

Rapid Detection of Carbapenem Resistance in *Acinetobacter baumannii* Using Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption Ionization-Time of Flight Mass Spectrometry

Marie Kempf, Sofiane Bakour ,Christophe Flaudrops, Meryem Berrazeg, Jean-Michel Brunel, Mourad Drissi, Esma Mesli, Abdelaziz Touati, Jean-Marc Rolain

Abstract :

Rapid detection of carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* strains is critical and will benefit patient care by optimizing antibiotic therapies and preventing outbreaks. Herein we describe the development and successful application of a mass spectrometry profile generated by matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization-time of flight (MALDI-TOF) that utilized the imipenem antibiotic for the detection of carbapenem resistance in a large series of *A. baumannii* clinical isolates from France and Algeria. A total of 106 *A. baumannii* strains including 63 well-characterized carbapenemase-producing and 43 non-carbapenemase-producing strains, as well as 43 control strains (7 carbapenem-resistant and 36 carbapenem-sensitive strains) were studied. After an incubation of bacteria with imipenem for up to 4 h, the mixture was centrifuged and the supernatant analyzed by MALDI-TOF MS. The presence and absence of peaks representing imipenem and its natural metabolite was analyzed. The result was interpreted as positive for carbapenemase production if the specific peak for imipenem at 300.0 m/z disappeared during the incubation time and if the peak of the natural metabolite at 254.0 m/z increased as measured by the area under the curves leading to a ratio between the peak for imipenem and its metabolite being <0.5. This assay, which was applied to the large series of *A. baumannii* clinical isolates, showed a sensitivity of 100.0% and a specificity of 100.0%. Our study is the first to demonstrate that this quick and simple assay can be used as a routine tool as a point-of-care method for the identification of *A. baumannii* carbapenemase-producers in an effort to prevent outbreaks and the spread of uncontrollable superbugs.

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