean <i>et al.</i> , 2014).....	5
Table 1.2	Recommended treatment of uncomplicated typhoid fever adapted from WHO technical communities (Bhutta, 2006b; WHO, 2003).....	22
Table 1.3	Sensitivities and specificities of serological diagnostic tests for typhoid fever.....	30
Table 2.1	List of bacteria strains used in this study.....	48
Table 2.2	Details of primers targeting <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific genes for the development of the 6 individual PCR assays .....	52
Table 2.3	Combination of 4 main PCR components (MgCl <sub>2</sub> , IAC primers, <i>S. Typhi</i> primers and Annealing temperatures) at 3 different concentrations investigated using a modified Taguchi method for optimisation of the PCRs .....	59
Table 2.4	Combination of different concentrations of AFs in PCR mixture.....	64
Table 2.5	Calculation of sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV of PCR assay .....	66
Table 2.6	List of primers targeting 3 <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific genes that have potential to serve as sero-diagnostic markers.....	75
Table 2.7	Polyacrylamide gels preparation (A) Resolving gel, and (B) Stacking gel .....	84
Table 3.1	Summary of biochemical and serotyping results for differentiation of <i>Salmonella</i> serovars.....	94
Table 3.2	BLASTn results of the 6 <i>S. Typhi</i> genes compared to the 6 known reference genomes of <i>S. Typhi</i> (P-stx12, CT 18, Ty2, Ty21a, B/SF/13/03/195, and PM016/13) deposited in NCBI database .....	96
Table 3.3	BLASTn results of the 6 <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific genes when compared to the most significant nucleotide sequences other than <i>S. Typhi</i> deposited in NCBI database .....	97
Table 3.4	Optimised PCR master mix for <i>S. Typhi</i> genes STY0201, STY0307 and STY2020 .....	102

Table 3.5	Optimised PCR thermocycling parameters for <i>S. Typhi</i> genes STY0201, STY0307 and STY2020.....	102
Table 3.6	Optimised PCR master mix for <i>S. Typhi</i> genes STY0322, STY0326 and STY2021 .....	103
Table 3.7	Optimised PCR thermocycling parameters for <i>S. Typhi</i> genes STY0322, STY0326 and STY2021 .....	103
Table 3.8	Analytical specificity evaluation results of the 6 target genes for identification of <i>S. Typhi</i> using PCR (Total of 111 clinical strains) .....	112
Table 3.9	Effect of different AF concentrations counteracting the inhibitory effects of stool on the sensitivity of PCRs.....	119
Table 3.10	Reproducibility testing of PCR assay targeting gene STY0307 with addition of 0.2% BSA using stored DNA extracted from spiked stool samples, tested at weekly intervals .....	123
Table 3.11	Specificity, sensitivity, PPV, NPV, and efficiency of STY0307 PCR assay for diagnosis of typhoid fever .....	127
Table 3.12	Details of the genes and their GC content, locations in the SPI region, antigenicity prediction scores, and protein identity with <i>S. Typhi</i> , <i>E. coli</i> , and <i>S. Paratyphi A</i> .....	132
Table 3.13	Amino acid sequences and expected molecular weights of the recombinant proteins .....	140
Table 3.14	Specificity, sensitivity, PPV, NPV, and efficiency of recombinant protein STY0307 to serve as sero-diagnostic marker for diagnosis of typhoid fever .....	158
Table 3.15	Specificity, sensitivity, PPV, NPV, and efficiency of recombinant protein STY0326 to serve as sero-diagnostic marker for diagnosis of typhoid fever .....	158
Table 3.16	Specificity, sensitivity, PPV, NPV, and efficiency of recombinant protein STY2020 to serve as sero-diagnostic marker for diagnosis of typhoid fever .....	158

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1.1	An electron microscope image of <i>S. Typhi</i> showing flagella and short fimbriae (Adapted from <a href="https://www.britannica.com/science">https://www.britannica.com/science</a> ) ..... 2
Figure 1.2	Global distribution of typhoid fever (Adapted from Crump <i>et al.</i> , 2004)..... 9
Figure 1.3	Incidence rate of typhoid fever per 100,000 population in Malaysia from 2005 to 2015 (MOH, 2016)..... 9
Figure 1.4	Antigenic structure of <i>S. Typhi</i> (Adapted from University of British Columbia, <a href="http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PATH417:2015W1/Case_2/Student_8">http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PATH417:2015W1/Case_2/Student_8</a> )..... 16
Figure 1.5	Principle of the TUBEX <sup>®</sup> test (Adapted from Lim <i>et al.</i> , 1998) ..... 32
Figure 1.6	Phase 1 experimental workflow describing the comparative genomic and wet laboratory procedures used to determine and validate <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific genes as diagnostic markers ..... 42
Figure 1.7	Phase 2 experimental workflow describing the bioinformatic and wet laboratory procedures used to determine and validate <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific proteins as diagnostic markers ..... 43
Figure 2.1	Experimental workflow describing the bioinformatics procedure used to determine <i>S. Typhi</i> -specific proteins as diagnostic markers..... 71
Figure 2.2	An overview of the gene cloning process using pET-28a vector ..... 73
Figure 2.3	A schematic diagram showing the principle of the indirect ELISA..... 89
Figure 3.1	ATCC 7251 <i>S. Typhi</i> appears as black-centered transparent colonies when cultured on XLD selective agar ..... 93
Figure 3.2	Biochemical test results of ATCC7251 <i>S. Typhi</i> ..... 93
Figure 3.3	Six PCR products obtained using the 6 primer pairs specific for <i>S. Typhi</i> and resolved on 1.2% agarose gel ..... 99
Figure 3.4	Optimisation of the 6 PCR assays using Taguchi method with incorporation of IAC: (A) PCR assay targeting gene STY0201;

	(B) PCR assay targeting gene STY0307; (C) PCR assay targeting gene STY0322; (D) PCR assay targeting gene STY0326; (E) PCR assay targeting gene STY2020; and (F) PCR assay targeting gene STY2021.....	101
Figure 3.5	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY0201 and (B) gene STY0307 tested against a panel of 38 different <i>S. Typhi</i> PFTs .....	106
Figure 3.6	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY0322 and (B) gene STY0326 tested against a panel of 38 different <i>S. Typhi</i> PFTs .....	107
Figure 3.7	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY2020 and (B) gene STY2021 tested against a panel of 38 different <i>S. Typhi</i> PFTs .....	108
Figure 3.8	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY0201 and (B) gene STY0307 .....	109
Figure 3.9	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY0322 and (B) gene STY0326.....	110
Figure 3.10	Analytical specificities of 2 optimised PCR assays for: (A) gene STY2020 and (B) gene STY2021 .....	111
Figure 3.11	Sensitivity evaluation results of 6 optimised PCR assays using 5-fold serially dilutions of purified <i>S. Typhi</i> ATCC 7251 genomic DNA: (A) gene STY0201, (B) gene STY0307, (C) gene STY0322, (D) gene STY0326, (E) gene STY2020 and (F) gene STY2021, expressed at DNA level.....	114
Figure 3.12	Sensitivity evaluation results of 6 optimised PCR assays using 10-fold serially dilutions of <i>S. Typhi</i> ATCC 7251 bacterial lysate: (A) gene STY0201, (B) gene STY0307, (C) gene STY0322, (D) gene STY0326, (E) gene STY2020 and (F) gene STY2021, expressed at bacteria level (cfu/mL) .....	115
Figure 3.13	Sensitivity evaluation result of STY0307 PCR assay on 10-fold serially diluted <i>S. Typhi</i> ATCC 7251 spiked stool samples without addition of AFs, expressed at bacteria level (cfu/mL) .....	118
Figure 3.14	Analytical sensitivity of STY0307 PCR assay, expressed in bacterial counts (cfu/mL) in spiked stool samples with 18-hr enrichment: (A) with 1% (w/v) PVP and, (B) with 0.2% (w/v) BSA .....	121
Figure 3.15	Analytical sensitivity of STY0307 PCR assay, expressed in bacterial counts (cfu/mL) in spiked stool samples with 24-hr enrichment with addition of 0.2% (w/v) BSA.....	122

Figure 3.16	Diagnostic sensitivity of STY0307 PCR assay in identifying all 8 <i>S. Typhi</i> positive samples (lanes 8, 26, 35, 49, 56, 66, 90 and 116) out of 130 clinical stool samples tested in a blind study .....	125
Figure 3.17	PCR products of genes STY0307, STY0326, and STY2020 resolved on 1.2% agarose gel .....	134
Figure 3.18	Restriction enzyme digestion of pET-28a vectors resolved on 0.8% agarose gel.....	136
Figure 3.19	SDS-PAGE analysis shows recombinant proteins of vectors pET-28a/STY0307, pET-28a/STY0326 and pET-28a/STY2020 successfully expressed in <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21 cells.....	139
Figure 3.20	SDS-PAGE analysis of the recombinant proteins, STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020 expressed in <i>E. coli</i> following sonication.....	142
Figure 3.21	SDS-PAGE profiles showing proteins purified using Ni-NTA spin kit: (A) <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21-pET-28a/0307, (B) <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21-pET-28a/0326 and (C) <i>E. coli</i> Lemo21-pET-28a/2020 .....	143
Figure 3.22	Detection of poly-His-tagged recombinant proteins by Western blot analysis using mouse monoclonal anti-polyhistidine antibody .....	145
Figure 3.23	ELISA mean OD <sub>450</sub> readings of IgM responses to the 3 recombinant proteins (STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020) for 3 groups of sera: typhoid fever, non-typhoid fever and healthy controls .....	148
Figure 3.24	ELISA mean OD <sub>450</sub> readings of IgG responses to the 3 recombinant proteins (STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020) for 3 groups of sera: typhoid fever, non-typhoid fever and healthy controls .....	148
Figure 3.25	ELISA mean OD <sub>450</sub> readings of IgA responses to the 3 recombinant proteins (STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020) for 3 groups of sera: typhoid fever, non-typhoid fever and healthy controls .....	149
Figure 3.26	ELISA OD readings of IgM, IgG and IgA antibodies responses to recombinant protein STY0307 .....	152
Figure 3.27	ELISA OD readings of IgM, IgG and IgA antibodies responses to recombinant protein STY0326 .....	154
Figure 3.28	ELISA OD readings of IgM, IgG and IgA antibodies responses to recombinant protein STY2020 .....	157

## LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

°C	Degree Celsius
%	Percent
®	Registered Trademark
<	Less Than
>	More Than
+	Positive
-	Negative
±	Both Plus and Minus Operations
×	Time
×g	Gravitational Force
μg	Microgram (s)
μM	Micromolar (s)
μL	Microlitre (s)
A <sub>260</sub>	Absorbance at 260 nm Wavelength
A <sub>280</sub>	Absorbance at 280 nm Wavelength
AFs	Amplification Facilitators
ATCC	American Type Culture Collection
ATP	Adenosine Triphosphate
dATP	Deoxyadenosine Triphosphate
BLAST	Basic Local Alignment Search Tool
bp	Base Pair (s)
BSA	Bovine Serum Albumin
CaCl <sub>2</sub>	Calcium Chloride
cfu	Colony Forming Unit (s)
ddH <sub>2</sub> O	Double Distilled Water
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
dNTPs	Deoxyribonucleoside Triphosphates
<i>E. coli</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid
EIA	Enzyme Immunoassay
ELISA	Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay
g	Gram (s)
H <sub>2</sub> O	Water
HCl	Hydrogen Chloride
hr	Hour (s)
HRP	Horseradish Peroxidase
IAC	Internal Amplification Control
IgA	Immunoglobulin A
IgG	Immunoglobulin G
IgM	Immunoglobulin M
IL	Interleukin
IFN	Interferon
kb	Kilobase (s)
KCl	Potassium Chloride
kDa	Kilodalton (s)
L	Litre (s)



LA	Luria Agar
LAMP	Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification
LB	Luria Broth
LoD	Limit of Detection
M	Molar (s)
mg	Milligram (s)
mg/mL	Milligram (s) per Millilitre (s)
MgCl <sub>2</sub>	Magnesium Chloride
min	Minute (s)
mL	Millilitre (s)
mM	Millimolar (s)
MRVP	Methyl Red Voges Proskauer
N	Normality
NA	Nutrient Agar
NaCl	Sodium Chloride
NaOH	Sodium Hydroxide
NB	Nutrient Broth
NCBI	National Center for Biotechnology Information
NCTC	National Collection of Type Cultures (NCTC)
ng	Nanogram (s)
ng/μL	Nanogram (s) per Microlitre (s)
nm	Nanometer (s)
NPV	Negative Predictive Value
OD	Optical Density
PBS	Phosphate Buffered Saline
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
pg	Picogram (s)
pH	Power of Hydrogen
pmol	Picomole (s)
POC	Point-of-Care
poly-His-tag	Polyhistidine-tag
PPV	Positive Predictive Value
PVDF	Polyvinylidene Difluoride
PVP	Polyvinyl Pyrrolidone
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid
rpm	Revolutions per Minute
<i>S. Typhi</i>	<i>Salmonella Typhi</i>
SD	Standard Deviation (s)
SDS	Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate
SDS-PAGE	Sodium dodecyl Sulfate-polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis
sec	Second (s)
SIM	Sulfide Indole Motility
SPI	<i>Salmonella</i> Pathogenicity Island
TAE	Tris-Acetate-EDTA
TSI	Triple Sugar Iron
U	Unit (s)
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
UV	Ultraviolet
V	Volt (s)

v/v	Volume Per Volume
w/v	Weight Per Volume
WHO	World Health Organization
XLD	Xylose Lysine Deoxycholate

**PENGENALPASTIAN GEN SPESIFIK *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica*  
serovar Typhi UNTUK PEMBANGUNAN DIAGNOSTIK BERDASARKAN  
DNA DAN BERDASARKAN ANTIBODI UNTUK DEMAM KEPIALU**

**ABSTRAK**

Demam kepialu disebabkan oleh *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi (*S. Typhi*). Penyakit sistemik akut ini kekal sebagai satu masalah kesihatan awam yang utama di seluruh dunia. Kekurangan penanda diagnostik yang spesifik dan sensitif untuk pengesanan *S. Typhi* pada resolusi sasaran gen tunggal menghalang usaha pengawalan penyakit yang cekap. Dalam fasa pertama kajian ini, perbandingan genomik bagi *S. Typhi* dengan patogen enteric lain dilakukan dengan menggunakan BLASTn. Enam gen iaitu STY0201, STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 dan STY2021 didapati spesifik dan sensitif *in silico*. Enam ujian PCR sasaran gen tunggal telah dibangunkan dengan kawalan amplifikasi dalaman dan dioptimakan dengan menggunakan kaedah Taguchi. Spesifisiti analisa bagi ujian PCR yang dioptimakan telah ditentukan dengan menggunakan DNA tulen yang diperolehi daripada 39 *S. Typhi*, 62 *Salmonella* bukan-Typhi dan 10 bukan-*Salmonella* strain klinikal. Sensitiviti analisa bagi ujian PCR yang dioptimakan telah ditentukan dengan menggunakan pencairan 5-ganda genomik DNA dan pencairan 10-ganda bakteria kultur. Ujian-ujian penilaian ke atas spesifisiti diagnostik dan sensitiviti diagnostik telah diuji dengan lebih lanjut untuk salah satu daripada ujian yang paling spesifik dan sensitif. Daripada 6 calon gen, 5 gen iaitu STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 dan STY2021 menunjukkan 100% spesifisiti analitikal (pengesanan 39/39 strain

bakteria). Gen STY0201 menunjukkan 97.2% spesifisiti analitikal (pengesanan 70/72 strain bakteria). Sensitiviti 6 ujian PCR dengan DNA genom ialah; 32 pg untuk STY0322, 6.4 pg untuk STY0201, STY0326, STY2020 dan STY2021, dan 1.28 pg untuk STY0307. Sensitiviti ujian PCR dalam kiraan bakteria ialah seperti yang berikut;  $1.5 \times 10^5$  cfu/mL untuk STY0307;  $1.5 \times 10^6$  cfu/mL untuk STY0201, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 dan STY2021. Ujian PCR STY0307 menunjukkan sensitiviti yang paling tinggi. Oleh itu, ia telah dipilih untuk penilaian lanjut dengan menggunakan sampel tinja yang dicemari bakteria. Dengan pengeraman selama 18 jam, sensitiviti ujian PCR STY0307 ialah  $1.5 \times 10^4$  cfu/mL. Ujian PCR STY0307 menunjukkan 100% spesifisiti dan sensitiviti diagnostik apabila dilakukan secara rawak buta terhadap 130 sampel klinikal. Fasa kedua kajian ini telah dicadangkan untuk mengkaji nilai keantigenan protein-protein yang dikodkan oleh gen-gen yang dikenal pasti dalam fasa pertama kajian ini. Analisis bioinformatik telah digunakan untuk meramal potensi calon-calon antigen. Berdasarkan rasional skor ramalan keantigenan dan spesifisiti yang tinggi, 3 gen *S. Typhi* iaitu STY0307, STY0326 dan STY2020 telah dipilih untuk produksi protein dengan menggunakan teknik DNA rekombinan. Keantigenan protein yang afiniti-ditulenkan telah diuji menggunakan ELISAs tidak langsung, terhadap 12 sera demam kepialu, 28 sera bukan demam kepialu dan 28 sera sihat. Daripada 3 calon protein yang dikaji, 2 protein, STY0307 dan STY2020 menunjukkan tindak balas dengan IgM, IgG dan IgA antibodi daripada serum demam kepialu berbanding dengan serum bukan demam kepialu dan serum sihat ( $p < 0.01$ ). Anti-STY0307 ELISA mencapai 91.7% sensitiviti (11/12) dan 92.9% spesifisiti (52/56), manakala anti-STY2020 ELISA menunjukkan 66.7% sensitiviti (8/12) dan 94.6% spesifisiti (53/56). Anti-STY0326 ELISA mencapai hanya 25.0% sensitiviti (3/12) dengan 96.4% spesifisiti (54/56). Kesimpulannya, 5 gen iaitu

STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 dan STY2021 telah didapati 100% spesifik dan 100% sensitif sebagai penanda DNA untuk identifikasi *S. Typhi*. Dua gen, STY0307 dan STY2020 bukan sahaja sesuai sebagai penanda diagnostik DNA yang spesifik dan sensitif, tetapi protein yang diekspreskan juga berguna sebagai penanda sero-diagnostik. Hasil kajian ini menjamin pembangunan diagnostik yang dipertambahbaikan dan pembangunan vaksin untuk demam kepialu.

**IDENTIFICATION OF *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi-SPECIFIC GENES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DNA-BASED AND ANTIBODY-BASED DIAGNOSTICS FOR TYPHOID FEVER**

**ABSTRACT**

Typhoid fever is caused by *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi (*S. Typhi*). It is an acute systemic disease which remains a major public health burden worldwide. A lack of specific and sensitive diagnostic markers for detection of *S. Typhi* at single-gene target resolution prevents effective diagnosis and therefore efficient control of the disease. In the first phase of this study, genome level comparison of *S. Typhi* with other enteric pathogens was performed using BLASTn. Six genes, i.e. STY0201, STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 and STY2021 were found to be specific and sensitive *in silico*. Six individual single-gene target PCR assays with the incorporation of an internal amplification control (IAC) were developed and optimised using Taguchi method. The analytical specificities of the optimised PCR assays were determined using purified DNA from 39 *S. Typhi*, 62 non-Typhi *Salmonella*, and 10 non-*Salmonella* clinical strains. The analytical sensitivities of the PCR assays were assessed using 5-fold dilutions of genomic DNA and 10-fold dilutions of bacterial culture. Diagnostic specificity and diagnostic sensitivity evaluation tests were further assessed for one of these highly sensitive and specific assays. Of the 6 candidate genes, 5 genes i.e. STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 and STY2021 demonstrated 100% analytical specificity (detection of 39/39 bacteria strains). Gene STY0201 demonstrated 97.2% analytical specificity (detection of 70/72 bacteria strains). The sensitivities of the 6 PCR assays by genomic DNA were; 32 pg for STY0322, 6.4 pg for STY0201, STY0326, STY2020 and STY2021, and 1.28 pg for STY0307. The

sensitivities of these PCR assays by bacteria counts were as follows;  $1.5 \times 10^5$  cfu/mL for STY0307 and  $1.5 \times 10^6$  cfu/mL for STY0201, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 and STY2021. Since the STY0307 PCR assay demonstrated the highest analytical sensitivity, it was selected for further sensitivity evaluation using spiked stool samples. It was found that with 18 hr enrichment, the sensitivity of STY0307 PCR assay was  $1.5 \times 10^4$  cfu/mL. The STY0307 PCR assay demonstrated 100% diagnostic specificity and sensitivity when 130 clinical samples were blind screened. The second phase of this study was carried out in order to study the antigenicity of the proteins encoded by the genes identified in the first phase of this study. Bioinformatics analysis was used to predict the potential antigen candidates. Based on a rationale of high antigenicity and high specificity prediction scores, 3 *S. Typhi* genes, i.e. STY0307, STY0326 and STY2020, were selected for cloning and protein expression using recombinant DNA techniques. The antigenicity of the affinity-purified proteins was evaluated using indirect ELISAs against 12 typhoid fever, 28 non-typhoid fever and 28 healthy sera. Of the 3 candidate proteins investigated, 2 proteins, STY0307 and STY2020 showed reactivity with IgM, IgG and IgA antibodies from typhoid patient sera compared to the non-typhoid and healthy control sera ( $p < 0.01$ ). The anti-STY0307 ELISA achieved 91.7% sensitivity (11/12) and 92.9% specificity (52/56), whereas the anti-STY2020 ELISA demonstrated 66.7% sensitivity (8/12) and 94.6% specificity (53/56). Anti-STY0326 ELISA achieved only 25.0% sensitivity (3/12) and 96.4% specificity (54/56). In conclusion, 5 genes namely, STY0307, STY0322, STY0326, STY2020 and STY2021, were found to be 100% specific and 100% sensitive as DNA markers for *S. Typhi* identification. Two of the genes, STY0307 and STY2020 not only could serve as sensitive and specific DNA diagnostic markers, but their corresponding proteins

were shown to be sero-diagnostically useful as well. These results hold promise for the development of improved diagnostics and vaccine for typhoid fever.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi (*S. Typhi*)

*Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhi (*S. Typhi*) is a Gram-negative, non-spore forming, facultative anaerobic bacteria that belongs to the family of *Enterobacteriaceae*. It is rod-shaped,  $0.7-1.5 \times 2.0-5.0 \mu\text{m}$  in size, and flagellated (Figure 1.1). Unlike other *Salmonella* serovars, *S. Typhi* causes typhoid fever, an acute systemic disease that is exclusive to humans. It is exquisitely adapted to the human gut before invading the bloodstream via the Peyer's patches in the small intestine (Raffatellu *et al.*, 2008), and causing gastrointestinal inflammation and high fever for extended periods of time. Worldwide, there are approximately 26.9 million typhoid cases and 269,000 deaths each year (Buckle *et al.*, 2012). Inadequate sanitation and sewage disposable systems, contaminated water supplies and poor personal hygiene, provide an opportunity for this pathogen to infect and colonise humans, leading to substantial illness, mortality and enormous financial loss (Dewan *et al.*, 2013). Correct diagnosis is essential for effective clinical management to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates. Yet, reliable diagnostic markers and tests remain tragically elusive. Without correct diagnosis and effective treatment, typhoid fever may progress to more severe illness, such as peritonitis, intestinal haemorrhage or perforation, exacerbating the case-fatality rates to 10-30% (Buckle *et al.*, 2012).

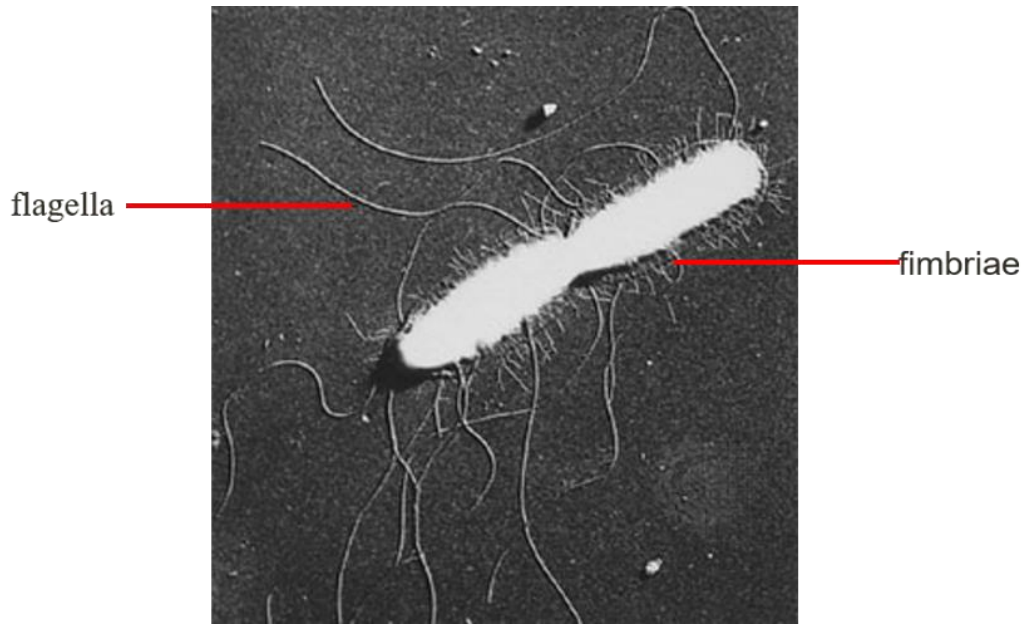


Figure 1.1 An electron microscope image of *S. Typhi* showing flagella and short fimbriae (Adapted from <https://www.britannica.com/science>)

### 1.1.1 Taxonomy

According to Le Minor and Popoff in 1987, the species *Salmonella enterica* could be classified into 7 subspecies, namely; I, *enterica*; II, *salamae*; IIIa, *arizonae*; IIIb, *diarizonae*; IV, *houtenae*; V, *bongori*; and VI, *indica* (Le Minor & Popoff, 1987). *S. bongori* was later re-classified as a distinct species based on DNA-DNA hybridization studies (Agbaje *et al.*, 2011). In 2005, a new *Salmonella* species, *Salmonella subterranean* was identified (Su & Chiu, 2006). Today, it is generally accepted that the genus *Salmonella* consists of 3 species (*Salmonella enterica*, *Salmonella bongori* and *Salmonella subterranean*), 6 subspecies (*S. enterica* subsp. *enterica*, *S. enterica* subsp. *salamae*, *S. enterica* subsp. *arizonae*, *S. enterica* subsp. *diarizonae*, *S. enterica* subsp. *houtenae* and *S. enterica* subsp. *indica*), and 2,659 serotypes (Issenhuth-Jeanjean *et al.*, 2014) (Table 1.1). *S. Typhi* is a serotype that belongs to *S. enterica* subspecies I (*S. enterica* subsp. *enterica*).

### 1.1.2 Nomenclature

*Salmonella* nomenclature is complex and has long been an issue of discussion. In the early 1920s, the taxonomy of *Salmonella* was in confusion until the development of the Kauffman-White scheme by Philip Bruce White in 1926. This scheme was then expanded by Fritz Kauffman from 1933-1978 (Hardy, 2004). The Kauffman-White scheme classified *Salmonella* species based on serological identification of O (somatic) and H (flagella) antigens, resulting in assignment of isolates to more than 2,500 serovars today. Many new serovars continue to be discovered each year. Currently, the *Salmonella* nomenclature system is maintained by the World Health

Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on *Salmonella* at the Pasteur Institute, France (Agbaje *et al.*, 2011).

When cited at the first time in a report, the genus name is italic and followed by the species (italic), subspecies (italic) and lastly the serotype name (non-italicized roman letters and starts with a capital letter) (Issenhuth-Jeanjean *et al.*, 2014), e.g. *Salmonella enterica* subspecies *enterica* serotype Typhi. This can also be stated as *Salmonella* ser. Typhi or simply *Salmonella* Typhi (*S.* Typhi). Since it is in subspecies I under serogroup D with the presence of O-9, O-12, Vi polysaccharides and phase 1 d-H antigens, *S.* Typhi can be named as *Salmonella* subspecies I, 9, 12, Vi:d. The details of *Salmonella* taxonomy and nomenclature is as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Taxonomy and Nomenclature of *Salmonella* (Issenhuth-Jeanjean *et al.*, 2014)

Taxonomic position and nomenclature				No. of serovars in each species or subspecies
Genus (capitalized first letter, italic)	Species (italic)	Subspecies (italic)	Serovars/serotypes (Capitalised first letter, not italic)*	
<i>Salmonella</i>	<i>enterica</i>	<i>enterica</i> (or subspecies I)	Choleraesuis, Enteritidis, Paratyphi, Typhi	1,586
		<i>salamae</i> (or subspecies II)	9, 46:z:z39	522
		<i>arizonae</i> (or subspecies IIIa)	43:z29:-	102
		<i>diarizonae</i> (or subspecies IIIb)	6,7:1, v:1,5,7	338
		<i>houtenae</i> (or subspecies IV)	21:m, t:-	76
		<i>indica</i> (or subspecies VI)	59:z36:-	13
		<i>bongori</i> subspecies V	13,22:z39:-	22
	<i>subterranea</i>			
Total				2,659

\*some selected serovars (serotypes) are listed as examples

## **1.2 Typhoid fever**

*S. Typhi* infection leads to the development of enteric fever, or more commonly known as typhoid fever. It is a systemic infection of the intestinal lymphoid tissue, gallbladder and the reticulo-endothelial system. The name “typhoid” was derived from the word “typhus”, owing to the indistinguishable clinical manifestations with the disease called typhus caused by *Rickettsia* bacteria. The burden of typhoid fever lies most critical in under-developed and developing countries, facilitated by inadequate personal hygiene, water supplies and sanitary systems. This disease is characterised by the sudden onset of a sustained high fever, constipation or diarrhea, malaise and abdominal pain (Gonzalez-escobedo *et al.*, 2011). Serious complications, such as intestinal perforation and septicaemia could occur leading to high mortality (Gonzalez-escobedo *et al.*, 2011). The disease affects all age groups, with higher incidence found in children (Darton *et al.*, 2014), immuno-compromised persons, and the elderly (Dougan, 2017). Complete control and eradication of typhoid fever remains a challenge despite improved sewage systems, socio-economic well-being and extensive efforts in public health. To further worsen the scenario, multidrug-resistant strains, which are responsible for high mortality, have risen over the past decade and appeared to be spreading worldwide (Wong *et al.*, 2015)

### **1.2.1 Epidemiology**

According to an epidemiological study in 2000, there were 21.6 million cases and 216,000 deaths each year (Crump *et al.*, 2004). An updated study by Buckle *et al.* in 2012 indicated that typhoid fever accounted for 26.9 million cases and 269,000 deaths each year. The true incidence of the disease burden is probably higher due to a lack of

reliable data collection systems in many endemic regions (Crump, 2014), especially in Latin America and Africa (Buckle *et al.*, 2012). The paucity of information regarding the true burden of the disease makes it a truly neglected disease.

Typhoid fever is a plague of the poor. It usually occurs in low and middle-income countries (Buckle *et al.*, 2012). Regions of high incidence (>100/100,000 cases/year) include South-central Asia and Southeast Asia (Crump *et al.*, 2004). Three countries, namely, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan together account for approximately 85% of the world's typhoid cases (Maurice, 2012). Medium incidence regions (10-100/100,000 population/year) include the rest of Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania, except New Zealand and Australia. Regions of low incidence rates (<10/100,000 population/year) include North America and other developed countries (Crump *et al.*, 2004). The low typhoid incidence rate in the developed countries could be associated with improved patient care, water sewage system and personal hygiene. However, sporadic outbreaks do occur in developed countries with most cases amongst travellers who had returned from typhoid endemic areas. In the US, about 80% of cases in the country occur from returned travellers and immigrants (Basnyat *et al.*, 2005; Lynch *et al.*, 2009). Judged by the association between migration and introduction of disease in this interconnected world, a history of travel to typhoid-endemic countries is useful for determining people who are at risk of the infection.

Malaysia is one of the countries in Southeast Asia which is endemic for typhoid fever (Figure 1.2). Presently, typhoid fever in Malaysia is considered sporadic with occasional outbreaks confined to a few areas where safe water supply, sanitation, food-

handling and personal hygiene practices are inadequate. The highest incidence rate in the country occurred in 2005 with 4.1 cases per 100,000 population (Figure 1.3). One state hit hard was Kelantan. In 2005, several outbreaks of typhoid fever occurred in the state, resulting in a high incidence rate of 56.7 per 100,000 population in which 735 culture-confirmed cases and 2 deaths were reported (Baddam *et al.*, 2012). Several intervention programs, such as food premise grading system, law regarding food hygiene, food premise inspection, and improved water supply, have been implemented by the government and the state Public Health Department. As a consequence of these interventions and government prodding, the incidence rate of typhoid fever in Malaysia in the past 10 years has decreased to 1.42 per 100,000 population in 2015 (Figure 1.3).

*S. Typhi* is a bacterium that can live in water and soil for several months and then, when scuffed out, infects humans. It is common to see the rise of typhoid fever cases during natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes (Sutiono *et al.*, 2010). Seasonal variation (45% of reported cases) was observed and associated with the monsoon season (July to October) in Southeast Asia.



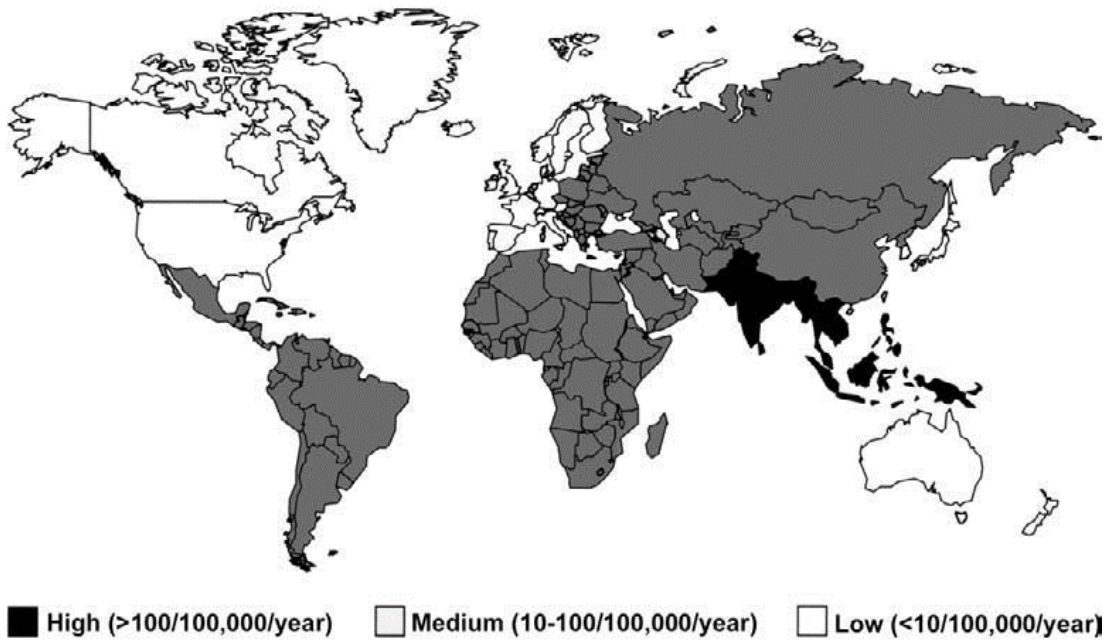


Figure 1.2 Global distribution of typhoid fever (Adapted from Crump *et al.*, 2004)

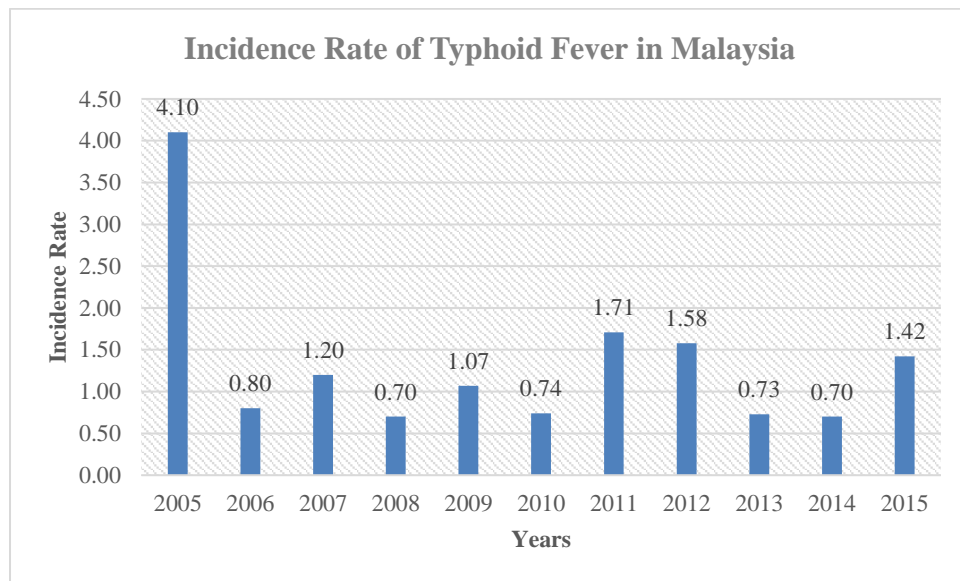


Figure 1.3 Incidence rate of typhoid fever per 100,000 population in Malaysia from 2005 to 2015 (MOH, 2016)

### 1.2.2 Pathogenesis

The pathogenesis of typhoid fever is difficult to study as humans are the only reservoir for the disease and there is no animal model. Current understanding of *S. Typhi* pathogenesis has been gleaned from the study of *S. Typhimurium*-infected murine model, which exhibits disseminate systemic infection with some resemble to that of human typhoid (Salazar *et al.*, 2017).

The infection starts with the ingestion of food or water contaminated with *S. Typhi* (approximately  $10^3$ - $10^6$  cfu/mL) into the human alimentary canal (Ja'afar *et al.*, 2013). *S. Typhi* is able to survive the destructive effects of gastric acid and the stomach barrier, and reach the small intestine. The intestinal wall is mainly made up of epithelial cells which serve as a protective layer against harmful substances. To invade the mucosa barrier of the small intestine, *S. Typhi* employs specialised fimbriae that help it to adhere to the epithelium of the Peyer's patches, usually the M cells (Kaur & Jain, 2012). A complex attack system, the type III secretion system (T3SS) of the bacteria is employed to initiate bacterial endocytosis. *S. Typhi* injects the effectors into the intestinal cell and causes host cell membrane ruffling to engulf the bacilli in an intracellular vacuole. However, *S. Typhi* is able to escape the intracellular vacuole and reach the lymphoid follicles at the Peyer's patches. They are then transported to the mesenteric lymph nodes, formed mainly by mononuclear cells such as T lymphocytes, as well as dendritic cells (De Andrade & De Andrade, 2003), and provoke cell-mediated and humoral responses.

*S. Typhi* is then phagocytised by macrophages. The Vi capsular polysaccharide prevents recognition by the pattern recognition receptors (PRRs) and enables *S. Typhi* to travel within the host's circulating system undetected by the host immune system (Wilson *et al.*, 2008). Survival from the phagolysosome process of the macrophage cells and even replicating within the macrophage cell, enables *S. Typhi* to be carried through the mesenteric lymph nodes and to the reticuloendothelial system, such as bone marrow, lymph nodes, spleen and liver (Garai *et al.*, 2012). This primary bacteraemia stage is usually symptomless, and the blood culture is usually negative.

Secondary bacteraemia happens when *S. Typhi* continues to multiply and induce macrophage apoptosis, breaking out into the bloodstream. The organism re-enters the gastrointestinal tract in the bile and re-infects the Peyer's patches. They may eventually spread to the gallbladder via either vasculature or ducts from the liver. The bacteria is then excreted from the faeces, and transmission to other individuals via contamination of water and food. This secondary bacteraemia coincides with the onset of typhoid symptoms and marks the end of the incubation period (WHO, 2003).

### **1.2.3 Immune Response**

Typhoid infection is restricted to humans. Therefore, the molecular pathogenesis of the pathogen must be unique and the host's immune response specific. The complex immune response to *S. Typhi* involves both innate and adaptive immune systems.

### **1.2.3 (a) Innate Immune System (Non-specific Immune System)**

The innate immune system provides immediate first line host defense against the invading pathogens. Gastric acidity ( $\text{pH} < 3.5$ ) serves as the first line of host defence against *S. Typhi* infection as it is ingested with water and food. However, *S. Typhi* manages to survive low pH gastric acid and encounter the next barrier - intestinal mucosa layer. Mucus covers the surface of the gut epithelium lining and acts as a protective layer to prevent direct contact of harmful bacteria with the epithelium. During *S. Typhi* infection, M cells in the epithelium are employed by *S. Typhi* as a means of transportation to the lumen epithelium and reach the lamina propria. Following this epithelial invasion, the presence of *S. Typhi* is detected by monocyte-derived phagocytic cells, namely macrophages and dendritic cells. These cells express a large family of pattern recognition receptors (PRRs) on their surfaces which detect pathogen-associated-molecular-patterns (PAMPs) and danger-associated-molecular-patterns (DAMPs) on pathogens. PAMPs expressed by *S. Typhi* include flagella, fimbria, T3SS protein, lipopolysaccharide and bacterial DNA (de Jong *et al.*, 2012). Upon engagement with PAMPs and DAMPs, the PRRs trigger expression of soluble protein called cytokines, leading to the activation of the adaptive immune system (Raffatellu *et al.*, 2006).

### **1.2.3 (b) Adaptive Immune System (Specific Immune System)**

When the innate immune response fails to prevent the entrance of *S. Typhi*, the adaptive immune system comes into play with the help of T and B cells. The adaptive immunity appears slowly, but it is more specialised and potent. Adaptive immune

system consists of cellular and humoral components which help them to carry out their protective functions.

### **1.2.3 (bi) Cellular Immune Response**

The cellular immune response (CRI) or cell-mediated immunity (CMI) represents the cellular component of the immune response and plays a dominant role in the early response to *S. Typhi* infection since *S. Typhi* could persist intracellularly. Two major components, CD4<sup>+</sup> and CD8<sup>+</sup> cytotoxic T-cells are involved in CMI of typhoid infection (Lundin *et al.*, 2002). The recognition of CD4<sup>+</sup> and CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells against the *S. Typhi* antigens leads to secretion of pro-inflammatory cytokines, such as interferon (IFN)- $\gamma$ , interleukin (IL)-6, IL-8 and Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF)- $\alpha$  (Fiorentino *et al.*, 2013). The predominant cytokine, IFN- $\gamma$  enhances the phagocytic ability of the macrophages (Nairz *et al.*, 2008). However, with T3SS mechanisms, *S. Typhi* can survive and use the macrophages as a vector for transport into the reticuloendothelial system of the host, such as bone marrow, lymph nodes, spleen and liver (Dougan & Baker, 2014). *S. Typhi* causes a restrained immune response in the host. Lower levels of IL-1 $\beta$  and TNF- $\alpha$  production by T- and B-cells compared to other Gram-negative bacteria infections during the acute phase of typhoid fever has been observed (Tsolis *et al.*, 2008). This result in limited neutrophil influx and explains why *S. Typhi* typically does not elicit septic shock and have prolonged incubation period (Gal-Mor *et al.*, 2012). As *S. Typhi* continues to multiply and induce macrophage apoptosis, the bacteria breaks out into the bloodstream, leading to the start of the humoral immune response.

### 1.2.3 (bii) Humoral Immune Response

Humoral immune response involves B cells which proliferate and differentiate into plasma cells and produce specific antibodies to neutralise and induce phagocytosis to destroy the bacteria. This immune response is important especially when *S. Typhi* is at the extracellular stage.

*S. Typhi* possess 3 main antigens; (1) somatic antigen O, (2) flagellar antigen H, and (3) surface antigen Vi. Antigenic structure of *S. Typhi* is shown in Figure 1.4. O, H and Vi antigens are the most studied activator of B cells to orchestrate the typhoid humoral immune response (Waddington *et al.*, 2014). O antigen is made up of polysaccharide and occurs on the surface of the outer membrane of the bacteria. It displays variable structures which are recognized by the humoral immune system leading to various *Salmonella* serovars (Liu *et al.*, 2014). H antigen constitutes the flagella, which is essential for attachment and invasion of the host intestinal epithelial cells, and also in biofilm formation (Haiko & Westerlund-Wikström, 2013). H antigen exists in 2 phases, called phase 1 and phase 2. Some *Salmonella* serotypes express one phase of H antigen (monophasic). Some others express both phases (diphasic). Some *Salmonella* serovars tend to change from one phase to another, which is termed as “phase variation”. Vi antigen is a capsular polysaccharide antigen located on the surface of the bacteria, and is associated with *S. Typhi* virulence. It also plays a main role in preventing *S. Typhi* from being phagocytized by macrophages (Janis *et al.*, 2011). However, Vi antigen is not essential for *S. Typhi* infection as Vi-negative mutants of *S. Typhi* can still cause typhoid fever (Pulickal *et al.*, 2013). Reliance of Vi antigen for serological testing will result in poor prognosis.

Antibodies against these *S. Typhi* antigens could be found in serum and other secretions. However, this humoral immune response does not confer long-life protection, but, instead, relapse of typhoid fever has been observed in 15–20% of individuals who had recovered from previous typhoid fever infection (Guzman *et al.*, 2006). Anti-O, -H and -Vi antibodies have been widely used as targets in various diagnostic tests, e.g. Widal (Olopoenia & King, 2000; Andualem *et al.*, 2014), enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (Fadeel *et al.*, 2004) and Tubex<sup>®</sup> (Khanna *et al.*, 2015) tests.

Humoral immune response of typhoid fever is not restricted to O, H and Vi antigens. Ty21a vaccine which is an attenuated *S. Typhi* live bacteria lack Vi antigen, gives similar protection with that of purified Vi capsular polysaccharide subunit (ViCPS) vaccine (Kantele *et al.*, 2012). These observations show that multiple adaptive immune response mechanisms are involved in eliminating the bacteria from the host. Although the humoral response in typhoid infection is mainly defined by the O, H and Vi antigens, there are other antigens such as the outer membrane proteins and heat shock proteins which have been shown to elicit specific antibody production (Sztein, 2007). However, these proteins have not been studied in detail.

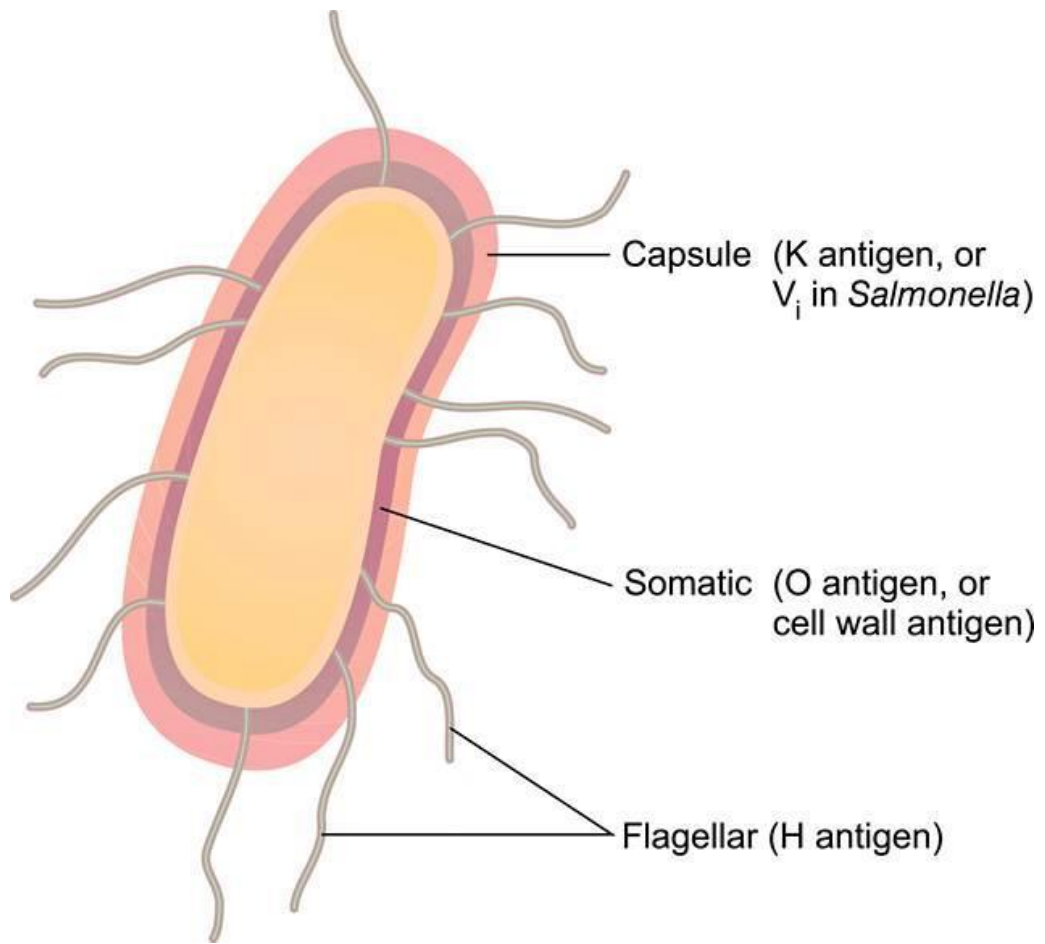


Figure 1.4 Antigenic structure of *S. Typhi* (Adapted from University of British Columbia, [http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PATH417:2015W1/Case\\_2/Student\\_8](http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PATH417:2015W1/Case_2/Student_8))



### **1.2.3 (biii) Important Antibody Isotypes in Typhoid Serology**

The initial exposure to *S. Typhi* causes the immune system to produce IgM. It activates the complement system by the Classical Pathway, promoting phagocytosis and destruction of the microbe. During *S. Typhi* infection, the level of IgM is detectable as early as 5-7 days of infection. Typhoid patients generally show significant rise in serum IgM titres during the first 10 days of illness and persists only for 45-90 days after acute illness, while serum IgG dominates the convalescent phase and can persist for more than 2 years after typhoid infection (Herath, 2003). IgM is therefore more of diagnostic significance than IgG to differentiate between acute and convalescent cases in an endemic population.

IgG functions in a variety of ways including opsonisation of antigen, complement activation, and neutralisation of pathogen. IgG production is induced by IFN- $\gamma$  which responds to *S. Typhi* infection. IgG persists longer than IgM and can have a half-life of more than 2 years after typhoid infection (Ismail, 2000). Thus, it is not suitable to be used for diagnosis of typhoid fever in highly endemic areas. Approximately 80% of *S. Typhi* chronic carriers manifest high titres of serum IgG against *S. Typhi* Vi antigen (Vaishnavi *et al.*, 2005). Thus, anti-Vi IgG has been routinely utilised for screening of chronic carriers (Sztein *et al.*, 2014). It is, however, unlikely to be effective in endemic regions as false-positive results may be obtained in acute or convalescent cases (House *et al.*, 2008).

IgA is secreted in mucosal tissues and neutralises microbes including those in the lumens of the gastrointestinal and respiratory tracts, preventing adherence of the

bacteria to epithelial cells and therefore gives protection to the mucosa. Increased IgA titres in typhoid patients' saliva have been observed during the first and second weeks of illness (Herath, 2003), and therefore has diagnostic uses (Zeeba Zaka-ur-Rab *et al.*, 2012; Herath, 2003; Chin *et al.*, 2016).

#### **1.2.4 Clinical Features**

The incubation period of the infection is typically between 7-14 days (Bhutta, 2006a). Typhoid fever generally produces indistinguishable clinical features from other febrile diseases such as malaria, leptospirosis, dengue and tuberculosis. The hallmark of typhoid fever is prolonged fever, which could increase daily in a stepwise manner to as high as 38-40°C in the third or fourth day of illness (WHO, 2003). Other symptoms include mild abdominal discomfort, headache, malaise, loss of appetite, constipation or diarrhoea, hepatomegaly and splenomegaly. In certain cases, transient rash of rose-coloured spots in the abdomen can be observed. Serious complications such as intestinal perforation, intestinal haemorrhage and typhoid encephalopathy occur between 10-15% of patients, sometimes with lethal consequences (Basnyat *et al.*, 2005). Factors which influence the severity of the infection include the status of host's immune system, the infecting dose of the bacteria, history of vaccination, medication, and virulence of the bacteria strains (Bhutta, 2006a). Patients with immune-suppressed conditions are of greater risk of developing the disease with greater morbidity and mortality rates.

### 1.2.5 Typhoid Carrier State

Approximately 1-5% of acute typhoid patients become chronic carriers (WHO, 2003). Carriers are individuals who harbour *S. Typhi* in their gallbladder, and excrete them in stool or urine, without showing any symptoms. *S. Typhi* stays innocuous in carriers, but poses a “silent” threat to the community, sometime causing outbreaks of typhoid fever in the population.

The predisposing factor for development of the carrier state is that of the ability of certain strains of *S. Typhi* which are resistant to bile by forming biofilm in the gallbladder. The biofilm layer overcomes the action of antimicrobial agents, such as antibiotics, disinfectants and preservatives (Marathe *et al.*, 2012), allowing it to be sequestered in the gallbladder or kidneys without being detected by the host immune system. The propensity to become a carrier was reported to be higher in females especially those who are greater than 50 years old and persons with cholelithiasis or schistosomiasis (Bhan *et al.*, 2005; Ja’afar *et al.*, 2013).

Generally, carriers are divided into 3 categories based on the *S. Typhi* excretion period: i) convalescent carriers, who continue to excrete *S. Typhi* 3 weeks to 3 months after the acute illness; ii) temporary carriers, who continue to excrete *S. Typhi* between 3-12 months after the acute illness; and iii) chronic carriers who continue to excrete *S. Typhi* for more than 1 year after the acute illness. Approximately 1-5% of typhoid patients become chronic carriers after recovering from the acute illness. The occurrence of typhoid fever outbreaks is often associated with asymptomatic carriers, particularly those who work as food-handlers (Gupta *et al.*, 2006). If the carriers could

not be identified, further spreading of the disease will occur, adding more difficulties in the control of the disease. Therefore, identification of typhoid carriers and extensive antibiotic treatment for this group of people, is extremely important. However, there is currently no reliable laboratory diagnostics for identification of typhoid carriers. Stool culture, which remains the gold standard for identification of carriers, only has a recovery rate of 5%, owing to intermittent secretion of *S. Typhi* from the carriers (Ismail, 2000). As such, identification of typhoid carriers remains challenge and an obstacle for eradication of the disease.

Perhaps, the most notorious typhoid carrier was Mary Malloon or better known as “Typhoid Marry”. Her career as a cook in New York city become one of the main route for spreading the disease among customers, families or friends. Eventually, 51 typhoid fever victims and 3 deaths were traced to her. She was forcibly taken into custody twice in her life by local health officials, and was detained until she die at the age of 69 (Marineli *et al.*, 2013).

#### **1.2.6 Treatment of Typhoid Fever - Antibiotic Therapy**

Typhoid fever can be controlled by antibiotic therapy. With the advent of pre-emptive antibiotic treatment, 99% of typhoid cases survival could be assured. However, without effective treatment, typhoid fever may progress to more severe illness, such as peritonitis, intestinal haemorrhage or perforation, leading to fatality in 10-30% of cases (Buckle *et al.*, 2012).

The selection of antibiotics depends on the clinical severity and antimicrobial susceptibility test. As per the WHO recommendation, the primary antibiotic treatment for *S. Typhi* infection is fluoroquinolones, followed by nalidixic acid and other antimicrobial agents. Fluoroquinolones such as ciprofloxacin, ofloxacin and pefloxacin are widely regarded as the ideal antibiotic of choice for typhoid fever (Upadhyay *et al.*, 2015; WHO, 2003). They demonstrate excellent ability to penetrate tissues and destroy the *S. Typhi* in monocytic cells such as macrophages, leading to rapid therapeutic response.

In the past decades, drug-resistant *S. Typhi* strains have emerged as a new threat. Fluoroquinolone-resistant strains have been reported in several countries, such as Nepal and India (Nobthai *et al.*, 2010; Dutta *et al.*, 2008; Afzal *et al.*, 2012). For these isolates, the use of ampicillin, chloramphenicol, and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole is recommended. In the mid 1980's, antimicrobial treatment has become more difficult with the emergence of pHCM1 plasmid-mediated multidrug-resistant strains, which are resistant to all 3 first-line antimicrobial agents, including chloramphenicol, ampicillin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (Zaki & Karande, 2011). In these cases, third-generation cephalosporins, such as ceftriaxone or cefotaxime are recommended (Zaki & Karande, 2011; Bhutta, 2006a). The selection of antibiotics based on the clinical severity and drug susceptibility of the *S. Typhi* strain is shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Recommended treatment of uncomplicated typhoid fever adapted from WHO technical communities (Bhutta, 2006b; WHO, 2003)

Susceptibility	Optimal treatment			Alternative treatment		
	Antibiotics	Daily dose (mg/kg)	Course (Days)	Antibiotics	Daily dose (mg/kg)	Course (Days)
<b>Uncomplicated typhoid fever</b>						
Fully sensitive	Fluoroquinolone e.g. ofloxacin or ciprofloxacin	15	5-7	Chloramphenicol	50-75	14-21
				Amoxicillin	75-100	14
				TMP-SMX	8-40	14
Multidrug resistance	Fluoroquinolone cefixime	15 15-20	5-7 7-14	Azithromycin	8-10	7
				Cefixime	15-20	7-14
Quinolone resistance <sup>b</sup>	Azithromycin ceftriaxone	8-10 75	7 10-14	Cefixime	20	7-14
<b>Severe typhoid fever requiring parental treatment</b>						
Fully sensitive	Fluoroquinolone e.g. ofloxacin	15	10	Chloramphenicol	100	14-21
				Ampicillin	100	14
				TMP-SMX	8/40	14
Multidrug resistance	Fluoroquinolone	15	10-14	ceftriaxone	60	10-14
				Cefotaxime	80	
Quinolone resistance	Azithromycin cefotaxime	60 80	10-14	Fluoroquinolone	20	14

### **1.2.7 Prevention of Typhoid Fever**

Recognising the threat posed by typhoid fever epidemics, strategies for prevention and control of this disease are urgently needed. Some approaches to reduce typhoid fever burden include vaccination, appropriate surveillance systems, safe water supply, improved sanitation facilities, rational use of antibiotics, appropriate personal hygiene and public health education. For government to regulate resources for these purposes, accurate figures of the disease burden is essential. However, lack of adequate diagnostic tools forms the formidable obstacle to estimate the true disease burden.

#### **1.2.7 (a) Vaccines**

Immunisation is one of the keys to prevent and control of the disease. At present, there are 3 licensed typhoid vaccines available: 1) whole cell live attenuated *S. Typhi* (Ty21a) oral vaccines; 2) purified Vi capsular polysaccharide subunit (ViCPS) vaccine (Shawky Hosny *et al.*, 2015), and 3) Vi-conjugate vaccine.

Ty21a vaccine is licensed for persons aged older than 6 years and requires 3 to 4 doses oral administration on alternating days. It induces both cell-mediated and humoral immunity. It is available in both liquid and coated capsule forms (Marathe *et al.*, 2012). As a live attenuated vaccine, it should not be administered to immune-compromised persons or persons having antibiotic treatment.

ViCPS vaccine is recommended by WHO as the vaccine of choice for typhoid fever as it is free from endotoxin and requires only a single dose for effective immunity. In

addition, it is also suitable for children over 2 years old, individuals receiving antibiotic therapy and immune-compromised individuals (Shawky Hosny *et al.*, 2015). This vaccine confers 50-80% protection against typhoid fever (Anwar *et al.*, 2014).

The present available vaccines are not suitable for mass immunisation, especially to children less than 2 years old and the elderly. Continuous efforts are being made to develop vaccines which can provoke higher antibody titres and longer immunity with reduced side effects. A new Vi antigen which is conjugated to exotoxin A (rEPA) of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* vaccine (Vi-rEPA) has been developed (Szu, 2013). This vaccine showed enhanced immunogenicity in adults and children compared to Vi antigen alone (Jin *et al.*, 2017). Remarkably, it protects most of the recipients in trials including children below the age of 5.

Although effective vaccines are available, there is no plan for vaccination programme for infants and children. Some do not trust the vaccine, claiming the side effects of vaccine pose a greater health risk than the disease itself. Out of 16 Asia countries where typhoid is endemic, only 3 countries, i.e. India, Vietnam and Thailand have allowed mass immunisation to protect their child (Ochiai *et al.*, 2007). The main cause of this neglect is due to the inadequacies of routine diagnostics which generally make the disease burden somewhat uncertain. All these form a major obstacle in the control and management of typhoid fever.



### **1.3 Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever**

Typhoid fever typically produces similar clinical features as with other febrile diseases, such as malaria, leptospirosis and dengue. Due to non-specific clinical manifestations, laboratory testing is therefore essential for typhoid fever diagnosis. Diagnostic methods used in diagnosis of typhoid fever include: (1) blood or stool bacterial culture method following phenotypic identification using biochemical and serotyping assays; (2) detection of antigens or antibodies by immunological assays, and (3) detection of DNA or proteins by molecular assays (Lee *et al.*, 2015). The choice of diagnostic methods depends on the laboratory facilities, budget and nature of the test samples. Presently, diagnosis of typhoid fever under the gold standard method ISO 6579:2002 (International Organization for Standardization, 2002) is through isolation of the bacteria from blood and stool samples, followed by biochemical and serological tests. However, these methods are time-consuming and laborious, delaying appropriate disease treatment and containment (Parry *et al.*, 2011).

#### **1.3.1 Culture Systems**

*S. Typhi* clinical strains can be isolated from blood, stool, urine, bone marrow, duodenal fluid and saliva of patients (Herath, 2003; Z. Zaka-ur-Rab *et al.*, 2012). The diagnostic efficacy of the culture method differs with the specimens tested. The highest recovery rate (detection rate) of *S. Typhi* is from bone-marrow, followed by blood, stool and urine in patients with typhoid fever (Mogasale *et al.*, 2016)